

First United Church of Christ
An Open and Affirming, Just Peace Congregation
May 3, 2020, 10:30 a.m.

Prelude *Praise to the Lord, the Almighty* arr. Paul Manz (1919-2009)

Welcome and Announcements

Lighting of the Candle

Gathering Music *This Is the Day* Ronald Krisman



This is the day that God has made; we will re-joice and be glad.



This is the day that God has made; al-le - lu - ia, al-le - lu - ia.

Call to Worship

One: Sisters and brothers, siblings and friends, God's joy be yours!

All: Delight in bread and wine!

One: God feeds our hungry hearts

All: A feast from God's good hands!

One: Come, taste how good God is;

All: Mercy on our table!

One: Lift up your hearts! Praise God!

Opening Hymn *All My Hope on God is Founded*

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All my hope on God is founded,
God doth still my trust renew;
Me through change and chance God guideth,
Only good and only true.
God unknown, God alone
Calls my heart to be God's own.

Daily doth th'almighty giver
Bounteous gifts on us bestow.
God's desire our soul delighteth,
Pleasure leads us where we go.
Love doth stand at God's hand;
Joy doth wait at God's command.

Still from earth to God eternal
Sacrifice of praise be done,
High above all praises praising

**For the gift of Christ the Son.
Christ doth call one and all:
Ye who follow shall not fall.**

Time With Children

**God's word is for all God's children; come gather, come gather.
You're never too old for stories; come listen, come listen.**

Scripture

Romans 12:9-21

Elizabeth Olson

accompanied by the Antiphon from *Suite #1 for Organ* by Calvin Hampton

Sermon

Rev. Wendy Vander Hart

Hymn

Won't You Let Me Be Your Servant?

539

**Won't you let me be your servant,
Let me be as Christ to you?
Pray that I may have the grace
To let you be my servant too.**

**I will weep when you are weeping;
When you laugh, I'll laugh with you.
I will share your joy and sorrow
Till we've seen this journey through.**

**We are pilgrims on a journey,
We are trav'lers on the road;
We are here to help each other
Go the mile and bear the load.**

**When we sing to God in heaven
We shall find such harmony,
Born of all we've known together
Of Christ's love and agony.**

**I will hold the Christ-light for you
In the shadow of your fear;
I will hold my hand out to you,
Speak the peace you long to hear.**

**Won't you let me be your servant,
Let me be as Christ to you?
Pray that I may have the grace
To let you be my servant too.**

Sung Call to Prayer

Alleluia!

Alice Parker (1925-)

Pastoral Prayer

Response

Alleluia!

Alice Parker

Prayer of Jesus

*You are invited to unmute and speak the words most meaningful to you
or follow with the version here:*

**Our 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 debts as we forgive**

our debtors. And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil. For thine is the kingdom and the power and the glory forever. Amen.

Sharing our Gifts and Music

Offertory

Meditation on 'Beach Spring'

David Cherwien

Prayer of Thanks

Loving God, may our gifts given with love be further transformed like echoes of grace, delighting all who receive their blessings. Amen.

Sacrament of Holy Communion

Communion Hymn

As We Gather At Your Table

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Beach Spring

**As we gather at your table, as we listen to your word,
Help us know, o God, your presence; let our hearts and minds be stirred.
Nourish us with sacred story till we claim it as our own;
Teach us through this holy banquet how to make Love's victory known.**

**Turn our worship into witness in the sacrament of life;
Send us forth to love and serve you, bringing peace where there is strife.
Give us, Christ, your great compassion to forgive as you forgave;
May we still behold your image in the world you died to save.**

**Gracious Spirit, help us summon other guests to share that feast
Where triumphant Love will welcome those who had been last and least.
There no more will envy bind us nor will pride our peace destroy,
As we join with saints and angels to repeat the sounding joy.**

Invitation & Telling the Story

Sharing the Bread & Cup

Music During Communion

Argentinian Melody

Carlos Guastavino (1912-2000)

Hymn of Sending

This Little Light of Mine

524

This Joy

**This little light of mine,
I'm gonna let it shine.**

**Ev'rywhere I go,
I'm gonna let it shine.**

**All through the night,
I'm gonna let it shine.**

Benediction

Postlude

Praise and Thanksgiving

arr. Dale Wood
(1934-2003)

We are so glad you joined us for worship today!

Please remain in the meeting if you would like to briefly check in over Zoom Coffee Hour- we will be experimenting with Breakout Rooms to facilitate conversation.

News to Note

Updates from Covid-19 Task Force

On Thursday, April 23, 2020, Governor Walz made a few announcements regarding Minnesota's approach to the ongoing coronavirus pandemic. This update is to help First UCC members understand how the latest announcements impact our building, our activities, and our plan moving forward.

The Stay At Home order remains in effect at least until May 4. This means that our building remains closed with a few exceptions. The exceptions include essential work that can only be done in the building (e.g. recording an organ prelude for worship; picking up a text needed to write this week's sermon), and the maintenance/upkeep of our property. As spring arrives, the upkeep of our property includes tending to the grounds and the memorial garden. The Task Force has identified the following guidelines for staff and/or volunteers who are helping to maintain our grounds:

- Please wear face coverings to ensure that anyone else you run into will be safe
- Please only enter the parts of the building necessary to perform your task; the building will not be accessible during outside work projects
- Please limit the total number of participants at any given time to 10 for outside work and 2 for work inside the memorial garden
- Please maintain safe social distance - at least 6 feet for sedentary work, 12-15 feet for work with exertion (work that makes you breathe hard)
- Volunteers experiencing any symptoms (cough, fever, chills, shortness of breath, nausea, etc.) should stay home

The Governor is rolling out a plan to slowly re-open Minnesota. As part of his announcement, Governor Walz shared the slides linked here. We encourage you to look specifically at slide #7, which highlights with a graphic where places of worship fit into the big picture of reopening the state. In explaining the plan, Governor Walz said, "Our lives will look different for quite some time. As we move forward, I want you to know how we're making our decisions. Before we turn these dials, we will carefully consider public health, economic, and societal impacts."

In this plan, the Governor has outlined very specific steps that workplaces in industrial, manufacturing and office settings must take to allow workers to return. We trust that when it is time for places of worship to re-open, we will be provided with similarly specific steps to follow. As such, the Covid Task Force is not yet creating a reopening plan. Rather, we are paying close attention to the process as it unfolds so we will be prepared to respond with our detailed plan as soon as guidance from the Governor is issued.

Schools will finish the academic year through distance learning. While this announcement does not directly impact the life of the church, it has an enormous impact on the children and families of the church. It did not come as a surprise for most, but many families were quietly hoping that some semblance of a normal end to the year might still be salvaged. We see this announcement as a reminder that we need to continue to take care of each other, even virtually.

The Covid Task Force will meet again in May. We will continue to give you updates as we are able. Please feel free to reach out to any of the members with questions or concerns. This can feel like a very scary and lonely time, so as we continue on this uncertain journey together we encourage you to look for and share signs of hope.

Sincerely,

the Covid Task Force (Janet Lewis Muth, Gary Carlson, Anne Meyer-Ruppel, Erin Barnett, Linda Larson, Greg Muth, Lauren Baske-Davis, Wendy Vander Hart)

From the MN Conference United Church of Christ - Pandemic Relief Program Announced

The Minnesota Conference Board of Directors approved a plan to make three grant opportunities available to clergy and congregations. These grants are designed to provide some immediate relief to those struggling most during this difficult pandemic, and to strengthen our clergy and churches for the future beyond COVID-19. To read more about the program click [here](#).

The generosity of First UCC is helping to make this program possible for our struggling churches and leaders. God bless our giving.

If you are interested in receiving regular updates on the ministry of the MNUCC you can click here to [subscribe](#).

Spotlight on OWL

Middle School Our Whole Lives (OWL) has moved online to Zoom! When the pandemic arrived, this year's Middle School OWL program was nearly $\frac{3}{4}$ of the way complete. Pastor Lauren, and Co-Facilitator Dena Stulken, have adapted the remaining OWL workshops to a series of 3 sessions that are taking place on Wednesday nights, April 22-May 6. This social and sexual health program empowers youth, and gives them access to accurate information. It gives them the tools they need to be able to make healthy, values-based decisions as they grow. Volunteer leaders Brad Hoff and St. Olaf senior Abby Benusa are leading from their homes on Zoom, too. We are grateful for our leaders' faithful commitment to the program, and to the flexibility of this record-breaking, large class of 29 students and their families!

ISAIAH News

ISAIAH next week is offering virtual sessions on what it does AND how. Want to understand how you could play a powerful role in its mission to advance a multi-racial democracy and caring economy? Join leaders for a 45-minute call with a 15-minute optional Q&A. They will dig into the kind of questions and topics that can't be covered well on a website.

If you would like to be part of local and regional meetings (and aren't already on the Isaiah email lists), please contact Carolyn c.fureslocum@gmail.com, Leota leotagoodney@hotmail.com, or Matt rohn@stolaf.edu.

Join Us! New Member Sunday, May 17

Our Spring 2020 New Member Sunday is going to be a new version of "receiving new members into our congregation." We will be doing it during the Worship Service on Zoom. The New Member Orientation session will also be held via Zoom after the Worship Service and Coffee Hour on May 3. We hope that those of you who have not officially become members of First UCC yet will plan to join us! Please contact Membership Team Chair, Jean Haslett, via email hasletts66@yahoo.com or phone 507-650-0753.

Invitation to Prayers of Solidarity

During this time of pandemic and stay-at-home orders to protect the most at-risk, we invite you to take a moment of mindfulness or prayer each evening at 7:00 p.m. If it helps, set an alarm on your phone or device for this time each night. Pray for those who are living in isolation at home, or in assisted living, or in other care facilities. Together, at the same time each night, we will be praying in solidarity and hope. If you are isolated at home, or in an assisted living or care facility, we invite you to put a post-it note on your clock so you know that there are people all over the community specifically holding you in their hearts each night.

Giving to the Church

Due to Stay at Home orders and in an effort to slow the spread of Covid-19, we are worshipping online and connecting in small groups virtually. We still need your gifts! You may give electronically by visiting our website and clicking the "[Donate Online Now!](#)" button, under the Giving tab. You may also visit our website [electronic giving authorization form](#) and mailing it to Finance Manager Andrea Pegram at church. Gifts may be mailed First UCC, 300 Union Street. Thank you so much for your continued generosity and support of First UCC's ministries!

Care Ministry Team A note from the UCC Care Ministry Team: the Care Ministry Team wants to know if you have any needs that can be met by us or members of our congregation. We serve as the extra eyes and ears of the church, so please speak with any member of our Care Team if you or someone you know is in need of extra support--anything from meals, child care, crisis help or weekly check-ins. We can connect you with congregational pastor. Barb Altstaetter 507-645-9786, Barbara Crouter, Amanda Pettis Eastvold, Linda Larson 612-709-6795, Elizabeth O'Sullivan, Bill Poehlmann 507-645-5422, Katharine Powers, Claire Rafferty, Kathy Sandberg, Jan Shoger 507-645-5236, Kellee Tussing, Gina Washburn, Claire Rafferty, Bonnie and Larry Fowler 507-645-6930.

