



THE FIRST CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH CANTON CENTER, CT

September 3, 2023 ~ 10:00 a.m.

Fourteenth Sunday after Pentecost



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~ ORDER OF WORSHIP ~

Please stand if able. **Bold denotes unison response.*

CHIMES

Karen Needham

WELCOME & ANNOUNCEMENTS

*Brief announcements from the congregation are welcome. **Those wishing to make an announcement are asked to be in the front pews at the start of the announcement period. Prayer request cards may be found on the tables at the back of the church. Offerings may be placed in the marked boxes on the tables at the back or front of the church.***

PRELUDE

Come, Labor On

Thomas Noble

CALL TO WORSHIP

Listen! God is calling! Can you hear it?

**Calling us to turn away from self-interest;
To put down the things that distract us,
To take up our cross and follow.**

Can you hear it?

***HYMN**

Immortal, Invisible, God Only Wise

Chalice (blue), 66

*Immortal, invisible, God only wise, in light inaccessible hid from our eyes,
Most blessed, most glorious, the Ancient of Days,
almighty victorious, thy great name we praise.*

*Unresting, unhalting, and silent as light, nor wanting,
nor wasting, though rulest in might; Thy justice like mountains high
soaring above thy clouds which are fountains of goodness & love.*

*To all, life though givest, to both great and small; in all life thou livest,
the true life of all; We blossom and flourish as leaves on the tree,
and wither and perish, but naught changeth thee.*

*Thou reignest in glory; thou dwellest in light, thine angels adore thee,
all veiling their sight; All praises we render:*

O help us to see that only the splendor of light hideth thee.

***GATHERING PRAYER AND THE LORD'S PRAYER**

Loving God, You call us to turn away from our own selfish interests,
to take up our cross, and to follow after You—
to find our lives by giving them up to Your greater purpose.
So we come before You this morning with open hearts and open hands,
eager to hear Your Word, and eager to know Your will.

Through the power of Your Holy Spirit, move within us and among us as we worship. Open our eyes to Your presence; open our ears to Your call, open our hearts to one another. And then send us back out into the world, to live and work as Your faithful disciples. In the name of Jesus Christ, Amen

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.

***SUNG RESPONSE**

Bless God, O My Soul

The image shows two staves of musical notation in G major (one sharp) and 2/2 time. The first staff contains the melody and accompaniment for the first line of lyrics: "Bless God, O my soul! All with - in me bless God's name!". The second staff continues the melody and accompaniment for the second line of lyrics: "Bless God, who was, and is, and shall ev - er be the same!". The music is written in a simple, hymn-like style with a clear vocal line and a supporting accompaniment.

READING FROM SCRIPTURE Matthew 16:21-28 Pew Bible pg. 798

SERMON *Are You Sure?*

DEDICATION OF OFFERING

God of Grace, We give these gifts to you out of our devotion and love.

**All of our blessing, those tangible and intangible,
come from you and so accept this offering
as a token of our abiding love.**

Help us use it to bring peace, Justice, and comfort to our world. Amen.

***Doxology** (please stand)

*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.*

***Prayer of Dedication**

PRAYERS OF THE CHURCH

Joys & Concerns

Pastoral Prayer

HYMN *Love Divine, All Loves Excelling* Chalice (blue) 517

*Love divine, all loves excelling, joy of heaven, to earth come down;
fix in us thy humble dwelling, all thy faithful mercies crown; Jesus,
Thou art all compassion, pure, unbounded love thou art;
visit us with thy salvation, enter every trembling heart.*

*Breathe, O breathe thy loving Spirit in to every troubled breast;
let us all in thee inherit, let us find they promised rest;
take away our love of sinning; alpha and omega be;
end of faith, as its beginning, set our hearts at liberty.*

*Come, almighty to deliver, let us all thy life receive;
suddenly returned and never, nevermore thy temples leave.
Thee we would be always blessing, serve thee as thy hosts above,
pray, and praise thee without ceasing, glory in thy perfect love.*

*Finish, then, thy new creation; pure and spotless let us be,
let us see thy great salvation perfectly restored in thee;
changed from glory into glory, till in heaven we take our place,
till we cast our crowns before thee, lost in wonder, love, and praise.*

***BENEDICTION**

***BENEDICTION RESPONSE** *Amen*

***POSTLUDE** *Laudate Dominum* W. A. Mozart

WELCOME OUR VISITING MINISTER

Lauren Dube-Scott just finished her third year in the Master of Divinity Program at Andover Newton Seminary at Yale Divinity School. Lauren is a Connecticut-native and a graduate of the Loomis Chaffee School and Central Connecticut State University. She is a member in discernment at her home church, First Church in Windsor, UCC. Most of her experience is in Youth and Children's ministry, and she has a strong passion for community organizing, especially with GHIAA, in Hartford, CT. She spends most of her free time knitting with her two house rabbits, Theo and Marigold. She is excited to be worshiping with First Congregational Church, Canton Center today!

NEXT SUNDAY, SEPT. 10 – GATHERING SUNDAY!

We open a new church year, celebrate our coming back together as a faith community with our new Interim, Pastor Kurt, welcome back the choir, begin church school after some intergenerational time in the service, and enjoy a pizza lunch afterwards. Please bring a side dish or dessert to share, if you wish. Join us!