

First Congregational United Church of Christ
March 20, 2022

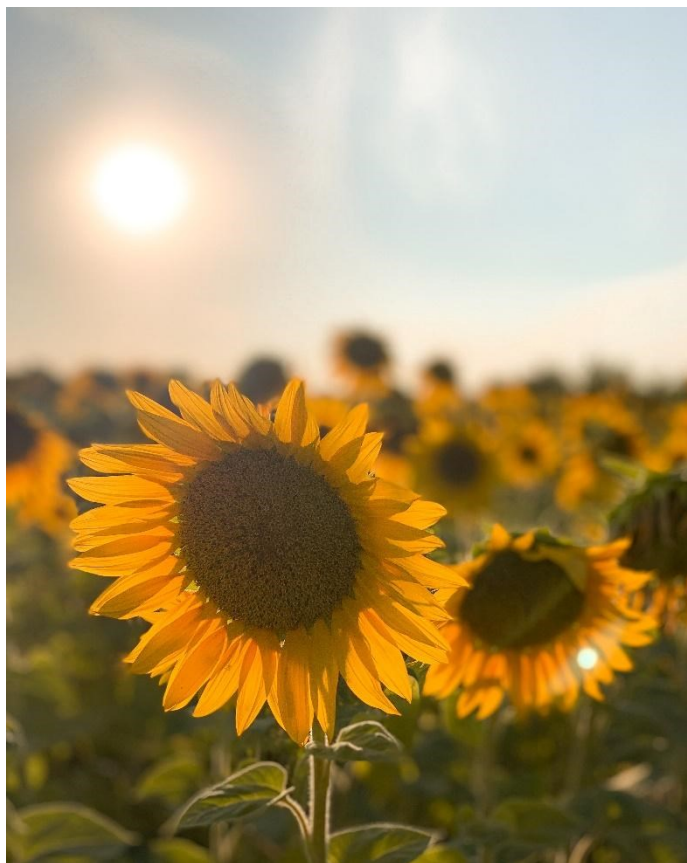


Photo by Shifan Hassan

Sunday in Lent

Ministers: All who are a part of this church

Pastor: Rev. Enno K. Limvere

Musician: Ben Nichols

Choir Director: Ann Russ

Peace Candle Lighter: Sandy Stover

Liturgist: Nan Backlund

Gathering Music

Words of Welcome

Words to Enter Worship (Based upon Galatians)

The Workers: But now that faith is here, we are no longer subject to the divisions of the world. For in love, all are children of God.

Dreamers: There is no longer American or Ukrainian, no longer rich or poor, no longer cisgendered or transgendered, for all are one in love.

Healers: By contrast, the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, generosity, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control.

Singers: We are called to freedom, and through love become servants to all. For the whole law is summed up in a single commandment, "You shall your neighbor as yourself."

Words of Lament

God of Love, there is too much despair and bad news. There is too much wrong with the world, with our country, and with our ability to come together. We often have to watch our words when in public and even with family members. It is hard to see a way forward, any kind of light at the end of the tunnel. Shine, O God, shine your light into our hearts, our communities, and your world. Show us the path forward that heals, reconciles, and invites us to feast together at the table set by you. Amen.

Words of Blessing (Based on Psalm 63)

One: O God, you are my God, I seek you, my soul thirsts for you; as in a dry and weary land where there is no water.

Many: So I have looked upon you in the sanctuary, beholding your power and glory. Because your steadfast love is life, my lips shall praise you.

All: So I will bless you as long as I live; I will lift up my hands and call on your name.

One: My soul is satisfied as with a rich feast, and my mouth praises you with joyful lips when I think of you in my house and meditate on you in the watches of the night.

Many: For you have been my help, and in the shadow of your wings I sing for joy.

All: My soul clings to you, your loving hand upholds the world.

Words of Poetry & Lighting the Candle of Peace

Peace Poem and Introduction

It is a custom in our congregation to light our Peace Candle during worship, as a witness to the Prince of Peace and our communal intention to be peace-makers as a Just Peace Church.

SUNFLOWER SEEDS by Kim Stafford

*How many do you have? Enough
to line the roads? Enough to give
to others so they can fill the fields?
Enough to plant in every bomb crater,
bullet hole? That would be too many.
If you have just one, one can spiral
into a thousand in a halo of gold.
Where will you hide it in the earth
so every seed may declare peace for
a survivor's knees at a brother's grave?*

Passing of Peace

Scripture Readings

1st Scripture Isaiah 55:1-9

55 Ho, everyone who thirsts, come to the waters;
and you that have no money, come, buy and eat!

Come, buy wine and milk without money and without price.

² Why do you spend your money for that which is not bread,
and your labor for that which does not satisfy?

Listen carefully to me, and eat what is good, and delight yourselves in rich
food.

³ Incline your ear, and come to me; listen, so that you may live.

I will make with you an everlasting covenant, my steadfast, sure love for
David.

⁴ See, I made him a witness to the peoples, a leader and commander for
the peoples.

⁵ See, you shall call nations that you do not know, and nations that do not
know you shall run to you, because of the LORD your God, the Holy One
of Israel, for he has glorified you.

⁶ Seek the LORD while he may be found, call upon him while he is near;
⁷ let the wicked forsake their way, and the unrighteous their thoughts;
let them return to the LORD, that he may have mercy on them,
and to our God, for he will abundantly pardon.
⁸ For my thoughts are not your thoughts,
nor are your ways my ways, says the LORD.
⁹ For as the heavens are higher than the earth,
so are my ways higher than your ways
and my thoughts than your thoughts.

Children's Message: Our thoughts and God's thoughts

Message : Let them return

Musical Reflections

Joys and Concerns, Pastoral Prayer and the Lord's Prayer

O Father/Mother God, shining light throughout the universe, pure is your name. Your love does come, your vision is lived out, in this world as it is in all worlds. Give us today what we need; no more, no less. Lighten our loads from what weighs us down, as we lighten the load of our neighbor. Shine the light upon our path so we may avoid the pitfalls and traps. The universe and everything in it is yours, as is love, mercy, and justice. Amen.

Our Time of Giving

News of God at Work in our Congregation & Community

Sending Music

Benediction