First Congregational Church of St. Louis
UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST

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a just world for all

SUNDAY • SEPTEMBER 12, 2021

First Congregational Church of St. Louis
United Church of Christ
An Open & Affirming Congregation

Welcome!

Whoever you are, and wherever you are on life's journey,
you are welcome here.

Restrooms are located down the hall on the main floor.

All Gender Restrooms are located at the back of the sanctuary and downstairs in the Fellowship Hall (which is accessible).

Changing tables are located in the Nursery on the main floor and at the back of the sanctuary.

***An asterisk** is an invitation to rise, in body or spirit.
Bolded text is an invitation for the congregation to read or sing in unison.

For everyone's health and safety:

- Masks are required for everyone ages 5 and over while indoors.
- Please practice physical distancing.
- Ushers will not collect offerings. Instead, you may place your offerings in the baskets located in the Tower Room and Narthex.
- Children should sit with their parents in the pews. Children may get activities from the Prayground and then return to the pews.
- At the conclusion of worship, attendees should exit the sanctuary promptly to avoid prolonged, close contact.
- Social hour following worship will be held without coffee or food on the Garth, weather permitting.

Worship September 12, 2021

Welcome & Announcements

Prelude "Introduction and Improvisation" *arr. Janet Linker*
from *Variations on Lasst uns erfreuen*

***Call to Worship**

Leader: Good morning gracious God,
the one who is forever seeking us,
People: Open our minds to the truth of your care.
Leader: Open our hearts to the gentle power of your love.
People: Open our lips to share stories of faith.
Leader: Open our lives to do justice and show kindness.
People: Open our mouths to sing boldly and loudly your praises

***Opening Hymn** "To You, O God, All Creatures Sing" #17 Stz 1, 5

To you, O God, all creatures sing,
and all creation, everything
sings your praises, alleluia!
Your burning sun with golden beam,
your silver moon with softer gleam
sing your praises, alleluia,
alleluia, alleluia, alleluia.

Now we who are of tender heart,
forgiving others, take our part,
sing your praises, alleluia!
To you we lift our pain and care,
receive the burdens that we bear,
singing praises, alleluia,
alleluia, alleluia, alleluia.

Prayers of the People

The Prayer of our Savior

**Our Mother, 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 sins, as we forgive those who sin against us.
And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil.
For thine is the kingdom, and the power,
and the glory forever. Amen.**

*Passing of the Peace

***Hymn** "I Met a Stranger on the Road" *David Bjorlin*

Tune: KINGSFOLD by Ralph Vaughan Williams

**I met a stranger on the road
who read a book alone,
whose skin was dark and language strange,
whose status was unknown.
And yet he read my sacred text,
this pilgrim from abroad,
and asked, "Where can I find a guide
to lead me to this God?"**

**I told the story of the Christ
whose life denounced each wall,
whose love expands our narrowed sights:
the Lamb raised up for all.
And when I asked if he believed,
I saw my view was flawed:
we both encountered grace that day,
we both were led to God.**

(Continued on the next page)

For when we draw our boundary lines
dividing out from in,
then Christ stands on the other side;
exclusion is our sin.
Praise God for strangers on the road -
the different and the odd -
the pilgrim guides who take our hand
and lead us back to God.

Scripture Acts 8:26-40 (NRSV)

Then an angel of the Lord said to Philip, "Get up and go toward
the south to the road that goes down from Jerusalem to Gaza."
(This is a wilderness road.) So he got up and went.
Now there was an Ethiopian eunuch, a court official of the Candace,
queen of the Ethiopians, in charge of her entire treasury.
He had come to Jerusalem to worship and was returning home;
seated in his chariot, he was reading the prophet Isaiah.
Then the Spirit said to Philip, "Go over to this chariot and join it."
So Philip ran up to it and heard him reading the prophet Isaiah.
He asked, "Do you understand what you are reading?"
He replied, "How can I, unless someone guides me?"
And he invited Philip to get in and sit beside him.
Now the passage of the scripture that he was reading was this:

"Like a sheep he was led to the slaughter,
and like a lamb silent before its shearer,
so he does not open his mouth.
In his humiliation justice was denied him.
Who can describe his generation?
For his life is taken away from the earth."

The eunuch asked Philip, "About whom, may I ask you,
does the prophet say this, about himself or about someone else?"
Then Philip began to speak, and starting with this scripture,
he proclaimed to him the good news about Jesus.

As they were going along the road, they came to some water;
and the eunuch said, "Look, here is water!
What is to prevent me from being baptized?"
He commanded the chariot to stop, and both of them,
Philip and the eunuch, went down into the water,
and Philip baptized him. When they came up out of the water,
the Spirit of the Lord snatched Philip away;
the eunuch saw him no more, and went on his way rejoicing.
But Philip found himself at Azotus,
and as he was passing through the region,
he proclaimed the good news to all the towns
until he came to Caesarea.

Anthem "Thy Perfect Love" *John Rutter, text 15th C.*

Jesus, my love, my joy, my rest,
Thy perfect love close in my breast
That I thee love and never rest;
And make me love thee of all things best,
And wound my heart in thy love free,
That I may live in joy evermore with thee.

Message

Anthem "Come My Way, My Truth, My Life" *Malcolm Archer* *Text George Herbert*

Come, my Way, my Truth, my Life: such a way as gives us breath;
such a truth as ends all strife; such a life as killeth death.

Come, my Light, my Feast, my Strength: such a light as shows a feast;
such a feast as mends in length; such a strength as makes a guest.

Come, my Joy, my Love, my Heart: such a joy as none can move:
such a love as none can part; such a heart as joys in love.

Blessing

Postlude "Chorale Fantasia and Finale" *arr. Janet Linker*
from *Variations on Lasst uns erfreuen*

Our Ministry Team:

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