

Welcome to First Congregational Church United Church of Christ
Second Sunday after Epiphany | Martin Luther King Jr. Sunday
January 17, 2021

WELCOME, ANNOUNCEMENTS, AND GREETING

Rev. Dr. David Dethmers

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

PRELUDE

Lift Every Voice and Sing

Max Reilly and Pam Gregory

Tune: *Lift Every Voice*, J. Rosamond Johnson, 1921. Text: James Weldon Johnson, 1921, alt. Public domain.

CALL TO WORSHIP (Based on Isaiah 58:1-11/The Message)

Anna Dethmers

Shout! A full-throated shout! Hold nothing back—a trumpet-blast shout!

Tell my people what's wrong with their lives, face my family Jacob with their sins!

They're busy, busy, busy at worship, and love studying all about me.

To all appearances they're a nation of right-living people— law-abiding, God-honoring.

They ask me, 'What's the right thing to do?' and love having me on their side.

But they also complain, 'Why do we fast and you don't look our way?

Why do we humble ourselves and you don't even notice?'

Well, here's why: The bottom line--on your 'fast days' is profit. You drive your employees much too hard.

You fast, but at the same time you bicker and fight. You fast, but you swing a mean fist.

The kind of fasting you do won't get your prayers off the ground.

Do you think this is the kind of fast day I'm after: a day to show off your humility?

To put on a pious long face and parade around solemnly in black?

Do you call that fasting, a fast day that I, GOD, would like?

This is the kind of fast day I'm after: to break the chains of injustice, get rid of exploitation in the workplace, free the oppressed, cancel debts.

What I'm interested in seeing you do is: sharing your food with the hungry, inviting the homeless poor into your homes, putting clothes on the shivering ill-clad, being available to your own families.

Do this and the lights will turn on, and your lives will turn around at once.

Your righteousness will pave your way. The GOD of glory will secure your passage.

Then when you pray, GOD will answer.

You'll call out for help and God will say, 'Here I am.'

HYMN

Lead On Eternal Sovereign

Pam Gregory

Lead on, eternal Sovereign, we follow in your way

Loud rings your cry for justice, your call for peace this day

Through prayerful preparation your grace will made us strong;

To carry on the struggle to triumph over wrong.

Lead on, eternal Sovereign, we follow not with fear

For in each human conflict your words of strength we hear:

That when we serve with gladness, you will not let us fall,

Our trust is in your promise that love will conquer all.

Lead on, eternal Sovereign; til sin's fierce war shall cease

And all your saints together will sing a hymn of peace;

Then all in your dominion will live with hearts set free,
To love and serve each other for all eternity.

Tune: *Lancashire*, Henty T. Smart, 1836. Text: Ernest W. Shurtleff, 18887, alt.
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SCRIPTURE:

I Kings 21:1-16 (The Message)

Anna

... Naboth the Jezreelite owned a vineyard in Jezreel that bordered the palace of Ahab king of Samaria. One day Ahab spoke to Naboth, saying, "Give me your vineyard so I can use it as a kitchen garden; it's right next to my house—so convenient. In exchange I'll give you a far better vineyard, or if you'd prefer I'll pay you money for it."

But Naboth told Ahab, "Not on your life! So help me God, I'd never sell the family farm to you!" Ahab went home in a black mood, sulking over Naboth the Jezreelite's words, "I'll never turn over my family inheritance to you." He went to bed, stuffed his face in his pillow, and refused to eat.

Jezebel his wife came to him. She said, "What's going on? Why are you so out of sorts and refusing to eat?"

He told her, "Because I spoke to Naboth the Jezreelite. I said, 'Give me your vineyard—I'll pay you for it or, if you'd rather, I'll give you another vineyard in exchange.' And he said, 'I'll never give you my vineyard.'"

Jezebel said, "Is this any way for a king of Israel to act? Aren't you the boss? On your feet! Eat! Cheer up! I'll take care of this; I'll get the vineyard of this Naboth the Jezreelite for you."

She wrote letters over Ahab's signature, stamped them with his official seal, and sent them to the elders in Naboth's city and to the civic leaders. She wrote "Call for a fast day and put Naboth at the head table. Then seat a couple of stool pigeons across from him who, in front of everybody will say, 'You! You blasphemed God and the king!' Then they'll throw him out and stone him to death."

And they did it. The men of the city—the elders and civic leaders—followed Jezebel's instructions that she wrote in the letters sent to them. They called for a fast day and seated Naboth at the head table. Then they brought in two stool pigeons and seated them opposite Naboth. In front of everybody the two degenerates accused him, "He blasphemed God and the king!" The company threw him out in the street, stoned him mercilessly, and he died.

When Jezebel got word that Naboth had been stoned to death, she told Ahab, "Go for it, Ahab—take the vineyard of Naboth the Jezreelite for your own, the vineyard he refused to sell you. Naboth is no more; Naboth is dead."

The minute Ahab heard that Naboth was dead, he set out for the vineyard of Naboth the Jezreelite and claimed it for his own.

SCRIPTURE:

Luke 12:13-21 (The Message)

David

Someone out of the crowd said, "Teacher, order my brother to give me a fair share of the family inheritance."

He replied, "Mister, what makes you think it's any of my business to be a judge or mediator for you?"

Speaking to the people, he went on, "Take care! Protect yourself against the least bit of greed. Life is not defined by what you have, even when you have a lot."

Then he told them this story: “The farm of a certain rich man produced a terrific crop. He talked to himself: ‘What can I do? My barn isn’t big enough for this harvest.’ Then he said, ‘Here’s what I’ll do: I’ll tear down my barns and build bigger ones. Then I’ll gather in all my grain and goods, and I’ll say to myself, Self, you’ve done well! You’ve got it made and can now retire. Take it easy and have the time of your life!’

“Just then God showed up and said, ‘Fool! Tonight you die. And your barnful of goods—who gets it?’

“That’s what happens when you fill your barn with Self and not with God.”

SERMON SERIES: THE SEVEN DEADLY SINS
Today’s Message: GREED

INVITATION TO THE OFFERING

OFFERTORY

Precious Lord, Take My Hand

Pam

Thomas A. Dorsey, 1932. This arrangement © 1938, renewed. Warner-Tamerlane Publishing Corp. OneLicense A-709231.

PRAYER OF DEDICATION

David

May the gifts we give this day, O God, be used to usher in your reign, to bring peace and justice to your world and for your creation, we pray. Amen.

PRAYERS OF THE PEOPLE AND THE LORD’S PRAYER

A LITANY CELEBRATING GOD’S PLAN FOR CREATION!

David

In the beginning, God brought cosmos out of chaos and spoke humanity into being with the words: “Let there be...!”

O God, give us power to speak the words that will bring the positive possibilities of a new creation into existence.

And after God spoke the universe and humanity into existence, God spoke again and said: “It is good! It is very good!”

O God, give us power to speak the words that will celebrate and affirm the wondrous virtue of your human and cosmic creation.

And in the fullness of time, God spoke again, and this time the Word of God became flesh; and the living Word lived among us.

O God, give us power to speak the words that will abide in the hearts and minds of all people; words that will call each of us into your marvelous light.

And in due time God spoke to us through the prophet, Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., saying:

“Although the Church has been called to combat social evils, it has often remained silent behind the anesthetizing security of stained-glass windows...How often the Church has been an echo rather than a voice, a tail-light behind the Supreme Court and other secular agencies, rather than a headlight guiding men and women progressively and decisively to higher levels of understanding.”

O God, we confess that our silence in the face of injustice makes us complicit. Forgive us and give us the power to speak the words that will challenge the systems of inequity — represented in the principalities and powers of this world and in spiritual wickedness in high places.

And through the words of Christ, God spoke to us, saying:

“If the Son makes you free, you will be free indeed.”

And through the words of the Apostle Paul, God spoke to us, saying:

“For freedom Christ has set us free. Stand firm, therefore, and do not submit again to a yoke of slavery.”

So, we boldly and courageously speak the words: “Let freedom ring!”

Let freedom ring!

Our destiny lies in our willingness to speak until the strongholds of prejudice and bigotry crumble before the new creations of justice and equality for all of God’s children.

We will not be silent. Let freedom ring until every shackle of racism, sexism, classism, militarism and heterosexism is broken.

Let freedom ring!

We will not be silent: Let freedom ring! For the freedom of every human being, let freedom ring! For the salvation of the world, let freedom ring! For the glory of God, let freedom ring! Let freedom ring! Let freedom ring!

REKINDLING THE DREAM: A FILM FOR MARTIN LUTHER KING DAY

HYMN

We Shall Overcome

Pam

We shall overcome, we shall overcome,
we shall overcome someday!

Refrain:

Oh, deep in my heart I do believe
we shall overcome someday!

We are not afraid ... today!

The truth shall make us free ... some day!

This anthem of the 1960’s civil rights movement was frequently sung at mass meetings and marches.
Several sources have been cited as its origins.

BENEDICTION

David

POSTLUDE

Improvisation on Precious Lord

Music by Thomas A. Dorsey, 1932. Improvisation by Max Reilly, 2021.

Max

Acknowledgements

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The litany is a modification of one prepared by Dr. Kenneth L. Samuel, Pastor, Victory for the World UCC, Stone Mountain, Georgia.

Rekindling the Dream is a free film provided by The Salt Project for use in worship and other church gatherings,
<https://www.saltproject.org/>.

Today’s Worship Leaders

preacher

Rev. Dr. David Dethmers

liturgist

Anna Dethmers

song leader

Pam Gregory

musician

Max Reilly

This Week at FCUCC
January 17 – January 24, 2020

Sunday 17 Pre-Recorded Worship Service available any time via YouTube.
11:30 Gratitude Course zoom
12:30 Church Council Meeting zoom

Council Meetings are open to congregants to attend. If you would like to sit in on a council meeting, please notify Mark Long, Moderator, or Beth Rakestraw, Church Administrator, to receive the zoom link information required.

Monday 18 **Church Office Closed for MLK Day**

Friday 22 10:00 Women’s Coffee. zoom

Sunday 24 Pre-Recorded Sunday of Worship Service available any time via YouTube.
11:30 Gratitude Course zoom

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

FCUCC Staff

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volunteer treasurer/finance	finance@uccgj.org	Martha Jones

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

Pastoral Care

The best way to contact Pastor David at any time is on his cell phone: 520-528-0855, with either a call or a text. Or you can leave a message at church: 970-242-0298, x104. To share a prayer request with the congregation, contact Beth Rakestraw, office@uccgj.org or 970-242-0298 x 105.

- ◇ Heidi Hess and Dannie Bowman are both Covid-Positive and are struggling with their symptoms, including low oxygen counts. Dannie has been to the ER earlier this week, and was sent home with a strict medical protocol to follow. Please pray for their recovery.
- ◇ Carolyn Ramsey asks for prayers for a couple of her family members who have health concerns.
- ◇ Continue to pray for Rick Smith, our church facilities manager, who has been diagnosed with liver cancer.
- ◇ A joy: Brian Mahoney’s deep brain implants have begun working and he is experiencing very little tremor.

Announcements

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

January Food Item for Catholic Outreach: Fruit, Glorious Fruit | So, we did such an astonishing job on canned veggies and soups, let’s do it again ... if one standard-size can of fruit will

feed three people, how many people would you like to feed? 200 cans feed 600 people; 300 cans feed 900 people ... 🙄🙄🙄

First Quarter Mission & Outreach Project: It's Winter ... Let FROST abound! | While most of us reading this are fortunate enough to be able to stay clean and healthy, many people in our community — especially many of those served by Catholic Outreach (our mission partner for the first quarter of 2021) — are not. So, for January-March — in addition to collecting for the soup kitchen — we'll be collecting "FROST" items:

F = Fingernail cutters

R = Razors

O = de-Odorant

S = Shampoo

T = Tooth-care (paste and/or brushes)

All of these items can be obtained inexpensively at the Dollar Store. How 'bout setting ourselves a goal of, say, at least 25 of each? Or ... whatever strikes your fancy. Everything we collect will be welcomed, and is needed.

Thanks, Your Mission Team

Martin Luther King Day Grand Junction March | Join Pastor David and others at City Hall on this Monday, January 18th, at 1 PM. There will be a program at City Hall and then we will walk together to Handy Chapel, which is less than a half mile away. The weatherman is cooperating. It's supposed to be sunny and about 40. So, make a sign or put on a MLK hat or T-shirt and step up and step out with others in the Grand Valley. Let's make FCUCC's presence felt! This event is sponsored by Black Citizens and Friends. Face masks are required throughout the event.