



THE HEART OF
SEEKING:
LOVE
as Our Guide

***Fourth Sunday in
Epiphany***

February 2, 2025



FIRST CONGREGATIONAL
SALEM OREGON
UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST

***We are an Open and Affirming
and Just Peace Congregation***

***No matter who you are,
Or where you are on your life's journey,
You are welcome here!***

Welcome to First Congregational United Church of Christ. Whether you come here every Sunday or are here for the first time, know that you are welcome!

Please take a moment during the **welcome** to sign our **Friendship Pad** at the end of the pew. If you are new, we'd love to get your contact info so we can reach out during the week. Let us know if you would like to get on our mailing list so we can share our weekly newsletter with you.

We Love Kids and Families!

We have created a space in the back of the sanctuary for families and children.

It is a space designed for kids to have quiet activities during worship—art projects, legos, reading, etc.—and we have Busy bags as well to help the “*smallers*” share this time with us. If you find the quiet activities are distracting to you we invite you to sit in the main part of the sanctuary. Help us support our intergenerational community by sitting where you can get your needs met.

Thank you for sharing your time and spirit with us this morning!

When you see an asterisk, () please stand in body or spirit as you are able.*

NCH = New Century Hymnal, Black Hardbound Cover

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT OF THE LAND

We offer the following acknowledgment of the communities of Indigenous People who first lived in the land we call the Willamette Valley. These are the tribes with whom we are walking together even today: the Kalapuya , tribes that include Tualatin (Atfalati), Yamhill (Yamel), Ahantchuyuk (Pudding River), Luckiamute, Santiam, Chepenefa (Mary's River), Chemapho (Muddy Creek), Tsankupi (Calapooia River), Mohawk (Mohawk River, OR; unrelated to the Mohawks of NY), Chafan (near Eugene), Chelamela (Long Tom River), Winefelly (Mohawk, McKenzie and Coast Forks of the Willamette River), and the Yoncalla peoples.

PRELUDES

Remembrance

Martin

Prelude on the Early American Hymn Tune “Dove of Peace”

Martin

WELCOMING ALL

RINGING THE BOWL

CALLING IN THE SPIRIT

One: Come, seekers of God's truth, come with open hearts and searching spirits..

Many: We come longing for love that is patient, love that is kind.

One: Come, bring your doubts and your questions, your fears and your hopes.

Many: We come seeking the love that bears all things, believes all things, hopes all things, endures all things.

One: The Spirit of the Lord is here, calling us to proclaim good news to the poor, freedom for the oppressed, and healing for the brokenhearted.

Many: We come, ready to follow the way of love, to be led by God's Spirit, and to be transformed by God's call.

***SINGING TOGETHER** *Won't You Let Me Be Your Servant*

NCH 539

PRAYER FOR GOING DEEPER

One: God of boundless love,
We confess that sometimes we struggle to seek you with open hearts.
We allow fear to restrict our vision, resentment to shrink our spirits,
and selfishness to lead our actions.

Many: Forgive us, O God, and turn our hearts toward your love.

One: Too often, we hold back when you call us to step out in Love. We let old wounds and divisions keep us from seeking unity, and we doubt the power of your Spirit to bring healing, reconciliation, and wholeness.

Many: Forgive us, O God, and remind us that your love never fails.

One: Let us open our hearts to the Spirit of Love today.

Silence is Shared

One: Friends, hear this truth: God's love is patient and kind, forgiving and transforming. Even when we fall short, God's grace is sufficient for all life. Let us embrace the call to love friend and foe alike, trusting that God's Spirit is at work in and through us.

Many: Thanks be to God. May this be so! Amen.

One: Trusting in Christ's promise of renewal, let us offer God's peace to one another this morning.

***SHARING THE PEACE**

One: May the Peace of Christ be with you.

Many: And also with you.

You are invited to find someone you do not yet know and offer them your peace.

At the end we will offer the world our peace together.

PRAYERS FOR ALL PEOPLE AND THE LORD'S PRAYER

Come and Find a Quiet Center by Shirley Erena Murray

**Vs. 1: Come and find a quiet center in the crowded life we lead,
find the room for hope to enter, find the frame where we are freed:
Clear the chaos and the clutter, clear our eyes that we can see
all the things that really matter, be at peace and simply be.**

We will pray in three parts for the **world**, the **community**, and **each other** with a time of silence between each section.

**Our Creator, who dwells with us in love,
Holy is your name.**

**May your way of love come,
And your will for peace and justice be done,
On earth as it is in heaven.**

Give us today the nourishment we need for our bodies and souls.

**Forgive us when we fail to love,
As we forgive those who have failed to love us.**

**Lead us away from paths of fear or hatred,
And guide us in the way of your love.**

**For yours is the realm of peace, the power of grace, and the radiance of
love, Now and forever. Amen.**

Come and Find a Quiet Center

**Vs 3: In the Spirit let us travel, open to each other's pain,
let our lives and fears unravel, celebrate the space we gain:
There's a place for deepest dreaming, there's a time for heart to care,
in the Spirit's lively scheming there is always room to spare.**

READINGS Luke 4:21-30, 1 Corinthians 13:1-13

REFLECTION The Heart of Seeking: Love as Our Guide

COMMUNION HYMN *I Come with Joy* **NCH 349**

SHARING THE MEAL OF LOVE

GATHERING OUR GIFTS

If you wish to make a financial donation today, you may

- ◆ Text the amount of your donation to **(833) 367-9224**
- ◆ Use the QR code to the right:
- ◆ Give online at www.uccsaalem.org by simply clicking on **Donate** button
- ◆ Or you can always leave a check or cash or mail a check to our physical address: First Congregational Church UCC, 700 Marion Street NE, Salem, OR 97301



Thank you to everyone who has made a pledge and who gives through their bank or other electronic portals.

OFFERTORY *There is a Balm in Gilead* Spiritual/arr. Diemer

***DEDICATION CHORUS** *What Does the Lord Require of Us?* **NCH BACK COVER**

*DEDICATION OF THE GIFTS GIVEN AND RECEIVED

ANNOUNCEMENTS

Please read the announcements printed in the bulletin and in the entryway video. If you have something to share that is not in the bulletin, please come to the microphone at the front or raise your hand and someone will bring the microphone to you.

Please remember to fill in your name and contact info in the Friendship Pads.

*SINGING TOGETHER

Love As Our Guide original lyrics by Robin Lunn
to the tune of "The Water is Wide"

The path is long, the road unclear,
Yet love will guide, and calm our fear.
Through storms and doubt,
we walk as one,
Until the work of love is done.

Where hearts are hurt,
where hope is thin,
Love beckons us to enter in.
To heal, to hold, to lift, to share,
Love sends us forth to meet God there.

Now as we go, God's call is clear,
To serve with love and draw all near.
To heal, to build, to bring release,
And show the world God's gift of peace.

So let us go, both strong and free,
To build a world where all can see:
The love of God, so deep, so wide,
A boundless grace for all our lives.

*BENEDICTION AND BLESSING

POSTLUDE

Didn't My Lord Deliver Daniel Spiritual/arr. Drennan

*During the Postlude, you are invited to leave or remain and quietly listen to the music.
Please join us for fellowship downstairs following worship!*



With Thanks to:

Ushers/ Greeters : Bill Hayden
Liturgist/Reader: Ann Krier
Worship on Duty: Judith Taussig
Finance on Duty:

ANNOUNCEMENTS

Ella Curran Food Bank -- is collecting donations of winter coats, hats, gloves, scarves, and heavy sweatshirts, as well as blankets for the winter. Ongoing needs are: toilet paper, feminine pads, diapers sized 3-6, and winter clothing. Questions? Contact Rebecca Ralston.

About today's keyboard music: The folk tune known as "Dove of Peace" was first set to a hymn text in the 1835 collection *Southern Harmony*. It has subsequently been set with a number of other texts, including that of our Communion hymn, "I Come with Joy." The offertory and postlude are both based on spirituals, in recognition of the beginning of Black History Month. Emma Lou Diemer's setting of "There is a Balm in Gilead" is a tone painting of the text, alternating quiet sections for the words of reassurance of the refrain, with louder, more agitated sections for the words of distress and discouragement of the verses. The spiritual "Didn't My Lord Deliver Daniel" refers to the Biblical story of Daniel in the lion's den, and was sung by slaves as a connection with God and affirming their belief that they would someday be freed.

Bell Choir Anniversary

Did you know that 50 years ago a church member presented our congregation with the first two octaves (25 bells) of Handbells? Now we have a total of 62 bells!

In celebration of this anniversary, we would like those who are interested - and can read music - to join us for a rehearsal in early February. The rehearsal will most likely be right after the service on Sunday and last an hour. Our goal is to perform at church through the Lenten and Easter season and hopefully in May also.

Please attend if you are interested. Even if you have never played before, there will be lots of instruction - and fun! The dates for the rehearsals will be announced at church and will also be in the *Weekly Word*. Looking forward to seeing some of you! Jean O'Grady

Join us Sunday morning's at 9:45 AM for **First Light Meditation** led by Judith Taussig. This is an opportunity to deepen your spiritual practice in a contemplative form.

2025 DATES TO SAVE

- ◆ **February 2-March 2**—Pastor Robin will be away on a combined **vacation and sabbatical**. This is part of her call agreement as well as the Resurrecting process.
- ◆ **February 6 @ 1 PM**—Know Your Rights Training: Together Lab is offering this free training for faith communities wanting to prepare for immigration enforcement actions.
- ◆ **March 4th @ 5:30 PM**—Shrove Tuesday Pancake Supper
- ◆ **March 5 @ 5:30 PM**—Ash Wednesday
- ◆ **March 8 @ 6 AM to 1 PM**—Super Saturday with the Southern New England Conference United Church of Christ. Rev. William Barber will be the Keynote Speaker.

Check the website and Weekly Word for details!

ONGOING JUSTICE OPPORTUNITIES

- ◆ **Moral Monday Marches**—**Poor People's Campaign Oregon: every Monday at noon**, starting at First Christian on the corner of Cottage and Marion.
- ◆ **Peace Walks**—Join a diverse groups of Salemites as we walk in different neighborhoods across town to support gun violence reduction initiatives. Find the schedule here—<https://www.salemlf.org/peacewalks/>
- ◆ Watch for **Mission and Justice Ministry Circle** legislative initiatives!

!PASTOR ROBIN'S CAFE CHAT HOURS ARE CHANGING!

As of January 20th, Pastor Robin will **not be holding Ike Box hours on Wednesdays**. Starting March 3rd, she will be switching her Coffee & Conversation day to Monday from 9 AM-11 AM with a new location at **Prismatic Coffee, 3996 Cousteau Dr SE** . Come discover the newest coffee shop in town (also the new location for Epilogue Restaurant) and share a cuppa with Pastor Robin.

PRAYER IN THREE BREATHS

For the World we pray.....

- For the city of Los Angeles, and those affected by the ongoing fires.
- For the people of the Middle East and all who are in war and conflict zones.
- For the people around the world struggling with drought or floods.

For Our Community we pray....

- May We find peace among the chaos while still making a difference.
- For those impacted by the executive orders issued this week.
- For anyone in our community and in the wider community who live in fear that they will be targeted under this new administration.
- For all who live without adequate healthcare.
- Please remember the leaders of our country in your prayers

For Our Beloveds We pray....

- For Tia Mercedes as she battles cancer.
- For our Trans and queer family members. May they know love and safety.
- For Amy regarding continuing health concerns.
- For Lyda Rice as she mourns the death of her brother
- For Jody Boley as she mourns the death of her brother-in-law
- For Tom Fuller's recovery from diverticulitis.
- For our daughter's apartment and Encino to be spared from the surrounding fires and to keep responders safe.
- For Linda to be strong enough for radiation and chemotherapy.
- For Christ the Healer, United Church of Christ in Milwaukie, Oregon, and their pastor Gabrielle Chavez.

Holy One, we gather all of the names, all of the places, all of the concerns into you and ask that they be held, healed, transformed, and loved into the fullness of their calling as part of your blessed Creation. May we hold them with you in tenderness and grace. In the name of the Christ who shines in you. Amen

Do you have a special need for prayer and support? If you would like to be on our weekly prayer list, please contact the church office: office@uccsalem.org

WE ARE A JUST PEACE AND OPEN & AFFIRMING CONGREGATION OF THE UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST.

This church welcomes everyone without regard to race, gender, age, sexual orientation, ethnicity, economic class, marital status, or physical/mental abilities and encourages all to share in the full life and leadership of this congregation.

PASTOR ROBIN'S OFFICE HOURS

- ◆ Monday and Tuesday - 1 PM to 4 PM
- ◆ Thursday - 9 AM to 1 PM
- ◆ Other times by appointment

Want to explore your questions and share something of your journey? Pastor Robin welcomes your calls and visits. You may contact her via cell (971)666-3442, at the church (503-363-3660) or email: pastor@uccsalem.org.

If you prefer to meet outside, she is always up for a walk and talk!

Friday and Saturday are Pastor Robin's Sabbath days.

GET CONNECTED: The **Weekly Word**, our email newsletter which comes out every Thursday will keep you up to date on all that is happening at FCCUCC. Links to the livestreaming worship as well as the bulletin are included. To subscribe, find the link on our webpage www.uccsalem.org, or email the office—office@uccsalem.org. Our phone number is **503-363-3660**

webpage QR



CHURCH STAFF

| | |
|------------------------|---|
| DESIGNATED TERM PASTOR | Rev. Robin Lunn, ext. 312 |
| SEMINARY INTERN | Amy Tobey |
| ORGANIST | Dr. Marcia Hauff |
| CHURCH ADMINISTRATOR | Lily Walker, ext. 310 |
| SOUND TECHNICIANS | Zanne D'Anna, Jim Mankins, Kim Colantino, Elijah Gores, Amy Knowles |
| CUSTODIAN | Joe Martin |

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Our Covenant

adopted 2023

We are a community of faith drawn together in our common search for spiritual life. We are a community of covenant rather than creeds. Acknowledging our commitment to the teaching and practices of Jesus of Nazareth, whom some of us call Christ, we believe in the freedom of each individual to pursue their own spiritual journey. Therefore,

We Covenant to be a progressive Christian community that values inclusivity and embraces diversity. We Endeavor to be a congregation of extravagant welcome that respects the spiritual life and journey of each person.

We Listen to the “Still Speaking God” who emboldens us to Seek Justice, Love Kindness, and Walk Humbly with our God. (Micah 6:8)

Our Open and Affirming Statement

adopted 1993

We are an Open and Affirming (ONA) Congregation that welcomes everyone without regard to race, gender identity and expression, citizenship status, age, sexual orientation, ethnicity, economic class, marital or educational status, physical or mental abilities, or appearance. We encourage all people to share their talents, gifts, and energy in the liturgy, life, and leadership of our congregation. We affirm that it is our call to work for peace and wholeness by overcoming attitudes and acts of injustice, discrimination, violence, and hatred in ourselves and others.

Our Just Peace Statement

adopted 1991

We are a Just Peace Church. We seek to keep the vision of shalom central to our corporate and individual lives, working to deepen our understanding of the many dimensions of peace and justice in our time. Through our worship, programs, and outreach, we seek to be a community of reconciliation, hope, and courage, as we work and pray for peace and justice in our world.

What Kind of Christians Are We?

By calling ourselves progressive Christians, we mean we are Christians who...

1. Believe that following the path and teachings of Jesus can lead to an awareness and experience of the Sacred and the Oneness and Unity of all life;
2. Affirm that the teachings of Jesus provide but one of many ways to experience the Sacredness and Oneness of life, and that we can draw from diverse sources of wisdom in our spiritual journey;
3. Seek community that is inclusive of ALL people, including but not limited to:
Conventional Christians and questioning skeptics,
Believers and agnostics,
People of other faiths and good will.
4. Know that the way we behave towards one another is the fullest expression of what we believe;
5. Find grace in the search for understanding and believe there is more value in questioning than in absolutes;
6. Strive for peace and justice among all people;
7. Strive to protect and restore the integrity of our Earth;
8. Commit to a path of life-long learning, compassion, and selfless love

We seek to live out these values, however imperfectly, offering grace freely as we seek to follow Jesus. If our values fit yours, please consider becoming a part of our community.