



First Congregational Church of Anoka United Church of Christ

An Open and Affirming Congregation

September 3, 2023 ♦ 14th Sunday after Pentecost



This bulletin is designed to assist you as you watch our livestreamed worship service, whether you follow along live or view it at a later time. The stream can be found on our YouTube channel at this location:

<https://www.youtube.com/@AnokaUCC>

Welcome & Announcements

If you would like to join our mailing list, email office@uccanoka.org and ask to be added.

Prelude

Koki Sato

The Church Bell Rings

* Opening Hymn

“A Mighty Fortress Is Our God” #439

Feel free to sing the older lyrics at the end of verse 3 because they're so poetically awesome.

**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.**

**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.**

**And though this world with devils filled should threaten to undo us,
we will no 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 endure,
for lo, their doom is sure: one little word shall fell them.**

** The Prince of Darkness grim, we tremble not for him; his rage we can endure;
for lo, his doom is sure: one little word shall fell him.*

**That word beyond all earthly powers forever 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 forever.**

Sharing at Christ's Table

Invitation

One: When Jesus sat at table and enjoyed communion with tax collectors and sinners he proclaimed that God's care knows no bounds. At this table we live into that call by spreading the invitation as widely as we possibly can; no matter who you are or where you are on your life's journey you are welcome here. For neither age, nor race, nor gender, nor orientation, nor ideology, nor anything else can separate us from the love of God in Christ Jesus our Savior.

Thanksgiving Prayer

One: God be with you:

Many: and also with you.

One: Lift up your hearts:

Many: we lift them up to God.

One: Let us thank God:

Many: it is good to thank God.

One: We thank you, God, that you have provided for all the worlds that ever were or will be by giving yourself to them in love. If we go to the heights of the mountains, or if we make the grave our bed, you are with us. If we go to the depths of the sea, your right hand holds us fast. We thank you for Jesus, your Word, who lived among us, uncovering your presence. We thank you that you stamped his death with victory and that Life, not Death, was the final word. We ask now that you bless us, as we share this bread and cup, that we might be nourished by that same unbounded love and so be encouraged to be your servants to the world. And now, as your beloved whom you have reconciled to yourself, we pray:

Prayer of Our Savior (unison)

The Prayer has many versions; pray whichever you desire (debts, sins, trespasses, etc.).

We affirm that God has many names, so use one of the suggested or another of your choosing.

Our Father/Mother/Creator, 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.

Communion

One: As this grain once was scattered in the field and has come together in one bread, so we, with different needs and hopes, come together as one, for we share one bread. Take. The Bread of Life.

The cup which we share is the cup of the New Covenant written in our hearts and witnessed by Jesus. Take. Drink. The Cup of the New Covenant. God is with you.

*You may hold the bread until all have been served.
Peel-and-eat safety elements will be distributed with the cup.
As the ushers distribute, we sing:*

Eat this bread, drink this cup, come to me and nev - er be hun - gry.

Eat this bread, drink this cup, trust in me and you will not thirst.

When all have received bread:

One: This is the bread of life for the Body of Christ. Let all the people say:
Many: Amen! [Eat.]

You may hold the cup until all have been served. As the ushers distribute, we sing:

Eat this bread; drink this cup; come to me and never be hungry.

Eat this bread; drink this cup; trust in me and you will not thirst.

When all have received the cup:

One: This is the cup of blessing for the people of God. Let all the people say:
Many: Amen! [Drink.]

Prayer of Thanksgiving

One: Let us pray in gratitude.

**Many: Thank you God, for renewing us at your table by the presence of Christ.
 Thank you for your eternal love, the Bread of Life, that sustains all creation.
 May you continue to love us in our faithful acts and by that love discourage us
 from our unfaithful acts, that we might rejoice as your servants to the world.
 Amen.**

A Time for Children

Prayer of Preparation

“Pour Out Your Spirit”

C. Grundy

From the sac - red wa - ters of my birth
 to the sac - red wa - ters of this hour,
 I have leaned up-on You who knit me in my
 moth-er's womb. O pour out Your Spir - it now.

Special Music

“All in the Same Boat”

Brown, Simonetti, Singleton

Anoka UCC String Band

*We're all in the same boat, fishing in the same hole,
 wondering where the same time goes; we're all in the same boat.
 We could all believe what we believe, peacefully agree to disagree
 but you can't judge a man until you walk a country mile in his shoes.*

*(refrain) We're all in the same boat, fishing in the same hole,
 wondering where the same time goes, and money too.*

*Tryin' to fix the same broke hearts, wishing on the same stars;
 we're all hoping hope floats, and we're all in the same boat.*

*We've all been kicked and knocked around but you ain't gonna keep a good man down.
 You can run like hell from your mistakes but you can't hide from your truth.
 Share them peaches, if you're holding; take those shots and keep reloading.*

If you can't be nice, don't say nothing at all.

*So help somebody who might be struggling, spread a little love, gotta give back something.
 If the ship keeps rocking, we'll all go overboard.*

Scripture Reading - Matthew 5:38-42

"You have heard that it was said, 'An eye for an eye and a tooth for a tooth.' ³⁹ But I say to you, Do not resist an evildoer. But if anyone strikes you on the right cheek, turn the other also; ⁴⁰ and if anyone wants to sue you and take your coat, give your cloak as well; ⁴¹ and if anyone forces you to go one mile, go also the second mile. ⁴² Give to everyone who begs from you, and do not refuse anyone who wants to borrow from you.

One: Hear what the Spirit is saying to the church.

Many: Thanks be to God.

Sermon

Pastor Kelsey Renk

Hymn

"How Like a Gentle Spirit" #443

**How like a gentle spirit deep within God reins our fervent passions day by day,
and gives us strength to challenge and to win despite the perils of our chosen way.**

**Let God be God wherever life may be; let every tongue bear witness to the call;
all humankind is one by God's decree; let God be God, let God be God for all.**

**God like a mother eagle hovers near on mighty wings of power manifest;
God like a gentle shepherd stills our fear, and comforts us against a peaceful breast.**

**When in our vain pretensions we conspire to shape God's image as we see our own,
hark to the voice above our base desire; God is the sculptor, we the fashioned stone.**

**Through all our fretful claims of sex and race the universal love of God shines through,
for God is love transcending style and place and all the idle options we pursue.**

Offering

Text-to-Give: **844-334-1477**

Thank you for your gifts to our ministries!

*If you are watching from home (live or later), please consider adding to the Offering
by sending your gifts by mail, text, or online (uccanoka.org/donate).*

*You can support the church further through the RaiseRight program:
www.raiseright.com. Our unique church ID is gWKLGX8TRZCN.*

Offertory

Koki Sato

* Doxology

LASST UNS ERFREUEN (#17)

Praise God from whom all blessings flow.

Praise God, all creatures here below. Alleluia! Alleluia!

Praise God for all that love has done; Creator, Christ, and Spirit, One.

Alleluia! Alleluia! Alleluia! Alleluia! Alleluia!

* Benediction

* Congregational Blessing “God Be With You” (#809)

Dorsey/Hutchins

God be with you. God be with you. God be with you ‘til we meet again.

O God be with you. God be with you. God be with you ‘til we meet again.

Postlude

Koki Sato

You may be seated as you listen to the Postlude. If you choose to depart at this time, please speak gently as you exit out of respect for those who choose to listen.

Acknowledgements

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First Congregational Church, UCC of Anoka is an Open and Affirming Christian Community for all. We affirm that the image of God is most fully reflected in diversity. We invite all people to share their energy and talents in full participation with our community. We welcome all individuals and families of any sexual orientation, gender, gender identity, gender expression, relationship status, race, national origin, socioeconomic status, age, mental and physical health or ability, or belief. Together, we celebrate these and all other facets of one's essential being.