

CONGREGATIONAL CLARION

First Congregational Church ~ Salt Lake City, Utah

November 2023

November

Worship Services

Services Held at 10:30am

Nov. 5

Communion Sunday

“Transformation U:
Reconnect with Our
Community”

Nov. 12

“Transformation U:
Going All In”

Nov. 19

Thanksgiving Sunday

Pilgrim Sunday

“The Genius of the
Pilgrims”

Taizé @7pm

Nov. 26

Last Sunday after

Pentecost

“The Search for
Meaning and the
Surprise”

Dec. 3

Advent 1 ~ Hope

Communion Sunday

“Christmas with the
Grinch: When

Everything is Wrong”

Taizé @7pm

Imagine: Seeing Our Future with God’s Eyes

By Rev. Doug Gray

I remember looking into the eyes of each our children for the first time, my heart full to bursting with love and gratitude. Each time I remember saying, “I love you! I will always love you!” By that I meant, “Whatever it takes, whatever you need, whatever happens. God help me see their needs through Your eyes.” I wanted to be able to see their needs better than I could imagine.

We can all learn how to see through God’s eyes better. To help us, here are some questions to ask ourselves. All of them are based on spiritual principles from the Bible. If you like numbers, rate yourself from 0 to 5 for each one (5 being always and zero being never) and total up at the end.

- Am I concerned for people more than things?
- Am I focusing on meeting needs more than solving problems?
- Do I take every opportunity to be grateful to each person who does a kindness to me?
- Do I take time to be grateful to God for all the big and small blessings we receive?
- Have I taken time to enjoy the beauty of today?
- Have I shared my joy at being able to live and love today?
- Have I shown someone kindness who doesn’t deserve it?
- Have I looked for possibilities in your life, things you believe God would want for you?
- Have I invested in people in a way that will build up other people?

How’d you do? If you scored over 35, you are most likely living a life of gratitude, joy and showing grace. Trying to imagine what God would want for us and for our fellowship is not as hard as it seems. When we stop to think about it, we get sure direction, especially when we are together.

On November 12, we’ll have our first Congregational Conversation and Potluck—postponed because of the Covid surge in October. As we sit around the table together, we’ll think about the “DNA” of our church fellowship—strengths and growing edges, how our lives are different because of this fellowship, and how God might be leading us forward. It’s a time to remember where we and our church have been and to imagine our future together.

I believe God is calling us to look through His eyes at the future He has prepared for us. Our Lord will give us everything we need to achieve the vision He has for us. We have only to walk in Christ’s Way, to seek Him in all things, and to follow with great courage. “And yet,” Jesus prays in the Garden, “Not what I will, but what You will.” (Matthew 26:39, Mark 14:35) Let us then develop our faithful imaginations, so we too can see with God’s eyes the tremendous future God has planned! It’s truly amazing!

Sunday Adult Formation

9:15–10:10a • Conference Room across from Office

Want to get closer to God? Want to understand how God is working in your life and our world? Sunday Adult Formation is a great way to do both! This month, we finish up our study with Thom Rainer’s book, *The Post-Quarantine Church: Six Urgent Challenges + Opportunities That Will Determine the Future of Your Congregation*. The conversations have been very thought-provoking and insightful, as we share and explore together. In December, we will spend time with the classic Christmas story, *The Grinch Who Stole Christmas*, and Matt Rawle’s book, *The Heart That Grew Three Sizes*.

11/5 Post-Quarantine Church
Challenge 4: Next Level Prayer

11/12 Safety Tour of the Church
No Study

11/19 Post-Quarantine Church
Challenge 6: Lasting Changes,
Lasting Differences

11/26 WEEK OFF

12/3 Christmas with the Grinch:
When Everything Is Wrong
Amos 5:21–24
Matthew 2:1–12

Bible Study! Friday Lunch Bunch @ Noon

Want to know more about the Bible? Come dig in with us! At Noon each Friday, we will gather for 45–50m (longer if people have the time) of exploring how the Bible can change our lives. Our weekly Bible Study sessions are open to all and provide an opportunity to explore the scriptures, discuss their relevance in our lives, and grow in faith together. You can join us on Zoom or in person, and bring your lunch! We can share a meal and a good Word for our day. In November, here’s our schedule:



10/27	Mark 1: Disciples and FaithIntro & Chapters 1–2	Mark 2:1–17
11/3	Mark 2: Critical Insight Chapter 8	Mark 8:22–9:1
11/10	Mark 3: Jesus’ Final Teachings Chapter 12	Mark 12
11/17	Mark 4: Jesus Ends and Begins Chapter 15–16	Mark 15–16
11/24	WEEK OFF	
12/1	Advent 1: Hope in Prophecy and Matthew	Matthew 1–2

Taizé Worship with All Saints

November 5 and 19, @7pm

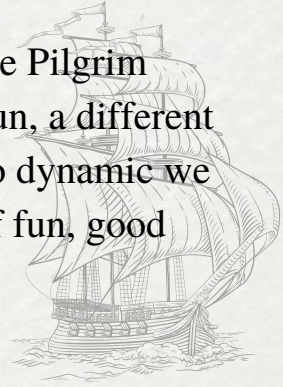
Worship is meant to be experienced with all our senses, to involve our whole body in praising and honoring God. The Taizé worship experience is designed to do just that. Once a month, All Saints Episcopal hosts Taizé worship—meditative music, prayerful chanting, thoughtful message, and Biblical worship all rolled into one! Why not give it a try!



Pilgrim Sunday

Thanksgiving is coming, so of course, lots of us have visions of Pilgrims, turkeys and cornucopia. But who were the Pilgrims? As Congregationalists, we have a special connection with these people, because they, too, were Congregationalists! But what were they like? What did they think about God? How did they read the Bible? How did they worship? Really, when you think about it, most of us have very little idea about the Pilgrims, other than an image of tall hats for men and white bonnets for women, and dressing all in black. The real Pilgrims were much more interesting.

The Board of Deacons and Pastor Doug have agreed that November 19 will be Pilgrim Sunday. That Sunday, we will worship Pilgrim style! Come prepared for some fun, a different approach to worship and lots of learning about the people whose faith life was so dynamic we remember them to this day. Feel free to come in costume! This should be a lot of fun, good worship and a healthy reminder of all we have to be thankful for!



From the Trustees - Phil LeHoux

*“The end of a matter is better than its beginning,
and patience is better than pride.” – Ecclesiastes 7:8*

Well, I am using the biblical quote as a summary of events that transpired over the past month, that progress is slow, but we are moving towards our goals. Those goals for the year, I remind you, are to understand and plan our Stewardship responses and move towards an online and in-person plan that best utilizes available technology in the worship experience.

Our giving trend has been upward, which is gratifying. This is especially encouraging since, as I stated last month, regular weekly or monthly giving has likely evolved from the primary method of supporting FCC’s work, to one of now many available avenues. The Trustees and Treasurer are still at the preliminary levels of analyzing trends and developing plans.

On the worship technology side, as of the most-recent trustee meeting, we were still awaiting a response and proposal from at least one supplier of appropriate equipment. As well, Doug now has a list of contacts with churches who already have established and robust online delivery systems, which he will use to learn from their experiences. Doug’s recent use of the whiteboard in his sermon introduced an added dimension to the sermon delivery, which he would like to add on a more regular basis. This will also require a plan that considers what can be managed and installed within our worship space and the reality of its multiple use throughout the week.

So, the end of the matter is better than the beginning, and getting these things right is better than getting something quickly.

First Version of Our FCC Sanctuary Painting at the Springville Museum of Art

Exciting News! The first version of our FCC Sanctuary painting titled "Color My Soul" by Rob Adamson was accepted into the 36th Annual Spiritual & Religious Art of Utah show.

Exhibitions will be on display:

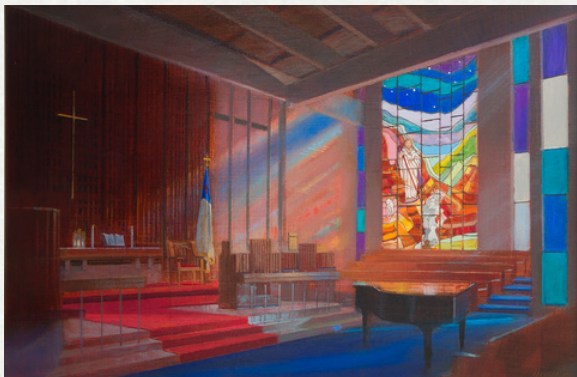
Thurs. Oct 12 - Thurs Jan 11, 2023 at the Springville Museum of Art. (126 E. 400 S. Springville, Utah 84663)

Hours: T,Th,Fr,Sat. 10:00am- 5:00pm
Wed. 10:00am- 8:00pm

Free Parking & Admission

Enjoy and call or text if you have any questions.

Jeanne Hansen
801-209-2823



Kristi's Family Vacation Plans

I am excited to announce I will be traveling to my favorite place on earth with my favorite people on earth... you guessed it Disneyland with my extended family. 26 people decked head to toe in Disney Swag ready to see Mickey and Minnie Mouse. This trip is a 2020 do-over. As you all know, my niece, who passed away in 2019, loved Disneyland as much as I do. This is a memorial trip to celebrate her and her amazing life she lived in her short 18 years here on earth.

In preparation for this trip I will need a little bit of your help and cooperation. I will be printing the bulletins for December 3 and December 10 early before I leave.

Rev. Doug will be holding down the fort while I am away. Please reach out to him if there are any needs that arise while I am away.

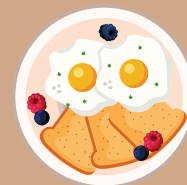


Breakfast Feeds the Soul

Men's Breakfast

November 1, 8am @ Sharon's Café in Holladay – Are you hungry yet? Like to meet some cool people who will make you laugh?

Come have breakfast with a bunch of guys finding their way in the world. Conversations are always good and the food is always tasty. Not all are members of the church, but all of us are trying to live lives marked by grace. If you would like more information, talk with Pastor Doug or other guys from this motley crew.



Women's Breakfast

Ladies, mark your calendars! We are thrilled to invite you to a Women's Breakfast on November 10 at 9am, we are meeting at IHOP on 5300 S. and State Street. It is going to be a fantastic opportunity for us to come together, enjoy a delicious meal, and connect with one another. We will be making this a regular monthly event, held on the 2nd Friday of every month, so if you can't make this month, we hope to catch you next month.

ASEC Fire/Emergency Safety Tour

If something were to happen during church, would you know what to do or where to go? Sunday, Nov. 12 at 9:20am. Please join us for a tour of the building, emergency exits, fire alarms, etc.



Building Requests and Calendar Updates

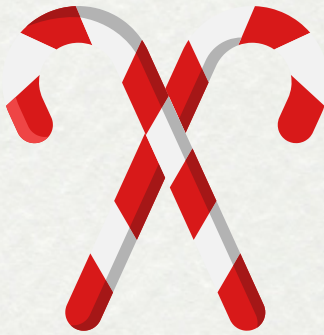
Please direct all building use requests through the church office by email at firstcongregationalslc@gmail.com or by leaving a written note. This will help eliminate any building conflicts. If you have any items that need to be added to the church calendar, please also let the office know by email.

November Outreach

By Becky Bishop, Chair

As we approach the holiday season, we are excited to announce our outreach focus for this month: Candy Cane Lane through the YWCA. This presents a wonderful opportunity for us to come together and spread joy during the holidays by supporting those in need.

How You Can Help: You can make a difference by contributing items from the wish list. You may also make monetary donations if you prefer. Please plan to drop off items to the church on Sundays. Last Sunday we can accept donations will be November 26.



2023 Wish List

Help stock our holiday store with new & unwrapped items!

NEW Teen Gifts	NEW Childrens Gifts
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Gift Cards to: Movie Theater, Nail Salon, Hogle Zoo, Coffee, Target, Walmart, Escape Rooms & Other Activities • Tech Gadgets: Bluetooth Headphones & Speakers. Pop Sockets, Phone Cases etc • Sports Equipment • Stocking Stuffers • Books • Gym bags • Sports Water Bottles • Hydroflasks 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Building Blocks • Play Centers • Educational Toys • Cars, Trucks, Boats • Dress Up • Stuffed Animals • Dolls & Figurines • Crafts • Books • Puzzles • Stocking Stuffers • Scooters • Bikes/Helmets/Roller Blades
Stockings & Stocking Stuffers	Wrapping & Pet Gifts
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Stockings (All Ages) • Candy • Card Games • Fidget Toys • Lotions • Journals • Candy Canes • Crafts 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Wrapping Paper • Gift Boxes & Bags • Tape • Scissors • Ribbons & Bows • Pet Stockings • Cat Toys • Dog Bones & Treats
Gift Cards	NEW Parent Gifts
<p>We would love to give every family living at the YWCA Utah \$50 in gift cards this holiday season.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Grocery Super Store Restaurant Lyft & Uber Home Decor Entertainment VISA Door Dash & UberEats 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Jewelery, Makeup • Hair Products • Self Care Kits • Thermal Socks • Throw Blankets • Tech Gadgets • Gift Cards to: Target, SPA Certificates, Coffee, Amazon, Netflix, Restaurants, Massage • Nail Care/Nail Polish • Perfumes & Body Lotions • Face Masks & Face Care



Schedule your donation drop off, learn more about Candy Cane Lane, Sponsorships or sign up to volunteer at www.ywcautah.org/get-involved/candycanelane/



Advent Worship Schedule:

Finding Faith in the Grinch Story

The run up to Christmas—for some it’s magical, for others it’s dreadful. The iconic Dr. Seuss story, The Grinch Who Stole Christmas, seems to capture both of those with a great sense of fun. Starting December 5, we will let the Grinch (and God’s Word) guide us to deeper faith through worship, Sunday School and Sunday Adult Formation. In all three, we will enjoy this iconic story, and find God can speak into our lives about the true meaning of Christmas. A great chance to invite a friend!





Anniversary of the Reformation

On October 31, 1517, a man of God was so unhappy with how his Church had lost its way, that he made a list of 95 ways it was failing to be what Jesus Christ had created it to be and nailed it to the castle door where it would be seen by everyone coming in and out (especially the rich and powerful), giving voice to the “spiritual wildfire” happening all around him. We call that “spiritual wildfire” the Reformation, and it changed the world. Martin Luther is the man of God who had spent time praying and thinking and wrestling with his inner demons, and was brought face-to-face with the great mysteries of knowing Jesus Christ—boundless grace for even the most lost, steadfast relationship for even the loneliest, and instant access to the Kingdom of God for even the least and last in the eyes of humanity. In Luther’s time, the Catholic Church had made grace “pay to play”—make a donation and we will give you forgiveness. In Luther’s time, the Catholic Church made people priests for political, familial, or even financial gain, with no regard for whether or not they had a relationship with God or any understanding of the Bible. In Luther’s time, the Lord’s Supper was celebrated with the people only getting the bread—only the priests could drink the wine. To make matters worse, the Church and the State had parallel court systems, and you could be charged for the same crime in both—justice became something only the wealthy could afford. Luther was not alone in his deep frustration with the Church’s “sell-out” to the world’s values. Across Europe, people were reading the Bible for themselves. They compared what the Bible said about God and His love, with the predatory self-aggrandizement of the Church of their time—so much did not fit! The Holy Spirit was moving people to the same set of thoughts at the same time. The same wildfire was popping up in different places, but wherever it spread, people’s hearts were lit on fire to belong to Jesus in transformative ways. Wherever people were reading the Bible for themselves, God was drawing them into closer relationship with Jesus Christ, and helping them see the way things could and should be. By nailing his 95 theses to the door of Wittenberg Castle on October 31, 1517, Luther reminded us that reading the Bible can be a powerfully dangerous, wonderfully challenging, and beautifully transforming thing—and that when change comes, sometimes the world can never be the same. – *By Rev. Doug Gray*

November 2023

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
			1 Men's Breakfast @8am	2 Super Thursday Board Meetings @1pm Choir Rehearsal @7pm	3 Friday Lunch Bunch Bible Study @Noon	4
5 Adult Formation @9:15am Choir Rehearsal @9:30am Worship Service @10:30am	6	7	8	9 Choir Rehearsal @7pm	10 Friday Lunch Bunch Bible Study @Noon	11
12 Adult Formation @9:15am Choir Rehearsal @9:30am Worship Service @10:30am	13	14	15 Clarion Deadline	16 Choir Rehearsal @7pm	17 Friday Lunch Bunch Bible Study @Noon	18
19 Pilgrim Sunday Adult Formation @9:15am Choir Rehearsal @9:30am Worship Service @10:30am	20	21 Council Meeting @2:30pm	22 *Office Note* Printing December Clarion Today. Please plan accordingly. Thank you	23 Thanksgiving Day No Choir Reersal Office Closed	24 Office Closed No Friday Lunch Bunch Bible Study	25
26 No Adult Formation Today Choir Rehearsal @9:30am Worship Service @10:30am	27	28	29 *Office Note* Printing December 31 st Bulletin Today	30 Choir Rehearsal @7pm *Office Note* Printing December 10 th Bulletin Today		

FIRST CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH

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