

**First United Church of Christ  
An Open and Affirming  
Just Peace Congregation  
May 24, 2020, 10:30 a.m.**

**Prelude**

*Sonata in E Minor, BWV 1034: Andante*  
Kay Sahlin, flute

J.S. Bach (1685-1750)

**Welcome and Announcements**

**Lighting of the Candle**

**Gathering Music**

*Canticle of the Sun*

Marty Haugen

Refrain

The heav - ens are tell - ing the glo - ry of God,  
and all cre - a - tion is shout - ing for joy. Come,  
dance in the for - est, come, play in the field, and  
sing, sing to the glo - ry of the Lord.

**Call to Worship**

One: Come friends, neighbors, people of God, experience the warmth of God's everlasting love.

**All: The warmth of God's everlasting love will sustain us.**

One: Come, friends, gather in the light of the Resurrection, to greet God's new day of healing and hope.

**All: Let us be at peace in this space where all are welcome and all belong.**

One: Open your hearts to the warmth of God's love.

**All: Let us worship together, journey together, and do the works of love together, for God, our hope, is with us, making all things new!**

Guide me, O my great Redeemer,  
Pilgrim through this barren land;  
I am weak, but you are mighty;  
Hold me with your powerful hand.  
Bread of heaven, bread of heaven,  
Feed me till I want no more,  
Feed me till I want no more.

Open now the crystal fountain,  
Where the healing waters flow.  
Let the fire and cloudy pillar  
Lead me all my journey through.  
Strong deliverer, strong deliverer,  
Ever be my strength and shield,  
Ever be my strength and shield.

When I reach the River Jordan,  
Bid my anxious fears subside.  
Death of death, and hell's destruction,  
Land me safe on heaven's side,  
Songs of praises, songs of praises  
I will ever sing to you,  
I will ever sing to you.

Recognition and Blessing of High School Graduates

Time With Children

Let the children come unto me, for theirs is the realm of God.  
All who believe must become like a child; theirs is the realm of God.

Scripture

Romans 12: 9 - 21

Leota Goodney

Sermon

Rev. Wendy Vander Hart

Hymn

*As Water to the Thirsty*

see next page

Sung Call to Prayer

One: We do not know how to pray as we ought,  
All: But the spirit of God intercedes for us, with sighs too deep for words.

Pastoral Prayer

Bob Bruce

Response

One: We do not know how to pray as we ought,  
All: But the spirit of God intercedes for us, with sighs too deep for words.

# As Water to the Thirsty 432

Unison F6 Fmaj7 F6 Gm7/F Fsus F

1 As wa - ter to the thirst - y, as beau - ty to the eyes, as  
 2 Like calm in place of clam - or, like peace that fol - lows pain, like  
 3 As sleep that fol - lows fe - ver, as gold in - stead of gray, as

Gm9 C Fmaj7 F6 Asus/E A A7 Dm

strength that fol - lows weak - ness, as truth in - stead of lies, as  
 meet - ing af - ter part - ing, like sun - shine af - ter rain, like  
 free - dom af - ter bond - age, as sun - rise to the day, as

Gm C# C Am D# Dm Bbmaj7 Gm/Bb C# C7

song - time and spring - time and sum - mer - time to be, SO  
 moon - light and star - light and sun - light on the sea, SO  
 home to the trav - eler and all we long to see, SO

Am Dm2 Dm Gm C2 C Bb F/A Gm7 C7 F

is my Lord, my liv - ing Lord, so is my Lord to me.

## 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

*Sonata in E Major, BWV 1035: Adagio ma non tanto*

J.S. Bach

### Prayer of Thanks

**For the promise of vision, the hope of community, and the meaningful work to which you call us, we are grateful, God. Bless the giver and those who receive our ministry in Christ's name. Amen.**

### Farewell Blessing

John and Lynne Severson

#### Words of Mutual Blessing (Unison)

**We affirm the promises of God to us.  
We affirm God's claim upon our lives.  
We affirm the gifts we have been given by this community of God's people.  
We shall not forget each other.  
We shall carry on the work that God has given us to do.**

### Hymn of Sending

*God Be With You*

God Be With You

**God be with you till we meet again;  
By good counsel guide, uphold you,  
With a shepherd's care enfold you:  
God be with you till we meet again.**

**God be with you till we meet again;  
Wings of shelter safely hide you,  
Daily manna still provide you;  
God be with you till we meet again.**

### Benediction

### Postlude

*Sonata in E Major, BWV 1035: Allegro*

J.S. Bach

**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.**

## News to Note

### **High School Graduates**

Our prayers, hopes, and blessings go with our high school graduates recognized in worship today. Godspeed into the next step of your life journey.

Alden Cristofaro-Hark (graduated a year early!)

Emmett Forster

Emily Garlitz

Julia Kallestad

Grace Muth

James Muth

Ben Reister

Jonah Stulken

Ellie Warren

### **Covid Task Force Update**

*"We're not reopening. Because we never closed.* We have engaged ministry in new ways. We will move forward in new ways." This quote from the Southern New England Conference of the UCC captures the sentiment at First UCC as well. While the Governor has allowed the stay-at-home order to expire, we on the Covid Task Force believe that caution is the best and safest way forward for all of us. As such, we have adopted a phased plan model that will give us concrete guidance on when it is reasonable to relax measures. Currently we are still in the "base phase" because our Covid-19 case count in the local area has not been decreasing for two weeks. Until Rice County data demonstrate that decrease, we will remain in "base phase". During this phase, worship will remain online and the building will remain closed. The Task Force will monitor Rice County data, stay apprised of Minnesota Department of Health (MDH) bulletins, and meet periodically in order to make plans for how we can safely move to the next phase when the situation allows. In the meantime, let us celebrate the efforts and creativity of our staff to deliver inspiring worship and the connections we are sustaining with each other. First UCC is as vibrant as ever, and we thank you for your patience and steadfastness in this unique time.

First UCC Covid Task Force (Gary Carlson, Anne Meyer-Ruppel, Linda Larson, Erin Barnett, Greg Muth, Wendy Vander Hart, Janet Lewis Muth)

### **Moderator's Corner**

*"I am about to do a new thing; now it springs forth, do you not perceive it? I will make a way in the wilderness and rivers in the desert."* Isaiah 43:19

Is anyone else feeling weary these days? I know I am. Between the Zoom meetings and the sleepless nights spent worrying about, well, EVERYTHING, I find that some days I can barely get out of bed. But the words in the verse from Isaiah above give me hope. And this congregation fills me with hope, too.

In our May meeting, Council focused on a concrete plan for moving forward. One of our actions was to empower Pastors Wendy and Lauren to create a Technology Task Force to help prepare us for a new normal. We have gained many wonderful things during this stay-at-home time (e.g. being able to

connect with homebound members who can't attend in-person worship, and reconnecting with the First UCC diaspora), and the Task Force will help us figure out what we will need technologically to be able to keep some of those gains into the future.

Additionally, we discussed a process to launch us into the transition and search and call phase. Our goal is to engage the whole congregation in thoughtful discernment. Please stay tuned for more information in the coming days about how you can be involved and shape the future of First UCC.

I don't yet know what this "new thing" springing forth will be, but I am excited and hopeful that we will make our way together.

Janet Lewis Muth, Moderator

### **Strengthen the Church Offering Received at Pentecost**

As we celebrate the life of the Holy Spirit at Pentecost, we celebrate the ways the Spirit is still moving to create and renew the church.

The Strengthen the Church (STC) Offering reflects the shared commitment of all settings of the United Church of Christ to cooperatively build up the UCC. Conferences and the national setting equally share the gifts given by members and friends through their local congregations. The funds raised support leadership development, new churches, youth ministry, and innovation in existing congregations. This offering embodies the wisdom, "together we grow stronger."

This offering provides the financial resources for the United Church of Christ to be a Spirit-inspired and world-changing Christian movement. STC funds ministry that allows us to benefit from best practices, insights, and innovations across the life of the UCC. Because of our support, new church starts have emerged, congregations have been revitalized, and leadership skills have been enhanced. We will receive the offering in our Pentecost worship on-line on Sunday, May 31.

### **Meet and Greets with Pastor Wendy**

In an on-going effort to join the community of First UCC, Pastor Wendy will be hosting Meet and Greet gatherings on the Zoom platform. The gatherings will include up to four people in addition to Pastor Wendy and will center around two questions to generate conversation. The prompting questions are:

1. Tell us your story of finding First UCC.
2. What are your hopes for First UCC in this time of transition?

To sign up for a time you can go to SignUpGenius by [clicking here](#) and selecting a time that works best for you. Once you have signed up, you will receive an email with the Zoom meeting instructions.

If you cannot access the sign up on-line, please call the church office and leave a message with possible times that work for you. We will match you with a date and the information you need to join the meeting by phone.

### **Spotlight on Connect**

The winter/spring Connect groups were scheduled to end shortly before the stay at home order began. Both groups decided to continue meeting weekly through Zoom. The Wednesday afternoon group has been using a rotating facilitation model where each member takes a turn offering a short reading for the group to reflect on and discuss together. The Wednesday evening group is also being facilitated by volunteers within the group. They use the week's Scripture passage and sermon as the basis for the group discussion. Members of both groups have expressed gratitude for the ongoing experience of community that Connect offers, even remotely, at this time. ~ Erin Barnett

### **Register Now for the Online Conference Annual Meeting**

A short, virtual meeting for voting delegates only will be held on June 13 from 10 am to noon via Zoom to attend to essential business of the Conference. Registration for this meeting is now open at this [link](#).

There is no fee for the meeting. We have First UCC delegates attending, but visitors are welcome as well. Please register for this Zoom meeting at your earliest convenience, but before Memorial Day as registration for this meeting will close on Monday, May 25, 2020. Once you register, you will receive email information about attending the meeting online.

### **ISAIAH Helps Build the Beloved Community**

The state legislature adjourned with much left undone to build a caring community. Continue urging legislators to put values ahead of partisanship in the likely special session next month. Northfield folks linked to ISAIAH will be calling many of you in the weeks to come on what concerns you most of all as we formulate a loving vision going forward. Please respond to these calls.

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](mailto:c.fureslocum@gmail.com), Leota [leotagoodney@hotmail.com](mailto:leotagoodney@hotmail.com), or Matt [rohn@stolaf.edu](mailto:rohn@stolaf.edu).

### **Invitation to Prayers of Solidarity**

During this time of pandemic, 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 our congregational pastor. Barb Altstaetter 507-645-9786, Barbara Crouter, 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.