

CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH OF LACONIA
UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST

NOVEMBER 3, 2024 9:30 A.M.

AN OPEN AND AFFIRMING AND JUST PEACE CHURCH



Prelude

Welcome and Greeting

Introit

'Tis a Gift to Be Simple

Shaker Song

Call to Worship**

Sing to the Lord a new song. Praise God among the communion of saints!

Let the people of God rejoice in their creator. Let them praise the LORD with dance, and celebrate with music, because the Lord delights in them, and adorns the despoiling with welfare.

Let all the saints jump for joy; let them cry out with gladness where they rest.

Let high praises of God be in their throats: word and song that overcome injustice, binding rulers in chains and the powerful in iron shackles; bringing justice to them, and honor to all God's faithful.

***Hymn**

O God, We Give Thanks for the Saints Gone Before Us (Insert)

Prayer of Confession***

Creator God, you are our God and we are your people, and we are grateful that you have claimed us as your own. You have set us in the company of saints past and present, among those who have made bold witness

to your goodness and your truth. Your word opens up new futures where we see no way forward.

And still, we confess the places in our hearts where we are afraid: afraid of a future we cannot control, afraid of losing health and independence, afraid for the well-being of our children and grandchildren, afraid that past mistakes will ruin our future. We confess that as much as we want to be guided by faith, it is often our fear that takes control.

Write the stories of your people deep into our hearts, we pray, so that we may learn to trust you beyond our fears. Give us hearts and minds and spirits ready to trust and follow wherever your Spirit leads, confident that you will not lead us beyond your loving embrace.

Moment of Silent Confession

Assurance of Pardon

God is our God, and we are God's people. The prayers that we lift are held in God's heart, and the tears we weep wet God's cheeks. And we hold fast to the promise that endings are not final, for love is infinite, beyond all our imaginings. So we hear the assurance that God's mercy abides with us, and God's grace forgives us, now and always.

Thanks be to God! Amen.

Sung Response

Anthem

Offertory

John Ness Beck

Scripture: Revelation 21:1-6a

Then I saw a new heaven and a new earth, for the first heaven and the first earth had passed away, and the sea was no more. ²And I saw the holy city, the new Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband. ³And I heard a loud voice from the throne saying, "See, the home⁴ of God is among mortals.

He will dwell⁵ with them; they will be his peoples,⁶ and God himself will be with them and be their God;⁷ he will wipe every tear from their eyes.

Death will be no more; mourning and crying and pain will be no more, for⁸ the first things have passed away."

⁹And the one who was seated on the throne said, "See, I am making all things new." Also he said, "Write this, for these words are trustworthy and true." ¹⁰Then he said to me, "It is done! I am the Alpha and the Omega, the Beginning and the End. To the thirsty I will give water as a gift from the spring of the water of life.

Sermon

Remembering the Saints

Invitation to the Table

Jesus calls us to the well, inviting us to drink of the Living Water, and the life eternal.

Jesus calls us out of the shadows, out of the graves, to be entirely known, and entirely filled with God's presence.

Jesus calls us all: all who were made in God's own image, all who breathe the breath of God's spirit: the Spirit of Life.

Jesus calls us to the table, to the meal that nourishes our bodies and binds our mortal flesh into one Body, living in Christ.

Jesus calls us, here and now. Come to this table, you who are beloved in Christ. Come, not because you must, but because you may.

Communion Prayer

Holy God, source of all being, you are greater by far than our human thoughts can comprehend. With all that you have created, you abide; weeping with us in grief and pain, rejoicing with us in life and love. You are everywhere in this very moment; holding the entirety of living experience and weaving us together in the great and intricate tapestry of Creation.

Creator God, parent of us all, in your holy love you took on our limitations. Born of a body, bound within a body, you know the whole of this human experience. Learning to communicate with words; teaching us to communicate with presence. Learning the fears that wring us dry; teaching us of the love that nurtures us back to life.

Everlasting God, you are everywhere and right here. As close as the air we breathe, the air which binds us one to another and all to your beautiful creation. You are as close as the presence of the saints in our lives whose voices remain within our hearts, who push us and lead us and call us again and again into relationship with one another and with you. Holy

Spirit, divine Advocate, guide and encourage us. Stir within our souls, that we may speak anew the familiar words that Jesus taught us...

Prayer of Our Savior

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 sins, as we forgive those who sin against us. Lead us not into temptation but deliver us from evil. For thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, forever. Amen.

Blessing of the Elements

Sharing of the Elements

All of the elements are gluten-free and non-alcoholic. To receive, please come forward one row at a time up the center aisle. Take a piece of bread, dip it into the chalice, and partake; then return to your seats via the side aisles.

Prayer of Thanksgiving

Source of life, and breath, and being, breathe into the dry dust of our existence. Nourished in body by bread and juice, may we strive for the nourishment of all bodies: may we work to end hunger in this creation that provides amply for all. Nourished in spirit by the Body which is within our own, may we strive for the incorporation of all: may we work to break the barriers that divide us from one another and from you. In the love that sustains us, and the Spirit that animates us, may we give all thanks and praise to you, O God of all. Amen.

Mission in Motion Moment

Offertory

Sine Nomine

Ralph Vaughn Williams

Doxology

Prayer of Dedication

***Closing Hymn 595**

I'll Fly Away

***Benediction**

Choral Response

Peace Be With You Alleluia

Laura Bellanger

Postlude

****Loosely adapted from a prayer by Christine Jerrett, and posted on the Christine Jerrett blog.**