



God is still speaking

First Congregational Church, UCC
Seventh Sunday of Easter
May 24, 2020
Rev. Dr. Daniel Ling

Our Mission: Feeding the hungry in body, mind, and spirit
*“No matter who you are or where you are on life’s journey,
you are welcome at First Congregational Church.”*

Welcome

It is a joy to connect with you today. You are here in spirit. God is Spirit. Let us worship God in spirit and in truth.

Statement of Oneness (*unison*)

We were made in the image of God; thus, as we grow in faith and mature in spirit, that image shall shine all the more clearly. Like Jesus, we are children of God; thus, as our birthright, we shall live all our days surrounded by unconditional love. Humanity, the Image of God, is beautiful in God’s sight, part of a magnificent creation; therefore, we are beautiful in God’s eyes.

The Scriptures declare that the entire Kingdom of God is within us. Also, we live our lives immersed in Divinity. We gather to celebrate that sacred and wondrous Truth.

Many hurtful and unjust things happen in our world, motivated by hatred or fear. Yet also there is love in our hearts. Let us declare that love, acknowledge it is of God, and promise to grow in love day by day. Amen

Call to Worship

Psalm 68 (The Message)

One: When the righteous see God in action, they'll laugh and sing for joy.

All: Sing hymns to God. Enjoy God and cheer when you see God at work.

One: God makes homes for the homeless, leads prisoners to freedom, but leaves rebels to rot in hell.

All: Blessed be the Lord - day after day God carries us along

One: He's our Savior, our God, oh yes!

All: He is God-for-us, he's God-who-saves-us.

***Hymn #240**

I Love Your Church, O God

those dis-tressed, long-ing for life ev-er-last-ing.
to re-main, built in our bod-ies God's tem-ple.
show his face, bless-ings up-on them be-stow-ing.

I Love Your Church, O God

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1. I love your church, O God, on earth your
2. I love your church, O God, whose walls be-
3. In love my tears shall fall, in love my
4. Be-yond my high-est joys, I prize your

blest a-bode, one faith-ful bo-dy
fore you stand, dear as the ap-ple
prayers as-cend, to serve your church, my
church-'s ways, its sweet com-mun-ion,

saved by Christ with his own pre-cious blood.
of your eye, and grav-en on your hand.
toils be given, till toils and cares shall end.
sol-emn vows, its hymns of love and praise.

WORDS: Timothy Dwight, 1801, alt.
MUSIC: Aaron Williams' *New Universal Psalmodist*, 1770

ST. THOMAS
SM

Timothy Dwight was President of Yale College. In this hymn we see him as a bridge between the Calvinism of his grandfather Jonathan Edwards and the more liberal theology to follow.

FOUNDATION

Morning Prayer (*unison*)

Dear God, all that you are, all that you say, all that you have done and are still doing on our behalf speaks of your graciousness. You are slow to anger and abounding in steadfast love. In Jesus, we see how gracious you are. He died

for us while we were yet sinners. You lift us up whenever we stumble and fall. Your patience, mercy, grace and love never ends. Help us to be gracious to others. Amen

Scripture

1 Peter 4: 12-14, 5:6-11 (The Message)

Friends, when life gets really difficult, don't jump to the conclusion that God isn't on the job. Instead, be glad that you are in the very thick of what Christ experienced. This is a spiritual refining process, with glory just around the corner. If you are abused because of Christ, count yourself fortunate. It's the Spirit of God and his glory in you that brought you to the notice of others.

So be content with who you are, and don't put on airs. God's strong hand is on you; he'll promote you at the right time. Live carefree before God; he is most careful with you. Keep a cool head. Stay alert. The Devil is poised to pounce, and would like nothing better than to catch you napping.

Keep your guard up. You're not the only ones plunged into these hard times. It's the same with Christians all over the world. So keep a firm grip on the faith. The suffering won't last forever. It won't be long before this generous God who has great plans for us in Christ - eternal and glorious plans they are! - will have you put together and on your feet for good. He gets the last word; yes, he does.

Scripture

John 17:1-11

After Jesus had spoken these words, he looked up to heaven and said, "Father, the hour has come, glorify your Son so that the Son may glorify you, since you have given him authority over all people, to give eternal life to all whom you have given him. And this is eternal life, that they may know you, the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom you have sent. I glorified you on earth by finishing the work that you gave me to do. So now, Father, glorify me in your own presence with the glory that I had in your presence before the world existed.

I have made your name known to those whom you gave me from the world. They were yours, and you gave them to me, and they have kept your word. Now they know that everything you have given me is from you, for the words that you gave to me I have given to them and they have received them and know in truth that I came from you and they have believed that you sent me. I am asking on their behalf; I am not asking on behalf of the world, but on behalf of those whom you gave me, because they are yours. All mine are yours, and yours are mine; and I have been glorified in them. And now I am no longer in the world, but they are in the world, and I am coming to you. Holy Father, protect them in your name that you have given me, so that they may be ONE, as we are One.

Sermon

Jesus Prays for Us, That's True Grace!

Prayer Requests and Offertory Reminder

***Hymn #333**

Lord, Dismiss Us with Your Blessing

Lord, Dismiss Us with Your Blessing

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1. Lord, dis - miss us with your bless - ing; fill our hearts with
 2. Thanks we give and ad - o - ra - tion for the gos - pel's
 3. So that when your love shall call us, Sav - ior, from the

joy and peace; let us each, your love pos - sess - ing,
 joy - ful sound; may the fruits of your sal - va - tion
 world a - way, fear of death shall not ap - pall us,

tri - umph in re - deem - ing grace: oh, re - fresh us,
 in our hearts and lives a - bound: ev - er faith - ful,
 glad your sum - mons to o - bey: may we ev - er,

oh, re - fresh us, trav - eling through this wil - der - ness.
 ev - er faith - ful to the truth may we be found.
 may we ev - er reign with you in end - less day.

WORDS: Attr. John Fawcett, 1773, alt.
 MUSIC: Sicilian melody, 18th century; *The European Magazine and Review*, 1792

SICILIAN MARINERS
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Moved to commitment by a sermon of English evangelist George Whitefield, John Fawcett became a Baptist minister. He wrote over 160 hymns, including 'Blest Be the Tie That Binds.'

GOING FORTH

Benediction

May the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, the love of God, the comfort, guidance and challenge of the Holy Spirit, be with each one of you, now and always. Go in peace and the God of peace go with you. Amen