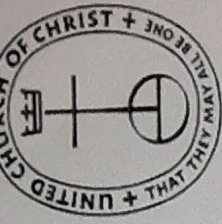


The Congregational Church of Laconia
United Church of Christ
18 Veterans Square
Laconia, NH 03246-3425

Rev. Neil H. Wilson, Senior Pastor
Rev. Paula B. Gile, Associate Pastor
K. Robert Bengtson, Director of Music
Church office: (603) 524-0668



Gathering for Worship

September 1, 2019

www.laconiaucc.org

9:00 a.m.

Twelfth Sunday after Pentecost

+ * + * + * + * + * +

The Congregational Church of Laconia, United Church of Christ, is a welcoming Christian community with a scriptural foundation seeking Justice and peace for all.

Preparing

Organ Prelude

Mary Ruth Scott

Meditative Thought *"The greatest good you can do for another is not just to share your riches but to reveal to him/her their own."* — Benjamin Disraeli (British Prime Minister 19th century)

Welcome & Announcements

Praising

Call to Worship (seated Congregation respond with bold print.)

Sing aloud to God our strength and shout with joy:

God, our Host, welcomes us.

God reminds us, "I brought you out of the land of Egypt and fed you along the way:"

When we opened our mouths, God filled us with good things.

God calls us to walk the path of faithfulness, trusting the promise:

**a feast for all-- freshly-baked bread, hot from the oven,
and sweet honey to satisfy our hunger. Let us worship God!**

***Opening Hymn**

"As We Gather at Your Table"

332

Invocation (unison)

Hospitable God, you invite us to a banquet where the last may be first, and the humble and the mighty trade places. Let us share your abundance with no fear of scarcity; let us greet strangers as angels you have sent!

Send your Spirit now so that we may find a place at your table and welcome others with radical hospitality. In the Guest at all our tables, Jesus, we pray these things and also pray in the manner he taught his disciples:

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 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. Amen.

Musical Offering

"To a Wild Rose"

Mary Ruth Scott

A Moment with Our Children

Rev. Paula Gile

*Passing of the Peace & the Gloria

*Halle, Halle, Halle-lu-jah, Halle, Halle, Halle-lu-jah, Halle,
Halle, Halle-lu-jah, Hallelujah, Hallelujah*

Reflecting & Praying

Scripture Reading

Philemon 1 – 21

Pew Bible p. 1088

Sermon

"The Return of Onesimus"

Rev. Neil Wilson

Meditative Moment

Prayer Preparation

"O, Lord, Hear My Prayer"

Taize

O Lord, hear my prayer, O Lord, hear my prayer; when I call answer me.

O Lord hear my prayer, O Lord hear my prayer. Come and listen to me.

Pastoral Prayer Yellow prayer cards may be placed in the offering plate. You may go to the Church's website click on Prayer Wall and post your requests. www.laconiaucc.org

Committing

Stewardship Invitation

Offertory

"There is a Balm in Gilead"

Mary Ruth Scott

Doxology

Praise God from whom all blessings flow; Praise God, all creatures here below:

Praise God for all that love has done; Creator, Christ, and Spirit, One. Amen

*Prayer of Consecration/Dedication (Unison)

Dear God, you have offered us a place at the table and you have called us to share without expectation of being repaid. You have called us to make a place for the poor, the outcast and the oppressed. So we ask that you bless these resources so that they might support ministries of compassion and justice until all of your children have a place at the table. Amen.

The Sacrament of Holy Communion

There are gluten free wafers in the center of the plates and we use grape juice rather than wine.

Prayer of Thanksgiving

We give thanks, O God, for this holy meal you have given us. May the power and presence of Christ, so evident in this sacrament, be evidenced in our thoughts, words, and deeds as we try to serve both you and our neighbors in the coming days. Keep us mindful of the example of Christ and fill us with your Holy Spirit, now and for evermore. Amen.

Going to Serve

*Closing Hymn

"God, Speak to Me, That I May Speak"

531

Pastoral Benediction

Organ Postlude

*You may stand as able.



Thursday Sep 5 at noon or 6:00 p.m. - Book Club in Bean Parlor

Anyone interested in a book discussion, please join us. This month's book is Gilead by Marilyn Robinson. Whether you've read the book, all are welcome.

Donna Bertrand stopped by and wanted us to announced the birth of her son's second child - Eric Mitropoulos 7.28.2019 - Congratulations!

CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH OF LACONIA, UCC ("Church")

NOTICE AND CALL TO

SPECIAL MEETING OF THE CONGREGATION

To Be Held On

SUNDAY, SEPTEMBER 8, 2019

In accordance with Article IV, Section (b) of the Bylaws of the Church, the Executive Committee of the Church hereby notifies the members and associate members of the Church of a Special Meeting of the Congregation to be held in the **Church Sanctuary** on **Sunday, September 8**, commencing at approximately **10:45 a.m.** (promptly following the conclusion of the 9:30 a.m. worship service). All are cordially invited and encouraged to attend.

The purposes of the meeting:

- To consider the proposal from Property and Finance Committee to proceed with Option #1 from Eckhart & Johnson to install new gas burners to both boilers complete with new gas lines for \$24,700.00 plus gas lines to meter installation;
- In addition to authorize the church to borrow up to \$25,000.00 from the Bank of New Hampshire at 5% interest for ten years;
- To conduct any other business related to the foregoing which is proper to come before the meeting.

Welcome & Information

Next Sunday worship time returns to 9:30 A.M.

Welcome to our service of worship! Please introduce yourself to those sitting near you & use a pew rack card to inform us of requests.

Wireless hearing assistance devices, back cushions, and large print bulletins are available. Please ask an usher.

Nursery & Child Care: Children younger than 1st grade are welcome in the Nursery before the service begins or following the Moment with our Children. The Nursery is across the Bridge and pick them up after the service. Visitors are welcome!

Yellow prayer request cards are available in pews. Write your request(s) and place them in the offering plate. Our prayer disciples will pray during the week.

Our Greeters today are a surprise!

Today's Ushers are Lisa and Mike Marshall, Charlotte Landow, Brad Geltz

The Altar Flowers today are given by Florence Merrill, Bruce, Claire, Emily and Eric -
In loving memory of Harry G. Merrill.

Join us for a time of fellowship downstairs following the service for refreshments served by the Executive Council. Fair Trade is served in biodegradable cups.

Pastor Paula will be on vacation from Sep. 11-19.

This Week's Committee Meetings and Gatherings

| | | |
|--------------------|------------------|--|
| Today Sep 1- | 9:00 a.m. | Summer Worship |
| | 10:30 a.m. | Channel 25 Worship Broadcast |
| | 4:00 p.m. | Channel 25 Worship Broadcast |
| | 9:30 p.m. | Channel 25 Worship Broadcast |
| Tuesday Sep 3- | 6:30 p.m. | Membership Committee Mtg |
| | 7:00 p.m. | Stiches of Love |
| Wednesday Sep 4- | 6:30 p.m. | Outreach Mtg |
| Thursday Sep 5- | 10:00 a.m. | Faith Walk, Beane Parlor |
| | Noon & 6:00 p.m. | Book Club - Beane Parlor |
| | 5:30 p.m. | Stewardship Committee Mtg |
| | 7:00 p.m. | Choir Practice |
| Next Sunday Sep 8- | 9:30 a.m. | Sunday Worship |
| | 10:45 a.m. | Special Congregational Mtg |
| | 3:00 p.m. | Church Picnic, Vespers at Camp Mowglis |

September 1, 2019

Luke 14:1, 7-14

Open Table

Jesus ate with everyone, including people who were marginalized by others. He ate with women and he welcomed children at his table. He ate with tax collectors, who were considered the worst kind of sinners because they collaborated with the empirical forces against their own people.

And, in the last meal he ate with his friends, Jesus shared food even with one who he knew would betray him to his death. As he did so, he offered words not of condemnation but of forgiveness and promise.

In the United Church of Christ, we practice an open table at communion. In most of our denomination's congregations, you do not have to follow any particular creed, or profess any specific beliefs to practice communion. You need only to seek the new life that comes in Christ to participate in this sacrament.

What is a sacrament? A sacrament is a ritual action in worship which lowers the barrier between holy and mundane. A sacrament is sometimes called a "thin place," where the barrier between every day life and divine life is lowered. In a sacramental moment, we participate in a ritual that was begun by Jesus and has been practiced by Christ followers for generations.

When we receive communion, we also receive the forgiveness that Christ promised, and we have the opportunity to extend that forgiveness to others. Whether you receive communion gathered around a table or seated in a pew, communion is at its root communal. Around you are those with whom you share the open table. As you take the bread, as you sip the cup, hear again the words of Christ who welcomed all to his table, and who promised forgiveness for all who chose to eat and drink with him.

Receiving communion is an opportunity to be grateful for those moments when we are especially invited to brush up close to the holy. It is a chance to remember that throughout Christ's life, and even when he was close to death, he ate with those who were excluded by others. It is a place to be grateful that even at the end Christ Jesus offered grace and forgiveness to all, including the one who betrayed him. Communion is more than an opportunity to receive Christ's grace and forgiveness with humility and gratitude. It is also an opportunity to extend those gifts to all in our congregation, in our community and in our world.

Questions to consider:

- Does your congregation practice an open table? How can you tell?
- How would someone visiting your worship service for the first time know they are welcome at the open table?
- Are there ways that your congregation could extend the idea of open table beyond this sacrament, beyond these walls?

