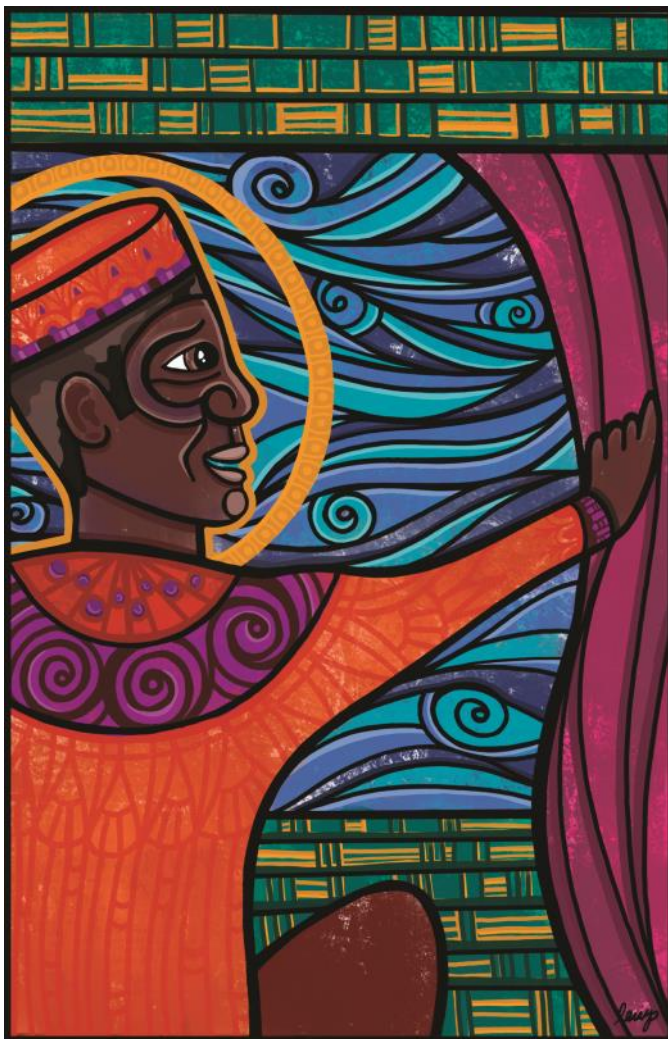


Faces of Our Faith: Facing Ourselves — The Ethiopian Official August 20, 2023



TWELFTH SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST

August 20, 2023

10:00 am

"Find questions you can spend your life answering." ~ adrienne maree brown

PRELUDE

Penelope Keep

WELCOME & ANNOUNCEMENTS

Sharon Benton

We love children in worship—their noises and wiggles are welcome, too. There are pillows in the front where they can see the instruments and participate fully, or the coloring, book, and play area is available in the corner near the windows. Their movements back and forth are a joy for us.

RINGING OF THE BELL

THE STORY

Sharon Benton

What questions pop into your head when you read scripture?

**Rise in body or spirit*

***CALL TO WORSHIP**

Janet Ott

One: Am I my brother's keeper? (*Gen. 18:25*)

All: **Whom shall I send? Who will go for us?** (*Is. 6:8*)

One: How often should I forgive? As many as seven times? (*Mt. 18:21*)

All: **Who do you say I am?** (*Mt. 16:5*)

One: Who is my neighbor? (*Lk. 10:29*)

All: **What must I do to inherit eternal life?** (*Lk. 18:18*)

One: How can I understand unless someone guides me? (*Acts 8:31*)

All: **If God is for us, who is against us?** (*Rom. 8:31*)

***HYMN**

"Ask the Complicated Questions"

AUSTRIAN HYMN

Text by David Bjorlin. Tune by Joseph Haydn



Ask the com - pli - ca - ted ques-tions, do not fear to
Knock on doors of new i - de - as, test as - sump-tions

be found out; for our God makes strong our weak-ness,
long grown stale; for Christ calls from shores of won - der,

forg-ing faith in fires of doubt. Seek the dis - con - cert-ing an-swars,
dar-ing us to try and fail. For in strug-gle we dis - cov - er

fol - low where the Spir - it blows; test com - pet - ing
truth both sim - ple and pro-found; in the knock - ing,

truths for wis - dom, for in ten-sion new life grows.
ask - ing, seek - ing, we are op - ened, an - swered, found.

WE ARE A NURTURING BELOVED COMMUNITY

TIME WITH CHILDREN

Mark Gale

SUNG RESPONSE

"God Welcomes All"

God wel - comes all, strang - ers and friends;

God's love is strong and it ne - ver ends.

The musical score is written for two voices (Soprano and Bass) and piano accompaniment. It is in 4/4 time and the key signature has one sharp (F#). The melody is simple and repetitive, using whole and half notes. The lyrics are: "God wel - comes all, strang - ers and friends; God's love is strong and it ne - ver ends." The score is divided into two systems, each with a vocal line and a piano accompaniment line.

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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.

*If you have a prayer request you'd like to share confidentially with our pastors,
have added to the confidential prayer list, or spoken aloud in worship,
go to www.fccb.net/contact-us/ to send a message or call the church to talk with a pastor.*

SUNG RESPONSE

"Take, O Take Me As I Am"

TAKE O TAKE ME

Take, O take me as I am; sum - mon out what I shall
be; set your seal up-on my heart and live in me.

Text: John L. Bell, b.1949

Tune: John L. Bell, b.1949

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WE ARE GROWING AUTHENTIC CHRISTIAN FAITH

A READING FROM SCRIPTURE

Acts 8, selected verses
New Revised Standard Version

Janet Ott

SCRIPTURE RESPONSE

Janet Ott

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

“All Questions Considered”

Pastors Sharon & Page

*Questions were submitted by the congregation the last few weeks;
the pastors have not seen them yet!*

MUSICAL MEDITATION

“Pilgrim”

Unbroken Circle

by Steve Earle. Used under CSS License #12615.

WE ARE LIVING CHRIST-INSPIRED ACTION

TESTIMONY

Jen Green

FAREWELL LITANY FOR JEN & JOHN GREEN

Pastor: Our church community is constantly changing. People come and go. Babies are born. Children grow up. Loved ones among us come to the end of their lives. Individuals move into our community. Others leave us, growing toward new places, new experiences, new opportunities. It is important that we recognize these times of passage, of endings and beginnings. Today we share a short-term farewell with Jen and John Green as they leave for Palestine for the next 10 months.

Jen & John: We ask for your prayers, and we pray for God's blessing upon you while we're away.

Pastor: Let's extend a symbolic laying on of hands as we pray:

All Voices: O God, we pray that Jen and John will be aware of your Spirit's guidance in their life while they live elsewhere. Help us pray for them until we see them again. May their experiences be blessed, and may we greet them joyfully when they return home. In the name of Jesus Christ we pray. Amen.



1. Go to the world! Go in - to all the earth.
 2. Go to the world! Go in - to ev - 'ry place.
 3. Go to the world! Go strug - gle, bless and pray.
 4. Go to the world! Go as the ones I send,



Go preach the Christ whose life re - news our worth
 Go live the Word of God's re - deem - ing grace,
 The nights of tears give way to joy - ous day.
 for I am with you till the age shall end,



bap - tiz - ing as the sign of our re - birth.
 Go seek God's pres - ence in each time and space.
 As ser - vant Church you fol - low Christ's own way.
 when all the hosts of glo - ry cry "A - men!"



Al - le - lu - ia! Al - le - lu - ia!

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*Offering plates are available near the doors as you leave;
thank you for your gift helping to build justice and compassion.*

There are several other ways to give: 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.



Cover Image "Dive In" by Lauren Wright Pittman, inspired by Acts 8:26-40. Artist statement; "what I was most drawn to in this text was the water. The focus ended up being the background of swirly, energetic waves of water. Nothing holds him back from baptism. Courageously diving headfirst into a wonderfully mysterious and certainly uncertain life of following Christ, the eunuch emerges from the water drenched in the truth that nothing will keep him from the love of God." © A Sanctified Art

ANNOUNCEMENTS

Do you receive our Friday Announcements email? Contact office@fccb.net to sign up!

Save the Date: Gathering In Sunday September 17 Special Worship followed by Picnic at Squalicum Creek Park

WORSHIP:

- **Sundays, 10:00 am**—Hybrid worship in person, and on Facebook or on Zoom, our #BiggerBalcony.

WEEKLY CALENDAR

For details, see our Connection Calendar in the Friday email or contact office@fccb.net.

Monday

Walking Group, **10:30 am**, Barkley Pond
Board Meetings—**2nd Mondays, 6:30 pm**
Church Council—**4th Mondays, 7:00 pm**
Poetry Group—**7:00 pm**

Tuesday

Book Club—**1st Tuesdays, 9:30 am** beginning again in September
Pilgrim Circle—**2nd Tuesdays, 12:00 noon** beginning again in September
Green Team—**2nd & 4th Tuesdays, 7:00 pm**

Wednesday

Glee Club—**5:00 pm**
Adult Forum—**7:00 pm** beginning again in September

Thursday

Evening Book Study—**5:00 pm** beginning again in September

Friday

Knitting Group: weekly, **10:00 am**
Quilters: weekly, **12:00 noon**, off-site
Game Night—**3rd Fridays, 6:00-9:00 pm**
SPIRIT Group—**2nd & 4th Fridays, 6:15 welcome, 6:30 pm discussion on Zoom**

Sunday

Youth Group—**11:30 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.

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

2401 Cornwall Avenue, Bellingham, WA 98225

Church Office: 360-734-3720

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

office@fccb.net • www.fccb.net

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

TREASURER: Craig Jennings

HISTORIAN: Stacy Miller

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