



**FIRST CONGREGATIONAL**  
UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST  
235 South Kenilworth Avenue, Elmhurst, IL  
*Partners in Christ's Service since 1890*

CONFIRMATION SUNDAY

At Home or Small Group Worship for May 2, 2021

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**OPENING HYMN** – *audio available on the church website*

Meg McGarry, vocals

#75 I Was There to Hear Your Borning Cry

1 I was there to hear your borning cry,  
I'll be there when you are old.  
I rejoiced the day you were baptized,  
to see your life unfold.

5 In the middle ages of your life,  
not too old, no longer young,  
I'll be there to guide you through the  
night,  
complete what I've begun.

2 I was there when you were but a child,  
with a faith to suit you well;  
In a blaze of light you wandered off  
to find where demons dwell.

6 When the evening gently closes in,  
and you shut your weary eyes,  
I'll be there as I have always been  
with just one more surprise.

3 When you heard the wonder of the Word  
I was there to cheer you on;  
You were raised to praise the living God,  
to whom you now belong.

7 I was there to hear your borning cry,  
I'll be there when you are old.  
I rejoiced the day you were baptized,  
to see your life unfold.

4 If you find someone to share your time  
and you join your hearts as one, I'll be  
there to make your verses rhyme from dusk  
till rising sun.

**CALL TO WORSHIP**

Whether gently roused by the sunrise,  
**Or surprised by a sudden burst of joy.**  
Whether captivated by the inescapable need to dance,

**Or caught in the glorious serenity of silent wonder.**  
You are the source of love, laughter, and life, O God.  
**Let us rejoice and be glad!**

## **OPENING PRAYER**

We rejoice, Loving God, in the celebration of our youth confirming their faith. Your Spirit binds our hearts in Christian love and emboldens us to be faithful disciples of your church. Thank you for parents, teachers, mentors, churches, and friends who help young people grow to maturity with faith in you. In this time of worship, we praise you for blessing us so deeply. In Christ's name. Amen.

## **GLORIA PATRI**

Glory be to the Father, and to the Son  
And to the Holy Ghost: as it was in the beginning  
Is now and ever shall be, world without end. Amen, amen.

## **THE RITE OF CONFIRMATION**    Nicholas Bresnahan, Keil Rosen, and Sam Rosen

The Congregational Prayer

**We welcome you into the life of this church. We promise you our love, support, and prayers as we share the hopes and labors of the church of Jesus Christ. By the power of the Holy Spirit, may we continue to grow together as witnesses of our risen Savior and as partners in Christ's service. AMEN.**

## **PRAYERS OF THE CHURCH**

Prayer Hymn #263

Surely the presence of the Lord is in this place,  
I can feel his mighty power and his grace;  
I can hear the brush of angels' wings,  
I see glory on each face;  
Surely the presence of the Lord is in this place.

Silent Prayer

## **PASTORAL PRAYER** – *audio available on the church website*

Rev. Mike Daly

God of Celebration and Joy, you brought freedom to those who passed through the waters of the Red Sea, and raised Jesus to life again after death. We look for your

inclusive love that makes us one. We long for the courage to risk living out of that love.

Gracious God, today we celebrate receiving of three First Congregational Church confirmation youth into the full life and fellowship of this church. Through their time of study, reflection, and service, they have made their covenant promises to be a part of your people and your church. They have done well and we are proud of them.

Sustaining God, we gather in gratitude for this witness of faith. We are thankful for these confirmands who were thoughtful and faithful on this journey. And we are grateful for Martha's guiding hand. We thank you for their parents, grandparents, brothers & sisters, mentors & friends who believe in the beautiful future of youth - and in the bright future of those who are on any journey of faith.

God of Covenant and Promise, we draw courage from their example of trust in you. Continue to show us - that whatever is beyond belief and feels impossible to us - becomes possible through you. And through Christ's earthly ministry, continue to show us the way of discipleship and a new covenant with you.

Holy Spirit, sustain us amid trials and doubts. You are the assurance that strengthens, the light that illuminates, and the truth that dispels our worry. You are the source of all hope. Be with those who ache and cry, love and laugh, toil and search.

We praise you for drawing us together as the Body of Christ! Your blessing fills our hearts and nurtures all who are lifted up this day. We know you will hold us and grant us peace. In Christ's holy name. Amen.

**OUR LORD'S PRAYER** – *audio available on the website*      Michelle Maiers, vocals  
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. And lead us not into temptation but deliver us from evil. For thine is the kingdom and the power and the glory forever. Amen.

**CHILDREN'S MESSAGE** – *audio available on the church website*      Martha Mendoza

## **COMMUNION SONG**

Christ Comes To Us  
*Michelle Maiers, Meg McGarry, Kevin Loeper, Al Thurkow- vocals*  
*Dave Benziger, guitar*

Genesis 17: 1-7, 15-16 (NSRV)  
*The Sign of the Covenant*

When Abram was ninety-nine years old, the LORD appeared to Abram, and said to him, “I am God Almighty; walk before me, and be blameless. And I will make my covenant between me and you, and will make you exceedingly numerous.” Then Abram fell on his face; and God said to him, “As for me, this is my covenant with you: You shall be the ancestor of a multitude of nations. No longer shall your name be Abram, but your name shall be Abraham; for I have made you the ancestor of a multitude of nations. I will make you exceedingly fruitful; and I will make nations of you, and kings shall come from you. I will establish my covenant between me and you, and your offspring after you throughout their generations, for an everlasting covenant, to be God to you and to your offspring after you.

God said to Abraham, “As for Sarai your wife, you shall not call her Sarai, but Sarah shall be her name. I will bless her, and moreover I will give you a son by her. I will bless her, and she shall give rise to nations; kings of peoples shall come from her.”

**SERMON** – *audio available on the church website*

Rev. Mike Daly

Covenant

Congratulations to our Confirmands! We are all very proud of you. Today, we look at a good “church” word, covenant. But there is a pre-story that sets the stage for what covenant is and means.

God renamed Abraham and Sarah! When Abraham and Sarah received their new names from God, nothing was the same again. It was like a rebirth for them! They became the start of many generations of people, including us. God made this promise to the Hebrew people.

Naming is important, and at our baptisms, the pastor might say, "By what name shall this child be baptized?" We will be called a lot of names in our lifetimes; hopefully, nice names. We are called daughter, son, mother, father, brother, wife, nurse, teacher, carpenter, plumber, neighbor, friend, coworker, or perhaps "confirmand." Today, we might think about is what name is God giving me? And, does that name change me?

Abraham was ninety-nine, and Sarah probably about the same when God called them into covenant. Sarah was barren her whole life and now found herself pregnant. When Moses and his brother Aaron led the Israelites out of Egypt, Moses and Aaron were very old. So, the bible teaches us; we are never too old to be influenced by new things. We can change or be changed anytime, no matter where we are on life's journey.

When something is new, it is exciting and interesting. So, I wonder if sometimes we take the word "covenant" for granted sometimes. We hear certain words at church so often that we think we know the meaning, and we skip right over the word.

Covenant is one of the most important words we have in the church. We know that a covenant is an agreement. But a covenant with God is so much more than an agreement. A covenant with God has a deep, indescribable quality that must be experienced. We need to live a covenant with God even to begin to understand a covenant with God. It is a binding agreement between each one of us and binding with God. It is a living covenant!

Jesus calls us to this type of faithfulness. It still applies to us. Our faithfulness is about our choice to walk with Jesus - or not. Theologians think the phrase "taking up the cross and following" had to do with punishment in Jesus' time. "Taking up the cross" described a specific Roman punishment. Rebels and traitors were hung on crosses in public view as a warning to others.

Remember Jesus was beaten and forced to carry the heavy crossbeam on his way to the cross. Jesus tells us that to follow, we must be prepared to embrace some struggle. We take a risk in discipleship!

Is discipleship any different today? Not really! We still experience racism, oppression, marginalization, illness, war, hatred, revenge, anger, and on it goes. People are still killed for trying to make the world a better place.

There are lots of blessings and positives in our world. Faith is about moving forward, about journeying forward. We learn from the past, but we journey toward the future. The journey involves risk. In discipleship, we have to "put ourselves out-there" by making our views known in love and covenant with one another and, most importantly, with God.

You have a story to tell. You have been given a name to live out. Sure, discipleship is risky. Sometimes we go into the wilderness where there is darkness around us. But

one thing we can be assured of through our binding relationship with God, God is always there as a beacon and lamp.

"At age twelve, Robert Louis Stevenson was looking out from his upstairs window watching a man light the streetlamps. His governess came into the room and asked Robert what he was doing. He replied, 'I am watching a man cut holes in the darkness.'"

May our faith journeys "cut holes in the darkness" too. Amen.

**OFFERTORY** – *audio available on the church website*

*In our youth, we see God's vision for the future. Our gifts lead us to build God's dreams. Let us share our offerings to create the Church of today and tomorrow.*

**Guide My Feet**

*Michelle Maiers, Meg McGarry, Kevin Loeper, Al Thurkow- vocals  
Dave Benziger, guitar*

**DOXOLOGY**

Praise God from whom all blessings flow;  
Praise him, all creatures here below;  
Praise him above, ye heavenly host:  
Praise Father, Son, and Holy Ghost. Amen.

**OFFERTORY PRAYER**

Gracious God, accept our gifts – of time, talent, and treasure - as evidence of our desire to participate with you in the care of your beloved creation. These gifts symbolize our thanksgiving for all that you provide. Through these gifts, we praise you. In Christ's name, we pray. Amen.

**CLOSING HYMN** – *audio available on the church website*

Mitchell Kinn, vocals

#284 Gather Us In

Here in this place, the new light is streaming,  
Shadows of doubt are vanished away.  
See in this space our fears and our dreamings,  
Brought here to you in the light of this day

Gather us in, the lost and forsaken;  
Gather us in, our spirits inflame.  
Call to us now, and we shall awaken;  
We shall arise at the sound of our name.

We are the young, our lives are a mystery;  
We are the old, who yearn for your face.  
We have been sung throughout all of history,  
Called to be light to the whole human race.

Gather us in, the rich and the haughty;  
Gather us in, the proud and the strong;  
Give us a heart so meek and so lowly;  
Give us the courage to enter the song.

Here we receive new life in the waters;  
Here we receive the bread of new birth;  
Here you shall call your sons and your daughters,  
Call us anew to be salt for the earth.

Give us to drink the wine of compassion,  
Give us to eat the bread that is you;  
Nourish us well, and teach us to fashion  
Lives that are holy and hearts that are true.

Not just in buildings, small and confining,  
Not in some heaven, light years away,  
Here in this place the new light is shining;  
Now is God present, and now is the day.

## **BENEDICTION**

Go forth and be of good courage. Hold fast to that which is good. Render no one evil for evil. Strengthen the faint-hearted, support the weak, help the afflicted. Honor all people. Love and serve God, rejoicing in the power of the Holy Spirit. Peace be with you, amen.