

FAITH UNITED CHURCH

UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST



Closing Worship

Pentecost Sunday

May 23, 2021

May 23, 2021 • 10:00 am
Pentecost Sunday • Closing Worship Service

Prelude *"I Will Bless You"* Eunjin Lee & Eric Mrugala

Welcome & Announcements Pastor Chris & Holly Blair

Sharing the Peace* Leader: May the peace of Christ be with you all!
The Light of Christ **People: And also with you!**

Introit ***This is the day (This is the day) that the Lord has made (that the Lord has made)! Let us rejoice (Let us rejoice) and be glad in it (and be glad in it)! This is the day that the Lord has made! Let us rejoice and be glad in it! This is the day (This is the day) that the Lord has made!***

Greetings & Acknowledgement of Special Guests A Message from Rev. Darrell Goodwin
Executive Conference Minister, Southern New England Conference UCC

Call to Worship Michelle Leonard

Leader: Jesus said, "Come to me, all you that are weary and carrying heavy burdens, and I will give you rest."

People: We have labored together for many generations. The time has come to set our burdens down.

Leader: We have gathered today to close this era of ministry together as Faith United Church. We gather to remember the ways in which God has worked through our witness, worship, and fellowship.

People: We give thanks to you, Holy One, for your abiding presence through our journey of discernment.

Leader: We gather to release ourselves from the stewardship of this sacred building, to release ourselves from the formal covenants of fellowship, and to freely release our joys and our sorrows and every emotion in between.

People: We give thanks, Holy One, that you are the God Who Sees Us and Hears Us, and we have faith that you remember our joys and release our sorrows along with us.

Leader: We have come this far by faith. Let us give God our thanks and praise.

All: May we move forward in faith, holding fast to God's promised presence and the hope of new life and resurrection. Amen.

Gathering Hymn* *"They Did Not Build in Vain"* See page 7.

Offering *Today's offering will benefit the United Church of Christ's "Strengthen the Church" special missions offering.*

Anthem *"How Firm A Foundation" Eduardo Ortiz, Soloist*

Doxology* ***Praise God, from whom all blessings flow; praise God, all creatures here below; Praise God above, all heavenly host; Creator, Christ, and Holy Ghost. Amen.***

Prayer of Dedication (Unison) **God of Justice and Righteousness: May we give ourselves as an offering to be builders and restorers of your Kin-dom here on earth. Enlighten us, empower us, equip us, and compel us to offer ourselves generously in the name of your Son. Amen.**

Scripture Readings Cheryl Parzich

Ezekiel 37:1-10 The hand of the Lord came upon me, and he brought me out by the spirit of the Lord and set me down in the middle of a valley; it was full of bones. He led me all around them; there were very many lying in the valley, and they were very dry. He said to me, "Mortal, can these bones live?" I answered, "O Lord God, you know." Then he said to me, "Prophesy to these bones, and say to them: O dry bones, hear the word of the Lord. Thus says the Lord God to these bones: I will cause breath to enter you, and you shall live. I will lay sinews on you, and will cause flesh to come upon you, and cover you with skin, and put breath in you, and you shall live; and you shall know that I am the Lord."

So I prophesied as I had been commanded; and as I prophesied, suddenly there was a noise, a rattling, and the bones came together, bone to its bone. I looked, and there were sinews on them, and flesh had come upon them, and skin had covered them; but there was no breath in them. Then he said to me, "Prophesy to the breath, prophesy, mortal, and say to the breath: Thus says the Lord God: Come from the four winds, O breath, and breathe upon these slain, that they may live." I prophesied as he commanded me, and the breath came into them, and they lived, and stood on their feet, a vast multitude.

Acts 2:1-17 Barbara Connery

When the day of Pentecost arrived, the Disciples all met in one room. Suddenly they heard what sounded like a violent, rushing wind from heaven; the noise filled the entire house in which they were sitting. Something appeared to them that seemed like tongues of fire; these separated and came to rest on the head of each one. They were all filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak in other languages as she enabled them. Now there were devout people living in Jerusalem from every nation under heaven, and at this sound they all assembled. But they were bewildered to hear their native languages being spoken.

They were amazed and astonished: "Surely all of these people speaking are Galileans! How does it happen that each of us hears these words in our native tongue?"

We are Parthians, Medes and Elamites, people from Mesopotamia, Judea and Cappadocia, Pontus and Asia, Phrygia and Pamphylia, Egypt and the parts of Libya around Cyrene, as well as visitors from Rome— all Jews, or converts to Judaism—Cretans and Arabs, too; we hear them preaching, each in our own language, about the marvels of God!" All were amazed and disturbed. They asked each other, "What does this mean?" But others said mockingly, "They've drunk too much new wine."

Then Peter stood up with the Eleven and addressed the crowd: "Women and men of Judea, and all you who live in Jerusalem! Listen to what I have to say! These people are not drunk as you think—it's only nine o'clock in the morning! No, it's what Joel the prophet spoke of:

'In the days to come— it is our God who speaks—

I will pour out my Spirit on all humankind.

Your daughters and sons will prophesy, your young people will see visions, and your elders will dream dreams.

Congregational Response Leader: May God add a blessing to our hearing and understanding of this word.

People: Thanks be to God. Amen.

Song of Preparation *Spirit of the Living God, fall afresh on me.*
Spirit of the Living God, fall afresh on me.
Melt me, mold me, fill me, use me.
Spirit of the Living God, fall afresh on me.

Sermon "Faith + Hope = Love" Pastor Chris
Musical Response

Liturgy of Remembering & Releasing

Sacrament of Communion *This is God's open table and everyone is invited to share in Communion.*
Each individual serving of the elements contains grape juice and gluten-free bread. Please follow along with the liturgy.
Invitation

Prayer of Confession **Ever-present God: We remember that you are with us through all of our**
(Unison) **days, just as you were with our ancestors here through generations. Today is**
a hard day, and we ask that you would fill us with your Holy Spirit so that
we might be fully present. Some of us might carry regret or shame. Help us
lay down those burdens. Some of us might feel anger or blame. Help us to
set aside our need to point fingers or find fault. Some of us might feel a
sense of relief, which might be mixed with guilt. Comfort us, God, and
remind us that this journey has been hard and exhausting, and that there is
no guilt in welcoming rest.
For all that we carry, for all that we feel, in all that we are, in this moment
of quiet, we lift now the confessions of our hearts to you...

Silent Confession
Assurance of Pardon

Words of Institution

Sharing the Elements

The Lord's Prayer
(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 trespasses as we forgive those who trespass 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.

Sung Response

Hear our prayer, O Lord, Hear our prayer, O Lord; incline thine ear to us, and grant us thy peace.

Celebrating Our Staff

Eduardo Ortiz, *Director of Music Ministries & Office Administrator*
Eunjin Lee, *Accompanist*
Fox Buttaró, *Custodian*

**Remembering &
Releasing Our
Congregation**

John Robinson, *Moderator*
Michelle Leonard, *Head Deacon & Clerk*
Rev. Chris Mereschuk, *Designated Term Pastor*
Elliott Stratton, *Hampden Association Moderator*

Prayer of Thanksgiving
(Unison)

Loving God, We give thanks for all that we have experienced at Faith United Church. We give thanks that this community has held us in times of joy, in times of sorrow, and in all of the times in between. Our journey has not always been easy, yet you have always been beside us. You have been beside us, Holy One, and you go ahead of us now. Wherever we gather next for worship, you will be there as well. Amen.

Proclaiming Our
Legacy

The work and witness of Faith United Church will continue...Even if we are not physically present to see that work come to fruition, we remember this truth:

**"We plant the seeds that one day will grow.
We water seeds already planted, knowing that they hold future promise.
We lay foundations that will need further development.
We provide yeast that produces far beyond our capabilities.
We may never see the end results, but that is the difference between the master builder and the worker.
We are workers, not master builders; ministers, not messiahs.
We are prophets of a future not our own."**

Honoring the Saints

We are thankful, O God, that you have entrusted us to be the faithful stewards of this building and this congregation...Either aloud or with our inner voice, we speak the names of members, friends, pastors, and leaders — both departed and with us still:

You are invited to lift the name of anyone, alive or departed, whom you consider a "Saint" of Faith United Church.

Words from our Rev. Terry Yasuko Ogawa
Partners in Covenant *Area Conference Minister, Northwest Region*
Southern New England Conference UCC

Liturgy of Farewell for Rev. Chris Mereschuk **John:** In October 2018, Faith United Church called The Rev. Chris Mereschuk to serve as Designated Term Pastor.

Chris: I thank the members and friends of Faith United Church for the love, kindness, and support shown to me these last two and a half years. I ask forgiveness for the mistakes I have made. I am grateful for the ways my leadership has been accepted. As I leave, I carry with me many fond memories of you and all that I have learned here.

People: We receive your thankfulness, offer forgiveness, and accept that you now leave to minister elsewhere. We express our gratitude for your time among us. We ask your forgiveness for our mistakes. Your influence on our faith and faithfulness will not leave us at your departure.

Chris: I forgive you and accept your gratitude, trusting that our time together and our parting are pleasing to God.

Vows of Release **John:** Do you, the members and friends of Faith United Church, release The Rev. Chris Mereschuk from the duties of Designated Term Pastor, effective June 15, 2021?

People: We do, with the help of God.

Michelle: Do you offer your encouragement for Chris as he discerns his call and his ministry beyond this church?

People: We do, with the help of God.

John: Do you, Chris, release the people of Faith United Church from turning to you and depending on you as their pastor?

Chris: I do, with the help of God.

Michelle: Do you offer your encouragement for each individual's continuing faith journey as they seek a relationship with a new pastor and a new faith community?

Chris: I do, with the help of God.

Witness of the Hampden Association **Elliott:** On behalf of the Hampden Association of the Southern New England Conference of the United Church of Christ, I witness to the words spoken: words of thankfulness, forgiveness, and release. The member churches of our association and conference hold each of you in prayer. We pledge our support in the transitions signified in this service.

People: Thanks be to God.

Closing Prayer **For all that is behind us: God, we thank you.**
(Unison) **For all that remains ahead: God, we need you.**
For all that we are and all that we will become: God, we love you.
Amen.

Sending Hymn* *"In The Midst of New Dimensions"* See page 8.

Benediction* Pastor Chris

Postlude *"All Hail The Power Of Jesus' Name"* Eunjin Lee

Memorial Garden Acknowledgement & Blessing *Following the Postlude, you are invited to join us in the Memorial Garden to acknowledge the legacy of those who are interred there.*

Our Worship Has Ended • Now Let Our Service Begin

Worship Leadership

Preacher: Rev. Chris Mereschuk

Liturgists: Holly Blair, Barbara Connery, Cheryl Parzich, Michelle Leonard, John Robinson

Soloist: Eduardo Ortiz

Accompanist: Eunjin Lee

Violin: Eric Mrugala

Altar Design: Michelle Leonard

Technical Support: Sarah Barr & Fox Buttarro

Photographer: Tina Zorzi

The Call to Worship was written by Rev. Chris Mereschuk, inspired by and adapted from a liturgy by Rev. Quentin Chin, from "Facing Your Church's Uncertain Future," published by the United Church Building & Loan Fund. **The Liturgy of Remembering & Releasing** was written by Rev. Chris Mereschuk, with opening words and Vows of Release from the United Church of Christ Book of Worship, and a portion of "The Prayer of Oscar Romero," which was written by either Saint Archbishop Oscar Romero or Jon Sobrino, SJ.

Scripture selections come from:

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Congregational Leadership: Ministers *All of us* • **Rev. Chris Mereschuk** *Designated Term Pastor* • **Eduardo Ortiz** *Director of Music Ministries & Office Administrator* • **Eunjin Lee** *Accompanist* • **Fox Buttarro** *Custodian* • **John Robinson** *Church Moderator* • **Michelle Leonard** *Chair, Diaconate & Clerk* • faithunitedchurch.net • [@faithunitedchurchspringfield](https://www.facebook.com/faithunitedchurchspringfield) *Social Media & YouTube*

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They Did Not Build in Vain

Acts 2:1-4, 43-47; 1 Cor. 3:11; Eph. 2:19-22; Heb. 12:1-2

Alan Luff, 1989; alt.

1 They did not build in vain who found - ed here a church
 2 Those who have loved this place, a cloud of wit - nes - ses,
 3 In ev - ery place our world is storm and tem - pest tossed,
 4 Make this the meet - ing place where doubt finds grounds of faith,

as wit - ness to God's love a - mid a world of pain;
 sur - round and urge us on as we now run our race;
 the flames of fear and hate are e - vil's flags un - furled;
 where hurt finds heal - ing love, our pen - i - tence your grace;

They built up - on the rock that is the ris - en Christ,
 Though the ho - ri - zon's bend con - ceals the way a - head,
 Yet still the Spir - it's power in wind and fire of love
 Where God in Trin - i - ty is bridge from death to life,

the one foun - da - tion laid, that stands each earth - ly shock.
 the foot - prints on the road show Christ waits at the end.
 pours gifts up - on the church for ser - vice in this hour.
 from sin to ho - li - ness, time to e - ter - ni - ty.

Alan Luff, a graduate of the Royal College of Music, has served the Anglican Church as parish priest, precentor of Westminster Abbey, and canon of Birmingham Cathedral. He is also known as the author of *Welsh Hymns and Their Tunes* (1990).

Tune: LEONI 6.6.8.4.D.
 Traditional Yigdal melody
 Adapt. Meyer Lyon, 1770

In the Midst of New Dimensions

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*Julian Rush, 1985; alt.**Gen. 9:12-16; Exod. 13:21-22; Num. 14:14*

C C/B F C F Am7 Dm7 G7sus4 G7

1 In the midst of new di-men-sions, in the face of chang-ing ways,
 2 Through the flood of starv-ing peo - ple, war-ring fac-tions and de - spair,
 3 As we stand a world di - vid - ed by our own self - seek - ing schemes,
 4 We are man and we are wom-an, all per-sua-sions, old and young,
 5 Should the threats of dire pre-dic-tions cause us to with - draw in pain,

C C/B F C F Am7 Dm7 G C

Who will lead the pil - grim peo - ples wan-dering in their sep - arate ways?
 Who will lift the ol - ive branch-es? Who will light the flame of care?
 Grant that we, your glob - al vil - lage, might en - vi - sion wid - er dreams.
 Each a gift in your cre - a - tion, each a love song to be sung.
 May your blaz-ing phoe-nix spir - it res - ur - rect the church a - gain.

Refrain
 Am Em F C F C G7 C Dsus4 D7 G7sus4 G7 Am

God of rain-bow, fier - y pil - lar, lead-ing where the ea - gles soar, We your

Em F C F C/E F C/E F C/E Dm7 G7 C

peo-ple, ours the jour-ney now and ev - er, now and ev - er, now and ev - er - more.

Julian Rush, an ordained minister in the United Methodist Church, has spent more than a decade as director of the Colorado AIDS Project. He wrote this hymn on the theme of "diversity" for a meeting of the Rocky Mountain Conference (United Methodist).

Tune: NEW DIMENSIONS 8.7.8.7. with refrain
Julian Rush, 1985
 Arr. The New Century Hymnal, 1994

Pastors

Faith Congregational Church

Rev. Harry Meserve (1894-1900)
Rev. David Butler (1900-1908)
Rev. Frank Merrick (1908-1914)
Rev. Rueben Goddard (1915-1922)
Rev. Dr. Claude McKay (1923-1934)
Rev. Wallace Anderson (1934-1938)
Rev. Dr. Dwight Cart (1939-1947)
Rev. Dr. Alden Mosshammer (1947-1953)
Rev. Dr. David Weinland (1953-1964)
Rev. Dr. Eric Bascom (1965-1981)

Hope Congregational Church

Henry Lee, Founder (1876)
Rev. Charles Morgan (1876-1880)
Rev. David Reed (1881-1889)
Rev. Ralph Brokaw (1888-1898)
Rev. Samuel Woodrow (1898-1907)
Rev. George Rollins (1908-1918)
Rev. J. Burford Parry (1916-1930)
Rev. Dr. Alfred Walton (1931-1934)
Rev. Dr. John Miller (1935-1955)
Rev. J. Kenneth Clinton (1955-1962)
Rev. Dr. Charles Barnes (1962-1973)
Rev. Jeffrey Lewis (1975-1977)

Faith United Church

Senior & Solo Pastors

Rev. Dr. Eric Bascom (1977-1981)
Rev. Jeffrey Lewis (1977 -1978)
Royal Bricker Gibson (1982-1996)
Rev. David Hughes (1997-2010)
Rev. Mitzi Eilts (2012-2013)
Rev. Dr. Jan Burdewick (2014-2018)
Rev. Chris Mereschuk (2018-2021)

Assistant & Associate Pastors

Rev. J. Lincoln Thomas
Rev. Kenneth Eaton
Rev. Evelyn Scott
Rev. Richard Albin
Rev. Donald Baker
Rev. Allen Holt
Rev. William Eilers
Rev. Dr. Peter Wells
Rev. Charles Separk
Rev. Glen Schwarz
Rev. John Geer
Rev. Peter Sylver
Rev. Eileen Drumm
Rev. Eleanor Mercer
Rev. Barbara Schenk

Legacy Members

Jim Antiposti	Danielle Gibson	Winfield Moore
Dan Bahls	Tony Isham	Bob Mulligan
Angela Bargalla	Caren Jacques	Holly Mulligan
Debbie Bavaro	Cindy Jacques	Cheryl Parzich
Les Bezanson	Gary Kennett	John Pearson
Don Blair	Debbie Kirchherr	Cynthia Rice
Holly Blair	Kara Kirchherr	John Robinson
Nan Cavers	Kellyn Kirchherr	Janet Roper
Barbara Connery	Alex Leonard	Sandy Rowley
Andrew Ethier	Michelle Leonard	Mary Sawyer
Jessica Ethier	Bill Leonard	Fran Townsend
Aurora Flemming	Anita Little	
Don Foster	Gladys McKenzie	
Tracy Foster	Steve Mecham	
Trudy Foster	Nancy Miller	