

**Welcome to First Congregational Church United Church of Christ**  
**Pride Sunday**  
**September 8, 2024**

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

PRELUDE *Sonata in G*, Domenico Scarlatti Shannon Jones

GATHERING BELL

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

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 Carolyn Holmgren

We gather together as God's creation... diverse and talented, blessed and beloved, made in the divine image.

**We are all a part of the majesty of creation and the ongoing process of evolution.**

We are called to this place by a God who created gay and straight, nonbinary and bisexual, intersex and queer children of God.

**We come as a church affirming our mission as we say "We Love, We Listen, We Help."**

We pray for a day when all God's children will be released from guilt and shame, from laws that discriminate and target.

**We pray for the day when we all have the heart and consciousness to see the divine image in all God's children.**

\*\*HYMN NCH 402

*De Colores (Sing of Colors)*

All

Sing of colors, sing of colors that over the hills in profusion are springing;  
Sing of colors of the birds that fly outside my window their canticles singing;  
Sing of colors, in the rainbow's bright colors God's promise of hope we recall;  
Sing of colors that make up the earth and give thanks to the God who created us all.  
Sing of colors that make up the earth and give thanks to the God who created us all.

Sing, rejoicing! Every creature that breathes raise a song to the God of creation.  
Sing, rejoicing! Sing to God who so earnestly cares, who has offered salvation.  
Sing the good news! Sing the love of the Savior reflecting the colors of all.  
Many colors that shine from God's face, many colors that tell us God's love to recall.  
Many colors that shine from God's face, many colors that tell us God's love to recall.

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 Carolyn

OFFERTORY

*Gift of Love (O Waly, Waly)*, Hopson/Kim

Martha Jones

\*\*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

Carolyn

**The One who breathed life into the Big Bang and into our very lungs is present with us. In God we live and move and have our very being. We offer our gifts as a response to the gift of life. Help us to see the gift of all people and to affirm the dignity of those who have been targeted, persecuted and oppressed. Let us create a community of love beginning with our Church. Amen**

\*\*HYMN

*There is Room in God's Great Welcome* (tune: *Beecher*)

All

There is room in God's great welcome; See! The doors are open wide!  
Here on earth as in God's heaven, hear the call to come inside!  
There is so much room for difference — men and women, gay and straight.  
In God's love, the rooms are countless, but there is no room for hate.

There is room in our good nation if we stand on justice-ground.  
God has made a good creation; colors, cultures all abound.  
Welcome, sister! Welcome, brother! All those yearning to breathe free!  
There is room for one another but no room for bigotry.

There is room for understanding, for the outcast and the poor;  
For the Christian, Jew and Muslim — there is room for these and more.  
For the people on the fringes, for the ones with long career,  
There is room for building bridges, but there is no room for fear.

There is room in faithful churches for the wounded and oppressed:  
Women who've been told they're worthless, refugees who feel distressed,  
Immigrants who fear the future, people scorned and pushed and shoved.  
God, may we seek what you treasure: may we all make room for love.

SCRIPTURE

*Mark 12:28-31* [NRSVUE]

Carolyn

One of the scribes came near and heard them disputing with one another, and seeing that he answered them well he asked him, "Which commandment is the first of all?" Jesus answered, "The first is, 'Hear, O Israel: the Lord our God, the Lord is one; you shall love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind and with all your strength.' The second is this, 'You shall love your neighbor as yourself.' There is no other commandment greater than these."

MESSAGE

*"Jesus' Only Commandments"*

Paul

\*\*HYMN SPP 123

*Draw the Circle Wide*

All

*Refrain*

*Draw the circle wide. Draw it wider still.  
Let this be our song, no one stands alone,  
Standing side by side, draw the circle wide.*

God the still point of the circle, 'round whom all creation turns;  
Nothing lost, but held forever, in God's gracious arms. *refrain*

Let our hearts touch far horizons, so encompass great and small;  
Let our loving know no borders, faithful to God's call. *refrain*

Let the dreams we dream be larger than we've ever dreamed before;  
Let the dream of Christ be in us, opening every door. *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

*Sonata in D*, Scarlatti

Shannon

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### **Today's Worship Leaders**

preacher  
liturgist  
musicians

Rev. Dr. Paul Ashby  
Carolyn Holmgren  
Shannon Jones, Martha Jones

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### **Acknowledgements**

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