

OPEN AND AFFIRMING ANNIVERSARY CELEBRATION



November 18, 2018
3:00 PM

First Congregational Church

An Open & Affirming Congregation

United Church of Christ

508 Union Street, Manchester, NH * 603-625-5093

Sunday Worship 10:00 AM (9:30 Summer)

You are welcome here!

First Congregational Church
Our Church in Worship

One: Creator Spirit

**All: In the space of our small heart and in silence,
Come close that we may dream.**

One: In the name of all that is sacred and our Christ, Jesus. Amen.

CHORAL ANTHEM *Christ Has Broken Down the Wall* – Mark A. Miller Chancel Choir and
Bridget Thornton, soloist

Christ has broken down the wall. Let us join our hearts as one. We're accepted as we are.
Through God's love all is reconciled. Cast aside your doubts and fears. Peace and love freely
offered here. We will tear down every wall! God has called us, one and all.

A RESPONSIVE LITANY – THE BEATITUDES Written by Rev. Ann B Day

One: Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.

**All: God our Center, we are grateful for Your presence within and among us. May
all that we are and do arise from our love for you.**

One: Blessed are those who mourn, for they will be comforted.

**All: God our Comfort, be with all whose hearts are filled with grief. Let Christ's
peace uphold them. May we bear with them the burden of sorrow, and bring
to them faith's message of hope.**

One: Blessed are the meek, for they will inherit the earth.

**All: God our Inspiration, may we have the mind of Christ as we relate to one
another. Let love be our guide, and reconciliation our desire. May people of
every color and class, age and ability, sexual and gender orientation be truly
welcomed and valued among us.**

One: Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness, for they will be
filled.

**All: God our Advocate, let our righteousness be born, not of arrogance, but of
yearning to do Your good will. May we hunger for churches where all belong,
where diversity of humanity and unity in Christ create community and
promote justice. May we thirst for right relationship with You and all our
neighbors.**

One: Blessed are the merciful, for they will receive mercy.

**All: God our Refreshment, as Your forgiveness restores us, so may we offer the
blessing of restoration to those who wrong us, and accept it from those we
have wronged. Help us to find our way when the paths of justice and
compassion seem to diverge. Give us hearts ever open to mercy's possibilities.**

One: Blessed are the peacemakers, for they will be called children of God.

**All: God our Hope, plant deep in us the longing for a world where children do not
suffer at the hands of adults, where lovers' quarrels do not end in violence,**

**where nations do not battle. May we pray peace, make peace, live peace.
Amen.**

MUSIC

“We are Unbroken – Even After All”

Words and Music by Jeffrey Frye

SCRIPTURE READING

Philippians 4:4-9

Rejoice in the Lord always; again I will say, Rejoice. Let your gentleness be known to everyone. The Lord is near. Do not worry about anything, but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known to God. And the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus. Finally, beloved, whatever is true, whatever is honorable, whatever is just, whatever is pure, whatever is pleasing, whatever is commendable, if there is any excellence and if there is anything worthy of praise, think about these things. Keep on doing the things that you have learned and received and heard and seen in me, and the God of peace will be with you.

WORDS OF MEDITATION

Rev. Kevin Pleas

PRAYERS OF THE PEOPLE

THE CASA DEL SOL PRAYER OF JESUS (Unison)

Ground of all being, Mother of life, Father of the universe, Your name is sacred, beyond speaking. May we know of your presence, may your longings be our longings in heart and in action. May there be food for the human family today and for the whole earth community. Forgive us the falseness of what we have done as we forgive those who are untrue to us. Do not forsake us in our time of conflict but lead us into new beginnings. For the light of life, the vitality of life, and the glory of life are yours now and forever. Amen.

CALL TO OFFERING

OFFERING TO SUPPORT THE ONA COALITION

OFFERTORY MUSIC

*DOXOLOGY

**Praise God the Source of Life and Birth
Praise God the Word who came to earth
Praise God the Spirit, Holy Flame
All Honor, Glory to God's Name.**

*PRAYER OF DEDICATION (Unison)

Accept our gifts, O God, because we need to give. Use our gifts to the greatest good they can accomplish here in our midst and far beyond our individual reach. We present them in thanksgiving for all you have given us and in gratitude for the privilege of sharing in your work. Amen.

MUSIC SELECTIONS FROM THE NEW HAMPSHIRE GAY MEN'S CHORUS

REFLECTIONS ON OUR OPEN AND AFFIRMING PROCESS

Rev. Carlos Jauhola-Straight

RECEIVING OUR OPEN AND AFFIRMING CERTIFICATE

Carol Soucy

READING OF OUR COVENANT

The faith community of First Congregational Church, Manchester NH reaffirms our shared covenant and beliefs that the Gospel of Jesus Christ calls us to love one another and to extend welcome to all people. We affirm that each individual is a child of God and that all are worthy of God's love and grace.

As witness to these beliefs and as covenant members of Christ's church, we proclaim and celebrate God's love for people of all ages, all races and ethnic backgrounds, all mental and physical abilities, all socioeconomic backgrounds, all sexual orientations, all gender expressions, and all other diverse attributes that are woven into the fabric of humankind.

We are called to be as one body, seeking to walk together in the complete life and ministry of our church. With God's grace, we resolve to be an open, inclusive, affirming, and accessible community of faith. We invite all to participate and share in the life and leadership, ministry and fellowship, worship and sacraments, responsibilities and blessings of our Christian community.

Approved by the Congregation on Sunday, November 19, 2017

***CLOSING HYMN (See Insert) *Praise the Source of All Creation* – Jann Aldredge-Clanton**

BENEDICTION (Unison)

**Dearest Lord, in our times of need,
grant us the presence of those who are in solidarity with us.**

**In our moments of marginality,
grant us the ability to act boldly on our own behalves.
In our commitment to human liberation,
grant us the spirit of sacrifice that will enable us to empower
others to seek
and find their own freedom in Christ Jesus. Amen.**

POSTLUDE

Toccata on "Hymn to Joy" – arr. Joel Raney

PARTICIPANTS IN THE SERVICE

Reverend Kevin Pleas
Reverend Carlos Jauhola-Straight
Bruce Attridge
Jeffrey Frye
Karen Hawver
Sam Knowles
Ruth Knowles
Rick Nelson
Linda Noble
Michael Pugh
John Rowe
Carol Soucy
Bridget Thornton

OPEN AND AFFIRMING COMMITTEE MEMBERS

Carol Soucy, Chair
Kathy Alger
Bruce Attridge
Jeanine Finefrock
Jeffrey Frye
Karen Hawver
Michael Pugh
John Rowe
Kathy Rowe
Bridget Thornton

