



First Congregational United Church of Christ

August 20, 2023



Painting by Bazzi Rahib, Ilyas Basim Khuri

Great
Is
Your
Faith!

12th Sunday after Pentecost

Ministers: All who are a part of this church

Pastor: Rev. Enno K. Limvere

Musician: Brass Quintet

Choir Director: Ann Russ

Peace Candle Lighter:

Liturgist:

Words of Welcome

Prelude - Three Spirituals Arranged by Barnes

Words to Enter Worship (Based on Psalm 133)

People who are immigrants: **How very good and pleasant it is when kindred live together in unity!**

People who moved here: **It is like precious oil on the head, running down the beard of Aaron, running down over the collar of his robes.**

People who traveled: **It is like the dew of Hermon, which falls on the mountains of Zion. People who have come from different places: From there the LORD ordained their blessings, life forevermore.**

Opening Hymn #43 Love Divine, All Loves Excelling

1. Love divine, all loves excelling, joy of heaven, on earth be found
Fix in us a humble dwelling, all your faithful mercies crown;
Jesus, you are all compassion; pure, unbounded love impart.
Visit us with your salvation, enter every trembling heart.

2. Breathe, O breathe your loving Spirit into every troubled breast;
Let us all in you inherit, let us find your promised rest;
Take away our love of sinning; Alpha and Omega be;
End of faith, as its beginning, set our hearts at liberty.

3. Come almighty to deliver, let us all your life receive;
Suddenly return, and never, nevermore your temples leave.
You we would be always blessing, love you as your angels love,
Pray and praise for your unfailing, wounded arms outstretched above.

4. Finish then, your new creation; pure and spotless may we prove;
Let us see your great salvation perfectly restored in you;
Changed from glory into glory, till in heaven we take our place,
Crowned as saints, we ever shall be lost in wonder, love, and praise.

Charles Wesley, 1747; alt., John Zundel, 1855

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Words of Lament

Merciful God, we separate ourselves from each other by putting labels such as race, nationality, gender, religion, wealthy or poor, and then use our words, actions, and laws to keep ourselves apart. We too often forget that all are created in your image and are to love each other no matter what. RISE UP, scatter our stupid, unbearable ways that keep us apart, that hold us back from reaching out, denying your love for them and our unity in you. In Jesus' name we pray. Amen.

Time of Silence

Words of Poetry & Lighting the Candle of Peace

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 peacemakers as a Just Peace Church.



The Journey by Mary Oliver

*One day you finally knew
what you had to do, and began,
though the voices around you
kept shouting
their bad advice --
though the whole house
began to tremble
and you felt the old tug
at your ankles.
"Mend my life!"
each voice cried.
But you didn't stop.
You knew what you had to do,
though the wind pried
with its stiff fingers
at the very foundations,
though their melancholy
was terrible.*

*It was already late
enough, and a wild night,
and the road full of fallen
branches and stones.
But little by little,
as you left their voices behind,
the stars began to burn
through the sheets of clouds,
and there was a new voice
which you slowly
recognized as your own,
that kept you company
as you strode deeper and deeper
into the world,
determined to do
the only thing you could do --
determined to save
the only life you could save.*

Passing of the Peace

Hymn #547 Amazing Grace

1. Amazing grace, how sweet the sound, that saved a wretch like me!
I once was lost, but now am found, was blind but now can see.
2. 'Twas grace that taught my heart to fear, and grace my fears relieved;
How precious did that grace appear the hour I first believed!
3. Through many dangers, toils, and snares, I have already come;
'Tis grace has brought me safe thus far, and grace will lead me home.
4. My God has promised good to me, whose word my hope secures;
God will my shield and portion be as long as life endures.
5. When we've been there ten thousand years, bright shining as the sun,
We've no less days to sing God's praise than when we'd first begun.

St. 1-4 John Newton, 1770; alt.; St. 5, A Collection of Sacred Ballads, 1790
Columbia Harmony, Cincinnati, 1829; Arr. Edwin O. Excell, 1900.
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Scripture Readings

1st Scripture Isaiah 56:1, 6-8

1 Thus says the Lord: Maintain justice, and do what is right,
for soon my salvation will come and my deliverance be revealed.
6 And the foreigners who join themselves to the Lord,
to minister to him, to love the name of the Lord, and to be his servants,
all who keep the Sabbath and do not profane it and hold fast my covenant—
7 these I will bring to my holy mountain and make them joyful in my house of prayer;
their burnt offerings and their sacrifices will be accepted on my altar,
for my house shall be called a house of prayer for all peoples.
8 Thus says the Lord God,
who gathers the outcasts of Israel:
I will gather others to them besides those already gathered.

2nd Scripture Matthew 15:21-28

21 Jesus left that place and went away to the district of Tyre and Sidon. 22 Just then a Canaanite woman from that region came out and started shouting, "Have mercy on me, Lord, Son of David; my daughter is tormented by a demon." 23 But he did not answer her at all. And his disciples came and urged him, saying, "Send her away, for she keeps shouting after us." 24 He answered, "I was sent only to the lost sheep of the house of Israel." 25 But she came and knelt before him, saying, "Lord, help me." 26 He answered, "It is not fair to take the children's food and throw it to the dogs." 27 She said, "Yes, Lord, yet even the dogs eat the crumbs that fall from their masters' [a] table." 28 Then Jesus answered her, "Woman, great is your faith! Let it be done for you as you wish." And her daughter was healed from that moment.

Children's Message Jesus Still Learned

Choir Anthem

Message Great is your Faith!

Silent Reflection

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

Our Father, Mother God, who art in heaven, hallowed be thy name. Thy kingdom come, thy will be done, on earth as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread and forgive us our trespasses as we forgive those who trespass against us. And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil. For thine is the kingdom and the power and the glory, forever. Amen

News of God at Work in our Congregation & Community

Our Time of Giving Ashokan Farewell. By Jay Ungar

Doxology

*Praise God from whom all blessings flow;
Praise God, all creatures here below;
Praise God, for all that love has done.
Creator, Christ, and Spirit, One. Amen*

Closing Hymn #4 Joyful, Joyful We Adore You

1. Joyful, joyful, we adore you, God of glory, God of love;
Hearts unfold like flowers before you, opening to the sun above.
Melt the clouds of sin and sadness, drive the storms of doubt away;
Giver of immortal gladness, fill us with the light of day.
2. All your works with joy surround you, earth and heaven reflect your rays,
Stars and angels sing around you, center of unbroken praise.
Field and forest, vale and mountain, flowery meadow, flashing sea,
Chanting bird and flowing fountain, teach us what our praise should be.
3. You are giving and forgiving, ever blessing, ever blessed,
Wellspring of the joy of living, ocean depth of happy rest!
Loving Spirit, Father, Mother, all who love belong to you;
Teach us how to love each other, by that love our joy renew.
4. Mortals, join the mighty chorus, which the morning stars began;
Boundless love is reigning o'er us, reconciling race and clan.
Ever singing, move we forward, faithful in the midst of strife,
Joyful music leads us onward in the triumph song of life.

*Henry van Dyke, 1907; alt., Ludwig van Beethoven, 1824; Adapt. and harm. Edward Hodges, 1846
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Benediction Just A Closer Walk. Arranged by Don Gillis

Sending Music