

FIRST CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH

UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST

1201 JEFFERSON STREET
MUSKEGON, MICHIGAN 49441

231-726-3254

fccmuskegon.org

REV. DR. BECKY EMERSON + SENIOR MINISTER

EIGHTEENTH SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST SEPTEMBER 27, 2026

**WELCOME & COMMUNITY NEWS
SHARING THE PEACE OF CHRIST**

PRELUDE

Prelude No. II from *Kleine Präludien und Intermezzi*, by Hermann Schroeder

GATHERING PRAYER

The grace of the 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:

**Our God, we are grateful for this time of gathering,
for this time of connecting with You,
with ourselves, and with our community.**

**We come from seasons of challenges and struggles,
from seasons of gratitude and joy.**

**This morning, we joined with so many across our land
and our world to worship. You gather people from
every tongue, tribe, and nation, with grace and care.
This morning, as we offer our worship with inspiring
music and uplifting hymns, may we be centered
and attuned. As we come to Your sacred space,
may our worship rise and may our souls
be refreshed. May your beauty be upon us!**

Amen.

Those who wish may stand

OPENING HYMN

God of the Women

Those who wish may stand

1. God of the wo - men who an - swered your call,
2. God of the wo - men who walked Je - sus' Way,
3. God of the wo - men who ran from the tomb,
4. O God of Poe - be and min - is - ters all,

Trust - ing your prom - is - es, giv - ing their all,
Giv - ing their re - sourc - es, learn - ing to pray,
Prayed with the oth - ers in that up - per room,
May we be joy - ful in an - swering your call.

Wo - men like Sar - ah and Han - nah and Ruth;
Ma - ry, Jo - an - na, Su - san - na, and more;
Then felt your Spir - it on Pen - te - cost day;
Give us the strength of your Spir - it so near

Give us their cour - age to live in your truth.
May we give free - ly as they did be - fore.
May we so glad - ly pro - claim you to - day.
That we may share in your min - is - try here.

SCRIPTURE READING

Romans 16:1-16

I commend to you our sister Phoebe, a deacon of the church at Cenchreae, so that you may welcome her in the Lord, as is fitting for the saints, and help her in whatever she may require from you, for she has been a benefactor of many and of myself as well.

Greet Prisca and Aquila, my coworkers in Christ Jesus, who risked their necks for my life, to whom not only I give thanks but also all the churches of the gentiles. Greet also the church in their house. Greet my beloved Epaenetus, who was the first convert in Asia for Christ. Greet Mary, who has worked very hard for you. Greet Andronicus and Junia, my fellow Israelites who were in prison with me; they are prominent among the apostles, and they were in Christ before I was. Greet Ampliatus, my beloved in the Lord. Greet Urbanus, our coworker in Christ, and my beloved Stachys. Greet Apelles, who is approved in Christ. Greet those who belong to the family of Aristobulus. Greet my fellow Israelite Herodion. Greet those in the Lord who belong to the family of Narcissus. Greet those workers in the Lord, Tryphaena and Tryphosa. Greet the beloved Persis, who has worked hard in the Lord. Greet Rufus, chosen in the Lord, and greet his mother—a mother to me also. Greet Asyncritus, Phlegon, Hermes, Patrobas, Hermas, and the brothers and sisters who are with them. Greet Philologus, Julia, Nereus and his sister, and Olympas, and all the saints who are with them. Greet one another with a holy kiss. All the churches of Christ greet you.

Leader: This is the Word of the Lord.

People: Thanks be to God!

CHORAL ANTHEM

Arms Opened Wide, by Howard Helvey and Mary Louise Bringle

Arms opened wide to the needs of the neighbor;
eyes opened wide by the wonders of God's will;
daring to venture on pathways uncharted,
we move in faith that our God is speaking still.

Doors opened wide as a bold sign of welcome;
minds opened wide to the meanings of God's call;
"No longer alien or stranger or outcast—
my holy house is a house of prayer for all."

Hopes opened wide toward the light of the future,
hearts opened wide by the blessings of the past,
we pledge our lives to God's promise unfolding:
that love and justice shall fill the earth at last!

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MESSAGE

Community Life

Those who wish may stand

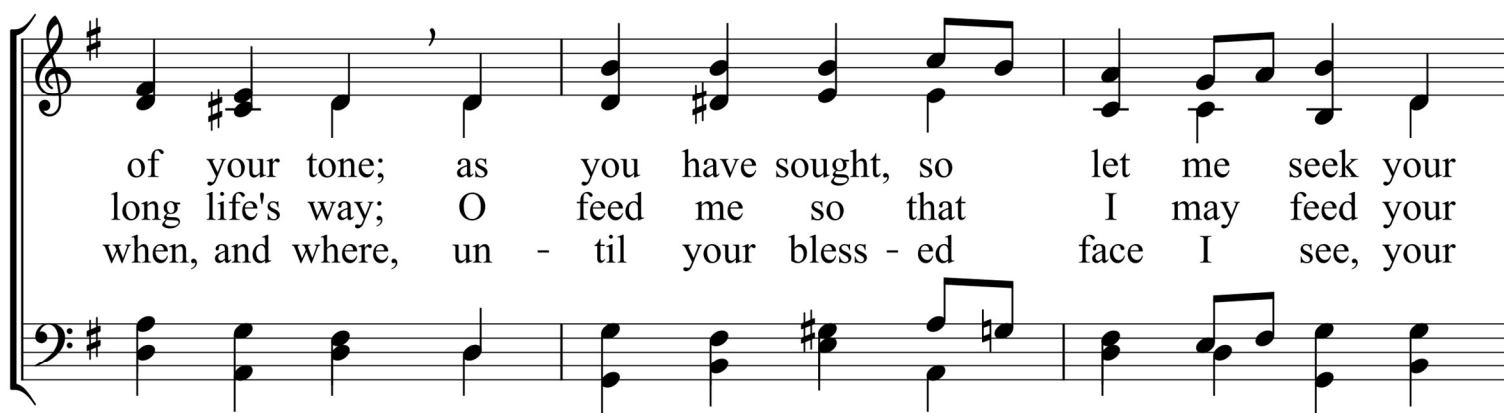
HYMN OF REFLECTION

Those who wish may stand

God, Speak to Me



God, speak to me, that I may speak in liv - ing ech - oes
O lead me, God, that I may lead some wan - der - ers a -
O use me, God, use ev - en me just as you will, and



of your tone; as you have sought, so let me seek your
long life's way; O feed me so that I may feed your
when, and where, un - til your bless - ed face I see, your



err - ing chil - dren lost and lone.
hun - gry ones with - out de - lay.
rest, your joy, your glo - ry share.

Text: Frances Ridley Havergal, 1872; alt., Tune: CANONBURY, Arr. from Robert Schumann, 1872

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.**

MOMENT FOR MISSION

Saturday Breakfast Garden

OFFERTORY INVITATION

OFFERTORY MUSIC

Christ be Near at Either Hand, by Andrew Wright
GREYSTONES, *Traditional Irish Melody*, Joseph Dixon, Soloist

Christ be near at either hand, Christ behind, before me stand.
Christ with me wher-e'er I go, Christ around, above, below.

Christ be in my head and mind, Christ within my soul enshrined,
Christ control my wayward heart; Christ abide and ne'er depart.

Christ my life and only way, Christ my lantern night and day;
Christ be my unchanging friend, Guide and shepherd to the end.

Christ the King and Lord of all find me ready at his call;
Christ receive my service whole. Hand and body, heart and soul.

Christ the King of Kings descend and of tyrants make an end;
Christ on us and all below concord, love, and peace bestow.

Arrangement © 2006, Andrew Wright; Published by OCP

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

Those who wish may stand

All Praise to Our Redeeming Lord

The musical score is written for a three-part setting (Soprano, Alto, and Bass) in 3/2 time, with a key signature of one sharp (F#). The lyrics are arranged in four lines, each corresponding to a musical phrase. The first line of the score includes a large bracket on the left side, spanning the first two staves. The lyrics are: 'All praise to our re - deem - ing Lord, who He bids us build each oth - er up; and We all par - take the joy of one, the And if our fel - low - ship be - low in joins us by his grace and bids us each to gath - ered in - to one, to our high call - ing's com - mon peace we feel; a peace to sen - sual Je - sus be so sweet, what height of rap - ture each re - stored, to - geth - er seek his face. glo - rious hope, we hand in hand go on. minds un - known, a joy un - speak - a - ble. shall we know when 'round his throne we meet!'

All praise to our re - deem - ing Lord, who
He bids us build each oth - er up; and
We all par - take the joy of one, the
And if our fel - low - ship be - low in
joins us by his grace and bids us each to
gath - ered in - to one, to our high call - ing's
com - mon peace we feel; a peace to sen - sual
Je - sus be so sweet, what height of rap - ture
each re - stored, to - geth - er seek his face.
glo - rious hope, we hand in hand go on.
minds un - known, a joy un - speak - a - ble.
shall we know when 'round his throne we meet!

Text: Charles Wesley, 1747., Tune: AZMON, Carl G. Gläser, 1828

BLESSING AND SENDING

POSTLUDE

Prelude No. VI from *Kleine Präludien und Intermezzi*,
by Hermann Schroeder

Today's Service

Rev. Dr. Becky Emerson	Senior Minister
Dr. Michael Match	Director of Music
John Mattson	Organist
Motet Choir	Leaders of Song
Jane Clingman-Scott	Liturgist/Prayer
Blake Filius	Audio and Video

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Altar flowers are given in loving memory of Monique Francoise Kahrs
by her family, marking 5 years since her passing.

Child Care is available on the second floor for infants & toddlers.

Cookies for Sunday Fellowship: Last names beginning with O-S are asked to donate during the
Sundays in October. Please provide descriptions to safely avoid any allergies. Thank you!

Choir Camp will be held TODAY from 2:30-4:30 PM.

There is still time to join us for this season! See Michael Match for any questions.

Genders And Sexualities Alliance (GSA) meet Mondays at 7 PM here.

Questions may be directed to members of that department, contact the church office
(231) 726-3254, or in the calendar event on the website at www.fccmuskegon.org,
go to the event and click on it for details.

Mobile Food Pantry will be held in our parking lot on Saturday, October 3. Volunteers are
appreciated and are asked to dress for the weather and be there about 9 AM to help unload the
truck and get things ready to be opened by 10.

Single Women's Group Luncheon will be on Tuesday, October 6 at 1:00 PM
at Mr. B's, 1910 E. Apple Ave.

Please sign up or contact Judy Dewall 734-478-3716.

New or gently used coats children thru adult sizes are being collected. Drop them off in the
basket in the Lobby. We will distribute at the Saturday Breakfast in November. Sponsored by
Congregational Life Dept.

The Crop Hunger Walk takes place next Sunday, October 4.

Riva will be in the Lobby this morning with registration packets. Saturday Breakfast
is one of the recipients from the Crop Walk.

FCC's 3rd Annual Heartfelt Hand Made Craft Fair will be held Saturday, October 24 from
10 AM – 3 PM. We are also looking for vendors. Please help us spread the word!
Interested vendors may contact the church office: 231-726-3254.

Trunk or Treat returns. Congregational Life will be collecting donations of candy and may be
left at the Welcome Center. Trunk or Treat will be held on Tuesday, Oct. 25 from 5-7PM.
Please sign up if you would like to decorate your trunk! Take a flier for details.

The Soul Box Project. Central United Methodist Church invites you to experience a powerful
memorial to lives lost to gun violence from September 22 through October 8. Please help
yourself to a flier at the Welcome Center for more information.

Join us at the Saturday Breakfast Garden every Saturday – weather permitting from 10:00 AM
till noon and or Tuesdays from 1-3 PM. A bike clinic will be held on October 10 from 9 AM-noon
at the Saturday Garden. (Last clinic for the season.)

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