



First United Church of Christ
An Open and Affirming, Just Peace,
Immigrant Welcoming Congregation
February 27, 2022
10:30 a.m.

Welcome to worship! Are you visiting us today? We invite you to fill out our [virtual visitor card](#).

Prelude

What God Ordains Is Good

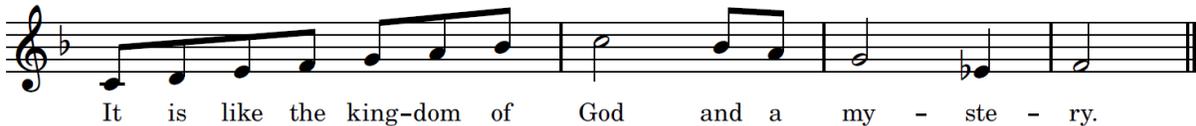
Johann Kellner (1705-1772)

Welcome and Announcements

Gathering Music

The Kingdom of God

Austin C. Lovelace (1985)



Call to Worship

One: When the lost are found,

Many: there is joy!

One: When hope overcomes despair,

Many: there is joy!

One: When we see that God is faithful,

Many: there is joy!

One: Thanks be to God who loves.

Many: Thanks be to God who searches, finds, and rejoices.

Opening Hymn

My Shepherd Is the Living God

#247 (Consolation)

1. My shepherd is the living God,
I therefore nothing need;
In pastures fair, near pleasant streams
you settle me to feed.
You bring my wandering spirit back
when I forsake your ways,
And lead me for your mercy's sake
in paths of truth and grace.

2. When I walk through the shades of death,
your presence is my stay;
A word of your supporting breath
drives all my fears away.
Your hand, insight of all my foes,
does still my table spread;
My cup with blessings overflows,
your oil anoints my head.

3. The sure provisions of my God
attend me all my days;
O may your house be my abode,
and all my work be praise.
There would I find a settled rest,
while others come and go—
No more a stranger or a guest,
but like a child at home.

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.**

Anthem

Spirit of the Living God

Daniel Iverson (1926)

Spirit of the living God, fall afresh on me.
Melt me, mold me, fill me, use me.

Scripture

Luke 15:1-10

Leota Goodney

Sermon

Rev. Lauren Baske Davis

Prayer Hymn

It Was God Who Ran to Greet Him
(see page 8)

Rae Whitney (Austin)

The Prayers

We will begin in song, a minister will pray, and there will be time for silent prayer. Then we will sing again. All on Zoom are invited to share prayers by using the chat function at any point during this time.

Sung Response

One: As your spirit moved upon the waters,
Many: God, let your spirit move in us.

Prayer of Jesus

You are invited to 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.

Offertory

Gathered Here

Phil Porter (1990)

Gathered here in the mystery of this hour, gathered here in one strong body,
Gathered here in the struggle and the power, Spirit, draw near.

Prayer of Thanks

Holy One, you search for us when we are lost, and celebrate when we are found. Your loving care knows no bounds, and your generous spirit rejoices with us. May the gifts we give be signs of our loving care and joy, too, used for the world you love so much. Amen.

Hymn of Sending

Go, My Children, With My Blessing

#82 (Ar Hyd Y Nos)

1. Go, my children, with my blessing,
never alone;
Waking, sleeping, I am with you,
you are my own;
In my love's baptismal river
I have made you mine forever,
Go, my children, with my blessing,
you are my own.

2. Go, my children, fed and nourished,
closer to me;
Grow in love and love by serving,
joyful and free.
Here my Spirit's power filled you,
here with tender comfort stilled you;
Go, my children, fed and nourished,
joyful and free.

Benediction

Postlude

What God Ordains Is Good

Johann Walther (1684-1748)

We are so glad you worshiped with us today! Join us for friendship and conversation by staying on Zoom after worship. We hope you will stay!

News to Note

Worship Information

First UCC worships at 10:30 a.m. in person on Sundays. Worship is also live streamed each week on Zoom and [YouTube](#). Whether you are joining us in person or online, we are glad to have you here! Are you visiting today? [Fill out our virtual visitor card](#).

Giving to the Church

Thanks for your continued generosity to First UCC. It's easy to give to First UCC online! [Set up a recurring gift or give one time](#). Visit <https://firstucc.org/giving/donate-electronically-now/> for more information about how to set up your recurring gift. Questions? Call the church office at 507-645-7532 or email church@firstucc.org.

News & Announcements

Keep up to date with all of the latest news and upcoming events! [Subscribe to The Chronicle, First UCC's weekly e-newsletter](#), and find First UCC on [Facebook](#) and [Instagram](#). Past issues of The Chronicle are available at firstucc.org.

This Week at First UCC

Tuesday, March 1

1-2:30 p.m. Staff Meeting (Zoom)
5 p.m. Overdose Grief Support Group (Big Room)
6:30 p.m. Northfield Handbell Choir Rehearsal (Assembly Room)
7:30 p.m. Church Council (Zoom)

Wednesday, March 2

6:30 p.m. The Great Escape (Big Room)
6:30 p.m. Ash Wednesday Worship (Sanctuary)
7:15 p.m. Senior Choir Rehearsal (Sanctuary)

Sunday, March 6

10:30 a.m. Hybrid Worship (In Person and Online)

Black History Month Spotlight: The Black Church in America

Religion plays a decidedly important role in Black American history, one that is long and complex. Before converting to Christianity, many generally followed West African religions or Islam. Belief systems included a distant God who created the world, as well as lower gods and ancestral spirits, who were a part of daily life. Because Christianity has always been present in Africa, some people were Christian when they were brought to this country and enslaved. Others converted to Christianity as a result of interactions with Christian missionaries. Initially, slave owners tended to resist this evangelizing. They were concerned that if enslaved people became Christian, they would see themselves as equal to their owners. Enslavers imposed restrictions on worship, leading enslaved people to hold secret services, typically in their cabins or the woods.

Eventually, Black-led denominations formed where Black Americans could worship freely. Founded before the 1900's, these denominations also supported Black communities in other ways, including colleges. Through the 20th century, especially through the enforced segregation of Jim Crow laws, predominantly Black churches played important roles in the social issues of the day. These included job-training programs, insurance cooperatives, libraries, and athletic clubs, as well as leadership opportunities. Initially, only men were able to become licensed preachers, with women holding lesser leadership roles on church committees or in advocacy work. In 1884, however, the African Methodist Episcopal (AME) church, the first Black Protestant denomination, allowed women to preach and in 1894, began ordaining women.

In 1957, the Southern Christian Leadership Conference was formed to use nonviolent activities across the South. With Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. as president, the group spoke out against racism and discrimination but did not have the support of many Black Christian clergy. According to historian Barbara Diane Savage, "Black churches, their members and their ministers were crucial to what the [civil rights] movement achieved, but it never involved more than a small minority of Black religious people." In the years following the civil rights movement, some Black theologians began to promote liberation theology, which urged consideration of racial justice as a tenet of Christian morality. By the 21st century, many Black Protestant churches have retained sizeable congregations. "Megachurches," churches with 2,000+ weekly attendees, are part of the Black religious landscape. Today, two-thirds of Black Americans are Protestant and Black Americans are more religious than the general population, with African immigrants being more likely than U.S. born Black adults to attend weekly religious services.

Meals on Wheels Drivers Still Needed March 6-19

March is coming and once again First UCC will be delivering two weeks of meals for Meals on Wheels (MOW), March 6–12, and March 13–19th. Fourteen slots are still open! If you are willing to volunteer for this

important ministry, please sign up using the links below. You may also email Annie Kramer, anniekramer@charter.net. You will be given complete instructions and have all your questions answered by Annie. Thank you!

[Sign up for MOW March 6–12](#)
[Sign up for MOW March 13–19](#)

“Full to the Brim: An Expansive Lent” Devotional Booklets Available

Join First UCC on the Lenten journey as we dig into the theme “Full to the Brim: An Expansive Lent.” The origins of Lent were that one was to leave their old life behind to fast and prepare to be baptized into a new way of living. In essence, this was a practice of stepping away from corrupt power, scarcity mentality, and empty rituals in order to live a more expansive and full life of faith. Lenten devotional booklets based on the theme “Full to the Brim” are available for pickup at the church office and outside the sanctuary. Pick one up for your personal reflection and prayer during this season, and keep your eyes on First UCC's social media for daily posts for our Lenten journey.

Ash Wednesday Worship, March 2, 6:30 p.m.

Join First UCC on Wednesday, March 2, at 6:30 p.m. for a brief Ash Wednesday Service with imposition of ashes. The service will also be streamed online via Zoom and YouTube. If you plan to worship at home and would like to mark yourself or others in your household with ashes, there are small containers of ashes available for pick up in the church office.

Faith Formation Families: Lent Kits Available Starting March 2

Families with children, we have some special ways for you to bring Lent into your home, starting Ash Wednesday, March 2! Lent kits will be available for pick up that include a weekly family devotion booklet (Not daily! Who can keep up with that?!), a paper chain prayer kit to build a day at a time as we count down to Easter, and a low maintenance hyacinth bulb kit to mark our Lenten journey, blooming around Easter.

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First UCC Leadership & Staff



Ministers: All the people

Moderator: Deb Gottfried

Senior Minister: Rev. Cindy Maddox

Minister for Congregational Life: Rev. Lauren Baske Davis

Director of Music: Chris Brunelle

Organist: Theo Wee

Director of Communications & Operations: Green Bouzard

Spirit Voices Director & Arts Coordinator: Bob Gregory-Bjorklund

Audio Visual Technician: Brynn Artley

Sexton: Mark Fischer

Thanks to this Week's Leaders



Ushers: Scott Richardson, Fred Rogers, Crystal Henslin, Linda Larson, Betsy Barrett

Scripture Reader: Leota Goodney

Digital Zoom Host: Margit Johnson

Tech Team: Annika Reister

Worship Arts: Linda Gagnon

ASL Interpretation: Patty Sheehan

It Was God Who Ran to Greet Him



It was God who ran to greet him as he stum - bled home in
It was God who swept the kit - chen and re - trieved that pre - cious
It was God who, as a shep - herd, left the nine - ty - nine a -
It is God who runs to meet us, con - scious of our ev - ery



shame, then em - braced him, clothed and fed him, gave him
coin; God in wo - man called her neigh - bors, "Come, and
sleep and then searched in cold and dark - ness till he
need; then, as we in turn help oth - ers, God re -



back his ho - ly name.
in my glad - ness join."
found that miss - ing sheep.
joic - es in each deed.