

First Congregational United Church of Christ  
“Where No One Is A Stranger”  
Sixth Sunday after Pentecost  
July 16, 2023

## PRELUDE

## RINGING OF THE BELL

## GREETINGS, GOOD NEWS, ANNOUNCEMENTS, JESUS ENCOUNTERS

### \*CALL TO WORSHIP

(read responsively)

One: Come in from busy, summertime days to this place of worship.

Many: We come to connect with God’s word.

One: Come in from the stress of everyday life into the light of knowledge.

Many: We come as seekers of truth.

One: Come into worship with offerings of praise.

Many: We come to hear the word and respond!

*All: Let’s worship God!*

### \*Opening Song

“O for a Thousand Tongues to Sing”

#96

### \*OPENING PRAYER (prayed together)

Creator, your presence among us illuminates our lives. Make us fertile soil, receptive to the seeds planted by your word. Nourish us with Living Water and grow us through the energy of your empowered and healing rays of sunshine. Let us encounter you afresh as we gather in community. May our worship show our love for you and each other. Make your presence known to us and through us for your glory.

## TIME FOR CHILDREN AND THE YOUNG AT HEART

## CALL TO CONFESSION

### PRAYER OF CONFESSION

(prayed together)

We walk through the world, Life Giver, so focused on ourselves, that we do not notice sin laying traps for us. We choose favorites, hurting folks looking for love. In our rush to grasp what we want, we let go of your promises given for us. In resisting your claims on us, we turn our backs on your dreams for us.

Forgive us, Promise Keeper, and have mercy. We are heirs of your trust; we receive your grace even when we have done nothing to deserve it; we share in your promises. May Jesus Christ, your Son, our Lord, sow seeds of faithfulness and hope in our hearts.

## A TIME FOR SILENT REFLECTION

### WORDS OF ASSURANCE

One: God leans over so that great heart of forgiveness and hope might touch our own, healing us and restoring us to new life.

Many: Not condemnation, but God's compassion; not judgment, but God's justice; not a punishment, but God's grace. We are forgiven and loved. Thanks be to God.

### SHARING THE FIRST SCRIPTURE READING

Romans 8:1-11

### AN AFFIRMATION OF FAITH

(read together)

We sing of God the Spirit, who from the beginning has swept over the face of creation, animating all energy and matter and moving in the human heart. We sing of God the Spirit, faithful and untameable, who is creatively and redemptively active in the world. The Spirit challenges us to celebrate the holy not only in what is familiar, but also in that which seems foreign. We sing of the Spirit, who speaks our prayers of deepest longing and enfolds our concerns and confessions, transforming us and the world. We offer worship as an outpouring of gratitude and awe and a practice of opening ourselves to God’s still, small voice of comfort, to God’s rushing whirlwind of challenge. Through word, music, art, and sacrament, in community and in solitude, God changes our lives, our relationships, and our world.

### \*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

Matthew 13:1-9, 18-23

read from *The Message*

### MESSAGE:

“Below the Surface”

Pastor Chris

Prayers of the People/Lord’s Prayer (debts)

### PRESENTING OUR GIFTS

### OFFERTORY

### \*DOXOLOGY

#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**

Holy One, may our offering of praise be a light to the world. Whether it be of time, wealth, or prayer, receive and multiply it through the glory of your love.

**\*Closing Song:** "Hymn of Promise" #515

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

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

The Call to Worship (adapted) and Offering Prayer of Dedication (adapted) are by Sara Lambert from *The Abingdon Worship Annual-2023* edited by Mary Scifres and B.J. Beu. The Opening Prayer is from *Worship Ways-Worship Resources for the United Church of Christ*. The Call to Confession, Prayer of Confession, and Words of Assurance are from *Lectionary Liturgies* by Thom M. Shuman. The Affirmation of Faith is excerpted from *Song of Faith* of the United Church of Canada (2006).

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Worship Leader: Pastor Chris Burtnett  
Lector: David Burrow  
Organist: Vicki Merchlewitz  
July Radio Sponsor: Sandy & Mark Williams In honor of Pat & in memory of Ray

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Birthdays: July: 18-Jeff Hines; 22-Cam Buchanan

Today, July 16: 10 am.- Worship  
Coffee

Tuesday, July 18: 9:30am.-Pastor at Feed Mill

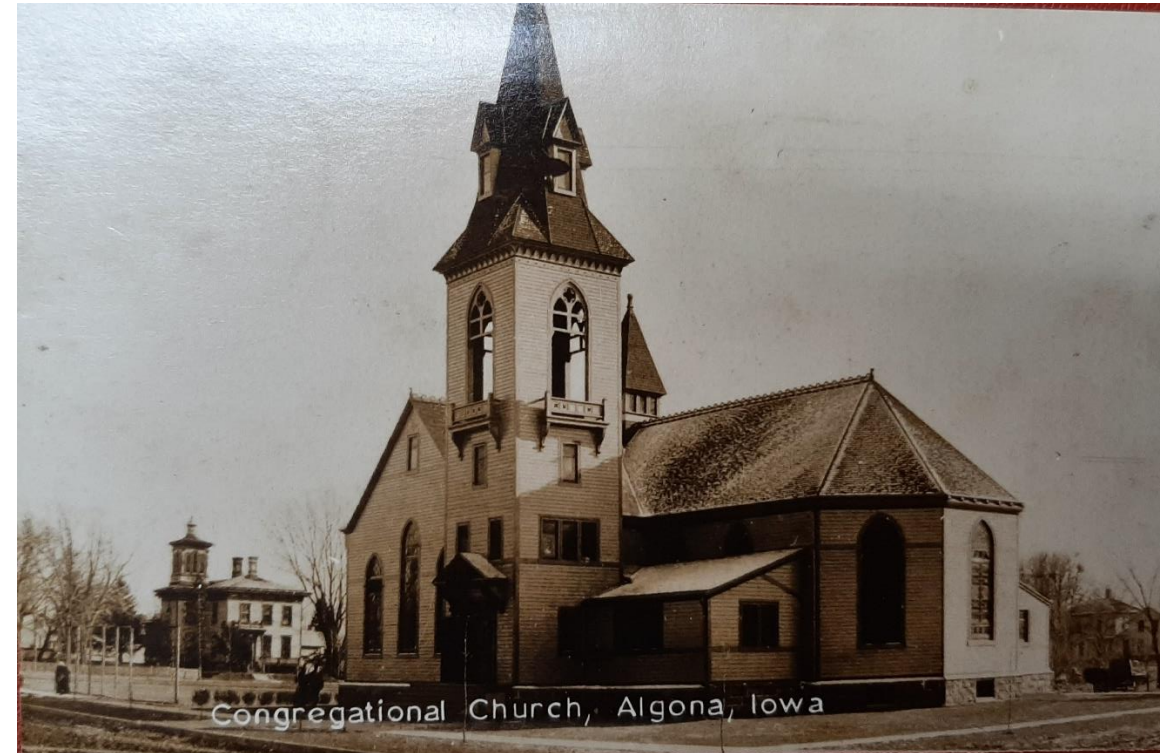
Wednesday, July 19: 11:30am. – Mobile Mission at Trinity Lutheran Church Lunch  
5pm – Board Meeting

Sunday, July 23: 10:00 am. – Worship  
Coffee

Congratulations to Vicki Merchlewitz on her one-year anniversary of being our church organist. You are appreciated!

Our Daily Bread June/July/August devotionals are available on the cart in the entry way to the Education/Office/Fellowship Hall building.

Pastor Chris and Pam will be on vacation from Monday, July 24 – 31.



*First Congregational  
United Church of Christ*

*165 Years*

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