



**FIRST CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH OF BETHEL**

*An Open and Affirming Church*

March 27th, 2022

# **ANNOUNCEMENTS**

***Welcome! We welcome you to our worship this morning and are grateful for your presence. No matter who you are, or who you love, wherever you are on life's journey, you are welcome here. Please introduce yourself to an usher or Rev. Sheldon Smith to learn more about our ministries.***

## **SHARING OF OUR GIFTS**

Those attending worship in the sanctuary please leave your offerings in the giving baskets located in the rear of the sanctuary. If you would like to gift electronically visit our website where you can find a donation link.

## **SUNDAY SCHOOL**

Children K-8th are welcomed to leave following the Children's Message.

## **DEACON'S MEETING**

March 28th, 2022

7:30 PM on Zoom

**Save the Dates! Do You Know Jonah?** Thursday eve March 31 7:00PM. Using the Viva Series we will think more deeply on themes that appear in the Book: Trouble, Time Out, Trabajo, Temper Tantrum. We hope you'll join us. The weekly study will last for one hour and be offered via Zoom. All you need is a Bible! **Please register and you will be sent the Zoom link.** Click to register:

<https://us02web.zoom.us/meeting/register/tZUtcOCqgToqHNZYsNsDC4gi4-k1DZDU47Gb>

On April 7th at 7PM, we will be having a zoom presentation about HeatSmart. Check the newsletter for more information.

**PRAYER REQUESTS** --Please send request to the Prayer Request Email:

[PRAYER@firstchurchbethel.org](mailto:PRAYER@firstchurchbethel.org)

***We thank our worship leaders for their participation in this morning's service:***

Rev. Sheldon Smith  
Organist: Dana Mancuso  
Deacon of the Day: Marcia Merritt  
Video & Tech Support: Wade Anderson, Jim Welsh & Eric Hermansen

### *Church Contact Information:*

Telephone: (203) 743-1877. Address: 46 Main Street, Bethel, CT 06801.  
Senior Pastor: Rev. Suzanne Wagner (swagner5@yahoo.com)  
Director of Music: Dana Mancuso (dmancuso.live@gmail.com)  
Secretary: Kathy MacAulay (secretary@firstchurchbethel.org)  
Pastor Emeritus: The Rev. Dr. Sheldon Smith  
Senior Deacon: Marcia Merritt (pesinger37@aol.com)  
Head Trustee: Jim Welsh (jim.welsh.jr@gmail.com)

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**SUNDAY ORDER OF WORSHIP**  
**FOURTH SUNDAY OF LENT**

**WELCOME AND ANNOUNCEMENTS**

*\*Please stand either in body or spirit.*

**PRELUDE #354**

*Seek Ye First*

**Call to Worship**

L: A new day has dawned, God's gift to us.

**P: We are a new creation in Jesus Christ; the old has passed away, the new has come.**

L: This is a day for forgiveness and reconciliation; celebrate God's love for the lost who are found.

**P: We will be glad and join the day of life; with the upright of heart, we rejoice and sing.**

**Invocation and The Lord's Prayer**

**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.**

**\*OPENING HYMN # 517**

*Love Divine, All Loves Excelling*

vs. 1&4

**PRAYER OF CONFESSION AND ASSURANCE**

**Call to Reconciliation**

One: We pause to consider how far we may have wandered from our home with God.

**All: Have we turned away from responsibility in order to seek shallow pleasures and selfish gratification?**

One: At times our rebellion leaves us hungry, alone, and friendless.

**All: O God, grant us, we pray, your forgiveness and pardon and a renewed sense of who you intend us to be and to become.**

*A moment of Silence is kept*

### **Assurance of Pardon**

One: We are assured that God forgives the guilt of our sin.

**All: Happy are those whose transgression is forgiven whose sin is covered.**

One: Happy are those to whom God imputes no iniquity and in whose spirit, there is no deceit.

**All: Rejoice, for God has brought us back to life.**

### **CHILDREN'S MESSAGE**

**\*HYMN OF PRAISE #687**

*In Christ There Is No East or West*

vs.1&4

**THE GOSPEL  
SERMON**

**Luke 15:1-3, 11b-32  
Divine Entitlement**

Rev. Sheldon Smith

### **THE PRAYERS OF THE PEOPLE**

**Sharing of Joys and Concerns**

**Pastoral Prayer**

### **SHARING OUR GIFTS**

#### **Invitation**

We have been granted more than our share of the world's wealth. Often, we have forgotten the source of our bounty. We grasp and spend as if all were ours to indulge our desires. This is a time to reexamine our management of what is really God's property, entrusted to us for a little while.

**Musical Offering**

*Good Good Father*

Instrumental

#### **Unison Prayer of Dedication**

**Bless our gifts, Generous God, that they may be used to find your children – children who wander in hunger, children who long to come home. Through our gifts, may all who wander set off for home, and may we celebrate and rejoice in their homecoming. Amen**

**\*CLOSING HYMN #546**

*Amazing Grace*(all welcome to sing)

vs. 1-4

#### **Benediction**

**\*POSTLUDE #529**

*I'm So Glad, Jesus Lifted Me* (all welcome to sing)

vs. 1-3

## **Attributions:**

### **Prelude**

(#354) Seek Ye First

Words and Music: Karen Lafferty, 1972

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### **Opening Hymn**

#517 Love Divine, All Loves Excelling (v. 1 & 4)

Words: Charles Wesley, 1743

Music: John Zundel, 1870

### **Hymn of Praise**

#687 In Christ There Is No East or West (v. 1 & 4)

Words: John Oxenham, 1908, alt.

Music: Alexander R. Reinagle, c. 1830

### **Musical Offering**

Good Good Father

Writers: Anthony Brown, Pat Barrett

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Designee, Vamos Publishing, [worshiptogether.com](http://worshiptogether.com) songs

Capitol CMG Publishing

### **Closing Hymn**

#546 Amazing Grace! (vs. 1—4)

Words: John Newton, 1779; st. 4 anonymous

Music: *Virginia Harmony*, 1831; harm. Edwin O. Excell, 1900

### **Postlude (all welcome to sing)**

#529 I'm So Glad, Jesus Lifted Me (vs. 1-3)

Words: African-American spiritual

Music: African-American spiritual; harm. Richard Smallwood

Harm. © 1977 Richwood Music

## Opening Hymn

#517 Love Divine, All Loves Excelling (v. 1 & 4)

Words: Charles Wesley, 1743

Music: John Zundel, 1870

1 Love divine, all loves excelling,  
joy of heav'n, to earth come down,  
fix in us thy humble dwelling,  
all thy faithful mercies crown.  
Jesus, thou art all compassion,  
pure, unbounded love thou art.  
Visit us with thy salvation;  
enter ev'ry trembling heart.

4 Finish, then, thy new creation;  
true and spotless let us be.  
Let us see thy great salvation  
perfectly restored in thee.  
Changed from glory into glory,  
till in heav'n we take our place,  
till we cast our crowns before thee,  
lost in wonder, love and praise.

## Hymn of Praise

#687 In Christ There Is No East or West (v. 1 & 4)

Words: John Oxenham, 1908, alt.

Music: Alexander R. Reinagle, c. 1830

1 In Christ there is no east or west,  
in him no south or north,  
but one community of love  
throughout the whole wide earth.

4 In Christ now meet both east and west,  
in him meet south and north:  
all loving hearts are one in him  
throughout the whole wide earth.

## Closing Hymn

#546 Amazing Grace! (vs. 1—4)

Words: John Newton, 1779; st. 4 anonymous

Music: *Virginia Harmony*, 1831; harm. Edwin O. Excell, 1900

1 Amazing grace how sweet the sound

that saved a wretch like me!  
I once was lost, but now am found,  
was blind, but now I see.

2 'Twas grace that taught my heart to fear,  
and grace my fears relieved;  
how precious did that grace appear  
the hour I first believed!

3 Through many dangers, toils and snares  
I have already come:  
'tis grace hath brought me safe thus far,  
and grace will lead me home.

4 When we've been there ten thousand years,  
bright shining as the sun,  
we've no less days to sing God's praise  
than when we'd first begun.

**Postlude (all welcome to sing)**

#529 I'm So Glad, Jesus Lifted Me (vs. 1-3)

1 I'm so glad, Jesus lifted me,  
I'm so glad, Jesus lifted me,  
I'm so glad, Jesus lifted me,  
singing glory, hallelujah! Jesus lifted me.

2 Satan had me bound, Jesus lifted me.  
Satan had me bound, Jesus lifted me.  
Satan had me bound, Jesus lifted me,  
singing glory, hallelujah! Jesus lifted me.

3 When I was in trouble, Jesus lifted me,  
When I was in trouble, Jesus lifted me,  
When I was in trouble, Jesus lifted me,  
singing glory, hallelujah! Jesus lifted me.