



# First Congregational Church

United Church of Christ

*"No matter who you are,  
or where you are  
on life's journey,  
you are welcome here."*

Senior Minister  
Rev. Tim Vander Haar

**Sunday, March 23, 2025**

1201 Jefferson Street  
Muskegon, Michigan 49441  
231-726-3254

[www.fccmuskegon.org](http://www.fccmuskegon.org)

**THIRD SUNDAY IN LENT  
MARCH 23, 2025**

*By calling ourselves progressive Christians, we mean that we are Christians  
who strive for peace and justice among all people.*

**WELCOME AND NEWS OF THE COMMUNITY**

**SHARING THE PEACE OF CHRST**

**PRELUDE**

*Psalm XVIII, by Benedetto Marcello*

**GATHERING PRAYER**

The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ,  
the love of God,  
and the communion of the Holy Spirit  
be with you all.

**And also with you.**

Let us pray.

**For many years, O God,  
people have quoted the advice of Pope Paul VI,  
"If you want peace, work for justice."**

**Many of us have taken that to heart and would follow that path,  
but we are also reminded how often we have  
no power in ourselves to help ourselves.**

**Grant us therefore the power that comes from acknowledging  
our need for your help and looking to you with faith  
for strength and guidance, even in the darkest of times.**

**We ask this through Jesus the Christ,  
who lives and reigns with you the Holy Spirit,  
one God, forever and ever.**

**Amen.**

\*Those who wish may stand\*

## OPENING HYMN

\*Those who wish may stand\*

### *There's A Wideness In God's Mercy*

The image shows a musical score for the hymn "There's A Wideness In God's Mercy". It consists of ten staves of music, each with a treble clef and a key signature of one sharp (F#). The time signature is 4/4. The lyrics are written below the notes, with hyphens indicating syllables that span across multiple notes. The lyrics are: "There's a wide - ness in God's mer - cy, For the love of God is broad - er like the wide - ness of the sea; than the mea - sures of our minds; there's a kind - ness in God's jus - tice, and the heart of the E - ter - nal which is more than lib - er - ty. is most won - der - ful - ly kind. There's no place where earth - ly sor - rows If our love were but more faith - ful, are more felt than in God's hea - ven; we would glad - ly trust God's word; there's no place where earth - ly fail - ings and our lives would show thanks - giv - ing have such kind - ly judg - ment given. for the good - nes of our God."

## SCRIPTURE READING

Luke 13:1-9

**A**t that very time there were some present who told him about the Galileans whose blood Pilate had mingled with their sacrifices. He asked them, "Do you think that because these Galileans suffered in this way they were worse sinners than all other Galileans? No, I tell you; but unless you repent, you will all perish as they did. Or those eighteen who were killed when the tower of Siloam fell on them—do you think that they were worse offenders than all the others living in Jerusalem? No, I tell you; but unless you repent, you will all perish just as they did." Then he told this parable: "A man had a fig tree planted in his vineyard; and he came looking for fruit on it and found none. So he said to the gardener, 'See here! For three years I have come looking for fruit on this fig tree, and still I find none. Cut it down! Why should it be wasting the soil?' He replied, 'Sir, let it alone for one more year, until I dig around it and put manure on it. If it bears fruit next year, well and good; but if not, you can cut it down.'"

## CHORAL ANTHEM

*Create In Me*, by Carl F. Mueller

Create in me a clean heart, O God;  
and renew a right spirit within me.  
Cast me not away from your presence;  
and take not thy holy spirit from me.  
Restore unto me the joy of thy salvation;  
and uphold me with thy free spirit.  
Then will I teach transgressors thy ways;  
and sinners shall be converted unto thee.  
Create in me a clean heart, O God.

© 1941 by G. Schirmer, Inc.

## MESSAGE

DO YOU THINK YOU ARE ANY BETTER?

\*Those who wish may stand\*

## HYMN

\*Those who wish may stand\*

### Amazing Grace



1. A - maz - ing grace! how sweet the  
2. 'Twas grace that taught my heart to  
3. The Lord has prom - ised good to  
4. Through man - y dan - gers, toils, and  
5. When we've been there ten thou - sand



sound, That saved a wretch like me!  
fear, And grace my fears re - lieved;  
me, His word my hope se - cures;  
snares, I have al - read - y come;  
years, Bright shin - ing as the sun,



I once was lost, but now am  
How pre - cious did that grace ap -  
He will my shield and por - tion  
'Tis grace has brought me safe thus  
We've no less days to sing God's



found, Was blind, but now I see.  
pear The hour I first be - lieved!  
be As long as life en - dures.  
far, And grace will lead me home.  
praise Than when we'd first be - gun.

Text: St. 1-4, John Newton, 1725-1807; st. 5, attr. to John Rees, fl.1859

Tune: NEW BRITAIN, CM; *Virginia Harmony*, 1831; harm. by Edwin O. Excell, 1851-1921

## PRAYERS OF THE PEOPLE

*. . . ending with the Lord's Prayer:*

**Our Father, who art in heaven, hallowed be thy name,  
thy kingdom come, thy 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 thine is the kingdom, and the power,  
and the glory, forever. Amen.**

## OFFERTORY REFLECTION

### OFFERTORY MUSIC

*Chant for Lent, by Steven Van Wye*

*Choir first, then ALL*



We a - dore you, O Christ, and we bless you.



You have re - deemed the world!

Copyright © 2018 by GIA Publications, Inc. • All rights reserved

## DOXOLOGY

**Praise God from whom all blessings flow;  
Praise God all creatures here below.  
Praise God above, ye heavenly host;  
Praise Father (*Creator*), Son (*Christ*), and Holy Ghost.  
Amen.**

## PRAYER OF DEDICATION

\*Those who wish may stand\*

## CLOSING HYMN

### *A Charge To Keep I Have*

\*Those who wish may stand\*

1 A charge to keep I have, a God to glo - ri - fy, a  
2 To serve the pres - ent age, my call - ing to ful - fill, O  
3 Arm me with watch - ful care as in thy sight to live, and  
4 Help me to watch and pray, and still on thee re - ly, O

nev - er - dy - ing soul to save, and fit it for the sky.  
may it all my powers en - gage to do my Mas - ter's will!  
now thy serv - ant, Lord, pre - pare a strict ac - count to give!  
let me not my trust be - tray, but press to realms on high.

The musical score is written for voice and piano. It consists of two systems. The first system has a vocal line in treble clef and a piano accompaniment in bass clef, both in 3/4 time. The second system continues the vocal line and piano accompaniment. The key signature has one sharp (F#).

WORDS: Charles Wesley (1707-1788)  
MUSIC: Lowell Mason (1792-1872)

BOYLSTON  
S.M.

## BLESSING AND SENDING

## POSTLUDE

*Postlude in D, by Healey Willan*

# Today's Service

Rev. Tim Vander Haar	Pastor
Dr. Michael Match	Music Director
John Mattson	Organist
The Motet Choir	Song Leaders
Jane Clingman-Scott	Liturgist
Blake Filius	Audio and Video

*All music reprinted by permission under ONELICENSE #A-727828*

**Flowers** are sponsored by Tom Linacre in honor of Amalina Linacre's 3<sup>rd</sup> birthday

On **Communion** Sundays we ask that you consider donating even one canned good or non-perishable food item and place it in the bushel basket in the Narthex for our food pantry.

**Progressive Christianity Foundations** - Faith Journey Discussion Series  
Progressive Christianity. **Today** at 11:45 am. All are welcome.

Join the Motet Choir, Canterbury Ringers, and Chamber Orchestra on Sunday March 30<sup>th</sup> at 3:00pm for a **Lenten Concert** featuring the Fauré Requiem. All are welcome, no tickets needed!

You Are Invited to **Line Dance With Amy Absolute Beginner Modern Line Dance Class NO EXPERIENCE NECESSARY** Wednesday Nights, 6 – 7 PM here at FCC in the lower level Activity Room. \$7.00 per session.  
Come dance with instructor/choreographer Amy Christian!

FCC hosts the free **Saturday Breakfast** Community Meal at FCC March 29th. Join us from 9:00 – 10:30 am for a nutritious, hot meal in Fellowship Hall. Please contact Donna Lachniet or just show up by 8:30 am to volunteer or to share a meal with friends and neighbors. Coinciding with the Breakfast Schedule, "Cowboy" Tom Hardy offers a **chapel service** for all who wish to attend at 10:45 a.m.

## FCC IS AN OPEN AND AFFIRMING COMMUNITY

"We, the people of First Congregational Church, United Church of Christ, of Muskegon, care for the welfare of our community and welcome everyone, no matter who you are or where you are on life's journey. We welcome into our community people of every age, race, nationality, mental and physical ability, economic and social status, faith background, marital standing, family structure, gender identity and expression, and sexual orientation. We also invite you to share in the life, leadership, worship, fellowship, sacraments, responsibilities, blessings, and joys of our congregation as we seek to grow together in faith and love."

*Adopted by congregational vote 10/17/21*