

First Congregational United Church of Christ  
“Where No One Is a Stranger”  
Fourth Sunday after Pentecost  
June 25, 2023

**PRELUDE**

**RINGING OF THE BELL**

**GREETINGS, GOOD NEWS, ANNOUNCEMENTS, JESUS ENCOUNTERS**

**RECOGNITION of MAHANA SCHOLARSHIP RECIPIENTS**

**\*CALL TO WORSHIP**

(read responsively)

One: Incline your ear, God, hear the praises of your people.

**Many: Gladden our hearts as we lift up our souls to you.**

One: For God is good and forgiving, abounding in steadfast love.

**Many: In the day of trouble, we call on God, knowing God will answer.**

One: God’s people everywhere, glorifying God’s name.

**Many: For God is slow to anger and abounding in steadfast love. God turns to us and is gracious.**

One: Let’s worship God!

**\*OPENING SONG**

“Great Is Your Faithfulness”

#72

**\*OPENING PRAYER**

(prayed together)

Holy and Beloved One, Author of Life, transcendent and yet closer than our breath – we gather first just to say “thank you.” We thank you for the privilege of being in relationship with you. We thank you that you know us and call us by name to follow in your way. We thank you for being our Teacher, leading us through the text of your life, death, and resurrection. We thank you for being the one who cares so much about us that not even a hair can fall from our heads without you taking notice. We thank you for challenging us to claim our identity as your disciples even when claiming so puts us at risk of adversity for your name’s sake and for the sake of compassion, justice, and extravagant welcome to all. We thank you for this community of faith and ask that you make your presence felt with and among us. Help us to see you in the faces of all whom we meet and on this Pride Sunday help us to celebrate the beautiful array of all we are as we worship you in spirit and in truthfulness. These things we pray in the name of the One who calls us continually to life and that more abundantly.

**TIME FOR CHILDREN AND THE YOUNG AT HEART**

**CALL TO CONFESSION**

**PRAYER OF CONFESSION**

(prayed together)

It is never easy to confess our lives to you, Listener to our words. When we have a chance to speak up for the outsider, we too often join in sending them away into the wilderness of hopelessness. When we could shout good news to a needy world, our voices drop to a whisper. When we could abound in grace, we continue to wallow in wrongdoing.

Forgive us, Hearer of our hearts, and have mercy on us. You lean over to listen to our words, and then to cast them into your sea of forgetfulness. You show us your signs of hope, that we might point others to you. You help us when we are weakest and, in Jesus Christ, our Lord and Savior, you save us when we cannot save ourselves.

**A MOMENT FOR SILENT REFLECTION AND CONFESSION**

**WORDS OF ASSURANCE**

One: Do not be afraid. God cherishes us, God treasures us, beyond all else in creation. We are graced, we are forgiven, we are healed.

**Many: We will not keep this good news to ourselves. We will shout our hope from the rooftops of our hearts. Thanks be to God, we are forgiven!**

**SHARING THE FIRST SCRIPTURE READING**

Matthew 10:24-39

**\*AN AFFIRMATION OF FAITH**

(read together)

God’s love frees me to be the person I am without having to become more attractive, more intelligent, more popular. God’s love frees me to live in confidence, not needing to be self-absorbed, but ready to listen and to hear the stories of others. God’s love frees me to take risks, to surprise myself with courage, sometimes to fall flat on my face-but always to move onward with the knowledge that God is encouraging me. God’s love frees me to view the world not from the standpoint of wealth gained or ambition achieved, but from the perspective of relationships lived and human love shared. God’s love frees me to put my sins behind me, to know that no sin is too great or too small to be left open and healed by God’s gentle touch. Thanks be to God!

**\*GLORIA PATRI**

#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**

Genesis 21: 8-21

read from the *Common English Bible*

**MESSAGE**

“God Listens...God Will Hear”

Pastor Chris

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

## PRESENTING OUR GIFTS

### OFFERTORY

#### \*DOXOLOGY

Words #44

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

(prayed together)

All that we have belongs to you, God. You provide for our every need. Now we bring back a part of what you've given to us. In love, we gladly say thank you. Receive our gifts which we return to you full hearted and freely. Take and use them for your glory and for the blessing of your beloved creation everywhere.

#### \*CLOSING SONG

“Children of the Heavenly Father”

#83

## GOING FORTH WITH THE PEACE OF CHRIST

### POSTLUDE

The Call to Worship (adapted) is by James Dollins from *The Abingdon Worship Annual-2023* edited by Mary Seifres and B.J. Beu. The Opening Prayer and Offering Prayer of Dedication are from *Worship Ways-Worship Resources for the United Church of Christ*. The Call to Confession, Prayer of Confession and Words of Assurance (adapted) are from *Lectionary Liturgies* by Thom M. Shuman. The Affirmation of Faith is by Holly W. Whitcomb from *Touch Holiness-Resources for Worship* edited by Ruth C. Duck & Maren C. Tirabassi.

Worship Leader:

Pastor Chris Burtnett

Lector:

David Burrow

Organist:

Vicki Merchlewitz

June Radio Sponsor:

Helen Scuffham

Birthdays: June: 25-Vicki Merchlewitz; 28-Lance Zook

Today, June 25: 10:00 am. – Worship  
Coffee

Congregational Meeting following worship - about the ASK (Ask, Seek, Know) process  
Lunch in Fellowship Hall

Tuesday, June 27: 9:30-11am. -Pastor at Feed Mill

June 30-July 4: 34<sup>th</sup> General Synod in Indianapolis, Indiana

Sunday, July 2: 10:00 am. – Worship  
Coffee

The United Church of Christ has designated Sunday, June 25 as Open and Affirming Sunday and is also the 66<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the United Church of Christ

**Thank you to everyone who helped in anyway for our 165<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of our Church with a BBQ Pork meal as a Fundraiser for the Care Team.**

Monday, July 3: 12:30-5:30pm.- Algona Community Blood Drive at 1<sup>st</sup> Methodist Church



LOVE IS LOVE