



**NEWTON
CONGREGATIONAL
UNITED CHURCH
OF CHRIST**
God is still speaking,

An Open and Affirming Congregation

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

Virtual Worship • May 17, 2020 • 10:00am • Sixth Sunday of Easter

Digital Bulletin

This document is prepared so you can join our Sunday morning live-stream worship via our Facebook page (facebook.com/NewtonUCC) or call in via Zoom (Dial 312-626-6799, when prompted enter Meeting ID: 624 681 423 followed by #) or worship on your own at a time convenient for you (visit our Facebook page or website—uccnewton.org).

We are new to online and streaming worship at Congregational UCC and still working on smoothing out a few “hiccups” and technical difficulties. Of course, there is nothing that compares to being physically present with one another in worship, and yet this is what we need to do to “love our neighbors” during the current national emergency.

We apologize in advance for any problems that you may encounter in connecting to the service and welcome your feedback on how to improve the virtual worship experience over the coming weeks when we will not be able to worship in our sanctuary.

PREPARING FOR VIRTUAL WORSHIP

As you prepare to join in online worship with us, in addition to making whatever technical preparations you need to make, consider how to prepare your personal space for worship:

- Silence your phone and eliminate distractions
- Light a candle or some incense
- Open your Bible or browser to Acts 17:16-31
- Position your body in a posture of worship and prayer

“Citizens of Athens, I know that in every respect you are scrupulously religious. As I walked about looking at your shrines, I even discovered an altar inscribed, ‘To an Unknown God.’ Now, what you are worshiping in ignorance I intend to make known to you.”

Acts 17:22b-23

PRELUDE

WELCOME AND ANNOUNCEMENTS

REMEMBERING WHO WE ARE

One: As we prepare ourselves to join together in worship,
let us remind ourselves who we are
as members and friends of Congregational United Church of Christ.

**All: We are a community of God’s beloved
dedicated to following the teachings of Jesus as we live our faith
by loving and serving all of God’s creation
and striving for justice and peace
throughout our community, our nation, and the world.**

THE BREATH OF GOD

CALL TO WORSHIP

One: We live in a pluralistic world
with people who come to know the divine in a multitude of ways.

**All: We live in a world full of beautiful diversity
with people who are each and all created in the image of the holy.**

One: Creative Spirit, through our worship this day, grant us eyes to see your likeness
in our neighbors who profess a faith that is not our own.

All: Grant us ears to hear their experiences as we listen to understand.

One: Give us hearts to love, affirm, and celebrate them for who they are
as we acknowledge both our similarities and our differences.

**All: Give us words to share, with humility and integrity,
our particular experience of you.**

One: Through the building of thoughtful, respectful, authentic interreligious relationships,

**All: may we be transformed more fully into the beloved, beautiful, diverse community
of healing, hope, and love that you envision.
We pray in the name of Jesus, Amen.**

OPENING HYMN 485

Diverse in Culture, Nation, Race

Tallis’ Cannon

***Di-verse in cul-ture, na-tion, race, we come to-geth-er by your grace.
God let us be a meet-ing ground where hope and heal-ing love are found.***

***God, let us be a bridge of care con-nect-ing peo-ple ev-’ry-where.
Help us con-front all fear and hate and lust for pow’r that sep-a-rate.***

***When cha-sms wid-en, storms a-rise, O Ho-ly Spir-it, make us wise.
Let our re-solve, like steel, be strong to stand with those who suf-fer wrong.***

*God, let us be a ta-ble spread with gifts of love and bro-ken bread,
where all find wel-come, grace at-tends, and en-e-mies a-rise as friends.*

CALL TO PRAYER

PRAYER FOR TRANSFORMATION AND RECONCILIATION

One: You call us, Divine Spirit, to interfaith relationships,
and we acknowledge those ways in which we have fallen short:
We have not always practiced humble listening,
and as a result have been disrespectful of others and impoverished ourselves.

**All: We confess that frequently our dialogues have been serial monologues,
and we have postured ourselves as the absolute standard
against which others are measured for integrity and wisdom.**

One: We acknowledge the strong temptation to “read ourselves into others”
as a way of softening the edge of difference,
because the result has often been to mute the distinctive gifts of others.

**All: We know that at times faithful Christians,
in witnessing to what God has done in our lives,
have claimed more certainty about the divine than we possess.**

One: We have sometimes forgotten that our ways are not always your ways,
and in forgetting, we have often dishonored the beauty of your creation.

**All: We confess that we have allowed fear and misunderstanding
to guide many of our actions and reactions to those who are unlike us,
and this has often had disastrous consequences
for those we encounter and for our own integrity.**

One: We know that we are called to rise beyond fear and misunderstanding
and with humility and vulnerability to know your image in all whom you created.

All: Past mistakes should not inhibit present commitment.

One: In your spirit of hospitality and welcome, O God,
we are called to new relationships and new ways of relating,
knowing that in those encounters we will have much to receive
as well as much to give.

**All: Lead us to deeper engagement with people of other religious traditions
as we grow in our understanding and cooperation
honoring our religious neighbors
and remaining faithful to our deepest convictions.
Guide us as we honestly share who we are and what we believe
and truly respect the particularity and integrity of the faith of others.
In your many holy names we pray, Amen.**

ASSURANCE OF GRACE

SHARING OF GOD’S PEACE

One: The peace of God be with you.

All: And also with you.

HYMN

Lead Us from Death to Life
**Lead us from death to life, from false-hood to truth,
from de-spair to hope, from fear to trust.
Lead us from hate to love, from war to peace;
let peace fill our hearts, let peace fill our world,
let peace fill our u-ni-verse.**

World Peace Prayer

A TIME WITH CHILDREN

SCRIPTURE

Acts 17:16-31

GLORIA PATRI

Greatorex

***Glo-ry to the Cre-a-tor, the Christ, the Ho-ly Spir-it, Three-in-One;
as it was in the be-gin-ning, is now and ever shall be,
world with-out end. A-men. A-men.***

SERMON

Let Us Learn

Rev. Jessica Petersen

PAUSE

(What did you hear yourself saying as you were listening to the presentation of the scripture and the sermon? How is God speaking to you today?)

INTERFAITH PRAYERS OF THE PEOPLE

(We join together in prayer with our siblings of faith throughout the world, those who seek the divine and reach for meaning in ways different from our own. You are invited to sing the refrain "Lord, Listen to Your Children Praying" between each prayer offering.)

REFRAIN 305

Lord, Listen to Your Children Praying
**Lord, lis-ten to your chil-dren pray-ing,
Lord, send your spir-it in this place;
Lord, lis-ten to you chil-dren pray-ing, send us love,
send us pow'r, send us grace.**

Children Praying

From Valarie Kaur

Sikh activist, documentary film maker, lawyer, founder of Groundswell Movement, America's largest multi-faith online organizing network, and author of SEE NO STRANGER.

Waheguru.

May we sit in stillness and be present to this bright pain.

May we let our tears flow.

May we awaken to the truth — that we are only as strong or safe or well as the most vulnerable among us.

May we look upon the faces of others as sisters, brothers, and siblings, and say: You are a part of me that I do not yet know.

May we begin to reimagine a world where we see no stranger, where no person is disposable — and emerge from this pandemic ready to remake the systems that crush us.

May we make revolutionary love a conscious practice in our homes and hearts and in the streets.

May we stay in Chardi Kala — ever-rising spirits even in the darkness, joy even in the suffering — and find the energy to stay in the labor.

For this will be one long labor.

May we breathe and push and begin to birth the world we dream.

REFRAIN 305

Lord, Listen to Your Children Praying
Lord, lis-ten to your chil-dren pray-ing,
Lord, send your spir-it in this place;
Lord, lis-ten to you chil-dren pray-ing, send us love,
send us pow'r, send us grace.

Children Praying

From Rabbi Arthur Waskow

Author, political and social activist, educator, founder and director of The Shalom Center, Philadelphia, and writer of the Freedom Seder. (Creative Commons Copyright © 2020 by The Shalom Center.)

You Who are the Interbreathing Spirit of all life,
You Who are the “still small Voice”
Who whispers breath into all living --
We hear You coughing, choking,
As we flood all Earth with burning smoke of carbon.
We hear You coughing, choking,
As human throats breathe in a virus
That comes as a plague to all of us --
Worse for those who already live on margins --
And as a warning to our pharaohs.

We recall the burning crosses lit by hate and greed;
We recall the flame and smoke
That rose from Auschwitz and from Hiroshima.
That still rise from the burning forests of the Amazon,
Torched for the sake of fast hamburger and fast wealth.
We count the hottest years of human history
That bring upon us
Melted ice fields. Flooded cities.
Scorching droughts. Murderous wildfires.

Before us we among all life-forms
Face the nightmare of a **Flood of Fire**,
The heat and smoke that could consume all Earth.

Yet with Your help, O Breath of life,
 We come to douse that outer all-consuming fire.
 To light again in our own hearts
 The *inner* fire that burned in the Burning Bush –
 The fire that did not consume the Bush it burned in.
 And to hear the inner Voice that breathed a whisper
 Of love and liberation amidst the inner flame:
 For Love and Breath are strong as death --
 Love's fire that breathes in the heart of all Creation
 To ease Your Breath throughout Your Earth.

We vow to make from inner fire
 Not an all-consuming blaze
 But the loving light in which we see more clearly
 The Rainbow Covenant glowing
 in the many-colored faces of all life.

REFRAIN 305

Lord, Listen to Your Children Praying
Lord, lis-ten to your chil-dren pray-ing,
Lord, send your spir-it in this place;
Lord, lis-ten to you chil-dren pray-ing, send us love,
send us pow'r, send us grace.

Children Praying

From Margaret A. Noodin

American poet and Anishinaabemowin language teacher, a Professor of English and American Indian Studies at the University of Wisconsin–Milwaukee.

Gizhawenimimin Gichidibenjiged ezhi-aanikoobidooyan gakina gegoo. Gizhawenimimin Giizis ezhi-mashkawizi'iyang. Gizhawenimimin Dibiki-giizis gikinoo'amawiyang zaagaasidiyang. Gizhawenimimin Mashkiig ezhi-ditibiziyan wenji-bimaadiziyang. Apii zhawenimiayang, zhawenimangidwaa. Apii zaagi'iyang, zaagi'angidwaa. Apii noojimo'iyang, noojimo'angidwaa. Apii inawenimigooyan, inawenindiayang.	We are blessed by you Lord you who connects all being. We are blessed by you Sun you give us light and strength. We are blessed by you Moon you teach us the importance of reflection. We are blessed by you Land and Water your circulation supports our living. As we are blessed, we bless others. As we are loved, we love others. As we are healed, we heal others. As we are related to you, we are related to one another.
Naadamawishinaam daga noongom Nagamotawishinaam daga noongom Nanaa'ishinaam daga noongom Nana'isanishinaam daga Gichidibenjiged.	Help us all now Sing to us all now Repair us all now Bring peace to all our souls O Lord.

REFRAIN 305

Lord, Listen to Your Children Praying
Lord, lis-ten to your chil-dren pray-ing,
Lord, send your spir-it in this place;
Lord, lis-ten to you chil-dren pray-ing, send us love,
send us pow'r, send us grace.

Children Praying

From Imam Naeem Baig

Vice President for Public Affairs with Islamic Circle of North America, Executive Director for the Council for Social Justice and Chair of the Board of Religions for Peace USA.

In the name of God, the Most Compassionate, the Most Merciful, Creator of all of us.

Praise be to God, Lord of the Worlds, and may the Peace and Blessings of God be upon His Prophets from Noah to Moses to Jesus to Prophet Muhammad

Ya Rahman (the Most Compassionate), Ya Raheem (the Most Merciful), we submit this prayer ...

Today the whole world is in pain, we are suffering, we are struggling to breathe, we are afraid of giving a proper burial to our loved ones, we are not able to hold the hand of the sick and kiss goodbye to our loved ones - Dear God, please provide us the cure from Covid-19

Ya, Rubb an-Naas (Lord of humanity), we ask for your Mercy and your Love, we believe in the prayer that Prophet Muhammad taught us:

“O Lord of humanity!, take away the suffering, bring the recovery, there is no cure but Your cure that leaves no illness.”

O God Almighty;

Help us to live in a world where all people are treated equally and with dignity; where we don't play with the lives of the people to fulfill our own selfish desires, where we as all people are united to help each other as brothers and sisters in humanity

Our Lord, help our country become one nation under God with liberty and justice for all; protect our neighbors, our city, state and country keep them all healthy and safe; guide our country's leaders to be compassionate, fair, and just; bring relief to all those who are suffering around the world; help our doctors and scientists to find a cure for Covid-19

Ya Allah, I am observing my Fast today in this blessed month of Ramadan, seeking your pleasure and mercy, and we know You love those who fast in absolute devotion to you and you alone and that you accept their supplication as your gift to them. Please accept my prayers; You are all Knowing, all Wise

REFRAIN 305

Lord, Listen to Your Children Praying
Lord, lis-ten to your chil-dren pray-ing,
Lord, send your spir-it in this place;
Lord, lis-ten to you chil-dren pray-ing, send us love,
send us pow'r, send us grace.

Children Praying

PRAYER OF OUR SAVIOR (*Other options for "Father" include "Mother," "Creator," "Parent.")

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.

Lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil.

For thine is the kingdom and the power and the glory forever. Amen.

INVITATION TO OFFERING

OFFERTORY

DOXOLOGY

Lasst Uns Erfreuen

*Praise God from whom all bles-sings flow,
praise God all crea-tures here be-low. Al-le-lu-ia! Al-le-lu-ia!
Praise God for all that love has done,
Cre-a-tor, Christ, and Spir-it, One. Al-le-lu-ia! Al-le-lu-ia!
Al-le-lu-ia! Al-le-lu-ia! Al-le-lu-ia!*

PRAYER OF DEDICATION

HYMN 487

Help Us Accept Each Other

Aurelia

*Help us ac-cept each oth-er as Christ ac-cept-ed us;
teach us as sis-ter, broth-er, each per-son to em-brace.
Be pres-ent, God, a-mong us and bring us to be-lieve
we are our-selves ac-cept-ed and meant to love and life.*

*Teach us, O God, your les-sons, as in our dai-ly life
we strug-gle to be hu-man and search for hope and faith.
Teach us to care for peo-ple, for all, not just for some,
to love them as we find them or as they may be-come.*

*Let your ac-cep-tance change us, so that we may be moved
in liv-ing sit-u-a-tions to do the truth in love;
to prac-tice your ac-cep-tance, un-til we know by heart
the ta-ble of for-give-ness and laugh-ter's heal-ing art.*

*God, for to-day's en-coun-ters with all who are in need,
who hun-ger for ac-cep-tance, for righ-teous-ness and bread,
we need new eyes for see-ing, new hands for hold-ing on;
re-new us with your Spir-it; God, free us, make us one!*

BENEDICTION

POSTLUDE

Resources:

Today's "Prayer for Transformation and Reconciliation" is slightly adapted from "A Study Resource on Interreligious Relations for the United Church of Christ" (adopted by the United Church of Christ General Synod Twenty-Five, July 2005, retrieved from https://www.ucc.org/ecumenical_interfaith-relations). Each prayer included in today's "Interfaith Prayers of the People" can be found at <https://www.ucc.org/idop>.

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