



Congregational Clarion

October 2023

Sunday Worship Series

Our fall worship series, Transformation U: Navigating Uncharted Waters, continues! How can God help us become the people and church we are meant to be? How are we meant to church the world together?

October 1

World-wide Communion
Transformation U:
Building Our Resiliency
Proverbs 3:3-6; Ephesians 4:7-16

October 8

Transformation U:
Inside, Outside, Upside Down
Isaiah 42: 1-9; Matthew 18: 18-20
Ephesians 2: 11-22

October 15

Transformation U:
Focus on People and Their Needs
Hosea 6: 6-8; John 20: 15-25

October 22

Transformation U:
The Digital Mission Field
Mark 12: 28-34; 1 Corin. 9: 19-27

October 29

Necrology Sunday
Transformation U:
Reconnect with Our Community
Psalm 19; Acts 3: 1-10

November 5

Communion
Transformation U:
Next Level Prayer
Acts 4: 13-27

Seeking Vision Together

by Rev. Doug Gray

*“And afterward, I will pour out my **Spirit** on all people. Your sons and daughters will **prophesy**, your old men will dream **dreams**, your young men will see **visions**.”* —God, *The Bible*, Joel 2:28

Whenever I come to a place where something has got to change, I always take time to look ahead. Who is God calling me to be? Where is God calling me to be a blessing? And always, who is God calling me to help? And here we are as a fellowship asking the same questions! As we look forward to this season when something has to change for our church, our leadership has set up Congregational Conversations of October and November. (See articles elsewhere in this issue.) The Bible has a lot to say about moments like this!

1. **God wants His church to succeed!** Yes, it’s our church, but really we are together because God wants us to be, because God has something to accomplish that we are uniquely equipped to do...and when we are faithful, we will always win through.
2. **God wants us to know where we are going.** Throughout the Bible, God gives vision to the confused and tired, and shares dreams with those who will listen.
3. When God’s people gather for discernment, **God always shows the way.** Something about seeking God’s together multiplies our effectiveness. Because the Holy Spirit speaks through each person in different ways, when we listen to each other, we will come to a place of unity that is of God.
4. **Prepare ourselves by doing what helps us** recognize God’s voice—worship, time alone with God, reading the Bible, journaling, and more! What else would help you?

Let’s lean into the moment together! God is about to do something truly remarkable with us

“You will seek me and find me when you seek me with all your heart.” — God, *The Bible*, Jeremiah 29:13



**New Bible Study! Friday Lunch Bunch
Starts Oct 6 @Noon**

Want to know more about the Bible? Come dig in with us! At Noon each Friday, starting on October 6, we will gather for 45–50m 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.

Blessing of the Animals Oct 8 at 1pm

Do you have a pet? Do they make your life better? The Christian faith has a long history of recognizing the blessing that animals are in our lives! On October 8, Father Trace and Pastor Doug are going to lead a special short service to ask God’s blessing on our pets, and then we will bless each of them. We will meet on the upstairs patio of All Saints at 1pm

**Taizé Worship with All Saints
October 1 and 15, @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!

Outreach - Becky Bishop, Chair

Outreach continues discussions about our mission in the community. All of the board members participated in the Lay Leadership Retreat. We left with even more things to think about. We will continue our combined commitment between FCC and All Saints to sandwich making for six months beginning with All Saints fiscal year starting January, 2024.

The October focus will be the monthly need for Crossroads Urban Center. They have a great need for baby formula. Matt, from Crossroads said that the most requested formula is Regular Similac (Blue) Milk Based. We will be collecting the formula and delivering it weekly. All monetary donations for the month of October will be used to purchase formula for Crossroads Urban Center. Your donations will feed the babies and also support the volunteers who won't have to say: "We are out of baby formula."

Sunday Adult Formation

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

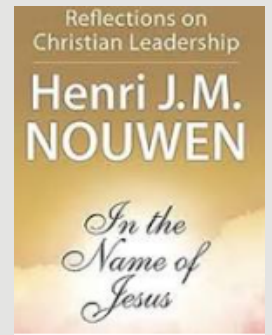
Our book series with Henri Nouwen’s *In the Name of Jesus: Reflections on Christian Leadership* continues. He really challenges us to think more deeply about our Christian faith, using Jesus’ temptations to help us think about ours. On October 15, we are changing books to read Thom Rainer’s *The Post-Quarantine Church: Six Urgent Challenges and Opportunities That Will Determine the Future of Your Congregation*. Thom’s book will help us think about our church outside our usual “boxes.” Really great study questions! Taught by Father Trace and Rev. Doug Gray

Oct 1

Christian Leadership with Henri Nouwen
“**Popularity to Ministry**”

Oct 8

Christian Leadership with Henri Nouwen
“**Leading to Being Led**”



Oct 15

Post-Quarantine Church
Challenge#1 - Gathering Differently and Better

Oct 22

Post-Quarantine Church
Challenge #2: Digital Mission Field

Oct 29

Post-Quarantine Church
Challenge #3: Reconnect with Community

Nov 5

Post-Quarantine Church
Challenge #4: Next Level Prayer



From the Trustees - Phil LeHoux, Chair

Your Board of Trustees has committed to address two important issues this year: Stewardship and Worship Technology. Both will be updated on an ongoing basis in Clarion articles. As well, any of the trustees can be approached any time for updates or further information. This month, Stewardship will be discussed.

Stewardship, as the gifts of talents and treasure to support and sustain our faith community, has for the past few years been largely overshadowed by all the activities and events associated with the property sale and our relocation. It is now time to review the financial aspects of this important issue, to figure out exactly where we are and what are our prospects going forward, as they directly impact our sustainability and must also be considered in light of our intent to disburse the sale proceeds. Be assured that in no case will any analysis of giving trends be based on individual contributions. Such information is in the care of the Financial Secretary and would never be shared with any individual or Board.

On the talent side, there is much to celebrate, as, for the first time in several years have, we have fully filled the Moderator track as well as the functioning Boards of Deacons, Outreach and Trustees. In addition, interest in holding some positions exceeded the bylaw requirements. On the financial side, things are not so rosy. Our giving trend has been down for many years, though its effect on our sustainability was largely obscured by several factors whose full impact may not have been appreciated, since our bank balance has continued “healthy” throughout. These factors included: income from the sale of the parking lot strip to UDOT for their electronic sign, the reduced costs associated with a part time Bridge Pastor, and the deferral wherever possible of building maintenance, especially long-term repairs, considering our planned sale and the uncertainty whether the building would even be part of any future site development.

We have now settled into our new location, with predictable operating costs in all areas and no direct building liabilities. Our giving continues below a level with which we can cover our congregation’s current expenditures, and the budget we approved in June will require an ongoing subsidy to pay all budgeted costs, drawn from the interest generated by the property sale. However, the dependance on this subsidy will also directly impact any plans for the use of the property sale’s proceeds to address glaring needs in our community.

Where do we go from here? That is the question with which the trustees and ultimately this congregation will be grappling. Clearly, some major factors, do not lend themselves to immediate solutions; these include changing life situations and incomes along with escalating costs of living. The obvious fix of “everyone has to give more” does not appear realistic when personal financial limits have already been reached or have combined with health and long-term care considerations to reduce the “tithing” basis in many members’ calculations. The Trustees will work at examining these trends and other drivers then recommend plans that might address them.

It is also clear from the giving side that the habit of regularly dropping a check in the collection plate has ended for many, if not most, members. We now also have alternate giving methods, from tax-advantageous vehicles such as Qualified Charitable Distributions from IRAs that are more “lump sum” and less predictable, to online contributions using PayPal and credit or debit cards. Irregular attendees may also be irregular givers, and unpredictable incomes will also result in unpredictable giving. As you can see, it’s complicated, but there is only one way to start, and that’s to begin, and with prayerful analysis and thought, work through to a plan which will address our sustainability into our future.

Men's Breakfast Feeds the Soul

October 4, 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 October 13 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.

World Communion Sunday

Reminding Ourselves How We Are All One Body

Rev. Doug Gray

One of the beautiful metaphors that Jesus used during the Last Supper was that of His Body—the bread—broken for us. This metaphor of the Bread as Jesus' Body would be picked up by Paul in 1 Corinthians 11–12, describing the Church as one Body, the Body of Christ in the world. So we should not be surprised to learn that part of the Church's mission is to be broken and given to the world, just as Jesus was, and somehow we become more not less, just as Jesus is more not less for being broken. In other places, we learn that we are part of a "the cloud of witnesses" to the grace Jesus shows, connecting all who follow Jesus across time and space. One Body, One Loaf, One Cup—all around the world. That was the vision of Shadyside Presbyterian Church in Pittsburgh, PA in 1933. Along with their pastor, Rev. Hugh T. Kerr, that fellowship hoped to unite all those who follow Jesus on what was first known as "Worldwide Communion Sunday." In 1940, what is now the National Council of Churches recommended the practice across the denominations in the US on the first Sunday in October. The World Council of Churches would eventually follow suit, recommending this beautiful practice that unites the nearly 2.5 billion Christians around the world. Truly, this day is one that reminds us we share "one Lord, one faith, one Baptism, One God and Father of us all" (Ephesians 4:6). For a broken and needy world, we become a hopeful sign of unity and grace!

2023–2024 Flu Vaccine

Get ready for our annual flu vaccine clinic on Oct 8 from 12-2pm. This clinic is available to members of First Congregational and All Saints Churches. We will hold the clinic upstairs in the Fellowship Hall of All Saints.

Community Nursing Service (CNS) will provide the vaccine and the nurses to administer the vaccine. Anyone from our congregations can sign up for a flu shot. CNS can bill most insurances and Medicare Part B for the vaccine. For those who are 65 years of age or older, Fluzone (a higher dose vaccine) is available. Children over 6 months of age should receive a flu shot and if it is the first flu shot, the child will receive 2 doses that are 4 weeks apart. Pregnant women can receive a flu shot, especially in the 3rd trimester.

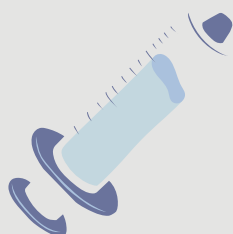
This year's vaccine will target the influenzas: A/Wisconsin, A/Darwin, and B/Austria strains. Each year's vaccine is different depending on where the influenza strain is identified by CDC. Getting your flu shot provides you with more protection from being hospitalized for flu; it doesn't entirely protect you from flu. The vaccine is grown in a chicken egg, so if someone has a significant allergy to eggs, there are other vaccine preparations.

You may need to see your health care provider or pharmacy for these non-egg vaccines.

In addition to getting your flu vaccine, you should practice protection by frequent handwashing, staying home when ill, and trying to avoid crowds of people. (<https://www.cdc.gov/flu/spotlights/2022-2023/flu-vaccination-recommendations-adopted.htm>, accessed Aug 14, 2023)

We had hoped that the flu shot would include a Covid booster, but it will not happen for this fall. The Covid boosters for fall look like they will be available at health departments and pharmacies in late Sept. These boosters will target the XBB variant.

Please call Diane Forster-Burke RN at 801-699-4841 to make an appointment. I need to let CNS know by 9/21 how many doses and how much Fluzone we will need. Thank you for your cooperation.



Lay Leadership Retreat

Sharing from Sept. 9

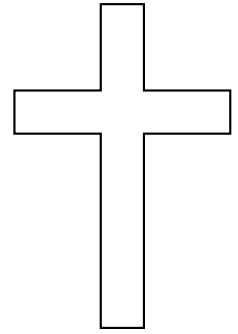
What a remarkable day! Through worship, prayer, brainstorming, small and large group discussions, our fellowship's leadership opened up to each other and to God's guidance. That morning helped us get on the same page together with foundational principles and vision-casting for what we are trying to do and how we are going to work and play together in the coming year. We thought some about where we have been—both the bad and the good ol' days—and recognized while that is our experience in the past, it doesn't constrain us for the future—though we want to cultivate the warmth, acceptance, faith, mentoring and relationships that were the best of what church had to offer. Then we spent time learning about “technical problems” and “adaptive challenges” (see my sermon for September 24 for a good, short explanation), to help us understand what it's like to head into uncharted waters as individuals and as a congregation—that we will have more questions than answers, that we will be trying to understand our fellowship in a completely new way, and that, as leaders, going deeper in our individual faiths will be essential to helping our congregation as a whole make this transition.

“We tend to think that our past prepares us for the future, because that's how we experience it. The reality is the other way around: future challenges inform today's preparation so we can meet them. This makes God the ultimate trusted source for helping us understand what to do right now, because only he has worked through our future...”

—Bolsinger, Canoeing the Mountains

Our Leadership thinks our fellowship has some great strengths for facing adaptive challenges

- Valuing the organization
- Consistent delivery
- Getting it done
- Asking questions
- Spirituality
- Being who we are
- Association not denomination
- Freedom
- Not exclusive/embrace diversity



But we also have some growing edges as we enter this season of transition

- We need better mission-focus
- We sometimes struggle to become who we say we are
- We have some work to do connecting who we are to getting things done

We generated some great “new” ideas for how our fellowship might reach beyond itself to find the next level for which we are working:

- Food Bank
- Find food banks to help
- Spending more time together serving the community (corporate)
- Spending time doing fun things
- Making effort to mix better in Coffee Hour
- Question of the day
- Talk to people you don't know or don't know well
- Need to express non-doctrinal/dogmatic
- Visit shut-ins
- Adopt a nearby nursing facility
- Adopt a nearby “younger generation” place
- Book groups
- Mission trip
- Camp Fellowship
- Sorting food at a food bank
- Board meetings less meeting like
- How do we get to deeper conversations? Listen/tell our stories more
- Find common interests

We know that we are all just beginning our conversations, and we hope you will join us for the upcoming Congregational Conversations!

October 2023

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
1 Adult Education @9:15am Choir Rehearsal @9:30am World Communion Sunday - Worship @10:30am Taizé @7pm	2	3	4 Kristi printing Bulletin today. Please plan accordingly. Men's Breakfast @7am	5 Kristi Out of Office Super Thursday Board Meetings @1pm Choir Rehearsal @7pm	6 Kristi Out of Office Bible Study Lunch Bunch@Noon	7
8 Adult Education @9:15am Choir Rehearsal @9:30am Worship @10:30am Flu Clinic Following Worship Blessing of the Animals @1pm	9	10	11	12 Choir Rehearsal @7pm	13 Women's Breakfast @9am Bible Study Lunch Bunch @Noon	14
15 Adult Education @9:15am Choir Rehearsal @9:30am Worship @10:30am Sandwich Making Following Worship Taizé @7pm	16	17 Council Meeting @2:30pm	18 Clarion Deadline	19 Choir Rehearsal @7pm	20 Bible Study Lunch Bunch @Noon	21
22 Adult Education @9:15am Choir Rehearsal @9:30am Worship @10:30am	23	24	25	26 Choir Rehearsal @7pm	27 Bible Study Lunch Bunch @Noon	28
29 Adult Education @9:15am Choir Rehearsal @9:30am Worship @10:30am	30 Rev. Doug Gray will be available remote hours this week. He will be back in the office Friday November 2.	31	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.			

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 Facebook and YouTube