

Unraveling Pharaoh

August 23, 2026



Vision Statement:

We Are a Nurturing, Beloved Community.
We Are Growing Authentic Christian Faith.
We Are Living Christ-Inspired Action.

THIRTEENTH SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST

August 23, 2026

10:00 am

Every book of the Bible wrestles with what it means to exist within a context of imperial rule.

-Kat Armas, Liturgies for Resisting Empire

There is no top-down approach that will yield the world we want.

- Andrea J. Ritchie, Practicing New Worlds

PRELUDE

Judy Widrig

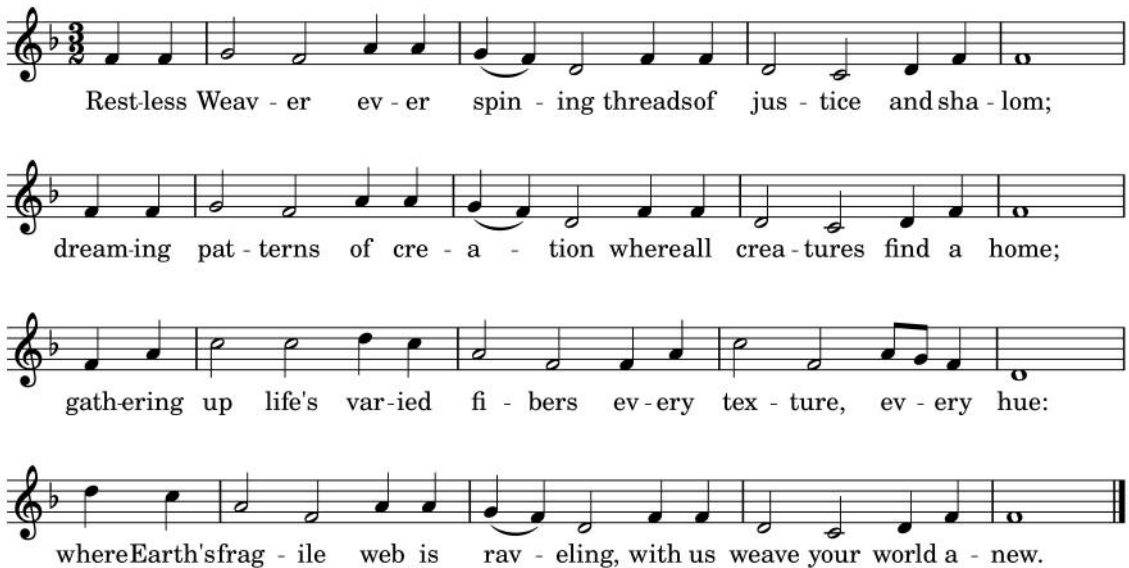
RINGING THE BELL

WE ARE A NURTURING, BELOVED COMMUNITY.

WELCOME SONG

“Restless Weaver”

BEACH SPRING



Rest-less Weav - er ev - er spin - ing threadsof jus - tice and sha - lom;
dream-ing pat - terns of cre - a - tion whereall crea - tures find a home;
gath-ering up life's var-ied fi - bers ev-ery tex - ture, ev - ery hue:
whereEarth'sfrag - ile web is rav - eling, with us weave your world a - new.

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**Rise in body or spirit*

WELCOME

Sharon Benton

We love children in worship—their noises and wiggles are welcome, too. There are pillows and a coloring, book, and play area in the front and in the corner near the windows. Younger kids may enjoy the Narthex play area. Their movements back and forth are a joy for us as they participate fully.

THE STORY

Sharon Benton

TIME WITH CHILDREN

John Mark Slagle

After Time with Children, children may go with Maya to church school in the social hall or remain in the sanctuary as they choose.

HYMN

“There Is a Line of Women”
see insert

CLIMBING VINE

COMMUNITY PRAYER

One Voice: Holy One, so many lives get unraveled by Pharaohs with power.

All Voices: **Immigrants who care for their new communities —
unraveled.**

**Families with transgender members wondering where safety lies—
unraveled.**

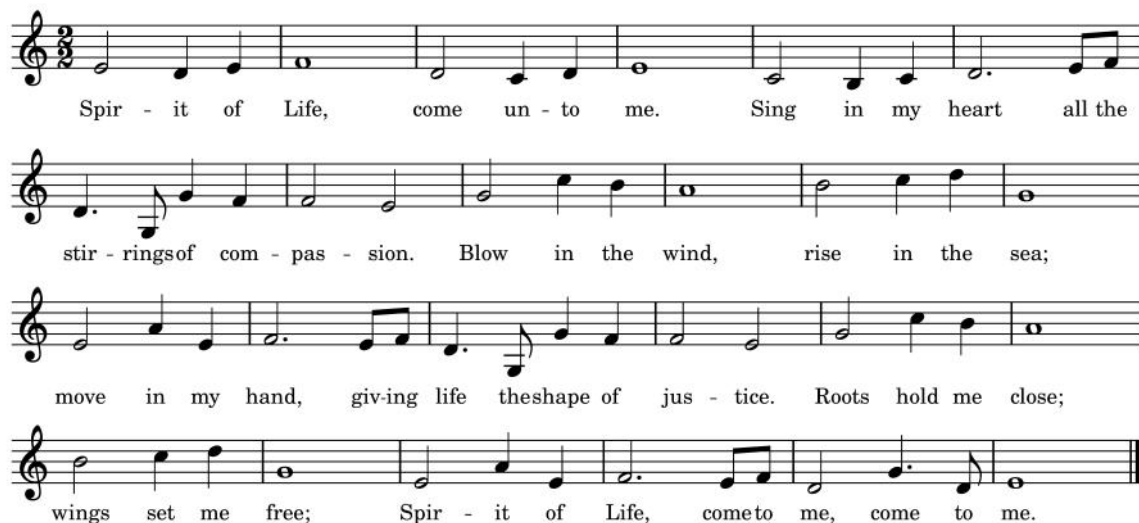
**Policies for the good of all creation—
unraveled.**

**Women’s lives and children’s lives—
unraveled.**

One Voice: Power seems impossible to fight, O God.
We need your Spirit to inspire us.

All Voices: **Help us unravel injustice.
Help us to weave your world anew. Amen.**

SUNG INVITATION TO PRAYER



Spir - it of Life, come un - to me. Sing in my heart all the
stir - rings of com - pas - sion. Blow in the wind, rise in the sea;
move in my hand, giv-ing life the shape of jus - tice. Roots hold me close;
wings set me free; Spir - it of Life, come to me, come to me.

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PRAYERS OF THE PEOPLE

Sharon Benton

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.*

WE ARE GROWING AUTHENTIC CHRISTIAN FAITH.

A READING FROM SCRIPTURE

Exodus 1:8-2:10
Common English Bible

SCRIPTURE RESPONSE

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

“Unraveling Pharaoh”

Sharon Benton

GIFT OF MUSIC

“Faith Is the Bird that Feels the Light”
tune by Elizabeth Alexander, by Rabindranath Tagore

One Accord

WE ARE LIVING CHRIST-INSPIRED ACTION.

ANNOUNCEMENTS & OFFERING

You may make an offering either in the plates or online.

*Your generosity allows us together to nurture beloved community,
grow authentic Christian faith, and live Christ-inspired action. Thank you!
There are several 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 on the back cover of the bulletin.

MUSICAL OFFERING

“A Mighty Fortress Is Our God”
by Martin Luther, adapted by Kyle Pederson

One Accord

***HYMN 574** (black hymnal)

“In Egypt Under Pharaoh”

LANCASHIRE

***BENEDICTION & PASSING THE PEACE**

Sharon Benton

POSTLUDE

Judy Widrig

Cover Image: Mural of Shiphrah, Puah, Jocheved, Miriam, Pharaoh’s Daughter, and the infant Moses ca. 245, Dura-Europos Synagogue, Syria (public domain)

ROOM FOR YOUR REFLECTIONS

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

Our pastor is available by appointment virtually or in person. Contact her by email or call the pastoral care line, 360-733-4255.

Sharon **sharon@fccb.net**

Our Chaplain is also available at
chaplain@fccb.net.

Or you can 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

Office Hours:

10:00 am-2:00 pm, M-F

PASTOR: Sharon Benton, she/her
DIRECTOR OF COMMUNITY LIFE:

Scott Ward, he/him (scott@fccb.net)

CHAPLAIN: Charlene Epp, she/her

ORGANIST: Judy Widrig, she/her

MUSIC COORDINATOR:

Niko F C Pen, he/they (music@fccb.net)

CHURCH SCHOOL/

YOUTH COORDINATOR:

Maya McEachern, they/them

NURSERY ATTENDANT:

Keira Martin, she/her

WORSHIP MEDIA COORDINATOR:

Moxxy Rogers, she/her

CHURCH FACILITY MANAGER:

Eric Whitaker, he/him

OFFICE MANAGER: Cydne Cochran, she/her

MODERATOR: Jordan Sandoval, she/they

VICE MODERATOR: Kate Destler

PAST MODERATOR:

Diane Cooper-Schick, she/her

CLERK: Leigh Hjelmseth

TREASURER: Darlene Mathias

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