

First Congregational United Church of Christ  
"Where No One Is A Stranger"  
Sixteenth Sunday after Pentecost  
September 17, 2023

## PRELUDE

## RINGING OF THE BELL

## GREETINGS, GOOD NEWS, ANNOUNCEMENTS, JESUS ENCOUNTERS

### \*CALL TO WORSHIP

(read responsively)

One: We gather here, where God would teach us:

**Many: so we may learn to be more compassionate, so we may be taught how to be more loving.**

One: We gather here, where Jesus would teach us

**Many: the wisdom to choose forgiveness over holding a grudge, the language of hope so we may speak to all.**

One: We gather here, where the Spirit imparts wisdom,

**Many: so we might know how to share grace, so we would learn to welcome all.**

### \*Opening Song:

"Come, Let Us Praise the Lord"

#9

### \*OPENING PRAYER

(prayed together)

God who calls, it is you who gathers us together and forms us as a community. It is you who makes us uniquely individual and who designs us for companionship. Let us journey together this day in your presence reminded of our interdependence with one another. May we see your glory and be inspired to demonstrate your goodness and care through our lives.

## TIME FOR CHILDREN AND THE YOUNG AT HEART

## CALL TO CONFESSION

### PRAYER OF CONFESSION

(prayed together)

God of grace, we need your strength in our weakness. We confess that we can be judgmental and hyper-critical of our neighbors, family, and friends. We project our own shortcomings on others in order to deflect attention from our mistakes. We withhold and

condition forgiveness, mercy, and grace from those who wrong us at the same time we seek it for the wrongs we have done. Even still, we struggle to forgive ourselves. You have shown us the better way. Help us to follow your path—receiving and extending forgiveness in a world in need of an infusion of grace for transformation. In your mercy, God, hear our prayer, and let us forgive as you forgive.

## A TIME FOR SILENT REFLECTION

## WORDS OF ASSURANCE

One: 2, 3, 30, 300 - we have gathered as God's people: broken, we are made whole; alone, we are welcomed into community; forgiven, we are sent to serve.

**Many: Fed, forgiven, restored, loved. We are reminded of God's presence in our lives, of God's grace which makes us new in every moment. Thanks be to God! Amen.**

## SHARING THE FIRST SCRIPTURE READING

Matthew 18:21-35

### \*AN AFFIRMATION OF FAITH

inside front cover of hymnal

### \*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

Romans 14:1-12

read from *The Message*

## MESSAGE:

"Make Room!"

Pastor Chris

## Prayers of the People/Lord's Prayer

## 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

Merciful God, receive our humble offerings as a testimony to your provision and a demonstration of our love. May they be magnified and multiplied for the benefit of our community and all creation.

### \*Closing Song:

"Help Us Accept Each Other"

#596

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

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

The Call to Worship (adapted), Call to Confession, and Words of Assurance (adapted), are from *Lectionary Liturgies* by Thom M. Shuman. The Opening Prayer, Prayer of Confession, and Offering Prayer of Dedication are from *Worship Ways-Worship Resources for the United Church of Christ*. The Affirmation of Faith is our 1st Congregational United Church of Christ, Algona Statement of Purpose

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Worship Leader:	Pastor Chris Burtnett
Lector:	David Burrow
Organist:	Vicki Merchlewitz
September Radio Sponsor:	Ginny Buchanan

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Birthdays: September 19-Kathryn Myers

Today, September 17: 10 am.- Worship  
                                    Sunday School  
                                    Coffee  
                    4pm.- Peace Pole Service with soft serve ice cream & toppings to follow.

Tuesday, September 19: 9:30-11:30am: Pastor at Feed Mill

Wednesday, September 20: 8:30am: Multi-Disciplinary Team Meeting in Fellowship Hall  
                                    4:30-6:30pm.: International Delight-Cuban Night in Fellowship Hall

Thursday, September 21: 10am.: Pastor at Clergy Cluster meeting in Humboldt  
                                    International Day of Peace

Sunday, September 24: 10:00 am. – Worship  
                                    Sunday School  
                                    Coffee

Today, September 17: 7am-12:30pm.-Flight Breakfast at Algona Municipal Airport with a free will donation.

September 20: Trunk or Treat meeting at the Methodist Church

September 27: Newsletter Deadline

Our Daily Bread September/October/November devotionals are available on the cart in the entry way to the Education/Office/Fellowship Hall building.



*First Congregational  
United Church of Christ  
165 Years*  
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