

Welcome to First Congregational Church United Church of Christ
World Communion Sunday | Feast of St. Francis
October 4, 2020

* All invited to stand in body or spirit

WELCOME, ANNOUNCEMENTS, AND GREETING

Rev. Dr. David Dethmers

**Whoever you are...and wherever you are on life's journey...
you are welcome here!**

PRELUDE

*De Colores*¹ – from Mexico

Martha Jones

* A LITANY FOR WORLD COMMUNION SUNDAY

Mark Long

In the midst of uncertain times, it is good to remind ourselves not just of what could be, but of what will be.

We worship the God who created time, and whose promises stand firm forever.

The Scriptures tell us that God's eternal Kingdom will contain "a great crowd that no one could number. They are from every nation, tribe, people, and language." (Revelation 7:9)

We worship the God who created every nation, tribe, people, and language out of love. And so, God's promise of grace is offered to all.

Following his death and resurrection, which we remember and celebrate through the practice of communion, and in his final words to us on earth, Jesus commissioned us to "go and make disciples of all nations." (Matthew 28:19)

We worship the God who calls us from the sidelines and invites us into the work of the Kingdom. One of God's blessings is the opportunity to join in the fulfilling of God's promises.

As we break the bread and drink from the cup today, remind us that we do not do so in isolation. We are part of a universal and diverse Church that crosses every line the world uses to divide us.

We worship the God who is preparing for us a great heavenly banquet, where one day we will all feast together. May our faith in God's promises inspire us to build bridges in our community, our country, and across the world. Amen.

HYMN

Bread for the World

Bread for the world: A world of hunger.

Wine for all peoples: People who thirst.

May we who eat be bread for others

May we who drink pour out our love.

Lord Jesus Christ, you are the bread of life,
Broken to reach and heal the wounds of human pain.
Where we divide your people, you are waiting there
On bended knee to wash our feet with endless care.

Lord Jesus Christ, you are the wine of peace,
Poured into hearts once broken and where dryness sleeps.
Where we are tired and weary, you are waiting there
To be the way which beckons us beyond despair.

Lord Jesus Christ, you call us to your feast,
At which the rich and pow'ful have become the least.
Where we survive on others in our human greed,
You walk among us begging for your ev'ry need.

Long ago, in the days before Israel had a king, there was a famine in the land. So a man named Elimelech, who belonged to the clan of Ephrath and who lived in Bethlehem in Judah, went with his wife Naomi and their two sons Mahlon and Chilion to live for a while in the country of Moab. While they were living there, Elimelech died, and Naomi was left alone with her two sons, who married Moabite women, Orpah and Ruth. About ten years later Mahlon and Chilion also died, and Naomi was left all alone, without husband or sons.

Some time later Naomi heard that the Lord had blessed his people by giving them good crops; so she got ready to leave Moab with her daughters-in-law. They started out together to go back to Judah, but on the way she said to them, "Go back home and stay with your mothers. May the Lord be as good to you as you have been to me and to those who have died. And may the Lord make it possible for each of you to marry again and have a home."

So Naomi kissed them good-bye. But they started crying and said to her, "No! We will go with you to your people."

"You must go back, my daughters," Naomi answered. "Why do you want to come with me? Do you think I could have sons again for you to marry? Go back home, for I am too old to get married again. Even if I thought there was still hope, and so got married tonight and had sons, would you wait until they had grown up? Would this keep you from marrying someone else? No, my daughters, you know that's impossible. The Lord has turned against me, and I feel very sorry for you."

Again they started crying. Then Orpah kissed her mother-in-law good-bye and went back home, but Ruth held on to her. So Naomi said to her, "Ruth, your sister-in-law has gone back to her people and to her god. Go back home with her."

But Ruth answered, "Don't ask me to leave you! Let me go with you. Wherever you go, I will go; wherever you live, I will live. Your people will be my people, and your God will be my God. Wherever you die, I will die, and that is where I will be buried. May the Lord's worst punishment come upon me if I let anything but death separate me from you!"

When Naomi saw that Ruth was determined to go with her, she said nothing more.

They went on until they came to Bethlehem. When they arrived, the whole town became excited, and the women there exclaimed, "Is this really Naomi?"

"Don't call me Naomi," she answered; "call me Marah, because Almighty God has made my life bitter. When I left here, I had plenty, but the Lord has brought me back without a thing. Why call me Naomi when the Lord Almighty has condemned me and sent me trouble?"

This, then, was how Naomi came back from Moab with Ruth, her Moabite daughter-in-law. When they arrived in Bethlehem, the barley harvest was just beginning.

SERMON SERIES: **GREAT WOMEN OF THE BIBLE**

TODAY'S MESSAGE: *Rahab, The Prostitute*

SOLO

Wherever You May Go

Lexi Taddeo

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INVITATION TO THE OFFERING

David

OFFERING AND OFFERTORY *We Shall Not Give Up the Fight²*

Martha

Siyaham' ekukhanyen' kwenkhos³ - freedom songs from South Africa

* DOXOLOGY

Praise God from whom all blessings flow,

Praise God all creatures high and low.

Alleluia. Alleluia.

Praise God for all that Love has done,

Creator, Christ and Spirit One.

Alleluia. Alleluia. Alleluia. Alleluia. Alleluia.

PRAYER OF DEDICATION (Unison)

As we prepare to gather around your table today, generous God, we reflect on the abundance that you have given us. Receive these gifts as expressions of our gratitude, we pray. Amen.

SACRAMENT OF HOLY COMMUNION

WELCOME TO THE TABLE

David

HYMN

As We Gather At Your Table

As we gather at your Table, as we listen to your Word,
Help us know, O God, your presence: Let our hearts and minds be stirred.
Nourish us with sacred story till we claim it as our own;
Teach us through this holy banquet how to make Love's vict'ry known.

WORDS OF INSTITUTION

CELEBRATING THE SACRAMENT

Music during communion: *O Bread of Life*⁴ – from China; *Una Espiga*⁵ – from Spain; *Somos pueblo que camina (We Are People on a Journey)*⁶ from Nicaragua

PRAYERS OF THANKSGIVING

HYMN

As We Gather At Your Table

Turn our worship into witness in the sacrament of life;
Send us forth to love and serve you, bringing peace where there is strife.
Give us, Christ, your great compassion to forgive as you forgave;
May we still behold your image In the world you died to save.

Gracious Spirit, help us summon other guests to share that feast
Where triumphant Love will welcome those who had been last and least.
There no more will envy blind us nor will pride our peace destroy,
As we join with saints and angels to repeat the sounding joy.

Tune: *Beach Spring*. Text: Carl Daw, © 1989 Hope Publishing Co, OneLicense A-709231

BENEDICTION

POSTLUDE

*Let Us Talents and Tongues Employ*⁷ – from Jamaica

Martha

Music Notes

Instrumental music today - international hymns from the New Century Hymnal. All streamed with permission – OneLicense #A-709231

¹ Tune: *De colores*, arr. Alfredo Morales © 1987, World Library Publications

² Tune: *Only Started*, Anders Nyberg © 1984 Walton Music Corp.

³ © 1984 Plymouth Music Corp.

⁴ Tune: *Sheng En*, Yin-Lan Su, 1936, arr Darryl Nixon, 1986 © Chinese Christian literature Council, arr (1986) Wood Lake Books.

⁵ Tune: *Una Espiga* (Sheaves of Summer), Cesareo Gabarain, 1973; harm. Skinner Chavez-Melo, 1987 © OCP

⁶ Tune: *Somos Pueblo* from *Misa Popular Nicaragüense*.

⁷ Tune: *Linstead*, adapt Doreen Potter, 1975 © Hope Publishing Co.

Today's Worship Leaders

preacher

Rev. David Dethmers

liturgist

Mark Long

song leader

Lexi Taddeo

musician

Martha Jones

ministers of welcome

Kelly & Pam Gregory

This Week at FCUCC
October 4 - October 11, 2020

Sunday 4	10:00	Worship w/ Communion	sanctuary
	11:30	Lord's Prayer Discussion	zoom
	1:00	Blessing of the Animals	outside
Tuesday 6	1:00	Property & Finance	chapel
	4:30	Mission & Outreach	zoom
Wednesday 7	1:30	Congregational Life	pilgrim
Thursday 8	10:00	MWS Book Study with David	chapel
	6:00	MWS Book Study with Beth	zoom
Friday 9	10:00	Women's Coffee	zoom
Sunday 11	10:00	Worship	sanctuary
	11:30	Lord's Prayer Discussion	zoom

“Corona Time” Church office hours: Monday through Thursday 9:00 to 3:00

FCUCC Staff

intentional interim minister	david@uccgj.org	Rev. Dr. David Dethmers
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volunteer treasurer/finance	finance@uccgj.org	Martha Jones

** On leave of absence until choirs can gather in person again.

announcements

Contact: Beth Rakestraw, Office Administrator, office@uccgj.org

Together Colorado Election Activities. Literature drops in support of the Paid Family Leave Initiative are planned for the weekend of October 10/11. This activity will involve working in groups of two to hang educational materials on the doors of specified voters. No face to face contact. Please let Mary Sealing (sealingm@gmail.com) know if you might be available to help for even an hour during one of these periods.

The Lord's Prayer: Pious Platitudes or Radical Manifesto? Beginning TODAY, David will lead a four-week class on the Lord's Prayer at 11:30 AM over Zoom. This class is for those who would like to dig a little deeper into a routinely repeating ritual. Using the biblical text itself, John Dominic Crossan's *The Greatest Prayer*, and a variety of other resources, we'll explore together the radical, counter-cultural journey Jesus sets out in this prayer for those who want to follow him. We will meet by Zoom and gather for about 45 minutes each week.

Join together for a Blessing of the Animals Service at 1 PM. The service will take place on the church lawn, weather permitting. So bring your lawn chair and your pet(s) to join us in a celebration of one of God's greatest gifts to us—the creatures of God's creation. We will social distance and wear masks throughout.

Pastor David is available to meet with anyone who would like to get together with him for any reason. Just call him at 970-242-0298, X104, and leave a message; he'll get back to you! For a pastoral care emergency after hours, please call Pastor David's cell, 520-528-0855. To share a prayer request with the congregation, contact Beth Rakestraw, office@uccgj.org, 970-242-0298 X105.

Please remember in your prayers:

- Jan Scheevel, who is now receiving round-the-clock care at home.
- Mary Endres, who has a procedure scheduled next Wednesday

NOTES ON TODAY'S INSTRUMENTAL MUSIC

All the instrumental music today are communion hymns from *The New Century Hymnal* and represent songs from Christian churches around the world.

De Colores (NCH 402), played as a **PRELUDE** is a traditional Spanish-language folk song. It is beloved by many Mexican-American churchgoers, and has also been popular among the United Farm Workers. The song is believed to have been in circulation throughout the [Americas](#) since the 16th century. The song promotes racial understanding and cooperation. While there are many verses to this song, the first stanza chosen for our hymnal speaks of the colors of nature, and the second of the different colors of the people of the earth. The tune is commonly performed with guitars and trumpets in Mariachi style. This arrangement, by Alfredo Morales, incorporates repeated use of thirds in the treble part as is characteristic of Mexican folk music.

The two pieces chosen for **OFFERTORY** are both freedom songs from South Africa. Modern South African music played a central part in the liberation of that country from an apartheid form of government to a majority democracy. Three of these freedom songs have been included in the New Century Hymnal, the first denominational hymnal to include examples of this genre. *We Shall Not Give up the Fight* (NCH 437) reflects the willingness of people to stand together for hours or days for their rights. In South African style this song would be sung without accompaniment, and, contrary to popular opinion, drums were not part of the Zulu and Zhosha tradition, from which it originates. It was said that a song never was sung the same way twice and that there is no way to “sing wrong.”

Siyahamba (NCH 526), another South African freedom song, was frequently sung by large groups of demonstrators marching or walking to protest the actions of a government that denied them participation. This song, beloved by our own comes out of the striving of a people for racial equality and justice.

During **COMMUNION**, I will play three very different communion songs from around the world. *O Bread of Life* (NCH 333) uses a tune called Sheng En, which was composed by Su Yin-Lan in 1934. She was a Chinese musician who died after giving birth to her son as the advancing Japanese army was bombing her city, Tientsin. The distinctively Chinese tune uses the pentatonic scale. The hymn text paired with this tune comes from leading Chinese educator and author, Timothy Tingfang Lew, who represented China at three sessions of the World Council of Churches. The text incorporates both Christian and Buddhist imagery: “Stand in our midst, eyes and hearts opening, your mystic self to us revealing. Unite us in life everlasting, Immanuel, blessing unending.”

Both the tune and text of *Una Espiga*, translated Sheaves of Summer, comes to us from the pen of Spanish composer, Cesáreo Gabaráin. The tune is reminiscent of the folk dances of his native Spain. The words use evocative poetry about sharing communion: “Like the grains which become one same whole loaf, like the notes that are woven into song, like the droplets of water that are blended in the sea, we, as Christians, one body shall become.” *Somos pueblo que camina* is the opening song of a mass created in response to the reforms of the Second Vatican Council, providing an authentic reflection of the faith experience of the local Nicaraguan community in which it was created. It is very popular throughout Latin America.

Let Us Talents and Tongues Employ (NCH 347), played for our **POSTLUDE**, was first sung at the World Council of Churches Assembly in Nairobi, Africa, in 1975. The Jamaican folk tune was adapted for hymnody by Doreen Potter, a Jamaican citizen, who later moved to England and became friends with Frederick Kaan, who wrote the text. Kaan was a clergyman of Dutch origin who served in the Congregational Church in Britain (subsequently part of the United Reformed Church) and a prodigious hymnwriter. As a youth, Kaan endured the Nazi occupation of his native country. His father was a member of the Dutch Resistance; his family hid a Jew and a political prisoner in their home and three of his grandparents starved to death during this time.

The words of this hymn send us out celebrating that “Jesus lives again, earth can breathe again, pass the Word around: loaves abound.”

So, on this World Communion Sunday, I commend to you these words from the New Century Hymnal editors about why it is important that we share this feast of music from around the world:

“The early church developed regional unity around the great historical worship traditions. We may also develop a unity of spirit by sharing others’ expressions of praise and prayer. As we learn one another’s songs . . . we come closer to understanding that the image of God (*imago Dei*) is much more diverse than we had ever imagined. “

Blessings upon you and your singing,
Martha Jones

Hymn profiles adapted from The New Century Hymnal Companion. Copyright © 1998. The Pilgrim Press. Used by permission. Additionally, thanks for a little help from Wikipedia!