



First Congregational United Church of Christ

September 3, 2023



14th Sunday after Pentecost

Ministers: All who are a part of this church

Pastor: Rev. Enno K. Limvere

Musician: Chandler Litterst

Choir Director: Ann Russ

Peace Candle Lighter:

Liturgist:

Gathering Music

Words of Welcome

Prelude

Words to Enter Worship (Based on Psalm 26)

People who are enthusiastic: **Vindicate the poor, O LORD, for they have struggled for integrity and have trusted in you, even while wavering.**

People who are happy: **Prove them to be yours, O LORD, for they are tested and tried in the media as something less than people with whole hearts and minds.**

People who stand their ground: **They are looked down upon those who sit with the worthless, while the hypocrites ignore the homeless and dine in places that will not admit the least of these.**

People who contribute to the needy: **Help all to walk in their integrity, redeem us all, and be gracious to your children. May our feet stand on level ground and in the great congregation may we bless the LORD.**

Opening Hymn Nothing Can Separate Us ([click here](#))

Words of Lament

Almighty God, the minimum wage has not risen in 20 years and 90% of all salary increases go towards the top ONE PERCENT! This cannot continue if we are to have a future for all. Rise UP! God of Justice, rise up, scatter the rich, and fill the poor with good things. In Jesus' name we pray. Amen.

Time of Silence

Blessing of the Earth The Wind

One: The wind carries the seed so flowers may bloom, and grass may grow. The wind carries the clouds in the sky so the earth may be watered.

Many: **The wind pushes the waves across the oceans. The wind pushes the sand across the deserts.**

All: **The wind bends the tree and strengthens the stalk. The wind cleanses the streets and field.**

One: The wind carries a song from country to country. Wind carries the smell of roses and good news.

Many: **The wind pushes back against inertia and stagnation. The wind pushes people to new places and new things.**

All: **God bless the wind, the ruach, the pneuma, the breath of life and Spirit. God bless the dancing leaves and soaring birds. God bless the weather and all those ways it brings life.**

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.

I Hear America Singing by Walt Whitman

I hear America singing, the varied carols I hear,

Those of mechanics, each one singing his as it should be blithe and strong,

The carpenter singing his as he measures his plank or beam,

The shoemaker singing as he sits on his bench, the hatter singing as he stands,

...

The wood-cutter's song, the ploughboy's on his way in the morning, or at noon intermission or at
sundown,
The delicious singing of the mother, or of the young wife at work, or of the girl sewing or washing,
Each singing what belongs to him or her and to none else,
The day what belongs to the day—at night the party of young fellows, robust, friendly,
Singing with open mouths their strong melodious songs.



Passing of the Peace

Hymn #181 You are Salt for the Earth, O People ([click here](#))

Scripture Readings

1st Scripture Matthew 16:21-28 (New Revised Standard Version)

21 From that time on, Jesus began to show his disciples that he must go to Jerusalem and undergo great suffering at the hands of the elders and chief priests and scribes and be killed and on the third day be raised. 22 And Peter took him aside and began to rebuke him, saying, “God forbid it, Lord! This must never happen to you.”

23 But he turned and said to Peter, “Get behind me, Satan! You are a hindrance to me, for you are setting your mind not on divine things but on human things.”

24 Then Jesus told his disciples, “If any wish to come after me, let them deny themselves and take up their cross and follow me. 25 For those who want to save their life will lose it, and those who lose their life for my sake will find it. 26 For what will it profit them if they gain the whole world but forfeit their life? Or what will they give in return for their life?”

27 “For the Son of Man is to come with his angels in the glory of his Father, and then he will repay everyone for what has been done. 28 Truly I tell you, there are some standing here who will not taste death before they see the Son of Man coming in his kingdom.”

2nd Scripture Romans 12:9-21 (Common English Bible)

9 Love should be shown without pretending. Hate evil, and hold on to what is good. 10 Love each other like the members of your family. Be the best at showing honor to each other. 11 Don't hesitate to be enthusiastic—be on fire in the Spirit as you serve the Lord! 12 Be happy in your hope, stand your ground when you're in trouble, and devote yourselves to prayer. 13 Contribute to the needs of God's people, and welcome strangers into your home.

14 Bless people who harass you—bless and don't curse them. 15 Be happy with those who are happy, and cry with those who are crying. 16 Consider everyone as equal, and don't think that you're better than anyone else. Instead, associate with people who have no status. Don't think that you're so smart. 17 Don't pay back anyone for their evil actions with evil actions, but show respect for what everyone else believes is good.

18 If possible, to the best of your ability, live at peace with all people. 19 Don't try to get revenge for yourselves, my dear friends, but leave room for God's wrath. It is written, *Revenge belongs to me; I will pay it back, says the Lord.* 20 Instead, *If your enemy is hungry, feed him; if he is thirsty, give him a drink. By doing this, you will pile burning coals of fire upon his head.* 21 Don't be defeated by evil, but defeat evil with good.

Children's Message Consider Everyone an Equal

Choir Anthem

Message Contribute to the needs of God's people

Musical Reflections

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

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 #584 I Am the Light of the World ([click here](#))

Benediction

Sending Music



Opening Hymn Nothing Can Separate Us

Refrain:

Nothing can separate us from the deep, deep love of God.
Not trials or temptations, from the deep, deep love of God.

1. In times of deepest sorrow, when all joy seems lost and gone,
Christ stays our true companion; we are never left alone.
2. If God our judge is for us, then who can stand against?
Christ Jesus laid his life down, our way to make amends.
3. God's love: the ground we walk on, God's love: the air we breathe,
God's love: the simple sunshine, God's love: our own heart beat.

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Hymn #181 You are Salt for the Earth, O People

1. You are salt for the earth, O people: salt for the reign of God!
Share the flavor of life, O people: life in the City of God!

Refrain:

Bring forth the reign of mercy, bring forth the reign of peace;
Bring forth the reign of justice, bring forth the City of God!

2. You are a light on the hill, O people: light for the City of God!
Shine so holy and bright, O people: shine for the City of God!
3. You are a seed of the Word, O people: bring forth the reign of God!
Seeds of mercy and seeds of justice, grow in the City of God!
4. We are a blessed and a pilgrim people: bound for the reign of God!
Love our journey and love our homeland: love is the City of God!

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