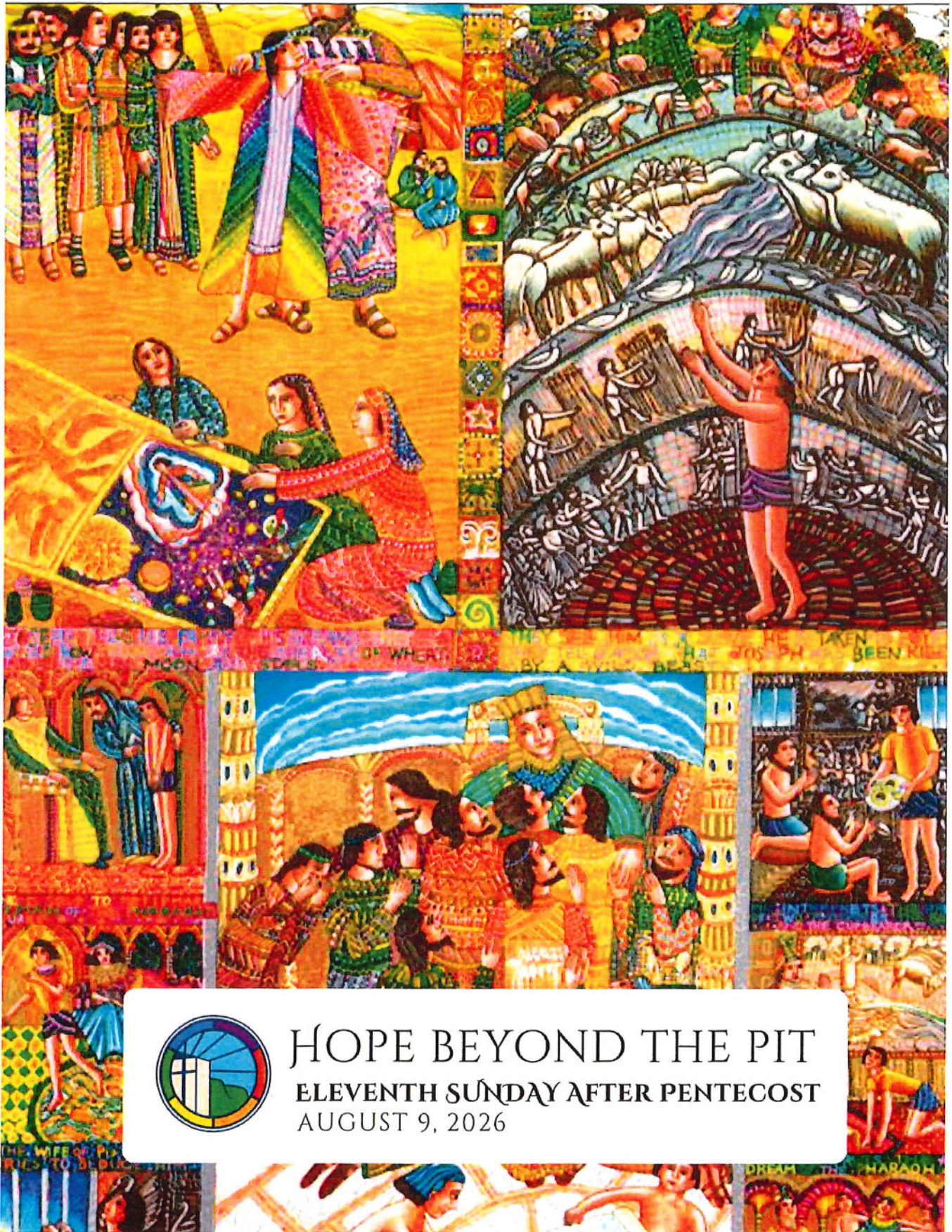




HOPE BEYOND THE PIT
ELEVENTH SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST
AUGUST 9, 2026

Welcome! At First Congregational United Church of Christ, our mission is to live by faith, embody love, proclaim hope, and seek justice. If you are worshipping with us for the first time, we hope that you will find God’s presence among us. When the Friendship Folder is passed during the announcements, please sign it, and then pass it back toward the center aisle.

All are welcome. Jesus calls us to welcome all into God’s family. Children are not only welcome – they belong here. Activity bags are available next to the Sanctuary’s doors, and a space near the front of the Sanctuary allows children to engage more closely in worship. Our staffed nursery (downstairs) is also available; all childcare workers have undergone background checks. Children will remain in worship and can pick up a worship bag by the doors to the Sanctuary. A restroom for families and all bodies is next to the Chapel.

Livestreaming Notice for Worship. To make worship accessible for all, we livestream our worship services on our YouTube channel (@firstcongolax). Your voice and/or image may be visible in the broadcast, which is publicly available. If you prefer not to appear on camera, we invite you to sit in the Sanctuary’s last three rows.

Please ask an usher if you need assistance, a large-print or sensory-friendly bulletin, or directions – we are glad to help.

Serving in Worship Today

Leading Worship & Preaching.....	Laura Wright
Pianist	Kristi Koch
Reading Scripture.....	Sue Heuer
Head Usher	Allan Beatty
Ushers	Tom Stolpa, Dawn Kay
Nursery.....	Zali Stanton

An asterisk (*) in the order of service indicates all who are able may stand.

Gathering

in the presence of God

Gathering Music

"We Are Climbing Jacob's Ladder"

Kristi Koch, Piano

arr. Keesecker

Welcome and Announcements

Thank you for joining us today. Please pass the Friendship Folder, fill out the information you wish to share, and note those worshipping near you so you can greet them by name.

Prelude Music

"May the Mind of Christ My Savior"

Kristi Koch, Piano

arr. P. Rodriquez

*Call to Worship

One: We come before God carrying all that life has brought—
our joys, our griefs, our hopes, and our scars.

Many: **We come seeking the God who walks with us through every season.**

One: The pit was not the end of Joseph's story. God is always weaving
redemption into places where we can only see loss.

Many: **We trust the God who can make the deepest wounds
places of compassion and grace.**

One: Let us sing to the God who is always making all things new.



The musical score is written for piano in 4/4 time, featuring a key signature of two flats (B-flat and E-flat). It consists of five staves of music. The lyrics are written below the notes, with some words hyphenated across measures. The score begins with a mezzo-forte (mf) dynamic marking. The lyrics are: "We are stand - ing on ho - ly ground, And I know that there are an - gels all a - round. Let us praise Je - sus now; We are stand - ing in God's pres - ence on ho - ly ground." The music concludes with a final chord on the fifth staff.

mf We are
stand - ing on ho - ly ground, And I
know that there are an - gels all a - round. Let us praise
Je - sus now; We are stand - ing in God's
pres - ence on ho - ly ground.

A Moment for Silence

Take this moment of silence to become still and attentive to God.

*Hymn 569 *(All join in singing the hymn.)*

"God of Grace and God of Glory"

CWM RHONDDA

*Sharing the Peace

One: The peace of Christ be with you.

Many: **And also with you.**

We invite you to share Christ's peace with one another by offering a wave or a bow and saying: "Peace be with you. / And also with you."

Listening

for the Still-speaking God

The Word for Children

Children are invited to join the minister at the front of the sanctuary for The Word for Children. Following the children's message, they will remain in worship with their families this Sunday.

Acclamation *(Sung by all.)*

SPIRITUAL

All:



1. This lit - tle light of mine I'm gon-na let it shine,
This lit - tle light of mine
I'm gon-na let it shine; This lit - tle light of mine
I'm gon-na let it shine. Let it shine.
let it shine, let it shine.

The First Lesson – Page 34 of the first half of the Pew's Bible
Genesis 37:1-4, 12-28

Sue Heuer

The Psalter

Psalm 105:1-6, 16-22, 45b (*Reading is based on The Common English Bible.*)

One: Give thanks to the LORD;

Many: **call on God's name;**

make God's deeds known to all people!

One: Sing to God;

Many: **sing praises to the LORD;**

dwell on all God's wondrous works!

One: Give praise to God's holy name!

Many: **Let the hearts rejoice of all those seeking the LORD!**

One: Pursue the LORD and God's strength;

Many: **seek God's face always!**

One: Remember the wondrous works God has done,

Many: **all God's marvelous works, and the justice God declared –**

One: you who are the offspring of Abraham, God's servant,

Many: **and the children of Jacob, God's chosen ones.**

One: When he summoned famine against the land

and cut off every supply of bread,

Many: **he had sent a man ahead of them, Joseph,**

who had been sold as a slave.

One: His feet were hurt with fetters; his neck was put in a collar of iron;

Many: **until what he had said came to pass,**

the word of the LORD kept testing him.

One: The king sent and released him;

the ruler of the peoples set him free.

Many: **He made him lord of his house and ruler of all his possessions,**

One: to instruct his officials at his pleasure

and to teach his elders wisdom.

All: **Praise the LORD!**

The Gospel – Page 16 of the second half of the Pew's Bible

Matthew 14:22-33

Sermon

"Family Vacation Gone Wrong"

Rev. Dr. Laura Wright

∞ Responding

with the voice of hope

***Hymn 65** *(All join in singing the hymn.)*
"God Moves in a Mysterious Way"

DUNDEE

The Community Invited into Prayer

Prayers of the People

Leader: God, in your love,
All: **hear our prayer.**

The Prayer of Jesus *(Please pray using the language for God that is most meaningful to you.)*

Our (Father / Mother / 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 trespasses,
as we forgive those who trespass against us.
And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil.
For thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory,
for ever and ever. Amen.

∞ Thanksgiving

for the gifts of God

Stories of Generosity

Music at the Offertory

"Jesus, Keep My Near the Cross"

Kristi Koch, Piano
arr. McDonald

***As the Gifts Are Presented:** Sing to the tune of OLD 100TH (Hymn 34).
(All who are able are invited to stand and sing.)

Praise God from whom all blessings flow.
Praise God, all creatures high and low.
Praise God, for all that love has done,
Creator, Christ, and Spirit, One!



Prayer of Thanksgiving

***Hymn 621** *(All join in singing the hymn.)*
 "For the Healing of the Nations"

REGENT SQUARE

***The Blessing**

Postlude Music
 "Plenty Good Room"

Kristi Koch, Piano
 arr. L. Larson

Acknowledgments: Hymns and music reprinted and streamed with permission under OneLicense.net #A-728014. The cover image, "The Story of Joseph," was painted by John August Swanson, whose work reflects the storytelling of his Mexican mother and Swedish father. His narrative style is direct and easily understood in his art.

*Flowers today are given by Chuck Hanson and family
 in loving memory of Cheryl on her August 6 birthday.*

Announcements:

This Week in Our Church:

Sunday, August 9

Eleventh Sunday after Pentecost

10:00 am Worship

10:00 am Nursery

11:00 am Missions & Social Justice Meeting (L)

Tuesday, August 11

5:00 pm Creation Care Meeting (Zoom)

7:00 pm Finance Meeting (L)

Wednesday, August 12

5:00 pm Circle of Support (L)

6:30 pm Building & Grounds Meeting (CR)

Friday, August 14

Office Closed

Sunday, August 16

Twelfth Sunday after Pentecost

10:00 am Worship

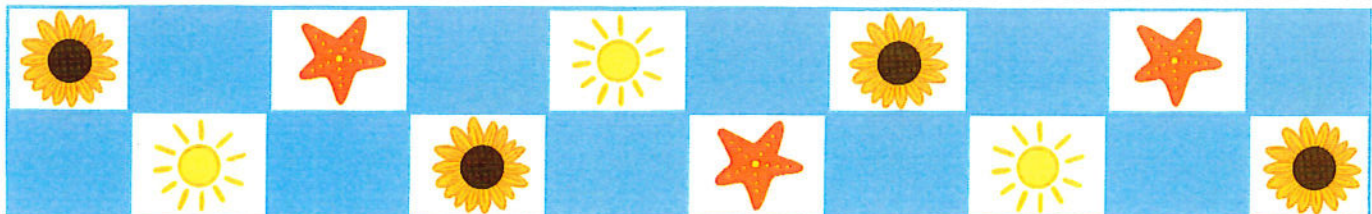
10:00 am Nursery

11:15 am WISE Committee Meeting (L)

C = Chapel, CR = Community Room, J = JAM Rooms, K = Kitchen,

CALENDAR KEY

L = Lounge, N = Narthex, P = Pastor's Office, S = Sanctuary





SOLAR PANEL INSTALLATION HAS BEGUN!



Exciting things are happening at First Congregational UCC! On July 30, we celebrated a major milestone with a pop-up party as the first solar panels were lifted onto our church roof.

This project reflects our commitment to caring for God's creation and investing in a more sustainable future for our church and community. It was wonderful to gather together and celebrate the beginning of this exciting new chapter!

Be sure to check out the photos from the celebration, and stay tuned for more solar updates as the installation continues!

