



First Congregational United Church of Christ

July 23, 2023



The Sower By VINCENT VAN GOGH

Welcome
Rev.
William
Beckstrand

8th Sunday after Pentecost

Ministers: All who are a part of this church

Pastor: Rev. Enno K. Limvere

Preaching: Rev. William Beckstrand

Musician: Karina Roth

Choir Director: Ann Russ

Peace Candle Lighter:

Liturgist: Bruce Tyler

Gathering Music

Words of Welcome

Prelude

Words to Enter Worship (based on Psalm 139)

People who have sown seeds: O LORD, you have searched me and known me. You know when I sit down and when I rise up; you discern my thoughts from far away.

People who have raised flowers: You search out my path and my lying down, and are acquainted with all of my ways. Even before a word is on my tongue, O LORD, you know it completely.

People who have planted trees: You hem me in, behind and before. Such knowledge is too wonderful for me; it is so high I cannot attain it. Where can I go from your spirit? Or where can I flee from your presence?

People who have grown love: If I take the wings of the morning and settle at the farthest limits of the sea, even there your hand shall lead me, and your right hand shall hold me fast.

Opening Hymn #31 All Things Bright and Beautiful (click [here](#))

Words of Lament

Almighty God, there is too much hate, fear, and discord sown into our world by those who just want attention, power, and money. The way of selfishness is too commonly practiced in our day and age. Remind us, Merciful God, remind us that compassion and generosity are your way, the true way of the world, the kingdom, and of love. In Jesus' name we pray. Amen.

Time of Silence

Words of Poetry & Lighting the Candle of Peace

It is a custom in our congregation to light our Peace Candle during worship, as a witness to the Prince of Peace and our communal intention to be peacemakers as a Just Peace Church.

SEEDS AND GARDENS

by R.H. Swaney

If words are seeds,
let flowers grow
from your mouth,
not weeds.

If heart are gardens,
plant those flowers
in the chest of the ones
who exist around you.

Passing of the Peace

Hymn #439 A Mighty Fortress is Our God (click [here](#))

Scripture Readings

1st Scripture Romans 8:12-25 (Common English Bible)

12 So then, brothers and sisters, we have an obligation, but it isn't an obligation to ourselves to live our lives on the basis of selfishness. 13 If you live on the basis of selfishness, you are going to die. But if by the Spirit you put to death the actions of the body, you will live. 14 All who are led by God's Spirit are God's sons and daughters. 15 You didn't receive a spirit of slavery to lead you back again into fear, but you received a Spirit that shows you are adopted as his children. With this Spirit, we cry, "Abba, Father." 16 The same Spirit agrees with our spirit, that we are God's children. 17 But if we are children, we are also heirs. We are God's heirs and fellow heirs with Christ, if we really suffer with him so that we can also be glorified with him. 18 I believe that the present suffering is nothing compared to the coming glory that is going to be revealed to us. 19 The whole creation waits breathless with anticipation for the revelation of God's sons and daughters. 20 Creation was subjected to frustration, not by its own choice—it was the choice of the one who subjected it—but in the hope 21 that the creation itself will be set free from slavery to decay and brought into the glorious freedom of God's children. 22 We know that the whole creation is groaning together and suffering labor pains up until now. 23 And it's not only the creation. We ourselves who have the Spirit as the first crop of the harvest also groan inside as we wait to be adopted and for our bodies to be set free. 24 We were saved in hope. If we see what we hope for, that isn't hope. Who hopes for what they already see? 25 But if we hope for what we don't see, we wait for it with patience.

2nd Scripture Matthew 13:24-30, 36-43 (New Revised Standard Version)

4 He put before them another parable: "The kingdom of heaven may be compared to someone who sowed good seed in his field, 25 but while everybody was asleep an enemy came and sowed weeds among the wheat and then went away. 26 So when the plants came up and bore grain, then the weeds appeared as well. 27 And the slaves of the householder came and said to him, 'Master, did you not sow good seed in your field? Where, then, did these weeds come from?' 28 He answered, 'An enemy has done this.' The slaves said to him, 'Then do you want us to go and gather them?' 29 But he replied, 'No, for in gathering the weeds you would uproot the wheat along with them. 30 Let both of them grow together until the harvest, and at harvest time I will tell the reapers, Collect the weeds first and bind them in bundles to be burned, but gather the wheat into my barn.'" 36 Then he left the crowds and went into the house. And his disciples approached him, saying, "Explain to us the parable of the weeds of the field." 37 He answered, "The one who sows the good seed is the Son of Man; 38 the field is the world, and the good seed are the children of the kingdom; the weeds are the children of the evil one, 39 and the enemy who sowed them is the devil; the harvest is the end of the age, and the reapers are angels. 40 Just as the weeds are collected and burned up with fire, so will it be at the end of the age. 41 The Son of Man will send his angels, and they will collect out of his kingdom all causes of sin and all evildoers, 42 and they will throw them into the furnace of fire, where there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth. 43 Then the righteous will shine like the sun in the kingdom of their Father. Let anyone with ears listen!

Message

Rev. William Beckstrand

Musical Reflections

Joys and Concerns, Pastoral Prayer and the Lord's Prayer

Our Father, Mother God, 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 trespasses as we forgive those who trespass against us. And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil. For thine is the kingdom and the power and the glory, forever. Amen

News of God at Work in our Congregation & Community

Our Time of Giving

Doxology

*Praise God from whom all blessings flow;
Praise Christ, all creatures here below;
Praise Holy Spirit, making us one;
Justice and peace under the sun. Amen*

Closing Hymn #558 O How Glorious, Full of Wonder (click [here](#))

Benediction

Sending Music



Opening Hymn #31 All Things Bright and Beautiful

Refrain:

All things bright and beautiful, all creatures great and small,
All things wise and wonderful, our dear God made them all.

1. Each little flower that opens, each little bird that sings
God made their glowing colors, and made their tiny wings.

2. The purple-headed mountain, the river running by.
The sunset, and the morning that brightens up the sky.

3. The cold wind in the winter, the pleasant summer sun,
The ripe fruits in the garden, God made them every one.

Words: Cecil F. Alexander, 1848; alt.

Tune: English Melody, Adapt. Martin Shaw, 1915

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Hymn #439 A Mighty Fortress is Our God

1. A mighty fortress is our God, a bulwark never failing,
Our present help amid the flood of mortal ills prevailing.
For still our ancient foe does seek to work us woe with craft and power
great, and armed with cruel hate, on earth without an equal.

2. Did we in our own strength confide, our striving would be losing,
But there is one who takes our side, the One of God's own choosing.
You ask who that may be? Christ Jesus sets us free! With mighty power to
save, victorious o'er the grave, Christ will prevail triumphant.

3. And though this world with devils filled should threaten to undo us,
We will not fear for God has willed the truth to triumph through us.
The powers of evil grim, we tremble not for them; their rage we can en-
dure, for lo, their doom is sure: one little word shall fell them.

4. That word beyond all earthly powers for ever is abiding;
The Spirit and the gifts are ours, for Christ is with us siding.
Let goods and kindred go, this mortal life also; the body they may
kill; God's truth shall triumph still; God's reign endures for ever.

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Hymn #558 O How Glorious, Full of Wonder

1. O how glorious, full of wonder is your name o'er all the earth,
God who wrought creation's splendor, bringing suns and stars to birth!
Rapt in reverence we adore you, marveling at your mystic ways.
Humbly now we bow before you, lifting up our hearts in praise.
2. When we see your lights of heaven, moon and stars, your power displayed,
Who are we that you should love us, creatures that your hand has made?
Born of earth, yet full of yearning, mixture strange of good and ill,
From your ways so often turning, yet your love does seek us still.
3. You have set us in communion with the wonders of your hand,
Made us fly with eagle pinion, pilgrims over sea and land.
Soaring spire and ruined city, these our hopes and failures show.
Teach us more of human pity, that we in your image grow.
4. O how wondrous, O how glorious is your name in every land,
God, whose purpose shines before us toward the goal that you have planned!
Yours the will our hearts are seeking, conscious of our human need.
Spirit in our spirit speaking, make us yours, O God, indeed.

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