

First Congregational Church
Our Church in Worship

April 14, 2024 10:00 AM

Third Sunday of Easter

PRELUDE *Allegretto* – Felix Mendelssohn Adam Peithmann

WELCOME & ANNOUNCEMENTS Rev. Barbara Papagian

*OPENING HYMN NO. 91 *All Hail the Power of Jesus' Name!*

CALL TO WORSHIP (Responsive) Rev. Barbara Papagian

Leader: We believe God:

People: Is creative and ever-creating.

Leader: Made us to reflect the divine image.

People: Breathed life into us and sustains our lives moment by moment, day by day.

Leader: We believe God:

People: Is making a difference in our neighborhoods and our lives.

Leader: Has demonstrated the power of love and the depths of God's love for us in Christ Jesus.

People: We believe God:

Leader: Chooses subversive means of love, truth, compassion, and joy to upend the kingdoms of this world.

People: And invites us to follow the ways of Jesus and thereby become active participants in the renewal of life.

OPENING PRAYER (Unison) Rev. Christopher Stevens

Merciful God, your ways are not our ways. We know this truth and we know you call us to act in accordance with your will, not our own. Yet, we constantly struggle to yield to the ways of the kingdom. We pass the broken beggars of our day, and, unlike Peter, we do not stop. We cower in fear rather than proclaim the truth of the resurrection. We accept the status quo, unwilling to challenge the power brokers of our age. Help us, Lord, to hear Peter's call to repentance as a call that is also intended for us. Give us courage and faith to deal honestly with ourselves and with one another. Strengthen us for worship and for service that we might live boldly as your people. For the sake of Christ, we pray. Amen.

MUSICAL OFFERING *Go Ye Into All the World* – Eugene Butler Chancel Choir

Refrain: Go ye into all the world and preach my gospel to every creature! Go ye into all the world and preach my gospel!

Jesus said, "This is the great commandment: that ye love one another as I have loved you.

Greater love hath no man than this; that he lay down his life for his friends." (Refrain)

"Let not your heart be troubled, you believe in God, if you believe in God, you believe in me!" (Refrain)

Those involved with Sunday Friends may leave for their activity.

PASTORAL PRAYER Rev. Barbara Papagian

OUR PRAYER CONCERNS

SILENT MEDITATION

OUR LORD'S PRAYER (Unison)

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. And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil. For thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory forever. Amen.

HYMN NO. 578 *I Need Thee Every Hour*

OUR MORNING OFFERING Rev. Barbara Papagian

OFFERTORY MUSIC

*DOXOLOGY (Hymn No. 46)

Praise God from whom all blessings flow. Praise Him all creatures here below;

Praise Him above, ye heavenly host: Praise Father, Son and Holy Ghost. Amen.

*PRAYER OF DEDICATION (Unison) Rev. Barbara Papagian

God of creation, thank you that you have plans for me that are for my good. Jesus said, "Give, and it will be given to you; for in the same measure as you give, it will be given to you again."

We give to you today, God, as a response to your goodness to us. We ask that you receive our offerings and continue to supply all our needs. May your peace be in our hearts, your grace be in our words, your love be in our hands and your joy be in our souls. In your mighty name, Amen.

SCRIPTURE READINGS Acts 3:12-19; 1 Thessalonians 2:14-16; John 19:14b Lisa Allen

SERMON *Dreadful Texts: How Not to Read the Bible* Rev. Christopher Stevens

*CLOSING HYMN NO. 658

Restless Weaver

BENEDICTION

Rev. Christopher Stevens

POSTLUDE

Allegro assai vivace – Felix Mendelssohn

*You are invited to stand if you wish.

SCRIPTURE READINGS

Acts 3:12-19

¹² Peter saw his opportunity and addressed the crowd. “People of Israel,” he said, “what is so surprising about this? And why stare at us as though we had made this man walk by our own power or godliness? ¹³ For it is the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob—the God of all our ancestors—who has brought glory to his servant Jesus by doing this. This is the same Jesus whom you handed over and rejected before Pilate, despite Pilate’s decision to release him. ¹⁴ You rejected this holy, righteous one and instead demanded the release of a murderer. ¹⁵ You killed the author of life, but God raised him from the dead. And we are witnesses of this fact! ¹⁶ “Through faith in the name of Jesus, this man was healed—and you know how crippled he was before. Faith in Jesus’ name has healed him before your very eyes. ¹⁷ “Friends, I realize that what you and your leaders did to Jesus was done in ignorance. ¹⁸ But God was fulfilling what all the prophets had foretold about the Messiah—that he must suffer these things. ¹⁹ Now repent of your sins and turn to God, so that your sins may be wiped away.

1 Thessalonians 2:14-16 (RSV)

¹⁴ For you, brethren, became imitators of the churches of God in Christ Jesus which are in Judea; for you suffered the same things from your own countrymen as they did from the Jews, ¹⁵ who killed both the Lord Jesus and the prophets, and drove us out, and displease God and oppose all men ¹⁶ by hindering us from speaking to the Gentiles that they may be saved—so as always to fill up the measure of their sins. But God’s wrath has come upon them at last!

John 19:14b (RSV)

...[Pilate] said to the Jews, “Behold your King!” ¹⁵ They cried out, “Away with him, away with him, crucify him!” Pilate said to them, “Shall I crucify your King?” The chief priests answered, “We have no king but Caesar.” ¹⁶ Then he handed him over to them to be crucified.

First Congregational Church



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**Manchester, New Hampshire
United Church of Christ**

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

Sunday Worship 10:00 AM

You are welcome here! An Open & Affirming Congregation