

Welcome to First Congregational Church United Church of Christ
World Communion Sunday
October 6, 2024

*** Some rise to their feet, some rise in their hearts—please rise as you are able.*

GATHERING BELL

At the sound of the bell, please silence yourselves and prepare for worship.

PRELUDE

Fantasy on “Holy Manna” John Carter

Martha Jones

ANNOUNCEMENTS

Rev. Paul Ashby

INVITATION TO WORSHIP

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

OPENING REFLECTION

CALL TO WORSHIP

Rev. Erin Gilmore

In the ancient world it was bread that kept the poor and working class from starving to death.

So, bread was the food of life. Bread sustained life.

We pray “Give us this day our daily bread.”

Calling Jesus “The Bread of Life” is about hope, purpose, meaning and a role model who points us toward being spiritually awake and alive.

The cup of the poor and working class was often filled with cheap, new wine – vintage, yesterday afternoon.

As wine served to keep the blood of the poor flowing, so Jesus used the metaphor of wine to connect to his life -- flowing for justice, mercy, hope and union with the heart of God’s love.

**HYMN

All Who Hunger, Gather Gladly (tune: *Holy Manna*)

All

All who hunger, gather gladly, holy manna is our bread,
Come from wilderness and wand'ring. Here in truth we will be fed,
You that yearn for days of fullness, all around us is our food.
Taste and see the grace eternal. Taste and see that God is good.

All who hunger, never strangers, seeker, be a welcome guest.
Come from restlessness and roaming. Here in joy we keep the feast.
We that once were lost and scattered, in communion’s love have stood.
Taste and see the grace eternal. Taste and see that God is good.

All who hunger, sing together. Jesus Christ is living bread.
Come from loneliness and longing, Here, in peace, we have been fed.
Blest are those who from this table live their days in gratitude.
Taste and see the grace eternal. Taste and see that God is good.

CHILDREN’S MESSAGE

Paul

PRAYERS OF THE PEOPLE

Respond to each shared prayer request with “Peace, Shalom, Salaam.”

PASTORAL PRAYER AND LORD’S PRAYER

Our Creator, who art in heaven, hallowed be your name. Your kingdom come, your will be done, on earth as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread, and forgive us our debts

as we forgive our debtors. And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil, for yours is the kingdom and the power and the glory, forever. Amen.

NEWS FROM THE CONFERENCE MINISTER Erin

INVITATION TO OFFERING Erin

OFFERTORY *Bread of the World*, Heber, Martin/Eliot Chancel Choir

****OFFERING RESPONSE** (tune: *Holy Manna*) All

**Lend your joy to all our giving, let it light our pilgrim way;
from the night of anxious keeping, loose us into generous day.
Open wide our hands in sharing as we heed Christ's ageless call,
healing, teaching, and reclaiming, honoring you by loving all.**

****PRAYER OF DEDICATION** Erin

Holy One, too often our churches are divided by theological interpretations and theological speculations. Inspire us to work for unity and understanding. Use our gifts to continue the work of being a church that strives for the day when we experience Oneness in the heart of the human family.

SCRIPTURE *Mark 14:12-17,22-26 & Matthew 6:21* [NRSVUE] Erin

On the first day of Unleavened Bread, when the Passover lamb is sacrificed, his disciples said to him, "Where do you want us to go and make the preparations for you to eat the Passover?" So he sent two of his disciples, saying to them, "Go into the city, and a man carrying a jar of water will meet you; follow him, and wherever he enters, say to the owner of the house, 'The Teacher asks: Where is my guest room where I may eat the Passover with my disciples?' He will show you a large room upstairs, furnished and ready. Make preparations for us there." So the disciples set out and went to the city and found everything as he had told them, and they prepared the Passover meal.

When it was evening, he came with the twelve.

While they were eating, he took a loaf of bread, and after blessing it he broke it, gave it to them, and said, "Take; this is my body." Then he took a cup, and after giving thanks he gave it to them, and all of them drank from it. He said to them, "This is my blood of the [a] covenant, which is poured out for many. Truly I tell you, I will never again drink of the fruit of the vine until that day when I drink it new in the kingdom of God."

When they had sung the hymn, they went out to the Mount of Olives.

For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also.

MESSAGE *"Opening Communion to the World"* Paul

****HYMN** NCH 332, vs 1 & 3 *As We Gather At Your Table* All

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.

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 bind us nor will pride our peace destroy,
as we join with saints and angels to repeat the sounding joy.

CELEBRATION OF COMMUNION

Paul

All who practice the way of compassion are welcome.

**HYMN NCH 347

Let Us Talents and Tongues Employ

All

Let us talents and tongues employ, reaching out with a shout of joy:
Bread is broken, the wine is poured, Christ is spoken and seen and heard.

Refrain

Jesus lives again, earth can breathe again, pass the Word around: loaves abound!
Jesus lives again, earth can breathe again, pass the Word around: loaves abound!

Christ is able to make us one, at his table he set the tone,
Teaching people to live to bless, love in word and in deed express. *Refrain*

Jesus calls us in, sends us out bearing fruit in a world of doubt,
Gives us love to tell, bread to share: God (Immanuel) everywhere! *Refrain*

**BENEDICTION

Paul

** SUNG BENEDICTION

World Peace Prayer

All

Lead us from death to life, from falsehood to truth,
From despair to hope, from fear to trust.
Lead us from hate to love, from war to peace,
Let peace fill our hearts, let peace fill our world,
Let peace fill our universe!

GREETING ONE ANOTHER IN THE SPIRIT OF LOVE

RECESSIONAL

Let Us Talents and Tongues Employ, arr John Carter

Martha

Today's Worship Leaders

preacher	Rev. Dr. Paul Ashby
liturgist	Rev. Erin Gilmore
choir director	Dr. Keri Rusthoi
musician	Martha Jones

Acknowledgements

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