

Jonah and the Whale, He Qi, www.heqiart.com

FIRST CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH
PALO ALTO, UCC



“No matter who you are, or where you are on life’s journey, you are welcome here.”

An Open and Affirming Congregation
www.fccpa.org • 650-856-6662

Third Sunday in Lent
March 8, 2026

Order of Worship March 8, 2026

Prelude *Largo from "Concerto in D"* Bach/Vivaldi

Call to Worship

Psalm 95

Leader: O come, let us sing to the Lord.

People: Let us make a joyful noise to the rock of our salvation!

Leader: Let us come into God's presence with thanksgiving.

People: For God is good.

Leader: O, that you would listen to the voice of God!

People: O come, let us worship our maker.

Leader: Do not harden your hearts, as our ancestors did.

People: Let us make a joyful noise with songs of praise!

Opening Hymn #57 *I Sing the Mighty Power of God

I sing the mighty power of God that made the mountains rise,
That spread the flowing seas abroad, and built the lofty skies.
I sing the wisdom that ordained the sun to rule the day;
The moon shines full at God's command, and all the stars obey.

I sing the goodness of our God that filled the earth with food;
And formed us from the lowly sod and then pronounced us good.
O how your wonders are displayed where'er I turn my eye:
If I survey the ground I tread or gaze upon the sky.

There's not a plant or flower below but makes Your glories known;
And clouds arise, and tempests blow by order from your throne,
While all that borrows life from you is ever in your care.
Where e'er I go, whate'er I do, I find you present there.

Welcome and Announcements

Prayer of dedication for our new piano

Children's Story

Todd, Joe, and Dave

Sung Response #493 *In the Bulb There Is a Flower*

In the bulb there is a flower; in the seed, an apple tree;
in cocoons, a hidden promise; butterflies will soon be free!
In the cold and snow of winter there's a spring that waits to be,
unrevealed until its season, something God alone can see.

Prayer of Confession and Assurance of Pardon

***Hymn**

How Can I Keep From Singing?

My life flows on in endless song; above earth's lamentation
I hear the sweet, though far off hymn that hails a new creation
Through all the tumult and the strife, I hear the music ringing;
It finds an echo in my soul – how can I keep from singing?

What though my joys and comforts die? My savior still is living.
What though the shadows gather round? A new song Christ is giving.
No storm can shake my inmost calm, while to that Rock I'm clinging;
Since love commands both heaven and earth, how can I keep from singing?

When tyrants tremble, sick with fear, and hear their death knells ringing;
When friends rejoice both far and near, how can I keep from singing?
In prison cell and dungeon vile our thoughts to them are winging;
When friends by shame are undefiled, how can I keep from singing?

I lift my eyes; the cloud grows thin; I see the blue above it.
And day by day this pathway smooths, since first I learned to love it.
The peace of Christ makes fresh my heart, a fountain ever springing;
All things are mine since I am his, how can I keep from singing?

Invitation to Offering and Art Reflection

Bell Choir Offering

Somebody's Knockin' at your Door

Austin

Prayers of the People

Rev. Dr. Eileen Altman

(You are invited to use the language that is most meaningful to you.)

Our Father (Mother/Parent/Creator/Great Spirit), 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.

Choral Anthem

Common Prayer

Szymko

Reading of the Torah

Exodus 17:1-7

Sermon

Out of Nowhere

Rev. David Howell

*Closing Hymn #363

In the Midst of New Dimensions

In the midst of new dimensions,
In the face of changing ways,
Who will lead the pilgrim peoples
Wandering in their separate ways?

Refrain:

**God of rainbow, fiery pillar, leading where the eagles soar,
We your people, ours the journey, now and ever,
Now and ever, now and ever more.**

Through the flood of starving people,
Warring factions and despair,
Who will lift the olive branches?
Who will light the flame of care? (refrain)

Though we reach the highest heavens,
Holding worlds at our command,
We are yet a desert people
Searching for the promised land. (refrain)

Should the threats of dire predictions
cause us to withdraw in pain,
May your blazing phoenix spirit,
resurrect the church again. (refrain)

Benediction & Choral Response

Postlude

If you are visiting us today, welcome! You can visit our **Welcome Table** after worship to pick up a gift bag with information about our church and a coupon for a specialty coffee in Sacred Grounds, our café in the Social Hall.

Ways to Give: To contribute to your annual church commitment or to a special program, give online at www.fccpa.org/give or by check. You can also contribute to the church's general fund today by dropping a gift in the red box at the welcome table, or by scanning the QR code to give via PayPal.



Participating in Today's Service:

Senior Pastor:	Rev. David Howell
Associate Pastor:	Rev. Dr. Eileen Altman
Director of Children's Min:	Todd Erickson
Director of Music:	Joe Guthrie
Choral Director:	Jenny Matteucci
Assistant Organist:	Daniel Lockert
Bell Choir Director:	Raf Ornes
Liturgist:	Megan Fogarty
Ushers:	Blake Putney, Marilyn Putney
Welcome Table:	Mary Marsh
Tech and A/V Support:	Steve Ketchpel, Robert Peng

Lent at FCCPA:

- **Lenten Services:** Join us in our sanctuary on Tuesdays at 7:30 p.m. through March 31 for services featuring plainsong, piano reflections, scripture, Communion and candlelight.
- **Maundy Thursday:** Worship 7:30 p.m. on April 2, led by our Chancel Choir.
- **Good Friday:** Worship at 7:30 p.m. on April 3, with a dramatic reading of the Passion Story.
- **Easter:** Worship at 9:30 and 11:00 a.m. on April 5 featuring brass, our choirs, and the Hallelujah Chorus. We will have an egg hunt and special treats between services.

Happening at FCCPA

- **Backyard Sunday School:** Backyard Sunday School meets in the backyard following the Children's Story. Join us for stories, songs, games, crafts, and snacks!
- **Children's Choirs:** Cherubs and Children's Choirs rehearse in in the Backyard following worship.
- **Fair Trade:** It's Fair Trade Sunday, with delicious chocolates, coffees, teas, nuts and olive oil available for purchase after the service. According to our supplier Equal Exchange, FCCPA is their second largest congregational customer of products grown by independent farmers and cooperatives throughout the world. What you purchase has an impact on the livelihoods of farmers and the health of their communities. We are grateful for your continued support.
- The **FCCPA Political Action Committee** meets after worship in the Fellowship Room. The agenda will focus on monitoring recommendations for key races, postcard and letter writing, and other ways to support the democratic process. The FCCPA Political Action Group and the Peace and Justice Task Force developed a Statement of Political Conscience which was accepted by the Church Council and posted on our website. Church members can read and consider the statement before the Congregational Meeting on April 12.
- **Spring Musical Rehearsal** at 1:00 pm today.
- **Caregivers' Group Meeting** is on Monday at 11:00 a.m. in the Casaday Library.
- **Memoirs Writing Group** meets on Tuesday at 10:30 a.m. in the Casaday Library.
- **Disciple Bible Study** meets Tuesdays at 7:00 p.m. and Wednesdays and 10:00 a.m.
- **Europe Trip Meeting** is on Wednesday, March 11 at 7:00 pm in Sacred Grounds.
- **Chancel Choir** rehearses Thursdays at 7:00 p.m.
- **Congregational Concert Chorale** rehearses Thursdays at 8:30.
- **Mental Health Allies** meets on Sunday, March 15 at 11:15 a.m. in the Casaday Library.
- **MLK, Jr. Research and Education Institute at Stanford:** After worship on March 15, join Dr. Lerone Martin, the King Institute's director, and postdoctoral fellow Dr. Jorden Sharick. They'll talk about the history of the King Institute, its longtime editorial work, and recent projects designed to engage new generations of King scholars. They'll also introduce a curriculum they're developing for local faith communities interested in exploring King's theology.
- **Sacred Lives: An Interfaith Community Vigil of Solidarity with Palo Alto's Beloved Trans Youth:** Our church is part of a vigil honoring trans youth from our community, especially remembering those who have lost their lives. It will be held at 4:00 p.m. on March 15 at the Unitarian Universalist Church of Palo Alto, 505 E. Charleston.
- **Congregational Concert Chorale** presents "A World Beloved: A Bluegrass Mass" on Sunday, March 22 at 3:00 p.m. in our Sanctuary.

Welcome!

We are so grateful that you have chosen to worship with us today. Our hope that you will find a warm welcome here and an experience of God's presence we worship together. We worship regularly at 10:00 a.m. every Sunday morning here in our sanctuary.



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Large Print Orders of Worship and Hearing Assistance Devices are available from our ushers. Our sanctuary also features an inductive loop system that works with hearing aids with a T-coil switch.



As we, the members of the First Congregational Church of Palo Alto, seek to embody God's extravagant welcome to all, we declare ourselves to be an **Open and Affirming** congregation of the United Church of Christ, welcoming into the full life and ministry of our church all who are LGBTQ+.

Land Acknowledgement: As a community dedicated in covenant to welcome and include all, we respectfully acknowledge the Ramaytush Ohlone peoples, original inhabitants of the San Francisco Peninsula where we, in faith, now gratefully gather and worship. We seek a deeper understanding of our relationship to the land and with the Bay Area Native peoples, one that promotes healing and justice within our faith community and the world beyond.

W.I.S.E. Covenant: As a congregation, we commit to fostering a Welcoming and supportive community for individuals facing mental health challenges and their families. We are dedicated to actively Including those with mental health challenges in the fabric of our congregational life, work, and leadership. We are steadfast in our Support for all who are navigating mental health challenges. We Engage in collaboration with organizations at the intersection of mental health and faith, working together to promote understanding and well-being.

Do you get our weekly "This Week at FCCPA" email newsletter? It's the best way to stay up-to-date on church events. Contact office@fccpa.org to sign up to receive it.

Get social: Follow [@FCCPA](#) on Instagram and Threads and like the First Congregational Church of Palo Alto on Facebook to interact with and share our content to extend our reach.

Contact our Pastors: If you would like to learn more about the church or talk with one of our pastors, please contact us at David@fccpa.org or Eileen@fccpa.org. For Pastoral Emergencies, you may contact Rev. David Howell at 650-906-7284 or Rev. Dr. Eileen Altman at 831-345-3830.

I Sing the Mighty Power of God

1. I sing the might-y power of God that made the moun-tains rise,
 2. I sing the good-ness of our God that filled the earth with food;
 3. There's not a plant or flower be-low but makes your glo - ries known;

that spread the flow-ing seas a - broad, and built the loft - y skies.
 and formed us from the low - ly sod and then pro-nounced us good.
 and clouds a - rise, and tem-pests blow, by or - der from your throne,

I sing the wis-dom that or-dained the sun to rule the day;
 O how your won-ders are dis-played wher - e'er I turn my eye:
 while all that bor-rows life from you is ev - er in your care.

the moon shines full at God's com-mand, and all the stars o - bey.
 if I sur - vey the ground I tread or gaze up - on the sky!
 Wher - e'er I go, what - e'er I do, I find you pres-ent there.

WORDS: Issac Watts, 1715, alt.

MUSIC: *Gesangbuch der Herzoglichen Wirtembergischen Katholischen Hofkapelle*, 1784

ELLACOMBE
CMD

This text is taken from Congregationalist Watts' *Divine Songs attempted in Easy Language for the use of Children*, 1715—the first hymnal written exclusively for children.

My Life Flows on in Endless Song

(How Can I Keep from Singing)

Ps. 46:1-7; 1 Cor. 3:21-23; 2 Cor. 5:17

Anon. in *Bright Jewels for the Sunday School*,
ed. Robert Lowry, 1869; alt.
St. 3, Doris Plenn, c. 1957

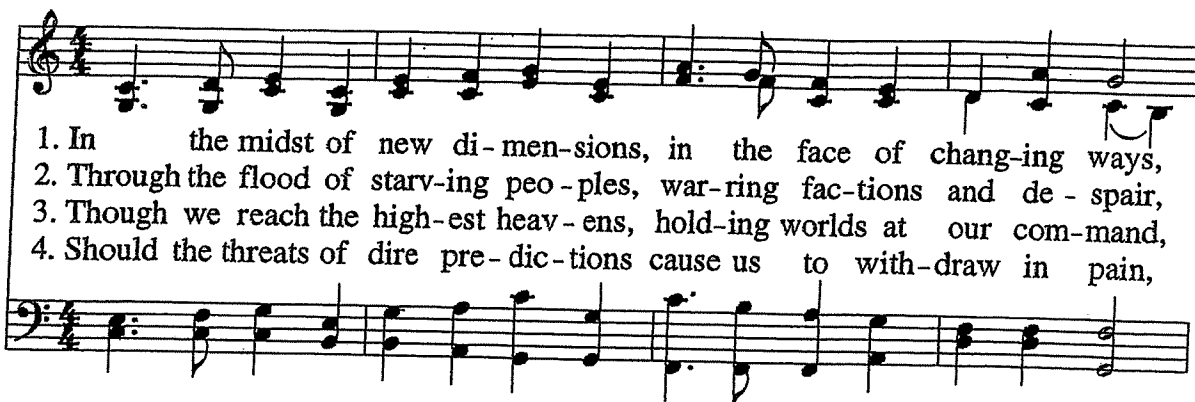
1 My life flows on in end - less song; a - bove earth's lam - en -
2 What though my joys and com - forts die? My Sav - ior still is
3 When ty - rants trem - ble, sick with fear, and hear their death knells
4 I lift my eyes; the cloud grows thin; I see the blue a -

ta - tion, I hear the sweet, though far - off hymn that
liv - ing. What though the shad - ows gath - er 'round? A
ring - ing; When friends re - joice both far and near, how
bove it; And day by day this path - way smooths, since

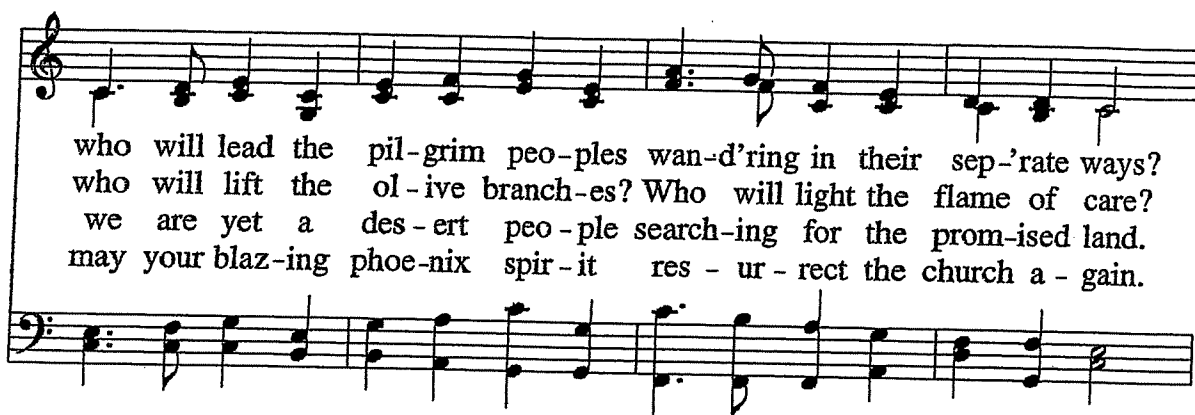
hails a new cre - a - tion. Through all the tu - mult
new song Christ is giv - ing. No storm can shake my
can I keep from sing - ing? In pris - on cell and
first I learned to love it. The peace of Christ makes

and the strife, I hear the mu - sic ring - ing; It
in - most calm, while to that Rock I'm cling - ing; Since
dun - geon vile our thoughts to them are wing - ing; When
fresh my heart, a foun - tain ev - er spring - ing; All

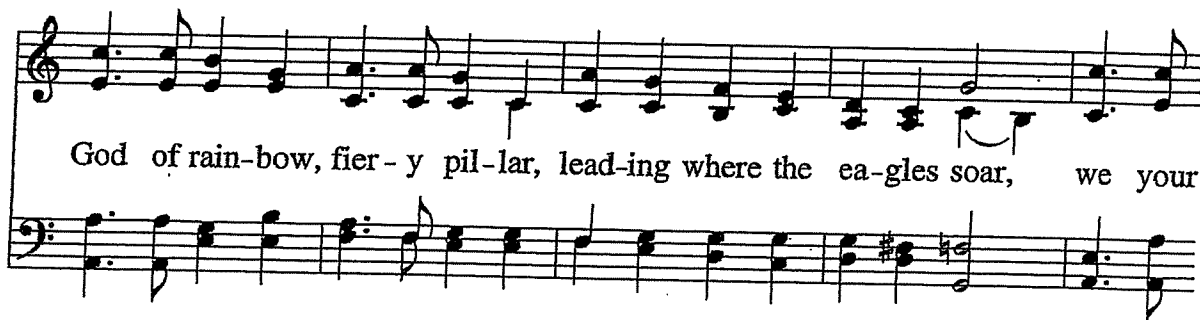
finds an ech - o in my soul— how can I keep from sing - ing?
Love com - mands both heaven and earth, how can I keep from sing - ing?
friends by shame are un - de - filed, how can I keep from sing - ing?
things are mine since I am Christ's— how can I keep from sing - ing?



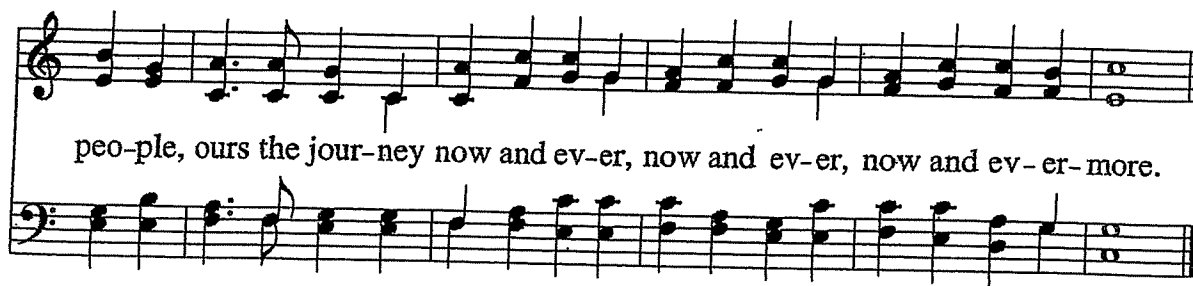
1. In the midst of new di-men-sions, in the face of chang-ing ways,
 2. Through the flood of starv-ing peo-ples, war-ring fac-tions and de-spair,
 3. Though we reach the high-est heav-ens, hold-ing worlds at our com-mand,
 4. Should the threats of dire pre-dic-tions cause us to with-draw in pain,



who will lead the pil-grim peo-ples wan-d'ring in their sep-'rate ways?
 who will lift the ol-ive branch-es? Who will light the flame of care?
 we are yet a des-ert peo-ple search-ing for the prom-ised land.
 may your blaz-ing phoe-nix spir-it res-ur-rect the church a-gain.



God of rain-bow, fier-y pil-lar, lead-ing where the ea-gles soar, we your



peo-ple, ours the jour-ney now and ev-er, now and ev-er, now and ev-er-more.

WORDS: Julian B. Rush, 1985, alt.

MUSIC: Julian B. Rush, 1985; arr. *The New Century Hymnal*, 1995, alt.

NEW DIMENSIONS
 87.87 w. refrain

This hymn on diversity was written for a meeting of the Rocky Mountain Conference of United Methodists. Rush is director of the Colorado AIDS Project.

Words, music © 1985 Julian B. Rush