

First Congregational United Church of Christ
“Where No One Is a Stranger”
Eighth Sunday after Pentecost
July 18, 2021

PRELUDE

RINGING OF THE BELL

GREETINGS, GOOD NEWS, ANNOUNCEMENTS, JESUS ENCOUNTERS

*CALL TO WORSHIP

(read responsively)

One: Neighbors and newcomers, families and strangers,

Many: we gather in this place built by God’s steadfast love.

One: Strugglers and stragglers, pilgrims almost at the end of the journey,

Many: each of us seeks to follow Jesus, the compassionate One.

One: Builders of bridges in fractured communities, those who stand on either side of walls of fear,

Many: the Spirit of faithfulness calls us to live as one people – God’s people!

*OPENING SONG

“Gather Us In”

#649

*OPENING PRAYER

(prayed together)

Caring and Gracious God, you are the shepherd who gathers us together today to celebrate with grateful thanksgiving the community in which we live. We are nourished by its diversity, brought about by the unique gifts each person contributes. Be with us in this time of worship and encourage us to never cease welcoming the strangers we meet and accepting the gifts they bring. Grant that they will enrich our lives and will be a reminder of the joy that comes when all will be one in you. Amen.

TIME FOR THE CHILDREN AND YOUNG AT HEART

CALL TO CONFESSION

PRAYER OF CONFESSION

(prayed together)

Steadfast God, we confess that we are so busy putting up walls between ourselves and others, we cannot see the home you are building for all of us. We spend so much time noting the differences between us and others, while you are embracing everyone as your child. We run to welcome those who look, talk, and act like us, and you throw open your

doors to the stranger, the alien, in our midst.

Forgive us, Faithful Heart. By your grace, help us to see the household you are building for all people: there are no plastic protectors on the furniture; there are no rooms that are off-limits; and even the smallest child is welcome to sit at the big peoples' Table and be fed by your grace. We pray this in the name of Jesus Christ, our peace, our hope, our Lord, our Savior. Amen.

SILENCE FOR PERSONAL REFLECTION AND CONFESSION

WORDS OF ASSURANCE

(read responsively)

One: Do you remember? At one time, you were without Christ; you were the stranger, the outsider, and the alien. But now, in Christ, you have been brought home, living in God's household of hope and peace.

Many: God's covenant with us is everlasting; God's steadfast love is forever; God's forgiveness makes us new and whole. Thanks be to God. Amen.

FIRST SCRIPTURE READING

Mark 6:30-34, 53-56

*AN AFFIRMATION OF FAITH

(read together)

We are a cloth of diverse colors, made from many gifts and graces. We are the people flowing forth from Creator God, surprising ourselves with the things which can be done. We are raw material for rewarding relationships as our lives interweave, we are each worthy of being respected and cared for essential to the pattern, skilled in our appointed tasks, sources of laughter and sharers of tears. We commit ourselves to work together, that one day, this world may be a place where all people live in justice, freedom and peace. Amen.

*GLORIA PATRI

#734

FOCUS SCRIPTURE

Ephesians 2:11-22

read from the *Good News Bible*

MESSAGE:

“One People”

Pastor Chris

PRAYERS OF THE PEOPLE/THE LORD’S PRAYER

BRINGING OUR GIFTS

OFFERTORY

*DOXOLOGY

Words #44

***PRAYER OF DEDICATION**

(prayed together)

Thank you, God, for the ministries of the people of your church. Thank you for the bounty of your blessings you have poured out upon us. We have taken a portion of our abundance and give it to you in grateful thanksgiving. Consecrate this offering. May it help to support the ministries of this church that will dismantle the walls that divide us so all people will be one in the new family gathered in Christ Jesus. Amen.

***CLOSING SONG**

“Community of Christ”

#615

GOING FORTH WITH THE PEACE OF CHRIST

POSTLUDE

The Call to Worship, Call to Confession, Prayer of Confession, and Words of Assurance are from *Lectionary Liturgies* by Thom M. Shuman. The Opening Prayer and Offering prayer of Dedication (adapted) are from *Worship Ways- Worship Resources for the United Church of Christ*. The Affirmation of Faith (adapted) is by Rex A. E. Hunt.

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Organist: Mary Jo Meyer
Lector: David Burrow
Worship Leader: Pastor Chris
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July Radio Sponsor: In memory of Arlen Benschoter

Birthdays: 7-18: Jeff Hines, 7-22: Cam Buchanan

Today, July 18: 10:00 am. – Worship

Tuesday, July 20: 9:30 – 11:30 am.: Pastor Chris at Feed Mill

Friday, July 23: 9:30 am. - Judy Boyd Visitation
10:00 am. – Judy Boyd Memorial Service

Saturday, July 24: 9-11 am. - Mobile Mission at Farmers Market

Next Sunday, July 25: 10:00 am. – Worship
Following worship CE will meet
Northern Valley Acapella Chorus will join us for worship (formerly Corn Belt Chorus)

August/September Newsletter deadline July28.

Thank you to Mary Jo Meyer for filling in as Organist last week and this week. Your gift of music is much appreciated.

**First Congregational Church
United Church of Christ
Algona, Iowa**



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