

First Congregational United Church of Christ
“Where No One Is A Stranger”
Seventh Sunday After the Epiphany
February 23, 2025

PRELUDE

RINGING OF THE BELL

GREETINGS, GOOD NEWS, ANNOUNCEMENTS, JESUS ENCOUNTERS+

***Call to Worship** (read responsively)

One: We come, those who seek to trust in God.

Many: We commit ourselves to do as Jesus would do for those around us.

One: We come, delighting in all the wonders God provides for us.

Many: We would not worry, but open ourselves to God’s heart.

One: We come, waiting patiently for God to speak.

Many: We will be still, listening for God’s words of hope, of peace.

One: Let’s worship God!

***Opening Song:** “Come and Find the Quiet Center” #477

***OPENING PRAYER** (prayed together)

Holy Love, bear in us a new beginning. Soften our hearts and still our minds into Your gracious embrace. Hold the worries and wanderings of our lives. Gift us with the renewing energy of Your Holy Spirit. Let it meet our fatigue and form in us a deepened commitment to your vision of the beloved community. Yes, mold us with Christ-love into agents of Your blessing, for the good of the world. May the cup of our lives run over with this of Your desire. In Your Holy name, we pray. Amen.

TIME FOR CHILDREN AND THE YOUNG AT HEART

CALL TO CONFESSION

PRAYER OF CONFESSION

God of the grand reversal, we confess our easy attachment to revenge in its many forms. Instead of interrupting violence, it has been easy to practice it in word and deed. It has been easy to worship the lie of scarcity instead of trusting your promise of abundance. By this, the way of the world has worked into our hearts and minds. Forgive us and free us from ourselves. Equip us anew with an outpouring of Your love. By this of You, form

us into channels of grace. Deepen our love, expand our generosity, and mold us and the world with Your abundant mercy. Let the heart and mind of Jesus take up residence in us anew. Amen.

A TIME FOR SILENT REFLECTION

WORDS OF ASSURANCE

One: Good news! The Holy One, Love Almighty, interrupts our missteps and misdeeds, our distractions and our detours. In Jesus, God has shown us what forgiving love has already done and continues to do.

Many: God’s love heals, mends, and makes a new chapter possible. This is the forgiving power of God that embraces us, here and now. It is the good news! We can trust it with our lives. Thanks be to God!

SHARING THE FIRST SCRIPTURE READING: Psalm 37:1-11, 39-40

***AFFIRMATION OF FAITH:** (read together)

We believe in God, who is love, whose love is manifest in all Creation, in our lives, and in all people.

We follow Jesus, who embodied God’s love. In his life and ministry, his death and resurrection, and his granting to us of his Spirit, he filled us with that love as well.

We live by the Spirit, the presence of God’s love in us. In that love we participate in the Church, Body of Christ, in loving God by loving our neighbors through our prayers, our presence, our gifts and our service.

Love is our faith, and it is a gift from God. We thank God, and ask God’s blessings, that we may love in the name of Jesus and the power of the Spirit, to God’s glory. Amen.

*** GLORIA PATRI:** “Glory Be to the Father” #734

Glory be to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Ghost: as it was in the beginning, is now, and ever shall be, world with-out end. A-men, A-men.

FOCUS SCRIPTURE: Luke 6:27-38 read from *The Message*

MESSAGE: “Love Without Strings” Pastor Chris

PRAYERS OF THE PEOPLE/THE LORD’S PRAYER (with debts/debtors)

PRESENTING OUR GIFTS

*** DOXOLOGY:** “Praise God from Whom All Blessings Flow” #34
Praise God from whom all blessings flow; praise God, all creatures here below;
Praise God above, you heavenly host; praise Father, Son and Holy Ghost. Amen.

*** PRAYER OF DEDICATION**

Generous God, thank you for pressing Your holy love into the lap of our lives. Bless these gifts we bring that they may be multiplied into a good larger than we can imagine. Also, bless us, that we might live our lives in gratitude, sharing freely without expectation of return. Through this way of Jesus, stretch our hearts, minds, and lives into channels of Your Holy grace. Amen.

*** CLOSING SONG:** “For the Healing of the Nations” #621

***Going Forth with the Peace of Christ**

POSTLUDE

***Indicates all who are able please stand**

The Call to Worship (adapted) and Call to Confession are from *Lectionary Liturgies* by Thom M. Shuman. The Opening Prayer, Prayer of Confession (adapted), Words of Assurance (adapted), and Offering Prayer of Dedication are by the Rev. Dr. David Long-Higgins, Conference Minister of the Heartland Conference of the United Church of Christ *from Worship Ways- Worship Resources for the United Church of Christ. The Affirmation of Faith is by Steve Garnass-Holmes*

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Organist: Antonia Rupert
Worship Leader: David Burrow
Pastor: Rev. Chris Burnett
February Radio Sponsor: David Burrow
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Birthdays: February 28: Charlie Hines

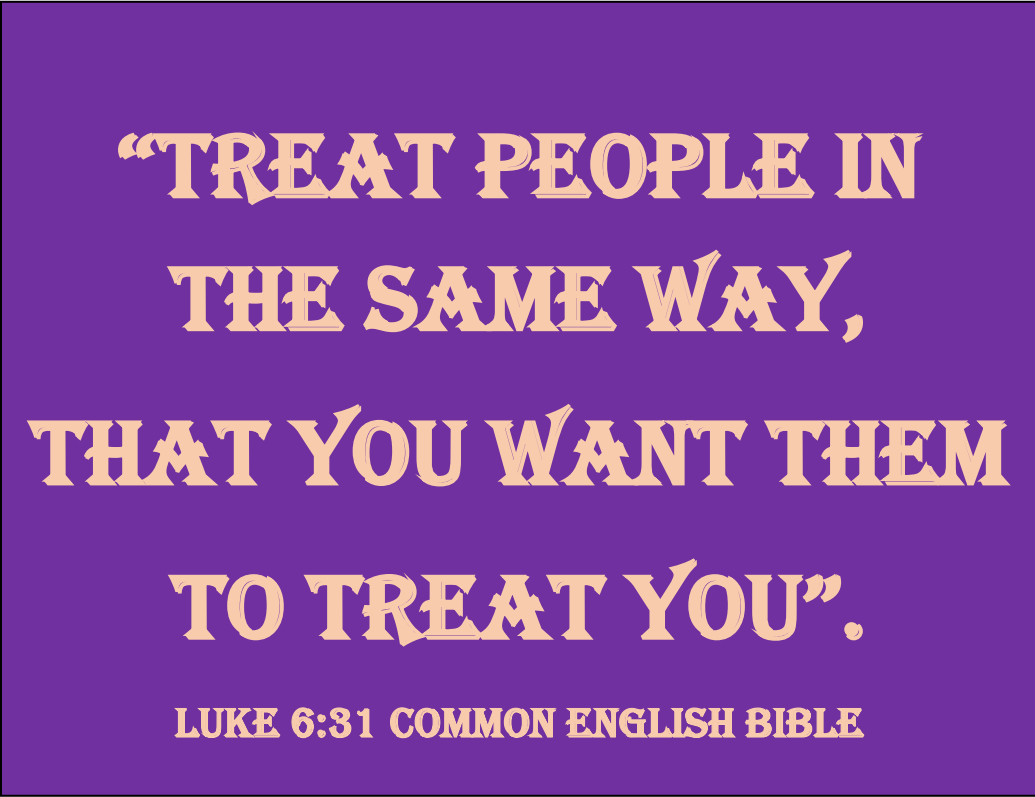
Sunday, February 23: 10:30am – Worship
Sunday School
Coffee

Tuesday, February 25: 9:30am.-Pastor at Feed Mill
6:00 - 7:30 pm.-CCC English Class in Room E

Thursday, February 27: 6:00 - 7:30 pm.-CCC English Class in Room E

Sunday, March 2: 10:30am – Worship with Sacrament of Communion
Sunday School
Coffee
Food Pantry

Our Daily Bread March/April/May 2025 issue may be picked up in the Fellowship Hall entry.
Friday, February 28:9am-2pm- Algona Blood Drive at 1st Lutheran



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