

Welcome to First Congregational Church United Church of Christ
Eighteenth Sunday After Pentecost
September 22, 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 *Cwm Rhondda (God of Grace and God of Glory)*, arr. J. Bert Carlson Shannon 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

Julie Krueger

We often want to separate our personal ethics from our political commitments.

Can ethics be simply a personal matter? What about the call to love our neighbor as ourselves?

How did Jesus describe his mission?

The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, Because God anointed me to share the Gospel with the poor.

God sent me to proclaim release to the oppressed and enslaved.

God sent me to restore sight to the blind, and free those trapped in poverty.

God sent me to proclaim the revolution that is the Year of God's blessing.

May we hear the good news, the "God" news shared by Jesus.

****HYMN**

Inspired by Love and Anger (tune: Salley Gardens), vs 1-3

All

Inspired by love and anger, disturbed by need and pain,
informed of God's own bias, we ask him once again:

"How long must some folk suffer? How long can few folk mind?
How long dare vain self-interest turn prayer and pity blind?"

From those forever victims of heartless human greed,
their cruel plight composes a litany of need:

"Where are the fruits of justice? Where are the signs of peace?
When is the day when prisoners and dreams find their release?"

From those forever shackled to what their wealth can buy,
the fear of lost advantage provoke the bitter cry:

"Don't query our position! Don't criticise our wealth!
Don't mention those exploited by politics and stealth!"

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.

INVITATION TO OFFERING

Julie

OFFERTORY

Because You Are God's Chosen Ones, Gary Alan Smith

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

Julie

**God of mercy and justice, open our hearts, minds and hands to live out Your compassion.
Too often we just want to talk, to form a committee for more talk, to appoint a task force to
write reports about talks. Move our feet to walk with Jesus on the path of mercy and
justice. Through our gifts and through our grit let us be people of action. Amen**

**HYMN

Inspired by Love and Anger (tune: Salley Gardens), vs 4-6

All

To God, who through the prophets proclaimed a different age,
we offer earth's indifference, its agony and rage:
"When will the wronged be righted? When will the kingdom come?
When will the world be generous to all instead of some?"

God asks, "Who will go for me? Who will extend my reach?
And who, when few will listen, will prophesy and preach?
And who, when few bid welcome, will offer all they know?
And who, when few dare follow, will walk the road I show?"

Amused in someone's kitchen, asleep in someone's boat,
attuned to what the ancients exposed, proclaimed and wrote,
a saviour without safety, a tradesman without tools
has come to tip the balance with fishermen and fools.

SCRIPTURE

Micah 6:8, Amos 5:21-24, Luke 4:16-30 [NRSVUE]

Julie

God has told you, O mortal, what is good, and what does the Holy One require of you but to do
justice and to love kindness and to walk humbly with your God?

I hate, I despise your festivals, and I take no delight in your solemn assemblies.
Even though you offer me your burnt offerings and grain offerings, I will not accept them,
and the offerings of well-being of your fatted animals I will not look upon.
Take away from me the noise of your songs; I will not listen to the melody of your harps.
But let justice roll down like water and righteousness like an ever-flowing stream.

When Jesus came to Nazareth, where he had been brought up, he went to the synagogue on the
Sabbath day, as was his custom. He stood up to read, and the scroll of the prophet Isaiah was
given to him. He unrolled the scroll and found the place where it was written:

"The Spirit of the Lord is upon me,
because he has anointed me
to bring good news to the poor.

He has sent me to proclaim release to the captives
and recovery of sight to the blind,
to set free those who are oppressed,
to proclaim the year of the Lord's favor."

And he rolled up the scroll, gave it back to the attendant, and sat down. The eyes of all in the synagogue were fixed on him. Then he began to say to them, "Today this scripture has been fulfilled in your hearing." All spoke well of him and were amazed at the gracious words that came from his mouth. They said, "Is this not Joseph's son?" He said to them, "Doubtless you will quote to me this proverb, 'Doctor, cure yourself!' And you will say, 'Do here also in your hometown the things that we have heard you did at Capernaum.' " And he said, "Truly I tell you, no prophet is accepted in his hometown. But the truth is, there were many widows in Israel in the time of Elijah, when the heaven was shut up three years and six months and there was a severe famine over all the land, yet Elijah was sent to none of them except to a widow at Zarephath in Sidon. There were also many with a skin disease in Israel in the time of the prophet Elisha, and none of them was cleansed except Naaman the Syrian." When they heard this, all in the synagogue were filled with rage. They got up, drove him out of the town, and led him to the brow of the hill on which their town was built, so that they might hurl him off the cliff. But he passed through the midst of them and went on his way.

MESSAGE

"The Day Jesus Preached Politics in the Pulpit"

Paul

**HYMN NCH #436, 1-3

God of Grace and God of Glory

All

God of grace and God of glory, on your people pour your power;
Crown your ancient church's story; bring its bud to glorious flower.
Grant us wisdom, grant us courage, for the facing of this hour,
for the facing of this hour.

From the evils that surround us and assail the Savior's ways,
From the fears that long have bound us – free our hearts for faith and praise.
Grant us wisdom, grant us courage, for the living of these days,
For the living of these days.

Cure your children's warring madness; bend our pride to your control
Shame our reckless, selfish gladness, rich in things and poor in soul.
Grant us wisdom, grant us courage, make our broken spirits whole,
Make our broken spirits whole.

**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

Cwm Rhondda, arr. Wilbur Held

Shannon