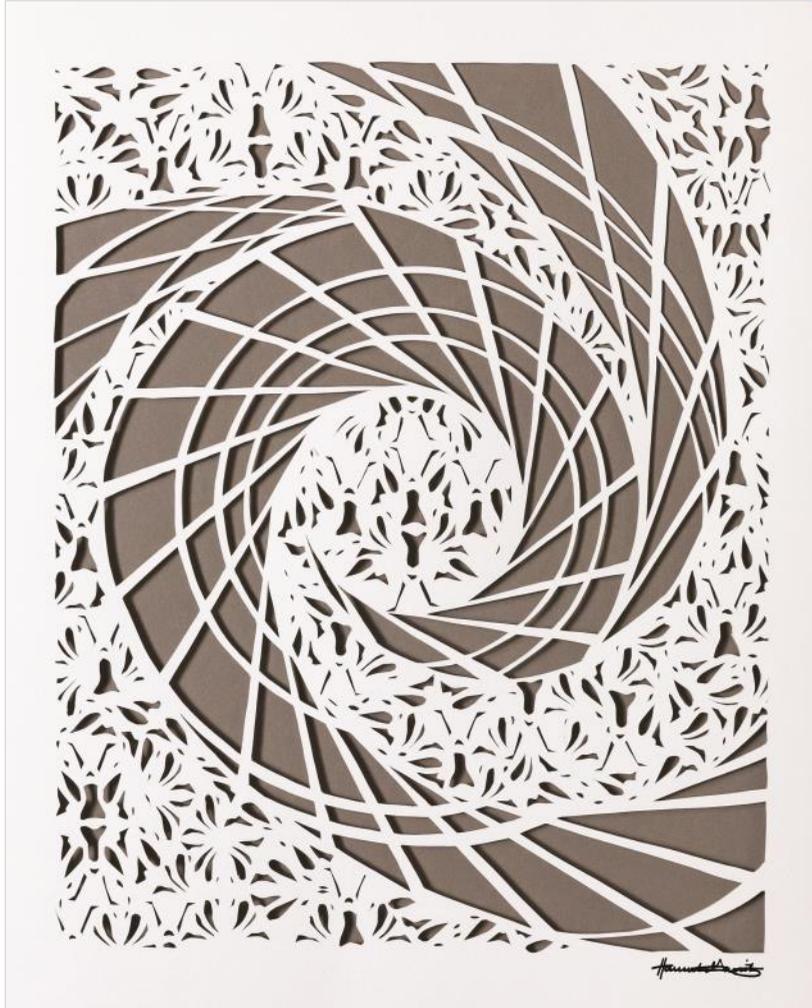


Again & Again, We Are Called to Listen
February 28, 2021
#BiggerBalcony



SECOND SUNDAY OF ADVENT

February 28, 2021

10:00 am

#BiggerBalcony

Please sign in to Worship Connect to let us know you're here!
<http://tiny.cc/worshipconnect>

*We cannot hear the trees growing—seeds pushing up through the dirt into the sun.
And we cannot hear a single drop of rain, missing one in the many.
We cannot hear the weight of people's grief, a burden that so often is silent.
And we cannot hear when hearts are changed, but you can.
You hear it all.
~ Rev. Sarah Are*

PRELUDE

"Dusk"
by Nkeiru Okoye, from "African Sketches"
Used under CCS #12615

Judy Widrig

WELCOME & ANNOUNCEMENTS

Rev. Sharon Benton

A READING FROM THE POETS

“Truth That Ricochets”

by Rev. Sarah Are

*I went to a lecture once —
An interfaith conversation with interfaith
leaders.*

*Whispers bounced off the church’s tile floors
As people shuffled into place,
Carrying hope alongside assumptions —
Mixed into pockets like loose change.*

*About halfway through the evening,
A young woman in a blue hijab began speaking.
She was the youngest person on the panel,
Seated far to the left. You might almost miss her
If you weren’t paying attention; But not here,
not when she spoke.*

*In quiet determination she told us of fear and
persecution.*

*She told us of hatred and racial slurs,
Thrown at her people from car windows like
bombs.*

*It was a truth I did not know,
And that truth ricocheted like sunlight through
the cathedral windows,
Touching almost everyone that day.*

*Then a man in the back, who could have been me —
Who has been me —*

*Approached the microphone and said,
“Your people are persecuted. You live in fear.
You are battered by hate.*

*If that is true, then why am I just now hearing
about it?*

*Why is your story not on the news? Why have
you not spoken up about it?”*

*And the air was still, partly because we held our
breath in anticipation,
And partly because the Spirit slows her dance
when we stand at the edge of truth.*

*The woman in the blue hijab leaned into the
microphone
And whispered with a quiet strength that can
only come from years of practice:
“We are screaming.”*

*If there is one truth in my life
That unfolds again and again,
It is the need to listen.*

*For again and again, I will try, with good
intentions,*

To act and walk with love.

*But again and again, I will make mistakes.
Again and again, I will say the wrong thing.
Again and again, they will call me Peter, And
again and again, they will be right.*

So again and again,

*I will pray for a truth that ricochets, For ears
that will listen,*

And for space to hold truth.

*If people are screaming,
And to be clear — people are screaming —
I do not want to miss it.*

HYMN

“God Is Still Speaking”

by Mark Miller. Used with permission.

*God is calling to her people
God is calling to us all
Are we listening?
God is still speaking
God is calling to us all.*

*Love is moving through this body,
Love is moving in this place
Breathing through us
Helping us get stronger,
Love is moving through this place*

*I will pour out my Spirit,
I will pour out my power.
Share my dreaming,
Shower you with visions,
I will pour out my power.*

*Pour out justice over flowing!
Pour out mercy for this hour!
Pour compassion on your people,
Let your Spirit flow with power!*

*Pour out justice over flowing!
Pour out mercy for this hour!
Pour compassion on your people,
Let your Spirit flow with power!*

TIME WITH CHILDREN

John Mark Slagle

PRAYER OF CONFESSION

Sharon Benton

**Take what is distracted in us and settle it.
Take what is hurting in us and hold it.**

**Take any and all parts of us that create distance from you.
For we are like Peter, O God.**

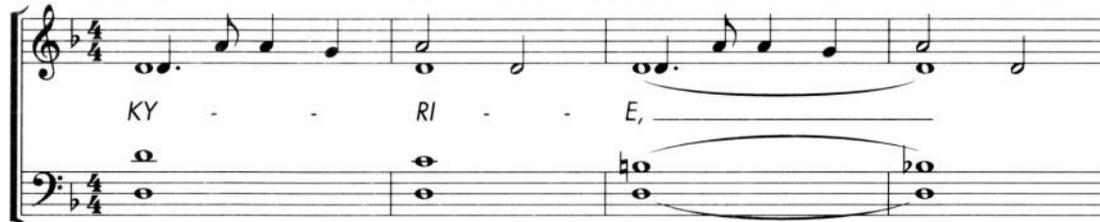
**We argue what we don't know. We fear what we cannot see.
And we almost always speak sooner than we listen.**

**So open us, settle us, hold us, and forgive us.
We long to hear you more clearly.
We long to know you more fully.**

**With hope we pray,
And with gratitude we confess. Amen.**

KYRIE ELEISON

Cantor: Ky - ri - e e - lei - son. ALL: KY - RI - E E - LEI - SON.



Cantor: Chri - ste e - lei - son. ALL: CHRI - STE E - LEI - SON.



Cantor: Ky - ri - e e - lei - son. ALL: KY - RI - E E - LEI - SON.



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WORDS OF FORGIVENESS

Sharon Benton

INVITATION TO OFFERING

John Green

There are several options for giving: 1) Mail checks to First Congregational Church, 2401 Cornwall Avenue, Bellingham, WA 98225. 2) Give at our website, <https://fccb.net/giving/>. 3) Use the GivePlus app. Download from your app store, set up an account, and give! 4) Give by text. Text a dollar amount to 208-516-2657, and set up your account. You're ready for easy giving by text! 5) Give by PayPal. Our easy link is [PayPal.Me/fccb](https://www.paypal.com/mefccb).

MUSICIAN MEDITATION

“Listening”

by Lea Morgan. Used with permission.

SCRIPTURE READING

Mark 8:31-9:8

Jen Green

Combined from the *Common English Bible* and the *Inclusive Bible*,
and adapted for expansive language.

SCRIPTURE RESPONSE

Jen Green

One: For the Word of God in scripture,
for the Word of God among us,
for the Word of God within us:

All: Thanks be to God.

SERMON

“Again & Again, We Are Called to Listen: Divine Q-Tips”
Rev. Chris Mereschuk

HYMN

“There Is a Time for Silence”

ST. CHRISTOPHER

words by Carolyn Winfrey Gillette. Used with permission.

Tune by Frederick C. Maker, public domain.

*There is a time for silence, a time to listen well,
a time to hear the painful stories others have to tell.
O God, may we who love to talk now hear the rage and fear,
and may we learn from neighbors who have long been silenced here.*

*There's time for humble study — for reading and for thought.
God, may we learn from others of the justice they have sought,
And may we learn from those who bravely stand against the hate,
So when we're called to justice, we, your church, won't hesitate.*

*There's time for good reflection, to ponder who we've been,
to think how our own attitudes have paved the way for sin,
to listen to the ones we fear — to folks we may resent —
to hear of Jesus' call to love — and humbly to repent.*

*And there's a time to work now — to boldly say their names,
to protest and to organize, to advocate for change,
to use our voices and to stand with those who are oppressed.
As we seek justice, hand in hand, Lord, may your world be blessed.*

PRAYERS OF THE PEOPLE

Sharry Nyberg

The Prayer of Jesus

We invite you to use the language for God that is most comfortable for you:

“Our Creator,” “Our Father” or “Our Mother.”

Our 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 and ever. Amen.

BENEDICTION

Rev. Chris Mereschuk

POSTLUDE

“Solace”
by Scott Joplin

Judy Widrig

Guest Preacher

Rev. Chris Mereschuk (he/him) is an Unsettled Pastor currently serving as the Designated Term Pastor at Faith United Church in Springfield, MA (Southern New England Conference). Chris has previously served churches in Massachusetts, Connecticut, and New Orleans, and has stumbled into a calling to transitional ministry. He lives in Northampton, MA with his partner, tweenager, and puppy, and enjoys drumming and starting ambitious home improvement projects in his spare time.

More information about Chris can be found at revcjm.com.

Prayers & poetry by Sarah Are | A Sanctified Art LLC | sanctifiedart.org

AGAIN & AGAIN, history repeats, brokenness finds us, injustices persist. And yet, again & again, God sings a sacred refrain:

"I choose you, I love you, I will lead you to repair."

This Lent, we'll come to God again & again—with our full selves, with courage, with trust that God is paving a new way.

- Ash Wednesday - 2.17
- Palm Sunday - 3.28
- Maundy Thursday - 4.1
- Good Friday - 4.2
- Easter 4.4



LENT: 2.17-3.27.21

ASH WEDNESDAY

2.17.21 at 7 pm, on [Facebook Live](#)

LENTEN SUNDAYS

2.21.21-3.21-21 at 10 am on [Facebook Live](#)

LENTEN WEDNESDAYS

2.24.21-3.31.21, 6:30 pm — Adult Forum will discuss *Entering the Passion of Jesus: A Beginner's Guide to Holy Week* by Amy-Jill Levine. Zoom meeting link will be in the weekly email.

LENTEN FRIDAYS:

2.19.21-3.26.21, 6:30 pm — Prayer Series, "Prayer: Living Our UCC Covenant." Zoom link in weekly email.

HOLY WEEK: 3.28-4.3.21

PALM SUNDAY

3.28.21 at 10 am on [Facebook Live](#)

MAUNDY THURSDAY

4.1.21 at 7 pm on [Facebook Live](#)

GOOD FRIDAY

4.2.21 at 7 pm on [Facebook Live](#)

EASTER: 4.4.21

6 am: Sunrise Service

10 am: Easter Worship on [Facebook Live](#)



Sleep Unborn, by Hannah Garrity. Paper lace inspired by Psalm 22:23-31.

Artist's Statement, excerpt: "In this piece, I depict a sense of covering—covering in the womb, "people yet unborn" (v. 28); covering in the soil, "sleep in the earth" (v. 31). A spiral radiates outward representing praise. The pattern depicts people in various poses of prayer and praise. ... As I cut tiny stencils of prayer poses, I abstracted them to depict the shrouded minuteness of our being in God's presence. As we became a beautiful and intricate pattern of prayer and praise, I began to see other images in the patterns—masks, faces, flowers—as though all states of being are present in that constancy of appreciation for God."

ANNOUNCEMENTS

Lent Adult Forums: On **February 24**, we begin a six-week reading of *Entering the Passion of Jesus: A Beginner's Guide to Holy Week*, by Amy-Jill Levine. For details, see our Full Circle blog: <https://www.fccb.net/blog/february-adult-forums/>.

Lenten Prayer Series: Beginning **Friday, February 19**, from **6:30-7:30 pm**, Jean Scribner will facilitate a six-week series title For more information, visit <https://www.fccb.net/blog/lenten-prayer-series/>.

WORSHIP:

- **Sundays, 10:00 am**—Worship on Facebook Live. #BiggerBalcony

Upcoming Services:

- **February 28:** Second Sunday of Lent, Mark 8:31-9:8 (Psalm 22:23-31)
- **March 7:** Third Sunday of Lent, John 2:13-22 (1 Cor. 1:18-25)
- **March 14:** Fourth Sunday of Lent, John 3:14-21 (Ephesians 2:1-10)

WAYS TO CONNECT: For more information about these and other groups and activities, contact office@fccb.net.

- **Monday**
 - ◆ Poetry Writing Group: **1st & 3rd Mondays at 7:00 pm**
 - ◆ Happy Hour: **1st & 3rd Mondays, 7:30-8:30 pm**
- **Tuesday**
 - ◆ Book Club, **First Tuesday of the month, 9:30 am**
 - ◆ PJs & Storytime **Tuesdays, 6:30 pm**
- **Wednesday**
 - ◆ Adult Forums, **Wednesdays, 6:30 pm**
 - ◆ Faith Formation for Children & Youth **Wednesdays, 6:30 pm**
- **Thursday**
 - ◆ Morning Coffee Group: **1st & 3rd Thursdays, 9:30 am**
 - ◆ Evening Book Club, **6:30 pm weekly**
- **Friday**
 - ◆ Knitting Group, **Fridays, 10:00 am**
 - ◆ Coffee Hour, **2nd & 4th Fridays. 1:00 pm**
 - ◆ Prayer Series, **Fridays, 6:30 pm**
- **Saturday**
 - ◆ Create & Check In, **every other Saturday, 10:00 am**

To stay up to date, follow us on social media, subscribe to our Friday Email, or check in with our Full Circle Blog, <https://www.fccb.net/blog/>.

Open and Affirming (ONA): As an Open and Affirming congregation believing in a loving God, all people are welcome in this church without regard to gender, race, ethnicity, economic or social status, sexual orientation, or gender identity.

We Try To Use Language which will help people feel included in our worship. Since not everyone is comfortable with the same language, we invite you to amend the words of the service as we sing and pray if they do not adequately express your faith. We invite you to assist us in creating new expressions of our common faith and life together.

Technical Support: If you need help streaming our worship services or connecting in other ways, please let us know.

VIRTUAL APPOINTMENTS WITH PASTORAL STAFF

In the before time, our pastoral staff were available by appointment. In COVID-19 time, they are available for virtual meetings by appointment. Contact them by email or call the pastoral care line, 360-733-4255

Sharon: sharon@fccb.net

David: david@fccb.net

Sharry: sharry@fccb.net

You can also email our Office Manager
Cydne at office@fccb.net
and she'll pass your message on.

FIRST CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH United Church of Christ

An Open & Affirming Congregation

2401 Cornwall Avenue, Bellingham, WA 98225

Church Office: 360-734-3720

Office Mobile Phone: 360-303-6806

24/7 Emergency Pastoral Care: 360-733-4255

office@fccb.net • www.fccb.net

Facebook: facebook.com/fccbucc

Twitter: @BhamUCC

Office Hours: 9:00 am-5:00 pm

LEAD PASTOR: Sharon Benton

PASTOR FOR YOUTH, YOUNG ADULTS,

& MISSION: David Weasley

MINISTER OF CHRISTIAN FORMATION:

Sharry Nyberg

MINISTER OF MUSIC: Lucy Bledig

NURSERY ATTENDANT: Lisa Harbine

ORGANIST: Judy Widrig

OFFICE MANAGER: Cydne Cochran

ACCOUNTANT: Renée Relin

CUSTODIAN/MAINTENANCE: Kurt Aagard

CARE ADMIN. SUPPORT: Laura Norton

FAITH COMMUNITY NURSE:

Alanna Steele

HEALTH MINISTER: Carol Nicolay

MODERATOR: Bill Henkel

VICE MODERATOR: Beth Tyne

PAST MODERATOR: Caryl Dunavan

CLERK: TBA

TREASURER: Laurie Hoyt

HISTORIAN: Stacy Miller

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