

Order of Worship
First Church Congregational
An Open and Affirming Congregation of the
United Church of Christ
Fairfield, Connecticut



FEBRUARY 21, 2021

Prelude *Lord Who Throughout These Forty Days* Claudia Frances Hernaman

Welcome and Announcements

We seek to extend the extravagant welcome of God to all people, all the time. Regardless of your race, class, ancestry, gender identity, marital status, ability, age, immigration status, or sexual orientation you are always welcome at First Church. We affirm your inherent dignity as a child of God. God loves you - just as you are – and so do we!

Call to Worship

adapted from Psalm 25:1-3

One: To you, O God, we lift up the spirit of our whole selves.

**Many: O God, we trust unashamedly in you;
seeking that you be not ashamed of us;**

One: May we begin our Lenten journey together in right relationships;

**Many: Teach us. Show us. Guide us in your paths.
Grow us to know your ways more clearly.**

One: You are the God of our salvation and the Sustainer of good relations.

Many: For you we wait.

One: May integrity, a clean conscience, and upright living preserve us.

All: Amen.

Hymn

“Come Down, O Love Divine”

8

15

Come down, O Love di - vine, Seek thou this soul of mine, And vis - it it with
O let it free - ly burn, Till earth - ly pas - sions turn To dust and ash - es
And so the yearn - ing strong With which the soul will long, Shall far out - pass the

thine own ar - dor glow - ing; O Com - fort - er, draw near, With - in my heart ap -
in its heat con - sum - ing; And let thy glo - rious light Shine ev - er on my
power of hu - man tell - ing; For none can guess its grace, Till we be - come the

pear, sight, And kin - dle it, thy ho - ly flame be - stow - ing. A - men.
place And clothe me round, the while my path il - lum - ing.
Where - in the Ho - ly Spir - it makes her dwell - ing.

Prayer of Invocation and Lord's Prayer

As in days of old, Creator God, we come to look for your signs of covenant promises. Like the rainbow days of Noah, we see and know your signs and hear your voice again directing us to places of preparation and transformation in our lives and in our world. Thank you God, for your covenant signs in this season of Lent. Hear us as we pray together: 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 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.

Children's Sermon

The Candle of Witness

Souper Bowl of Caring

Hymn

“In the Midst of New Dimensions”

5

10

14

In Through the midst of new di - men - sions, in the face of chang - ing ways,
As the flood of starv - ing peo - ple, war - ring fac - tions and de - spair,
We stand a world di - vid - ed by our own self - seek - ing schemes,
Should are man and we are wom - an, all per - sua - sions, old and young,
the threats of dire pre - dic - tions cause us to with - draw in pain,

Who will lead the pil - grim peo - ples wan - dering in their sep - arate ways?
Who will lift the ol - ive branch - es? Who will light the flame of care?
Grant that we, your glob - al vil - lage, might en - vi - sion wid - er dreams.
Each a gift in your cre - a - tion, each a love song to be sung.
May your blaz - ing phoe - nix spir - it res - ur - rect the church a - gain.

God of rain - bow, fier - y pil - lar, lead - ing where the ea - gles soar,

We your peo - ple, ours the jour - ney now and ev - er, now and ev - er, now and ev - er - more.

Scripture

Genesis 9:8-17, Mark 1:9-15

Sermon

The Reverend Vanessa Rose

A Time for Silent Reflection

Prayer of Confession

Call

Sisters and Brothers, in our daily lives we need the gift of the season of Lent. These 40 days can help us restore right relationships with God and with others. This is a fine time to focus, clear our hearts and minds of distractions, and re-orient and restore our whole selves. May God be with us. Let us pray:

Prayer

Creating and Renewing God. In this Lenten season we each need the opportunity to clear our eyes of the glaze of indifference and apathy. Help us get our minds off distractions, obsessions, and self-pity so that we don't feel helpless. Help us to start over. Re-orient head and heart so that we may fill our whole selves with life-affirming activities and thoughts.

(Silence)

May I be in right relationship with you and all your creation and join your people in overcoming violence, hunger, and injustice. May I find courage and clarity to assist me in works of justice and compassion which make daily life bearable for many.

In Jesus' name I pray. Amen.

Assurance of God's Steadfast Love

Brothers and Sisters, God hears our prayers and, even in our human frailty, promises to be with us in the wilderness times. We are God's forgiven and beloved people. As we live in the knowledge, may we experience a new and renewed sense of hope. *Amen.*

Joys and Concerns and Prayers of the People

Donations to the Deacons' Fund, in lieu of flowers, have been made to the Glory of God and in loving memory of their parents,

Ann & Howard Avery and Kay & Bill Sargent, Sr.

by Connie & Bill Sargent

and in loving memory of her parents Pat & Ken Raimondi

by Sue Raimondi

Invitation to the Offering and Prayer of Dedication

Hymn

“Jesus, Lover of My Soul”

Je - sus, lov - er of my soul, Let me to thy bos - om fly,
Oth - er ref - uge have I none; Hangs my help - less soul on thee;
Plen - teous grace with thee is found, Grace to cov - er all my sin;

6 While the near - er wa - ters roll, While the tem - pest still is high;
Leave, ah! leave me not a - lone, Still sup - port and com - fort me.
Let the heal - ing streams a - bound, Make and keep me pure with - in.

11 Hide me, O my Sav - ior, hide, Till the storm of life is past;
All my trust on thee is stayed, All my help from thee bring;
Thou of life the foun - tain art, Free - ly let from me take of thee;

17 Safe in - to the ha - ven guide, O re - ceive my soul at last! A - men.
Cov - er my de - fense - less head With the shad - ow of thy wing.
Spring thou up with - in my heart, Rise to all e - ter - ni - ty.

Benediction

God Be With You

God be with you till we meet a-gain; by good coun-sel guide, up - hold you,
With a shep-herd's care en-fold you; God be with you till we meet a-gain. A - men.

Postlude

On Eagle's Wings

Micheal Joncas

Go in peace and strength to love and serve the Lord and all God's people! Amen!

LEADING US IN WORSHIP

The Reverend David W. Spollett

The Reverend Vanessa Payne Rose

Ms. Heidi Butler, Student Pastor

Mr. Robert Codio, Worship Music Leader

Edite Weddle, Hymn Leader

Worship Tech Team: Alan Fuehring and Cheri Evan

Call to Worship, Invocation and Prayer of Confession from <https://www.ucc.org/worship-way/lent-1-february-21/>

Please hold in your prayers...

Disciples at First Church: Barbara Barton; Sandy Bromer; Ken and Betsy Dalling; Michael Dyslin; Bill Gatto; Sonia Gutierrez and Henry Hernandez; Gayle Hand; Joyce Hutchings; Christy Jefremow; Cathy Kane, her brother Scott and great niece, Amelia; Adelaide Kitchen; Alice and Jerry Krenke; Lillian Klein; Gerry Kuroghlian; Madeline Lee, Mimi Maniscalco; Gerry O'Donovan; Jack Robinson; Bill Sargent; Charlie Simmons; Donna Schmidt; Esther Sotolongo; Rachel Spollett; Joe and Lauren Strickland's five grandsons in Libya; Arlene Studer; Joann Van Esselstyn; Bill Verdier; Elinor Wilber; and Edith Zambo.

Serving in the military: James Classy, Sam Classy, Trevor Dawson, David Elmore, Sean Lomnitzer, and Christopher Muschett.

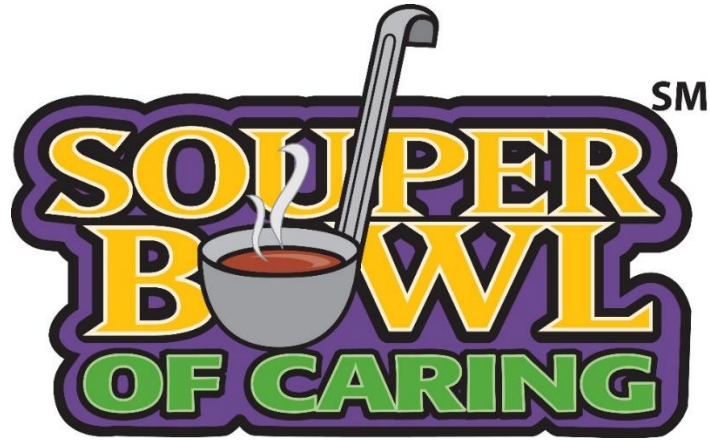
Those on the Front Lines of COVID-19:

Members of First Church: Eric Anderson, Michelle Baker, Laura Burr, Pertrinea Cash, Brooke Hine, Greg Jefremow, Kristin Koch, Kristin Lupo, Beth McKinnis, Kim Chaffee Trupp, Edite Weddle; *Friends of First Church:* Elizabeth Brennan, Raquel Canete, Marguerite Dolan, Fairfield EMS, Ericka Gordon, Stephen Huelskamp, Tracie and Devon Lingenfelter, Lauren Redler McGrath, Maria Pellegrino, Diane Marble, Casey Redler, Maria Sutton, Anna Taft, and Ann Yergeau.

Family and Friends: Adam; Gabe; George; Gloria and Eric; John Anderson; Brenda Baker; Nick Bandanza; Walter Beck; David Braun; Michelle Browser; Kevin Butler; Connor, Mike and Jess Callahan, Jaret Chase; Meg Cavanaugh; Amber Chiang; David Ciaburro; Elizabeth Clark; Charlotte Cole; The Daly Family; Steve Daniels; Brandon Deedon; The DiGioia Family; Jacqueline Geoffroy; Greenawalt and Darnall Families; Linda Drew; Tom Dwyer; Janet Faller; LaTonya Franklin; Scott Ferguson; Allen Freedman; Lauren Frey and Brian's parents; Joan Grabowski; Dave Gurrieri; Ira Jane Han-Cajegas; Christina Holms; Nancy Huber; Keli Imperatori; Mary Jean Jacob; Norma Jenkins and Family; Barton Jones; Sharon Kaley; Art Keller; Patricia Keller; Nancy King, Nancy Kovacs; Jeannette Lazarus; Desmond Leach; Jan MacMillen; Michael Maxwell; Eileen Maloney; Tim Marble; Verne Marble; Peter J. McGuinness; Lyn McCullers; MaKayla and John McGovern; Claire McMonagle; Matilda; Kathy Murdock; Joelle Murphy; George Noel; Morgan Paige; Parus Family; Mike Platt; Dimitri Psachoulias; Katie Pieterse; Artie Quinn; Sara Redeghieri; Dick Reese; Hilarys Rivera; Sally and Paul Robinson; Katelyn S.; Greg Sago; Violet; Darlene Scaia; Kristin Schleiter; Louise M. Schmidt; Levi Schmidt; Sergei; Connie Sokalsky; Ryan Steward; Seth Sullivan; Steven Szymczak and family; Paul Taylor; Clarence Traum, his wife Carolyn and Nora who are caring for him; Jenny and Mike Tkacz; Harumi Ishihara Sugiyama; Danielle Taal and her five sons, Max Varalli; Sarah Wakeman; Susan Walker; Kate Wilber, Andy Yuan; Virginia MacDonald and her children; Linda Hotchkiss; Dan MacDonald; Sydney West and family; Brian Zagorski; Reva Zamero; and James Zamora's family.

The Needs of God's Beloved World:

- First, we pray and then we work for justice and its fruit which is peace
- The people who are suffering so greatly from the winter storm, especially in Texas
- Uighur people in China and the Rohingyas in Myanmar and Bangladesh persecuted for their Muslim faith
- The people of Myanmar suffering political oppression after the military coup d'état.
- Members of Congress and the President act swiftly to alleviate human suffering
- Nearly 80 million refugees and displaced people around the world, especially children
- Our Brothers and Sisters at the First Baptist Church of Stratford
- All who have suffered from the COVID-19 pandemic: over **110 million infected**, many living with chronic conditions and over **2.4 million deaths** worldwide; nearly **28 million infected** & more than **490 thousand deaths** – **1 out of every 673 people** - in the US
- Those who are suffering in the economic crisis: lost jobs, closed and lost businesses, food insecurity, threat of eviction or foreclosure, and homelessness
- Health care professionals who provide care for COVID-19 patients and all who are sick
- Essential workers who have continued to work in spite of the risk
- All who are involved in education: parents, teachers, administrators, and staff
- Those who are isolated, lonely, and afraid in this time of social separation
- All who suffer from depression, anxiety, and all mental illnesses and their families
- Mental health providers who care for all who are suffering mentally and emotionally
- All who work to prevent domestic violence and to care for the victims of such violence
- People targeted by hatred of all kinds, including anti-Black, anti-Migrant, anti-Gay, anti-Trans, anti-Semitic, anti-Islamic, anti-Christian prejudice, and actions
- All who are committed to the work of antiracism and the eradication of white supremacy
- Survivors of sexual assault, abuse, and harassment and those who love them
- Those who are addicted and their loved ones; those who have died and those in recovery
- All victims of war, especially the grandsons of Joe and Lauren Strickland in Libya
- Our community partners: Council of Churches of Greater Bridgeport (CCGB), School Volunteer Association, Mercy Learning Center, Operation Hope, Westbridge, Simply Smiles, Make the Road Connecticut, Congregations Organized for a New Connecticut (CONNECT) and the Connecticut Institute for Refugees and Immigrants (CIRI)



TODAY 11:30-12:00 in front of the Sanctuary!

A Pasta Dinner Thank You!

Dear Andrew, Michelle, and all the Deacons,

Thank you for such a wonderful Valentine's Day Pasta Dinner! We were so impressed with how you were able to re-envision the event for 2021! So great to have folks connect over Zoom pasta!

Big shout out to Team Evan – Pete, Cheri, Josie, Liv, Nick, Lindsey, Leah, and Jacob – who staffed the kitchen and served up all those dinners hot and tasty!

We are especially grateful thinking of all the needs we will be able to meet this year thanks to the Deacons' Emergency Assistance Fund. Thanks to your love and dedication **\$6,927.00** was added to the Fund!

Your faithfulness keeps us honest when we say that we are the church that says "yes!" We can say "yes" to our sisters and brothers in need because of your love and dedication.

Peace and Love, Vanessa and David





You Can Help!!

Deliver Non-Perishable Food, Diapers, Checks,
and Gift Cards to Wakeman Hall
By **Thursday Noon** for delivery

to the Food Pantry at Mercy Learning Center on Friday Morning!!
These are basic items that will help right now:

- bags of rice and bags of any type of dried beans, lentils, etc.
- tomato paste, tomato sauce, or diced tomatoes
- oatmeal, cream of wheat, corn meal,
- pasta, cooking oil, flour
- powdered or evaporated milk
- canned meats, canned fruit, canned vegetables
- toilet paper, bars of soap, other toiletries
- Diapers: sizes 4, 5, and *especially 6*
- Gift cards: Stop and Shop, Shop Rite, Walgreens, CVS
- Financial Donations: Mail to First Church, check payable to Mercy Learning Center.

Join the Monday Lenten Devotional Group Beginning February 22



Beginning on February 22nd, Student Pastor Heidi Butler will be leading a devotional class on Monday nights throughout Lent focusing on spirituality and closeness to God through prayer, discussion, and exploration of art and written word. Gathering time will begin at 7:30pm, with the program beginning by 7:50pm and finishing by 9:00pm. Please contact Heidi (heidi.butler@yale.edu) for more information!

The devotional class is open to all who are interested, and it is not required that you prepare significant material ahead of time or attend every week. That being said, we will be incorporating materials from a devotional curriculum entitled "Again & Again: A Lenten Refrain" from *A Sanctified Art*. We will use portions of it in our discussions, but if you would like a full copy of your own, either for the class or your personal devotional use, they will be available both in hard copy and PDF on request. Please contact Heidi if you would like one!

Zoom Link: <https://zoom.us/j/91357117765?pwd=OGZV2V2N3VnSytMdUIVb1piR25qdz09>

Meeting ID: 913 5711 7765

Passcode: Fairfield1

Or call 1-646 -558 -8656

Meeting ID: 913 5711 7765

Passcode: 6261225580



Kino Border Initiative
Iniciativa Kino para la Frontera

**PERSPECTIVES FROM OUR
SOUTHERN BORDER**

TUESDAY, FEB. 23 @ 7PM



**SARA RITCHIE, KINO BORDER INITIATIVE
DIRECTOR OF COMMUNICATIONS**



Join us for this important discussion on issues facing asylum seekers and migrants at the border. Sara will humanize the realities of migration and provide suggestions on how to engage and advocate for reforms.

[RSVP for Event](#)

Thank you to our Sponsors! Center for Social Impact, University Honors Program, Humanitarian Action Minor, Department of Psychology, Sophomore Residential College

Center for Social Impact



RSVP @ https://fairfield.zoom.us/webinar/register/WN_XNe7OqinS8idb5Nd74GqUQ

"Helping Hands Near and Far!"

The Middle Road group is launching 2 service projects and would love it if you can join your helping hands to assist those both near and far.

For those in need in our community, we are joining with Operation Hope to create "**Move-In Baskets**" for those clients transitioning into apartments. Our goal is to create 12 baskets filled with some of the necessary, helpful items needed in setting up a home. We have created a sign-up genius for the items we hope to collect and appreciate any help you can offer. There is a laundry basket in the back of Wakeman Hall labeled "Move-In Baskets" where you can leave your donations. We hope to have all 12 baskets put together by March 7th. Here is the Sign-Up Genius link: <https://www.signupgenius.com/go/8050B44ADA928AA8-operation>



For our "far" helping hands, we are starting a "Coins for Care" fundraiser to help support the ongoing construction efforts of Simply Smiles and their Children's Village on the Cheyenne River Reservation. As founder Bryan Nurnberger shares, "the Simply Smiles children's village is a community of foster families offering a child placement option that fulfills the spirit of the Indian child welfare act by ensuring that native children who have been removed from their homes can remain with kin and community." One foster home is already built, the second one is underway now, and the hope is for more to come!

We are excited to see how far our coins can go in supporting this effort. Is that change weighing down your pockets? We'll take it! The penny you pass on the street, please pick it up for us! We will have a donation container **kept in the office**. Due to COVID, **please drop off your donations on THURSDAYS between 9-2 when Maria is in the office**. The collection will continue through the end of May.