

*First Congregational Church*  
*Our Church in Worship*

September 1, 2024 10:00 AM

Fifteenth Sunday after Pentecost

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PRELUDE *Morning Has Broken* – arr. Don Wyrzten Elizabeth Blood

WELCOME & ANNOUNCEMENTS Rev. Barbara Papagian

\*OPENING HYMN NO. 2 *Joyful, Joyful, We Adore Thee*

CALL TO WORSHIP (Responsive) —*Inspired by Psalm 81:1, 10-16*

Leader: Sing out! Sing out with joy to the God who gives us strength!

**People: Shout out! Shout loud praises to the Lord our God!**

Leader: Let us listen carefully for the Word,

**People: And let us be willing to follow where God leads.**

Leader: Let us be guided by God’s counsel,

**All: And let us walk in the ways of the Holy One.**

OPENING PRAYER (Unison) Rev. Christopher Stevens

**Loving God, continue your work of creation in us. In the work of our hands may beauty be shaped, cleanliness restored, feasts be shared. In the work of our minds may stories be created, children instructed, memories retold. In the work of our words may praise be sung, prayers be offered, counsel be given. In the hours of the day may our efforts bring gladness to our hearts and hope to others. Holy God, continue your work of creation in us and through us. Amen.**

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. 612 *Jesus, I Have Promised*

OUR MORNING OFFERING

OFFERTORY MUSIC *Will You Come and Follow Me?* – arr. Anne Krentz Organ

\*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)

**Holy God, we are grateful for your constant presence in our lives. We acknowledge that every perfect gift in our lives is a gift from you. We have listened to your guidance, directing us to offer you our first fruits. So, we now join in this generous act of giving. We pray that these resources may care for your children everywhere who are experiencing distress. We pray in the name of Jesus Christ.**

SCRIPTURE READING James 1:17-27 Becki Krueger

SERMON *Being a Good Person Is Way Overrated* Rev. Christopher Stevens

\*CLOSING HYMN NO. 608 *I Would Be True*

BENEDICTION

People of God, be beautiful. Love well and serve all. Speak gently and listen carefully. Let the mind of Christ be ever guiding you so that your lives may bring glory to God. Go now and do the work of God. In the name of God, the Father, the Son and Holy Spirit. Amen.

POSTLUDE *Joyful, Joyful, We Adore Thee* – arr. Joel Raney

\*You are invited to stand if you wish.

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## SCRIPTURE READING

### **James 1:17-27 (New Living Translation)**

<sup>17</sup> Whatever is good and perfect is a gift coming down to us from God our Father, who created all the lights in the heavens. He never changes or casts a shifting shadow. <sup>18</sup> He chose to give birth to us by giving us his true word. And we, out of all creation, became his prized possession.

<sup>19</sup> Understand this, my dear brothers and sisters: You must all be quick to listen, slow to speak, and slow to get angry. <sup>20</sup> Human anger does not produce the righteousness God desires. <sup>21</sup> So get rid of all the filth and evil in your lives, and humbly accept the word God has planted in your hearts, for it has the power to save your souls.

<sup>22</sup> But don't just listen to God's word. You must do what it says. Otherwise, you are only fooling yourselves. <sup>23</sup> For if you listen to the word and don't obey, it is like glancing at your face in a mirror. <sup>24</sup> You see yourself, walk away, and forget what you look like. <sup>25</sup> But if you look carefully into the perfect law that sets you free, and if you do what it says and don't forget what you heard, then God will bless you for doing it.

<sup>26</sup> If you claim to be religious but don't control your tongue, you are fooling yourself, and your religion is worthless. <sup>27</sup> Pure and genuine religion in the sight of God the Father means caring for orphans and widows in their distress and refusing to let the world corrupt you.

**Matthew 22:36-40 (New Living Translation)** <sup>36</sup> "Teacher, which is the most important commandment in the law of Moses?" <sup>37</sup> Jesus replied, "You must love the Lord your God with all your heart, all your soul, and all your mind." <sup>38</sup> This is the first and greatest commandment. <sup>39</sup> A second is equally important: 'Love your neighbor as yourself.' <sup>40</sup> The entire law and all the demands of the prophets are based on these two commandments."

# First Congregational Church



**September 1, 2024**

**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*