

FIRST CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH

UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST

1201 JEFFERSON STREET
MUSKEGON, MICHIGAN 49441

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fccmuskegon.org

REV. DR. BECKY EMERSON + SENIOR MINISTER

SIXTEENTH SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST SEPTEMBER 13, 2026

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

PRELUDE

"Prière à Notre-Dame," from *Suite Gothique*, Op 25, by Léon Boëlmann

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:

Transcendent One, you are Eternal and Infinite.

And yet you are personal and caring.

**Today, we have gathered in Your presence,
coming with challenges and joys of the past week.**

**We have come because you bid us to come,
to come and join many across this land
and the global family, to worship you!**

You have been our dwelling place in all generations.

**Before the mountains were brought forth,
and You have formed the earth, you are God!**

So, let the beauty of our God be upon us, as we gather.

Amen.

Those who wish may stand

OPENING HYMN

O Praise the Gracious Power

Those who wish may stand

O praise the gra-cious power that tum - bles walls of fear And
O praise in - clu - sive love, en - cir - cling ev - ery race, Ob -
O praise the tide of grace that laps at ev - ery shore With
O praise the liv - ing Christ with faith's bright song - ful voice! An -

gath - ers in one house of faith all stran - gers far and near:
liv - i - ous to gen - der, wealth, to so - cial rank or place:
vi - sions of a world at peace, no long - er bled by war:
nounce the Gos - Pel to the world and with these words re - joice:

We praise you, Christ! Your cross has made us one!
We praise you, Christ!

Text: Thomas Troeger, © 1985 Oxford University Press, Inc., Tune: MARION, Arthur H. Messiter, 1883

SCRIPTURE READINGS

Ephesians 2: 13-19

But now in Christ Jesus you who once were far off have been brought near by the blood of Christ. For he is our peace; in his flesh he has made both into one and has broken down the dividing wall, that is, the hostility between us, abolishing the law with its commandments and ordinances, that he might create in himself one new humanity in place of the two, thus making peace, and might reconcile both to God in one body through the cross, thus putting to death that hostility through it.

So he came and proclaimed peace to you who were far off and peace to those who were near, for through him both of us have access in one Spirit to the Father. So then, you are no longer strangers and aliens, but you are fellow citizens with the saints and also members of the household of God

2 Corinthians 5: 18-21

All this is from God, who reconciled us to himself through Christ and has given us the ministry of reconciliation; that is, in Christ God was reconciling the world to himself, not counting their trespasses against them, and entrusting the message of reconciliation to us. So we are ambassadors for Christ, since God is making his appeal through us; we entreat you on behalf of Christ: be reconciled to God. For our sake God made the one who knew no sin to be sin, so that in him we might become the righteousness of God.

Isaiah 57: 15

For thus says the high and lofty one who inhabits eternity, whose name is Holy:
I dwell in the high and holy place and also with those who are contrite and humble in spirit, to revive the spirit of the humble and to revive the heart of the contrite.

Leader: This is the Word of the Lord.

People: Thanks be to God!

CHORAL ANTHEM

Unless You Learn, by Marty Haugen

David Abdelkader, Soloist; Diane Goodman, Cellist

1. Unless you learn to see as a little child, you will never see the Reign of God.
Let your eyes be opened to the holiness in the simple and the small.
Come and learn from these little ones, learn to see with the eyes of faith.
And you may see the Reign of God in the simplest things of all.
2. Unless you learn to love as a little child, you will never touch the Reign of God.
Let your heart be opened to the holiness in the simple and the small.
All who welcome these little ones, will be welcoming me indeed.
And you may touch the Reign of God in the gentlest things of all.
3. Unless you learn to live as a little child, *(Jesus loves me, this I know...)*
you will never know the Reign of God. *(...for the Bible tells me so.)*
Let your life speak always of the holiness *(Little ones to Him belong...)*
in the simple and the small. *(...they are weak but He is strong.)*
Come and learn to be little ones, *(Yes, Jesus loves me)*
learn to serve as the least of all. *(Yes, Jesus loves me)*
And you may know the Reign of God *(Yes Jesus loves me...)*
in the simple, humble call. *(...the Bible tells me so)*

And you shall see the Reign of God in the humblest ones of all.

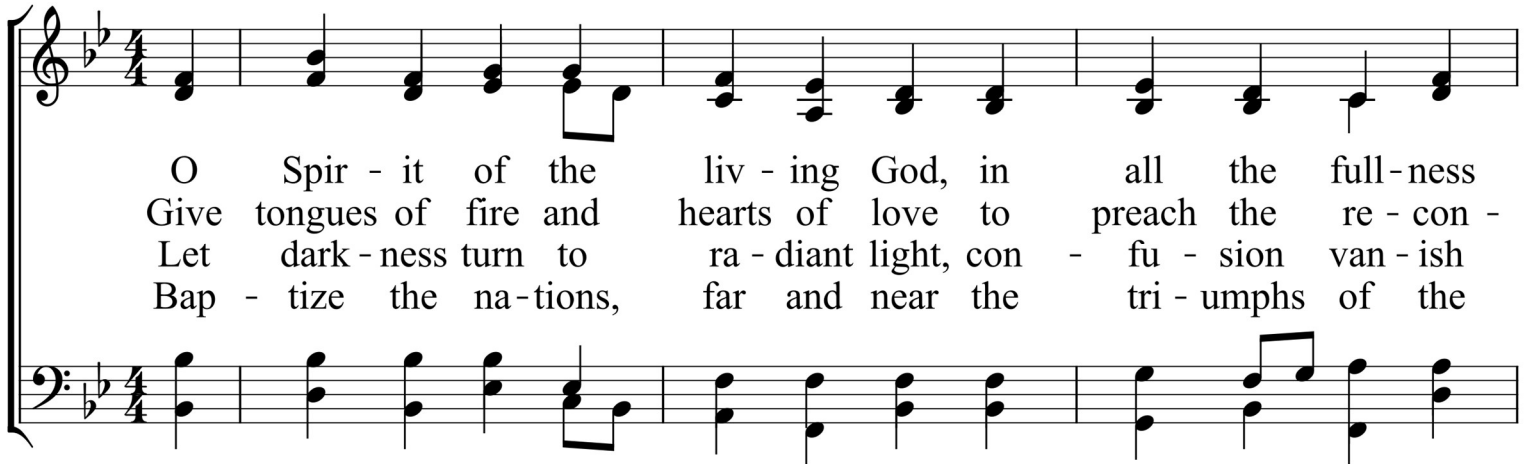
MESSAGE
Divine Connection

Those who wish may stand

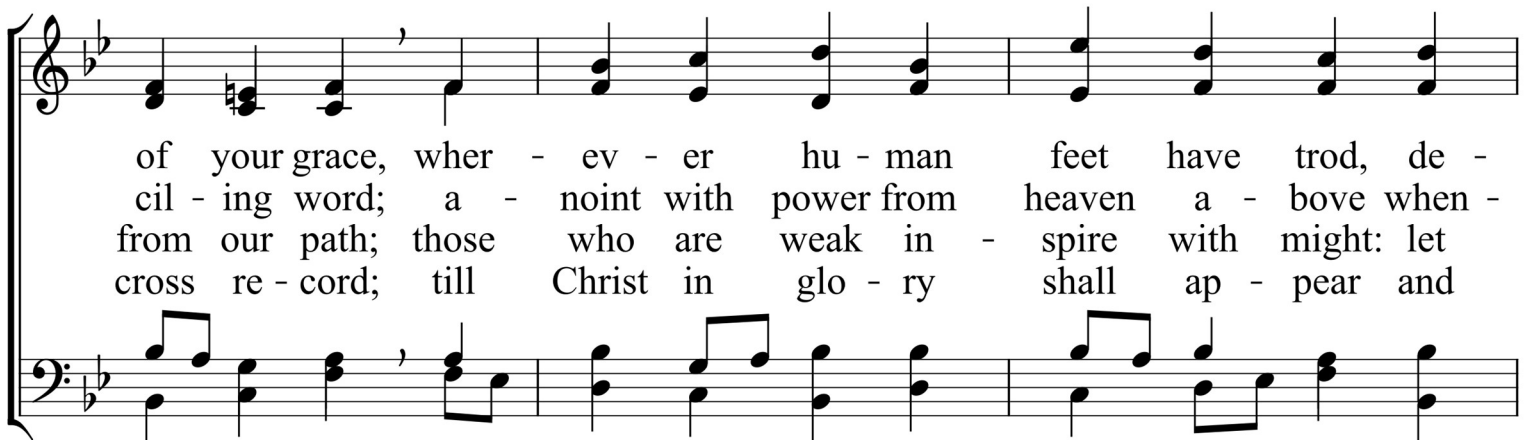
HYMN OF REFLECTION

Those who wish may stand

O Spirit of the Living God



O Spir - it of the liv - ing God, in all the full - ness
Give tongues of fire and hearts of love to preach the re - con -
Let dark - ness turn to ra - diant light, con - fu - sion van - ish
Bap - tize the na - tions, far and near the tri - umphs of the



of your grace, wher - ev - er hu - man feet have trod, de -
cil - ing word; a - noint with power from heaven a - bove when -
from our path; those who are weak in - spire with might: let
cross re - cord; till Christ in glo - ry shall ap - pear and



scend up - on our fal - len race.
ev - er Gos - pel truth is heard.
mer - cy tri - umph ov - er wrath!
ev - ery race de - clare him Lord!

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 INVITATION

OFFERTORY MUSIC

Bless The Lord, O My Soul, by Ippolitoff-Ivanoff

Bless the Lord O my soul; and all that is within me, bless his name.
Bless the Lord, O my soul; and forget not all his benefits.
Bless the Lord O my soul; and all that is within me, bless his name.
For his is gracious and plenteous in mercy.
As a father pitieth his children,
So the Lord pitieth them that fear him,
and remember his commandments, to do them.
Bless the Lord O my soul; and all that is within me, bless his holy name.
Bless the Lord, my soul.

© 1940 by Neil A Kyos Music Co., Chicago

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

Church of God, Elect and Glorious

1 Church of God, e - lect and glo - rious, ho - ly na - tion, cho - sen race;
2 God has called you out of dark - ness in - to his most mar - velous light;
3 Once you were an al - ien peo - ple, stran - gers to God's heart of love;
4 Church of God, e - lect and ho - ly, be the peo - ple he in - tends;

called as God's own spe - cial peo - ple, roy - al priests and heirs of grace:
brought his truth to life with - in you, turned your blind - ness in - to sight.
but he brought you home in mer - cy, cit - i - zens of heaven a - bove.
strong in faith and swift to an - swer each com - mand your Mas - ter sends:

know the pur - pose of your call - ing, show to all his might - y deeds;
Let your light so shine a - round you that God's name is glo - ri - fied;
Let his love flow out to oth - ers, let them feel a Fa - ther's care;
roy - al priests, ful - fill your call - ing through your sac - ri - fice and prayer;

tell of love which knows no lim - its, grace that meets all hu - man needs.
and all find fresh hope and pur - pose in Christ Je - sus cru - ci - fied.
that they too may know his wel - come and his count - less bless - ings share.
give your lives in joy - ful serv - ice—sing his praise, his love de - clare.

WORDS: James E. Seddon (1915-1983), para. 1 Peter 2:9-12

MUSIC: John Wyeth's *Repository of Sacred Music*, 1813

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NETTLETON

8.7.8.7.D.

BLESSING AND SENDING

POSTLUDE

"Menuet Gothique," from *Suite Gothique*, Op 25, by Léon Boëlmann

Today's Service

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

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Altar flowers are sponsored by Eddie and Trina Jankowski in recognition of the 25th anniversary of September 11th. Copies of a letter regarding 9/11 are at the Welcome Center that Eddie would like to share with you.

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

Coffee Fellowship will take place in the lobby this morning.

Please stay for our "Welcome Back Sunday Potluck and Trivia" in Fellowship Hall at 11:45.

Thank you Tom & Diane Goodman for hosting Trivia. Sponsored by Congregational Life.

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

Revised Picture Directories are ready for members and long time attendees at the Welcome Center. A donation of \$10 is recommended if you can, to help cover the cost. If you have a directory from September 6, you may pick up a revised version at no cost.

Choir Camp will be held Sunday, September 27th from 2:30-4:30 PM.

Come, be a part of our choir or just to see what we are about!

Saturday Breakfast will be September 26 (last Saturday of each month) from 9-10:30 AM and is a free community breakfast-buffet style. Volunteers are encouraged to help.

Tom "Cowboy" Hardy offers a Chapel Service following the breakfast. All are welcome.

The Saturday Breakfast Garden invites you to help out Saturdays from 10 AM to noon.

Tools are provided. Bring the family! We are across the street from the church.

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 check under the calendar event on the website for details at www.fccmuskegon.org.

A new and clean used coat drive has begun in September. New or gently used coats children through 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.

Year 5 of "Let's Make a Mess" acrylic pour paint class will be Wednesday, September 16th at 1 PM in FCC's decor room in the lower level. There is no charge for the class and everyone is welcome. Each participant will be asked to bring materials. Please sign up and get a Materials List at the Welcome Center.

September Mission of the Month: CROPwalk
The Crop Hunger Walk takes place Sunday, October 4.

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.

We will be collecting candy for our annual Trunk or Treat night.
It can be dropped off at the Welcome Center. Thank you!

When The Rabbis Came To Town

A play by Roger Rapoport and Leslye Witt starring Adam Bell.

September 26, 2026 – 4:00 PM at First Congregational Church, U.C.C.,

All First Congregational member families are welcome to attend this performance at no charge. (Our suggested donation is \$10). Fliers are at the Welcome Center for detailed information. It is also on our website in the calendar section.

Just click on the line for the event on that date and information will come up.

May also contact Roger at rogerdrapoport@me.com or call 231-720-0930.

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.

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