

FIRST CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH
United Church of Christ
August 8, 2021

Ministry of the Acolyte

Gathering Music #209 "This Is the Day"

This is the day (This is the day)
That the Lord has made (that the Lord has made)
We will rejoice (We will rejoice)
And be glad in it (and be glad in it)
This is the day that the Lord has made;
We will rejoice and be glad in it.
This is the day (This is the day)
That the Lord has made.

Welcome, Announcements and Opening Prayer

Prelude

Responsive Reading:

One: We are a people of water! We worship a God
whose love flows through water.

**All: Love, like the water in which we take form,
holds us in safety, softens our world
until we can live on our own.**

One: We are a people of water! We worship a God
whose love flows through water.

**All: Love like a puddle inspires our delight—
we jump, we splash, we dance with wild, wet joy.**

One: We are a people of water! We worship a God
whose love flows through water.

**All: Love, like a steaming shower
at the end of a long day's work—
it cleans us, relaxes our muscles, wakes us up.**

One: We are a people of water! We worship a God
whose love flows through water.

**All: Love, like the holy, delightful water
in which we are baptized—it drops like gentle rain
from loving fingertips to our waiting forehead.**

One: This is the water of baptism. In this water,
Christ is with us!

All: In this water, Christ is with us, indeed! Alleluia!

Hymn #719 “Children of the Heavenly Father”

Children of the heavn'ly Father safely in His bosom gather;
Nestling bird nor star in Heaven such a refuge e'er was given.

God, His own doth tend and nourish; in His holy courts they flourish.
From all evil things He spares them; in His mighty arms He bears them.

Neither life nor death shall ever from the Lord His children sever;
Unto them His grace He showeth, and their sorrows all He knoweth.

Though He giveth or He taketh, God His children ne'er forsaketh;
His, the loving purpose solely to preserve them, pure and holy.

Sacrament of Baptism:

Pastor: The prophet Isaiah spoke to a people who felt cut off from God.
He said: Listen to the loving voice of God, who created you
and formed you—

**People: “Don't be afraid. I have rescued you; I have called you by name;
you are mine.”**

Pastor: One time, some people brought children for Jesus to touch,
and the disciples scolded them. Jesus was very unhappy about that,
and said to the disciples:

**People: “Let the little children come to me; don't keep them
away, for the Realm of God belongs to those who become like little
children. Truly I tell you, only those who come to God like children
will enter God's Realm.”**

Pastor: And Jesus took the children in his arms and blessed them,
laying his hands upon them.

The sacrament of baptism is an outward and visible sign of the
grace of God. The promise of the gospel is not only to us;
it is also to our children. Baptism with water and the Holy Spirit
is the mark of their acceptance into the care of Christ's church;
it is the sign and seal of their participation in God's forgiveness,
and the beginning of their growth into full Christian faith and
discipleship.

**People: This is the water of baptism. Out of this water we
rise with new life, freed from the life-stealing power of sin
and one in Christ, members of Christ's body.**

*[The parents and any others who are coming to offer support
will make their promises here, then the pastor will say—]*

Pastor: Jesus Christ calls us to make disciples of all nations and to offer them the gift of grace in baptism. Do you, who witness and celebrate this sacrament, promise your love, support, and care to this child who is about to be baptized, as she lives and grows in Christ?

People: With God's help we will proclaim the good news and live according to the example of Christ. We will surround this child with a community of love and forgiveness, so that she may grow to entrust herself to God, and to be faithful in her service to others. We will pray for her, that she may be a true disciple who walks in the way that leads to life.

Pastor: Let us join with the church in all times and places, as we entrust our lives to the triune God:

**People: We entrust our lives to God, the eternal Creator.
We entrust our lives to the Word made flesh, Jesus Christ.
We entrust our lives to the Holy Spirit, who moves through all Creation, drawing everyone and everything into the loving family of the living God.**

Pastor: May God be with you.

People: And also with you.

Pastor: Lift up your hearts.

People: We lift our hearts to God.

Pastor: Let us pray. *[The baptismal prayer ending—]* Glory to you, eternal God, who was, and is, and will always be, world without end.

People: Amen.

[We baptize and welcome the child, then, please, return to your bulletin for the closing prayer.]

Pastor: Let us pray for Asa, who has been baptized today.

People: We give you thanks, Great Loving One, for the gift of this precious child, and for your kindness, which embraces us through this water and through your Holy Spirit. Help us, your grateful sons and daughters, to love our sister Asa. Help us to welcome, nurture and befriend her as she grows in the body of Christ. Give Asa, who is baptized today: strength for life's journey, courage in suffering, the joy of faith, the freedom of love, and the hope of new life; through Jesus Christ, who makes us one. Amen.

We Lift Up Our Joys and Concerns

Pastoral Prayer and the Lord's Prayer (trespasses)

Special Music

We Dedicate our Gifts

*Doxology and Offering prayer

*Hymn #572

“Blessed Assurance”

Blessed assurance, Jesus is mine!
Oh, what a foretaste of glory divine!
Heir of salvation, purchase of God,
born of his Spirit, washed in his blood.

Refrain: This is my story, this is my song,
praising my Savior all the day long.
This is my story, this is my song,
praising my Savior all the day long.

Perfect submission, perfect delight!
Visions of rapture now burst on my sight.
Angels descending bring from above
echoes of mercy, whispers of love. [Refrain]

Perfect submission—all is at rest.
I in my Savior am happy and bless'd;
watching and waiting, looking above,
filled with his goodness, lost in his love. [Refrain]

Scripture Ephesians 4:25-5:2

Sermon “growing up loved”

*Hymn #793 “For the Beauty of the Earth”

For the beauty of the earth, for the glory of the skies,
for the love which from our birth over and around us lies.

Refrain: Lord of all, to Thee we raise
this, our hymn of grateful praise.

For the wonder of each hour of the day and of the night,
hill and vale and tree and flower, sun and moon and stars of light,
[Refrain]

For the joy of human love, brother, sister, parent, child,
friends on earth, and friends above, for all gentle thoughts and mild,
[Refrain]

For Thy Church, that ever more lifteth holy hands above,
offering up on every shore Her pure sacrifice of love.
[Refrain]

For Thyself, best gift divine, to our race so freely given,
for that great, great love of Thine, peace on earth and joy in heaven.
[Refrain]

*Benediction

*Response #425 “Bind Us Together”

Bind us together, Lord, bind us together
with cords that cannot be broken.
Bind us together, Lord, bind us together;
bind us together with Love.

There is only one God. There is only one King.
There is only one Body. That is why we sing.

Bind us together, Lord, bind us together
with cords that cannot be broken.
Bind us together, Lord, bind us together;
bind us together with Love.

Postlude

*Scriptures for Sunday, August 15: 1 Kings 2:10-12, 3:3-14;
Psalm 111 or Proverbs 9:1-6, Psalm: 34:9-14;
Ephesians 5:15-20; John 6:51-58.*