

Lessons from a Burning Bush

October 1, 2023



SEVENTEENTH SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST

September 24, 2023

10:00 am

ANNOUNCEMENTS (9:50 am)

RINGING THE BELL (10:00 am)

WELCOME

Page

THE STORY

Sharon Benton

Get ready—children of all ages will be invited to participate in the telling!

CONGREGATIONAL SONG

"Holy Ground"

In the book of Exodus, the Divine introduces themselves as "I Am Who I Am" or

"I Will Be Who I Will Be"— I AM is therefore a name for God that we use.

music & lyrics by SAB. Used with permission.

The musical score is written on three staves in treble clef with a key signature of one sharp (F#) and a 4/4 time signature. The first staff begins with a measure rest labeled '1' and continues with the melody. The second staff begins with a measure rest labeled '2' and continues the melody. The third staff begins with a measure rest labeled '5' and continues the melody. The fourth staff begins with a measure rest labeled '8' and continues the melody. The lyrics are written below the notes.

1 2

Ho-ly ground, ho-ly ground Ev-ery-where you are is ho-ly ground

5

Can you hear the GOD-WHO-IS call-ing you? Can you hear the GOD-WHO-IS

8

call-ing you? Ho-ly ground, ho-ly ground Ev-ery-where you are is ho-ly ground

On holy ground, we can experience God inviting connection.

A READING FROM SCRIPTURE

Exodus 3:1-5

Janet Ott

THE MESSAGE Interpretation

REFLECTION

John Mark Slagle & Sharon Benton

We are invited to experience the sacred in the ordinary.

What have you wrestled with in your faith life?

On holy ground, we can experience God extending care.

A READING FROM SCRIPTURE

Exodus 3:6-8

Janet Ott

THE MESSAGE Interpretation

REFLECTION

John Mark Slagle & Sharon Benton

We are equipped with the capacity to accept, and extend, compassion.

How might we allow God to address our pain? How might God use us to bring comfort to others?

On holy ground, we can experience God instilling confidence.

A READING FROM SCRIPTURE

Exodus 3:9-15

Janet Ott

THE MESSAGE Interpretation

REFLECTION

John Mark Slagle & Sharon Benton

We are reminded of the God-given confidence needed to bridge the looming, pandemic-fueled chasm now situated between the church that was and the church that will be. How can we draw on the strengths of our shared past to imagine, and to forge, the promises of our shared future?

INTERACTION

All are invited into a “maker’s space” for a few minutes.

Sculpture Gallery: A Celebration of the Places & Ways God Speaks (Social Hall)

Poetry Lab: A Celebration of Receiving & Giving Compassion (Chapel)

Bread Studio: A Celebration of Feeding the Future (Kitchen)

Bigger Balcony: A Celebration of Embodiment (Sanctuary/Online)

MOVING MUSIC

Judy Widrig

RESPONSE

SACRAMENT OF HOLY COMMUNION

Invitation

Sung Invitation

Come, Let Us Bring

By Billema Kwillia & Marty Haugen

*Come let us bring our gifts to God in praise,
So that we might minister in countless ways.*

*Come, let us bring the warm and fragrant bread,
Broken here so all God's people might be fed.*

*Come, let us bring the sweet, abundant wine.
In this cup, we taste the joy of grace divine.*

Sharing the Elements

*You may come forward to receive communion or if you wish to remain seated,
someone will come around to you in your seat. Raise a hand or indicate that you would like
communion as they come around. If you come forward you will be on the video stream.*

*If you're worshiping at home, gather something to eat and drink:
the risen Christ will meet you right where you are.*

Communion Song

"Holy Ground"

add harmonies as you feel moved

*Holy ground, holy ground
Everywhere you are is holy ground*

*Can you hear the GOD-WHO-Is calling you?
Can you hear the GOD-WHO-Is calling you?*

BENEDICTION

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POSTLUDE

Judy Widrig

Offering Information

*Please leave your offering gift in the plates as you leave the sanctuary.
Your generosity allows the work of this place nurture beloved community,
grow authentic Christian faith, and live Christ-inspired action. Thank you!*

There are several options for giving: 1) Give at our website, <https://fccb.net/giving/>.

2) Mail checks to First Congregational Church, 2401 Cornwall Avenue, Bellingham, WA 98225.

3) Use the Breeze app. Download from your app store, set up an account, and give!

4) Give by text. Text a dollar amount to (360) 205-1297, and set up your account.

5) Scan the QR code below or on the back cover of the bulletin.

6) Drop it in the plate.



SCRIPTURE READINGS

Exodus 3:1-5

THE MESSAGE Interpretation

Moses was shepherding the flock of Jethro, his father-in-law, the priest of Midian. He led the flock to the west end of the wilderness and came to the mountain of God, Horeb. The angel of God appeared to him in flames of fire blazing out of the middle of a bush. He looked. The bush was blazing away but it didn't burn up. Moses said, "What's going on here? I can't believe this! Amazing! Why doesn't the bush burn up?" God saw that he had stopped to look. God called to him from out of the bush, "Moses! Moses!" He said, "Yes? I'm right here!" God said, "Don't come any closer. Remove your sandals from your feet. You're standing on holy ground."

Exodus 3:6-8

THE MESSAGE Interpretation

Then he said, "I am the God of your father: The God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, the God of Jacob." Moses hid his face, afraid to look at God. God said, "I've taken a good, long look at the affliction of my people in Egypt. I've heard their cries for deliverance from their slave masters; I know all about their pain. And now I have come down to help them, pry them loose from the grip of Egypt, get them out of that country and bring them to a good land with wide-open spaces, a land lush with milk and honey."

Exodus 3:9-15

THE MESSAGE Interpretation

The Israelite cry for help has come to me, and I've seen for myself how cruelly they're being treated by the Egyptians. It's time for you to go back: I'm sending you to Pharaoh to bring my people, the People of Israel, out of Egypt. Moses answered God, "But why me? What makes you think that I could ever go to Pharaoh and lead the children of Israel out of Egypt? I'll be with you," God said. "And this will be the proof that I am the one who sent you: When you have brought my people out of Egypt, you will worship God right here at this very mountain." Then Moses said to God, "Suppose I go to the People of Israel and I tell them, 'The God of your fathers sent me to you'; and they ask me, 'What is God's name?' What do I tell them?" God said to Moses, "I-Am-Who-I-Am. Tell the People of Israel, 'I- Am sent me to you.'" God continued with Moses: "This is what you're to say to the Israelites: 'God, the God of your fathers, the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob sent me to you.' This has always been my name, and this is how I always will be known."

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.

APPOINTMENTS WITH PASTORAL STAFF

Pastoral staff are available by appointment virtually, or in person with masks. Contact them by email or call the pastoral care line, 360-733-4255.

Sharon **sharon@fccb.net**

Davi: On Sabbatical

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

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

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Facebook: facebook.com/fccbucc

Summer Office Hours: M-Th, 10:00 am-4:00 pm

LEAD PASTOR: Sharon Benton, she/her

PASTOR: Davi Weasley, they/them

SABBATICAL PASTOR: L Page, she/they

CHURCH SCHOOL COORDINATOR:

Josh Marchand, they/them

MINISTER OF MUSIC: Lucy Bledig, she/her

ORGANIST: Judy Widrig, she/her

ACCOUNTANT: Marinda Seholm, she/her

OFFICE MANAGER: Cydne Cochran, she/her

CUSTODIAN/MAINTENANCE:

Kurt Aagard, he/him

WORSHIP MEDIA COORDINATOR:

Georgia Drost, she/they

MODERATOR: Mark Schofield

VICE MODERATOR: Scott Ward, he/him

PAST MODERATOR: Beth Tyne

CLERK: Janet Malley, she/her

TREASURER: Craig Jennings

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