

**SECOND CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH IN NEWCASTLE  
UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST  
Communion Sunday Online Worship – September 6, 2020  
10:00 AM**



“Be Transformed”

**INVITATION**

Welcome to Virtual Worship with the community of Second Congregational Church in Newcastle, United Church of Christ in Newcastle, Maine. From our various spaces, on our various devices, we enter sacred time together. No matter who you are or where you are on life’s journey, you are welcome here. God meets us everywhere and in all our humanness. Be here in this sacred moment. God is with you. God is with us. May this worship of saints be blessed, be nourishing, be comforting, be church.

**PREPARING FOR WORSHIP ON COMMUNION SUNDAY:**

***This Sunday is the first Sunday of the month, when our congregation celebrates the sacrament of Communion. Before the time of the service you will want to prepare some bread and a cup.*** In our tradition, these elements can be what you have at home – a slice or small loaf of bread, tortilla, rice cake, or crackers. Let it be something you alone or you with others in your house may break and share. Prepare a cup or cups of juice (like grape or cranberry) or wine. Ultimately you want to bring to the table the elements that bring you comfort, are common to your household and the people and connect you with others.

Set these elements in the living room or kitchen where you experience worship electronically with our faith community. Some suggestions: perhaps light a candle or place a cross; or place a flower or other symbol of faith and hope on the table; include the photograph of someone you wish to bring into the circle of faith beside the bread and the cup. Follow your heart.

**DEVICES**

As we gather, please be sure that your device (computer, phone or tablet) is in the mute mode to avoid feedback and background noise. You are encouraged to use the “chat” or “comment” features to offer prayer requests at any time during the service.

***Thank you for your preparation.  
Let us now be present to the Spirit  
which brings us together and loves us where we are!***

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## GATHERING MUSIC

“Holy Manna”

Peter Asche, piano

Link: <https://drive.google.com/file/d/1rNmB3h-03I9tfbqubkwtJkdLVdtlx3BM/view?usp=sharing>

## WELCOME AND CENTERING MOMENT

**CALL TO WORSHIP (based on Romans 12):** *(Said aloud together but muted):*

Leader: Let your love be genuine!

**People: Let us love one another with mutual affection.**

Leader: Do not lag in zeal, but be ardent in spirit and serve the Lord.

**People: We rejoice in hope, are patient in suffering, persevere in prayer.**

Leader: Contribute to the needs of the saints; extend hospitality to strangers.

**People: We rejoice with those who rejoice and weep with those who weep.**

Leader: Live in harmony with one another.

**People: Let us not be overcome by evil, but overcome evil with good.**

## HYMN 12

“Immortal, Invisible, God Only Wise”

St. Denio (NEXT PAGE)

*We will remain muted to avoid audio feedback and lags. Please sing aloud at home or follow along as best as you are able. Remember, it's our spiritual intention that matters!*

*Peter Asche, piano; Jane Wilmot, organ;*

*Song Leaders: Second Singers*

Link: <https://drive.google.com/file/d/1ozTSrkg4QsxU3nklZJ5limxgBAGPaa8/view?usp=sharing>

## PRAYER OF INVOCATION AND CONFESSION:

Forgiving and loving God, our hearts are filled today with pain and concern for the future of humankind. Words of anger assail us from all directions and it seems we cannot escape from all that threatens us in mind, body and spirit. In our fear, we cry “Where are you, O Lord?” We wander around in the darkness, seeking Your light and hope. Forgive us when we forget that you are always with us, through times of peace and times of struggle. Heal our souls. Help us to reach out to others with the assurance of your love and presence, for we ask this in Jesus’ name. Amen.

## WORDS OF ASSURANCE:

God hears our prayers and our cries. God leads us out of the darkness of the past into the bright promise of today. We are called to stand strong and confident in God’s Love. Rejoice, dear friends, for that love which began even before creation flows in and through you this day! Amen.

**THE LORD’S PRAYER** *(Second Church follows the version of the Lord’s Prayer that is offered below. However, you are invited to say this prayer aloud in the tradition that brings you the most comfort.*

**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.**

# Immortal, Invisible, God Only Wise

1. Im - mor - tal, in - vis - i - ble, God on - ly wise,  
 2. Un - rest - ing, un - hast - ing, and si - lent as light,  
 3. To all life thou giv - est, to both great and small;  
 4. Thou reign - est in glo - ry, thou dwell - est in light,

in light in - ac - ces - si - ble hid from our eyes,  
 nor want - ing, nor wast - ing, thou rul - est in might;  
 in all life thou liv - est, the true life of all;  
 in thine an - gels a - dore thee, the veil - ing of their sight;

most bless - ed, most glo - rious, the An - cient of Days,  
 thy jus - tice like moun - tains high soar - ing a -  
 we blos - som and flour - ish as leaves on the -  
 all praise we would ren - der; O help us to see

al - might - y, vic - to - rious, thy great name we praise.  
 thy clouds which are four - tains of good - ness and love.  
 and with - er and per - ish, but naught chang - eth thee.  
 'tis on - ly the spen - dor of light hid - eth thee.

## SCRIPTURE LESSON: Romans 12:9-21

Reader: Wilt/Judy Jones

<sup>9</sup> Let love be genuine; hate what is evil, hold fast to what is good; <sup>10</sup> love one another with mutual affection; outdo one another in showing honor. <sup>11</sup> Do not lag in zeal, be ardent in spirit, serve the Lord. <sup>12</sup> Rejoice in hope, be patient in suffering, persevere in prayer. <sup>13</sup> Contribute to the needs of the saints; extend hospitality to strangers. <sup>14</sup> Bless those who persecute you; bless and do not curse them. <sup>15</sup> Rejoice with those who rejoice, weep with those who weep. <sup>16</sup> Live in harmony with one another; do not be haughty, but associate with the lowly; do not claim to be wiser than you are. <sup>17</sup> Do not repay anyone evil for evil, but take thought for what is noble in the sight of all. <sup>18</sup> If it is possible, so far as it depends on you, live peaceably with all. <sup>19</sup> Beloved, never avenge yourselves, but leave room for the wrath of God; for it is written, "Vengeance is mine, I will repay, says the Lord." <sup>20</sup> No, "if your enemies are hungry, feed them; if they are thirsty, give them something to drink; for by doing this you will heap burning coals on their heads." <sup>21</sup> Do not be overcome by evil, but overcome evil with good.

*Prayer: May the words of my mouth and the meditations of our minds and hearts gathered here this day be acceptable in your sight, Oh Lord, our Strength and our Redeemer. Amen.*

**MEDITATION – September 6, 2020**  
**Second Congregational Church in Newcastle, UCC**  
**"Let Love Be Genuine"**  
**Rev. Char Corbett**

*Prayer: May the words of my mouth and the meditations of our minds and hearts gathered here this day be acceptable in your sight, Oh Lord, our Strength and our Redeemer. Amen.*

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It's so good to be back in community with all of you this morning. It certainly isn't the same as gathering in person for worship, but I must say I'm so thankful we have this digital technology for these times! I also want to express my sincere gratitude to all of you, our Deacons and our Church Assembly for supporting my request for vacation the last two weeks of August. As good as it is to stay connected through the mysteries of social media, it was good to also take a digital break! I highly recommend it if you too have been feeling overwhelmingly glued to your computer, tablet or iPhone. It never hurts to take a break from whatever consumes our time and energy, to return to the simple things that connect and re-connect us to ourselves and to God. My recommendation stands doubly so for these agitating, bewildering and unrelenting times.

While I was away I'd certainly hoped all that is agitating, bewildering and unrelenting in our nation would take a break too...however, it's apparent that didn't happen. Hurricane Laura hit, Jacob Blake was shot, Portland riots and protesting escalated to the point of two fatal shootings and fires in California exploded to an historical level. Speaking of historical, both the Democratic National Convention and the Republican National Convention took place in virtual format while I was unplugged, and I heard both heated up the newsfeeds on social media and has stoked the political ads on tv for the weeks to come. I may have taken a blessed break from it all, but the reality is that life moves on in all of its complexities, challenges and mysteries even while some of us, like myself, have the opportunity and privilege to check out temporarily.

And I have to say, this acknowledgement of lived reality is what I most appreciate about our reading today. Paul is very real about what happens in our communities. He doesn't skip over the messiness of our living together and the struggles we are faced with. He outlines, through this staccato of imperatives, how we need to act and live in the midst our lived realities, human temptations and sinful behaviors. The reality that societal living is often agitating, bewildering and unrelenting calls for our ethical response as faithful Christians. Paul

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<sup>1</sup> Meditation written by Rev. Char Corbett, September 2, 2020.

has given us a list you might say, of the ways that we can endure faithfully, with the strength of love by God's grace.

Now, what I've done by starting in the middle of Chapter 12 of Romans isn't quite fair I realize. We haven't been studying Romans and so it's likely you don't have the benefit of immediately recalling what Paul has been writing about in this letter to the Roman Church. It's a new church, mind you, maybe only about 10 years in the making, and they've been wrestling with the cultural differences between Christian Jews and Gentiles.

Now remember, Christian Jews have been raised in the Jewish law – there are rules and traditions around purity of faith – what you eat, how you dress, circumcision for males, specific holidays and history to celebrate and recall annually. Meanwhile Gentiles haven't been so restrictive in their behaviors – they are simply moved by the Spirit of Christian faith to be members of this new thing called church. Neither party is therefore sure how to move forward in their practices of faith together and are struggling to find common ground.

The apostle Paul has gotten word of this while doing missionary ministry 1,200 miles southeast in the coastal city of Corinth. It's obvious he cares deeply about this church in Rome, one of the first he had established, as he addresses his letter “to all God's beloved in Rome, who are called to be saints.” And the first eleven chapters are devoted to assuring them that whether Jewish or Gentile, we are all alike in our sin, that Jesus' teachings, death and resurrection heal and save all people by God's grace alone – not by what we do or say – and that it's by this divine grace that we are ALL called to be the church by overcoming our differences with good in the world.

It's Chapter 12 that Paul begins to outline how that is done. First, he appeals to their faith: “Brothers and sisters, by the mercy of God, present your living bodies as a sacrifice, holy and acceptable to God, which is your spiritual worship.” Essentially, the most important thing is to worship God together! Secondly, he encourages them to think outside the box and not to fall prey to the petty arguments and hateful behaviors that often catch us up and divide us in our living and worship. “Do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your minds, so that you may discern what is the will of God – what is good, and acceptable and perfect.”

Then, just before he offers us this list of how-to's that we have heard in our reading this morning, he reminds the church they have all that they need to figure their differences out and to be the church: God has gifted them all with faith and with various gifts, all of which are needed and appropriate for different roles in the church. Use what you've got!

How? Let love be your guide!

- Let your love be genuine.
- Hate what is evil and hold fast to what is good.
- Love one another with mutual affection.
- Outdo one another in showing honor
- Be joyful, committed and do your part to serve God and one another

- Remain hopeful, be patient as we all suffer, and don't forget to say your prayers
- Help one another – you're all saints!
- Extend hospitality to strangers

These are the things that God's grace helps us to do. By doing these things, it will be much easier for us to bless all people – the ones we love and the ones that hurt us. It will be easier for us to celebrate the joys of others and to be present and compassionate when they grieve – for we all rejoice and grieve together. It will be easier to live in harmony together, because the grace we have received and can now extend to others will help us to be humble, to be wise, to live peacefully. There's no room for anger, revenge or hateful behavior when evil is overcome with good: because grace abounds we can move past the temptation of judgement to feed the hungry, give drink to the thirsty and treat our enemies with kindness. Why? Because we are no better and no worse than anyone else. We all sin. Our faith has simply awakened us to the grace that heals us all. So act in this way – overcome evil with good. Let your love be genuine.

Paul has gotten real with the Roman church and by extension of our faith, with all of us. He knows we often get stuck in the details and the messiness of living together. He knows that at some point we will disagree, argue our points, behave stubbornly and act out in our ego, our anger or our fear. Paul knows we all want order and less chaos in our communal lives and that religious laws and civil laws help us to avoid the pitfalls, anticipate the expected and to be aware of the consequences should we fall short. In fact, in the very next chapter, Paul goes on to support government authorities – so long as they never forget that they are not the gods but rather servants of the God of all.

Paul loves this church into reality. God too has loved us into reality. The reality that Jesus died a most gruesome death on a cross because of sinful behavior, behavior that was evil and revengeful, haughty and disrespectful, callous and violent. And from this reality of sin, Love remains genuine. Love has been resurrected. Love heals. Love saves. Love perseveres. Love conquers evil with good.

We are invited, by our faith in by God's grace, to do the same.

It's a beautiful thing.

Today's reading offers us a great many things to consider and think about, to pray about. Each of these instructions for a good Christian life will certainly help us live through these agitating, bewildering and unrelenting times. Practicing these instructions certainly won't make our living any more worse, right? Because storms and fires, plagues and death, civil unrest and political maneuverings, violence in the streets and screaming in the air, they all can bring out the very worst – or the very best – in all of us. We need something to hold fast to, to help us to overcome the temptations of evil with good.

And perhaps the challenge for us all is to remember this passage. I'm serious. Let's work to commit it to memory. You can choose any bible version you wish to – the one you've heard today is the New Standard Revised Version. But there are multiple versions out there that speak to us in different ways. So find one that suits you if you haven't already and spend the next week committing this passage to memory. Or call me and I'll suggest a version for you.

And if that doesn't quite meet your need as we prepare to approach the communion table that is draped in God's grace and open to all, then let me end with light-hearted but genuine version of this passage, as written by Rev. Kirk Moore, who serves the St. Paul's United Church of Christ in Downers Grove, IL. I think you'll like it. It sounds a bit light hearted perhaps and he notes in his telling of it in his sermon last week, that it sounds a bit Dr. Seuss-ish. But in any event, it's offered with genuine love, hope and the joy of our faith.

### **Kindly Words That Are Just Not Absurd<sup>2</sup>**

Keep your love real, not fake or pretend.  
Hold onto what's good and make a new friend.  
Have a contest about being nice to each other.  
Serve well. And work hard for a sister and brother.  
Be happy in hope and when bad is in the way,  
Listen and pray...and listen...and pray.  
When folks are real nasty then bless them.  
However, stay away from any plan to hurt anyone, ever.  
When smiles abound, you smile too. Really – try.  
And when tears are flowing, it's okay to cry.  
We're not better or worse, there's no sense in keeping score.  
Make friends with those who others tend to ignore.  
Do your best to be kind and gentle and pleasant;  
And don't try to get back at someone who isn't.  
If you're nice to an enemy, giving them food and drink,  
It might make them mad but then happy, I think.  
Take this advice, oh that you would:  
Overcome evil and do it with good!

Today, in these agitating, bewildering and unrelenting times – don't get suckered into the ways of these days. Don't be conformed. Think outside the box. Remember who you are and whose you are. Stand your ground and speak your mind – and do so with peace, kindness, compassion, honor and humility. And above all else be guided by God, my friends. Let your love be genuine. Share your love and God's love, with everyone you meet – digitally and in person. Grace abounds and it's meant to be shared. Amen.

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**SOLO**

“Let Us Break Bread Together”  
*James H. O'Brien, soloist*

Let Us Break Bread

Link: <https://drive.google.com/file/d/1XLzR7503tWQARbK4CpMQ9eHOsR8PdP8o/view?usp=sharing>

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<sup>2</sup> Written by Rev. Kirk Moore, St. Paul UCC, Downers Grove, IL, August 28, 2020; found at <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=EmeXcwwWkUY&feature=youtu.be> on September 2, 2020.



## THE SACRAMENT OF COMMUNION<sup>3</sup>

*Communion will be shared together virtually from our own homes.*

### INVITATION

Jesus said,

“Come to me all you who are weary and are carrying heavy burdens, and I will give you rest.”

This morning you are invited for Holy Communion in the Body of Christ.

The Body of Christ is not the loaf of bread you see on your screen.

The Body of Christ is not even the bread on your table.

The Body of Christ is all of us, strengthened by sharing together this meal of hope and grace.

### PRAYER OF CONSECRATION

*PASTOR:* We pause to ask God’s blessing of grace be upon this Communion table and the many tables in our homes, where meals and memories are shared and we are forever united in Spirit. May God’s blessing touch all of the sacramental elements of bread and drink that we have prepared. And may God’s abundant blessings be upon all of us gathered and all those who are in our prayers this morning.

***UNISON:* Gentle Host, send your Spirit of life and love, power and blessing upon us all, scattered but gathered in joy for the sake of You and living in hope for all. Risen Christ, live in us, that we may live in you. Breathe in us, that we may breathe in you. Amen.**

***PASTOR:*** As we pray, we offer the prayers on our hearts and minds this morning...

*[a moment of silence for all to offer their prayers followed by prayers of the Pastor]. Amen.*

### WORDS OF REMEMBERING:

We remember that on the night of betrayal and desertion, Jesus took bread, blessed it, broke it, and gave it to the disciples, saying: “This is my body, broken for you. As often as you eat of it, do so in remembrance of me.”

In the same manner, Jesus took the cup, blessed it and gave it to the disciples, saying:

“This is the new covenant in my blood, poured out for you. As often as you drink of it, do so in remembrance of me.” By eating this bread and drinking this cup, we proclaim Christ’s birth, life, ministry, death and resurrection, and we live forever in the hope that Christ will come again.

### SHARING THE ELEMENTS:

Leader: Let us at our many tables receive the gift of God, the Bread of Heaven.

**Unison: We become the Body of Christ in the Bread we share.** *(Let us eat bread together, recalling our communal relationship with the Spirit and one another).*

Leader: Let us in our many places receive the gift of God, the Cup of Blessing.

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<sup>3</sup> Communion liturgy written by Rev. Char Corbett, June 29, 2020.



**Unison: We are one in Christ in the Cup we share.** (*Let us all drink, recalling our individual devotion to God, our love of Christ and the Spirit of hope*)

**PRAYER OF THANKSGIVING:**

Loving God, you are the font of every blessing, the source of all we have. Your breath gives us life, your love gives us courage and strength, your grace gives us healing and compassion. You care for us and feed our spirits, our minds, and our bodies. We thank you for your abundance given freely to all. May we so live that our lives reflect our faith in You, knowing that your abundance is meant to be shared with all our brothers and sisters, your children of the world. Amen.

**CLOSING HYMN 464**

“Take My Life And Let It Be”

Vienna

*We will remain muted to avoid audio feedback and lags. Please listen to the recording, sing aloud at home or follow along as best as you are able. Remember, it's our spiritual intention that matters!.*

*Peter Asche, piano; Jane Wilmot, organ;  
Song Leaders: Second Singers*

Link: [https://drive.google.com/file/d/1oCioQ8UfRmw353Xw74O\\_vTVefSJO-DGw/view?usp=sharing](https://drive.google.com/file/d/1oCioQ8UfRmw353Xw74O_vTVefSJO-DGw/view?usp=sharing)

## Take My Life and Let It Be

1. Take my life, and let it be con - se - crat - ed, Lord, to Thee;  
2. Take my hands, and let them move at the im - pulse of thy love;  
3. Take my will, and make it thine; it shall be no long - er mine;  
4. Take my love: my Lord I pour at thy feet its treas - ure store:

take my mo - ments, and my days, let them flow in cease-less praise.  
take my feet, and let them be swift and beau - ti - ful for thee.  
take my heart, it is thine own: it shall be thy roy - al throne.  
take my - self and I will be ev - er, on - ly, all for thee.

## **BENEDICTION<sup>4</sup>**

Go out in love, reconciled to one another in Christ.  
Lay aside the works of darkness and put on the armor of light.  
Live honorably, fulfilling the law through love for all.

And may God mark you with Love;  
May Christ Jesus be present among you always,  
And may the Holy Spirit reconcile you to one another in peace.  
May we go with grace to love and share with joy. Amen.

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***Today's Worship has been prepared, sent out, offered and led by:***

- ▶ **Peter Asche**, Recording and editing; Piano
- ▶ **Bill Bausch**, Communications & Technology Support; Snippets Meister
- ▶ **Rev. Char Corbett**, Pastor
- ▶ **Jim Corbett**, Videographer and Technical Support
- ▶ **Wilt/Judy Jones**, Scripture Reader
- ▶ **Peggy Farrell**, Altar Floral Arrangement
- ▶ **James H. O'Brien**, Soloist
- ▶ **Jane Wilmot**, Minister of Music; Organ

**Have a question about Second Church or today's service? A concern or a joy to share? A prayer request? We're here to listen and respond! Contact our Pastor, Deacons or Pastoral Relations Committee:**

- ▶ **Lonnie Anderson**, Deacon: [lonnieba@gmail.com](mailto:lonnieba@gmail.com)
- ▶ **Bill Bausch**, Pastoral Relations Committee: [wbausch@gmail.com](mailto:wbausch@gmail.com)
- ▶ **Rev. Char Corbett**, Pastor: [pastor@secondcongo.org](mailto:pastor@secondcongo.org)
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- ▶ **Rev. Ann Roundy**, Pastoral Relations Committee: [revaroundy@gmail.com](mailto:revaroundy@gmail.com)

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<sup>4</sup> Benediction written by Rev. Char Corbett, September 2, 2020.