

First Congregational United Church of Christ  
"Where No One Is A Stranger"  
Eighth Sunday after Pentecost  
July 23, 2023

## PRELUDE

## RINGING OF THE BELL

## GREETINGS, GOOD NEWS, ANNOUNCEMENTS, JESUS ENCOUNTERS

### \*CALL TO WORSHIP

(read responsively)

One: Early in the morning, we gather at the edge of heaven,

**Many: finding the gates flung wide open by the One who welcomes all.**

One: Early in the morning, we come to this holy place of worship,

**Many: to be touched by the One who offers us grace and love.**

One: Early in the morning, we worship God, who adopts us into the family,

**Many: to be filled by the One who would pour us out in service to the world.**

One: Let's worship God!

### \*Opening Song

"Gather Us In"

#649

### \*OPENING PRAYER (prayed together)

God of many names, mother of all creation, father of all that is, womb of life, and wellspring of all that we can ever know, we invite your presence here as we seek to embody your loving spirit and create your presence among us. We are in need and we turn to you to be with us as we practice creating the kin-dom of heaven here on earth.

## TIME FOR CHILDREN AND THE YOUNG AT HEART

## CALL TO CONFESSION

### PRAYER OF CONFESSION

(prayed together)

We've tried to hide from your searching gaze, Love's Delight: We've climbed mountains, and burrowed deep into earth's caverns; We've fled to the farthest edges of our souls, and longed to sail in our fears to the dark side of the moon. And wherever we go - You are waiting for us! Even in the dimmest corners of our hearts, your light is able to find us.

Lost, we are found; afraid to speak of our sinfulness - you hear our stumbling words; before we shape them in our minds; unable to help ourselves - you redeem us through the gracious love of Jesus Christ, our Lord, our Savior.

## A TIME FOR SILENT REFLECTION

## WORDS OF ASSURANCE

One: In sorrow so deep, we cannot find our way out, God cradles us in comfort; in moments so dark, we stumble over ourselves, God lights the way; in joy which cascades into our souls, God fills us with healing.

**Many: Even when we cannot see it, God's hope is all around us, surrounding us with peace and healing. Thanks be to God, we are forgiven.**

## SHARING THE FIRST SCRIPTURE READING

Genesis 28:10-19a

## AN AFFIRMATION OF FAITH

(read together)

**I believe in an innovative God, who does not wait for us to find ourselves but comes seeking the lost and calling us into a new way.**

**I believe in Jesus of Nazareth as God's crucial initiative, that when he calls us to follow, he also gives us the power to become, both in creed and deed, the children of the living God.**

**I believe in the Spirit by whom Jesus still comes to us, calling us to follow him into an obedience which is true liberty and to a humble service which is the fruit of holy friendship.**

**I believe in the church as the fellowship of Christ's people, called to respect and support one another through joys and tribulations as we travel the road towards the "promised land" of God's future.**

**Because Jesus has called me in this I truly believe.**

### \*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

Psalms 139:1-12, 23-24

read from *The Message*

## MESSAGE:

"Getting to Know You"

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**

We offer you our gifts this day, God, in gratitude and praise. May this offering be a sign of our commitment to be a blessing to all the peoples of the earth.

**\*Closing Song:** "Loving Spirit" #135 (sung to tune of #677)

**\*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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Today, July 23: 10 am.- Worship  
Coffee

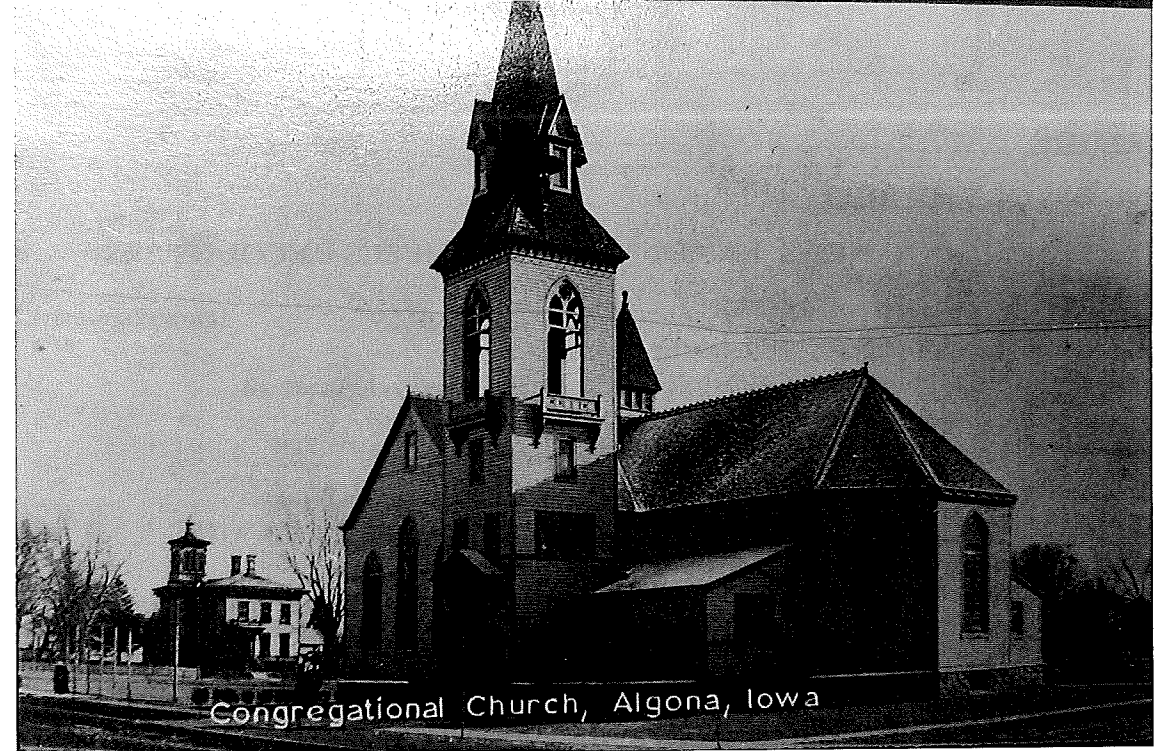
Sunday, July 30: 10:00 am. – Worship with Pam Rohde  
Coffee

If you or a family member are in need of pastoral care while Pastor Chris is on vacation, please contact Helen Scuffham at 515-341-4879 and Helen will call Pastor Karen Dearchs.

Our Daily Bread June/July/August and special issue Unshakable- 10 Reflections on Reflections on Resilience, 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.

Algona Blood Drive: Monday, August 7 from 12:30 – 5:30pm and Tuesday, August 8 from 9am to 2pm at the 1<sup>st</sup> Presbyterian Church, 101 N Main St., Algona. Notice the change of place.



*First Congregational  
United Church of Christ*

*165 Years*

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