

First Congregational United Church of Christ
Algona, Iowa
Twelfth Sunday after Pentecost
August 23, 2020

PRELUDE

RINGING OF THE BELL

GREETINGS, GOOD NEWS, ANNOUNCEMENTS

CALL TO WORSHIP

(read responsively)

One: We are gathered here to stand before the living God.

Many: **Our help is in the name of the living God, maker of heaven and earth.**

One: We are gathered here to turn away from the world and patterns of power that can hurt, trap, and swallow us up.

Many: **We stand before God, our helper, who rescues and renews us.**

One: We come to this time of worship seeking the living God, maker of heaven and earth.

Many: **We present ourselves to the living God, who is compassionate and forgiving, as a living and pleasing sacrifice. Let's worship God!**

***OPENING SONG** "Praise to the Living God"

(insert) verses 1 & 4

OPENING PRAYER

(read together)

We come from different places with our own place on the journey, God. Some of us have failed and seek reassurance. Some of us have succeeded and found favor. Some of us feel trapped and helpless. Some of us have escaped peril and feel great relief. But no matter what our experience has been, we come here today to meet you in worship.

Remind us of your power and mercy. Replenish our courage and vision. Renew our identity as your people. Reinvigorate our holy work in this world, for our help is in your name alone. Amen

TIME FOR THE CHILDREN AND YOUNG AT HEART

CALL TO CONFESSION

PRAYER OF CONFESSION

(read together)

We confess our struggle to be transformed into disciples, God of mystery. The desires of the world would shape us into people you would not recognize. The demands of our society pull us away from your heart. Our culture values the rich, the powerful, the successful, but you are on the side of the weak, the poor, the outcast, the oppressed. Forgive us, Merciful God, for looking for you in the wrong places. Reawaken us with your voice that calls us to service; revive our weary hearts with your vision of creation; refresh our fatigued spirits that we might boldly proclaim Jesus as our Lord and as our Savior, and go forth to serve your people in Christ's name. Amen.

SILENCE FOR PERSONAL REFLECTION AND CONFESSION

WORDS OF ASSURANCE

(read responsively)

One: It's too easy to think like the world, that money will give us happiness, that power will earn us grace. But Paul reminds us that if we think like Jesus, and live like servants, we will find true freedom.

Many: **Not only our minds, but our hearts and spirits will be transformed into the likeness of Christ, enabling us to be faithful disciples. Thanks be to God. Amen.**

FIRST SCRIPTURE READING Matthew 16:13-20

* AN AFFIRMATION OF FAITH

(read together)

We belong to God, creator of all that is and all that is to come, abundant provider of the gifts in this life and the gifts in our own hearts. It is God alone who gives life, who is generous beyond measure with grace and blessing.

We follow Christ, whom God sent to teach and heal, to show us a new way of living, with love and trust and courage, with joy and generosity. In this faith Jesus gave of himself, even his very life. He was crucified and buried; yet God raised him from death, and he lives among us, and grants his spirit to us.

We live by that Holy Spirit, and entrust ourselves to its guidance and empowerment. As members of the church, the Body of Christ, we devote ourselves to lives of love, rejoicing in the power of forgiveness, the reality of resurrection, and the mystery of eternal life. Amen.

GLORIA PATRI

(music only, not sung)

FOCUS SCRIPTURE Romans 12:1-21 read from *The Message*

MESSAGE: “A Well-Formed Maturity”

Pastor Burtnett

PRAYERS OF THE PEOPLE AND LORD’S PRAYER

AFFIRMING OUR GIFTS

***DOXOLOGY**

(music only, not sung) Words #44

*** PRAYER OF DEDICATION**

(prayed together)

Bless the gifts we offer, God. May they be a sign of hope and love to all they touch.

Amen.

***CLOSING SONG** “Spirit of God, Descend upon My Heart ”

#132 verses 1 & 2

GOING FORTH WITH THE PEACE OF CHRIST

POSTLUDE

The Call to Worship (adapted), Opening Prayer (adapted), and Offering Prayer of Dedication (adapted) are from *The Abingdon Worship Annual 2020* edited by Mary J. Scifres and B. J. Beu. The Call to Confession, Prayer of Confession, and Words of Assurance (adapted) are from *Lectionary Liturgies* by Thom M. Shuman. The Affirmation of Faith is by Steve Garnaas-Holmes

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Organist: Liz Reynolds
Lector: David Burrow
Worship Leader: Pastor Chris Burtnett

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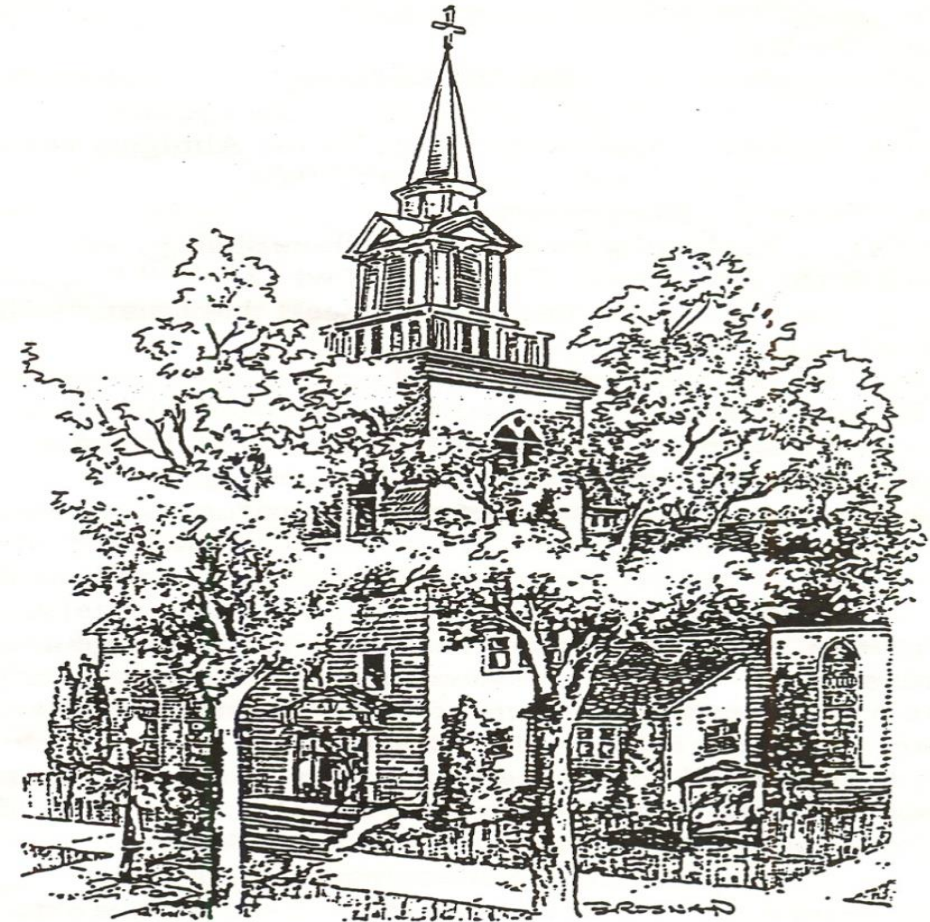
August Radio Sponsor: Chuck West and Becky Bibler

Birthdays: 8-26 Holly Filson-Heath

Next Sunday we will worship on the fellowship lawn. Bring lawn chairs. And, bring your own lunch if you wish to stay after the service.

You are invited to read the other two lectionary scriptures for today.
Ex 1:8-2:10 and Ps 124

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United Church of Christ
Algona, Iowa**



“Where No One Is A Stranger”

315 S. Moore Street – Algona, IA 50511

515-295-2845