

First Congregational Church
United Church of Christ
3 Gray Road, North Yarmouth, Maine 04097
Organized in 1806



**The Sixth Sunday after Epiphany
Racial Justice Sunday
Black History Month
February 12, 2023 ~ 9:30 a.m.**

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Welcome. We pray that you may be blessed through our worship and fellowship today.

* Indicates: Please stand if you are able.

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Order of Worship

Abraham Lincoln was asked why he had not joined any church. He replied, "When any church will inscribe over its altars, as its sole qualification for membership, the Savior's condensed statement for the substance of both law and gospel, 'Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind, and thy neighbor as thyself,' that church will I join with all my heart and soul."

We Gather to Worship God

Prelude

All Sing: God welcomes all! Strangers and friends!

God's love is strong! And it never ends!

Words: John L. Bell; Music: Trad. South African, transcribed by John L. Bell at the Sunrise Hospice, Themba. © 2008, GIA/Iona Community / WGRG

Welcome and Announcements

Call to Worship

Deuteronomy 30:15-20, altered

Pastor: See, I have set before you today life and prosperity, death and adversity. If you obey the commandments of the LORD your God that I am commanding you today, by loving the LORD your God, walking in his ways, and observing his commandments, then you shall live and the LORD your God will bless you. But if your heart turns away and you do not hear, but are led astray to bow down to other gods and serve them, I declare to you

today that you shall perish. I call heaven and earth to witness against you today that I have set before you life and death, blessings and curses.
People: **We choose life, loving the LORD our God, obeying him, and holding fast to him; for that means life to us!**

***Hymn**

Wonderful Words of Life

CH # 323

Words and Music: Philip P. Bliss, 1874

**Sing them over again to me, won-der-ful words of life;
let me more of their beauty see, won-der-ful words of life.
Words of life and beauty, teach me faith and duty;
beautiful words, won-derful words, won-der-ful words of life,
beautiful words, won-derful words, won-der-ful words of life.**

**Christ, the blessed one, gives to all, won-der-ful words of life;
Sinner, list to the loving call, won-der-ful words of life.
All so freely given, wooing us to heaven;
beautiful words, won-der-ful words, won-der-ful words of life,
beautiful words, won-de-rful words, won-der-ful words of life.**

**Sweetly echo the gospel call, won-der-ful words of life;
Offer pardon and peace to all, won-der-ful words of life.
Jesus, only Savior, sanctify forever;
beautiful words, won-der-ful words, won-der-ful words of life,
beautiful words, won-der-ful words, won-der-ful words of life.**

Call to Confession

Lincoln's Fast Day Proclamation

It is the duty of nations as well as of men, to own their dependence upon the overruling power of God, to confess their sins and transgressions, in humble sorrow, yet with assured hope that genuine repentance will lead to mercy and pardon

We have been the recipients of the choicest bounties of Heaven. We have been preserved, these many years, in peace and prosperity. We have grown in numbers, wealth and power, as no other nation has ever grown. But we have forgotten God. We have forgotten the gracious hand which preserved us in peace, and multiplied and enriched and

strengthened us; and we have vainly imagined, in the deceitfulness of our hearts, that all these blessings were produced by some superior wisdom and virtue of our own. Intoxicated with unbroken success, we have become too self-sufficient to feel the necessity of redeeming and preserving grace, too proud to pray to the God that made us!

It behooves us then, to humble ourselves before the offended Power, to confess our national sins, and to pray for clemency and forgiveness.

Prayer of Confession

Worship Ways

Pastor: O God, on this Racial Justice Sunday we confess that the sin of racial hatred and prejudice distorts your divine plan for our human lives: You created us in divine likeness, diverse and beautiful. In every person, every race is your image. But too often we fail to recognize your image in all.

People: **Forgive us.**

Pastor: You created us in divine freedom, to be free. In every decision, every choice is your possibility of justice. But too often we fail to choose to advocate for your justice for all.

People: **Forgive us.**

Pastor: You created us for divine abundance, to tend and share. In every garden, every social structure is your seed of community. But too often we fail to create that community which includes all, and gives to all equal access to your abundant life.

People: **Forgive us, God, and open our eyes to distinguish good from evil; open our hearts to desire good over evil; strengthen our wills to choose good over evil, so that we may create among us your Beloved Community; in Jesus' name. Amen.**

Words of Assurance

Pastor: Hear the good news: God's gift of grace in Jesus Christ forgives us and sets us free to live full human lives in community. We may go forth confident in the grace to see with new eyes beyond racial prejudice; to imagine with renewed fervor justice and mercy for all, and to create with a new will a community where all are given access to God's abundant life.

People: **Thanks be to God!**

***Passing the Peace**

Time with God's Children

Scripture Reading

Matthew 5:21-37

Choir Anthem

My Word

Amy Grant & Michael Smith

The Good News

"But I Say to You"
1 Corinthians 3

Pastor Day

*Hymn *Standing in the Need of Prayer* – vv. 1, 3 & 4 CH # 579

Words and Music: African-American spiritual; Music arr. William F. Smith, 1986

Refrain: It's me, (it's me) it's me, O Lord, standing in the need of prayer. It's me, (it's me) it's me, O Lord, standing in the need of prayer.

Not my brother, not my sister, but it's me, O Lord, standing in the need of prayer. Not my brother, not my sister, but it's me, O Lord, standing in the need of Prayer.

**It's me, (it's me) it's me, O Lord, standing in the need of prayer.
It's me, (it's me) it's me, O Lord, standing in the need of prayer.**

Not my father, not my mother, but it's me, O Lord, standing in the need of prayer. Not my father, not my mother, but it's me, O Lord, standing in the need of prayer.

**It's me, (it's me) it's me, O Lord, standing in the need of prayer.
It's me, (it's me) it's me, O Lord, standing in the need of prayer.**

Not the stranger, not my neighbor, but it's me, O Lord, standing in the need of prayer. Not the stranger, not my neighbor, but it's me, O Lord, standing in the need of prayer.

**It's me, (it's me) it's me, O Lord, standing in the need of prayer.
It's me, (it's me) it's me, O Lord, standing in the need of prayer.**

Prayers of the People

The Lord's Prayer (in 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.

The Worship of God in Tithes and Offerings

Paul reminds us that, as we each do our part, we are cultivating the Beloved Community and building God's Temple, where God is worshiped in spirit and in truth. God gives the growth. For God dwells with us, and in us.

Offertory

*Doxology

**Praise God, from whom all blessings flow;
Praise God, all creatures here below;
Praise God for all that love has done;
Creator, Christ, and Spirit, One. Amen.**

*Prayer of Dedication (in unison)

God, bless the gifts we bring – our time, our talents, our treasure – to build your Church and bless the wider Beloved Community. Bless these cans of soup that they may bless and feed those in need. Amen.

*Hymn *I'm Gonna Live So God Can Use Me* CH # 614

Words & Music: African-American spiritual; Music arr. Bill Thomas 1994

**1. I'm gonna live so (I'm gonna live so) God can use me any time
(yes any time) and anywhere. (yes anywhere).**

**I'm gonna live so (I'm gonna live so) God can use me any time
(yes any time) and anywhere. (yes anywhere).**

2. I'm gonna work ...

3. I'm gonna pray ...

4. I'm gonna sing ...

***Charge & Benediction**

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Postlude

We Go Forth to Serve God and Our Neighbors

Staff

Interim Pastor: Rev. Dr. Paul A. Day
Administrative Assistant: Lyn Glassock
Organist: Peter Dickson
Organist: Jesse Myers-Wakeman
Choir Director: David Myers-Wakeman*
Sexton: Mark R.H. Heath
Treasurer: Liz McGlinn, CPA, CGMA

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Pastor Day's email: revpaulday@gmail.com

Church Website: <http://nyccucc.com>
Maine Conference Website: www.maineucc.org
YouTube: youtube.com/c/nyccucc

Note: This service was recorded and streamed on YouTube.

If you are not receiving church emails and would like to, please send an email to nyarmouthcucc@gmail.com asking to be added to the list. Like the NYCC FB page and you will be notified of what is happening there, too!

Offerings can also be made online through Tithely at <https://tithe.ly/give?c=1301940> or text "Give" to 833-751-0314