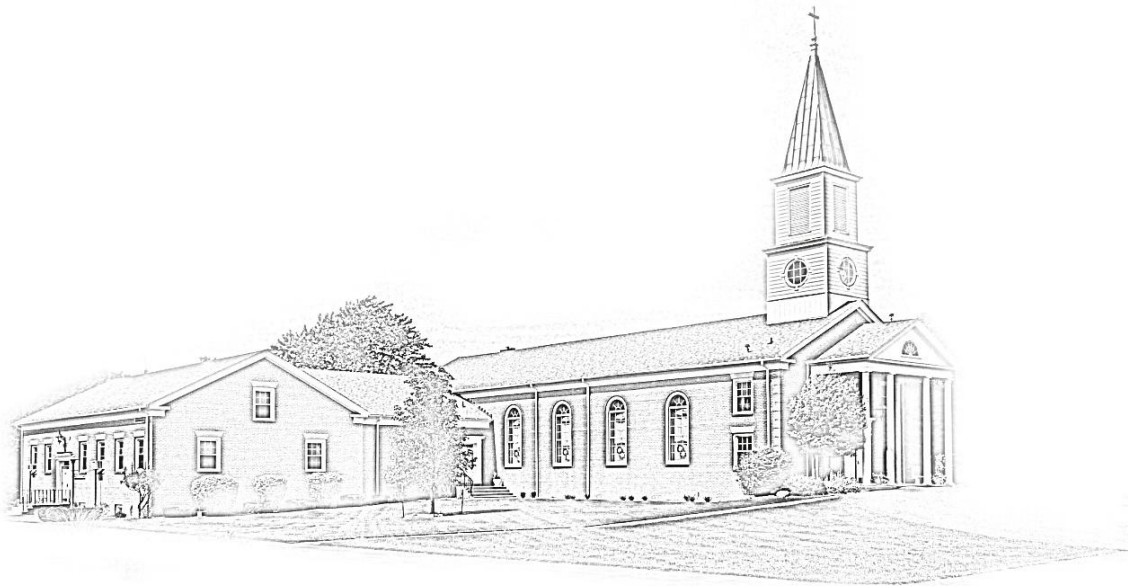




First Congregational United Church of Christ

3465 N. MacArthur Rd.
Decatur, Illinois 62526
(217) 877-2216
firstchurchdecatur.org

Sunday, August 30, 2026
9:00 a.m.
Fourteenth Sunday after Pentecost

**FIRST CONGREGATIONAL UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST
SUNDAY, AUGUST 30, 2026
9:00 A.M.
FOURTEENTH SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST**

WELCOME AND ANNOUNCEMENTS

Rev. Ryan D. Travis, Pastor

PRELUDE

"Immortal, Invisible, God Only Wise"

Welsh Hymn arr. Matt Limbaugh Copyright © 2013 Hope Publishing Company ARR
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CALL TO WORSHIP

Liturgist: Come, people of God, and hear again what freedom in Christ looks like. We are free from the need to settle every score, free from the burden of getting even, and free from allowing another person's wrong to determine who we will become. Christ calls us to overcome evil not with more evil, but with good; to bless rather than curse; to seek peace rather than revenge. So come and worship the One who has shown mercy to us, and who sets us free to love and serve our neighbors—even those who have wounded us.

SUNG RESPONSE

"Amazing Grace"

#422 (v. 1)

Public Domain

***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.***

INVOCATION

Liturgist

All: Gracious God, you have met our sin not with vengeance but with mercy, and you have overcome our rebellion through the love of Jesus Christ. By your Holy Spirit, free us from anger that consumes us, resentment that imprisons us, and the desire to repay hurt with hurt. Teach us the strength of Christ—the strength to forgive, to seek peace, to bless those who oppose us, and to entrust judgment into your hands. Shape us through this worship so that our lives may bear witness to the freedom and grace you have given us in Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

***OPENING HYMN**

“They’ll Know We Are Christians”

#595

Words and Music: Peter Scholtes;

F.E.L. Publications. Assigned 1991 Lorenz Publishing Company

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***CONFESSION**

Liturgist: Let us call to mind those ways we have sinned and fallen short of the glory of God. *(Silence is kept to reflect on our sins.)*

All: Merciful God, we confess that when others hurt us, we often want them to hurt in return. We remember offenses, rehearse arguments, imagine what we should have said, and sometimes take satisfaction when those who have wronged us suffer. We confess that resentment can become its own kind of bondage. Instead of being free to love our neighbor, we allow another person’s actions to control our own. Forgive us for returning evil for evil, whether through our words, our actions, our silence, or the grudges we refuse to surrender. Remind us that vengeance belongs to you, that our enemies are still our neighbors, and that Christ calls us not to destroy them but to seek their good. Set us free once more to overcome evil with good; through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

***WORDS OF ASSURANCE**

Pastor: Hear the good news: while we were still sinners, Christ died for us. God did not wait for us to become worthy of mercy before showing mercy to us. In Jesus Christ, our sins are forgiven, our debts are released, and we are set free. And because Christ has freed us, we no longer have to live imprisoned by resentment, retaliation, or the wrongs others have done to us. We are free to forgive. We are free to seek peace. We are free to love and serve our neighbor.

People: Thanks be to God! Amen.

***GLORIA PATRI**

#734

***Glory be to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Ghost;
As it was in the beginning, is now and ever shall be
World without end. Amen, Amen.***

MUSIC MINISTRY

"In the Garden"

Gospel Choir

C. Austin Miles Public domain

CHILDREN'S MESSAGE

Mindy Bunselmeyer

New International Version (NIV) Holy Bible, New International Version®, NIV®
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***"Teach me your way, LORD..."
Psalm 86:11***

SCRIPTURE READING

Romans 12:9-21

Liturgist

New Revised Standard Version, Updated Edition. Copyright © 2021 National Council of Churches of Christ in the United States of America. Used by permission. All rights reserved worldwide.

Liturgist: A reading from the book of Romans in the 12th chapter.

⁹ Let love be genuine; hate what is evil; hold fast to what is good; ¹⁰ love one another with mutual affection; outdo one another in showing honor. ¹¹ Do not lag in zeal; be ardent in spirit; serve the Lord. ¹² Rejoice in hope; be patient in affliction; persevere in prayer. ¹³ Contribute to the needs of the saints; pursue hospitality to strangers. ¹⁴ Bless those who persecute you; bless and do not curse them. ¹⁵ Rejoice with those who rejoice; weep with those who weep. ¹⁶ Live in harmony with one another; do not be arrogant, but associate with the lowly; do not claim to be wiser than you are. ¹⁷ Do not repay anyone evil for evil, but take thought for what is noble in the sight of all. ¹⁸ If it is possible, so far as it depends on you, live peaceably with all. ¹⁹ 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." ²⁰ Instead, "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." ²¹ Do not be overcome by evil, but overcome evil with good.

Liturgist: This is the word of the Lord.

People: Thanks be to God.

SERMON

"Why Not to Retaliate"

Pastor Ryan

***PRAYERS OF THE PEOPLE AND THE LORD'S PRAYER**

Pastor: Lord Jesus Christ, we pray for persistence...

All: 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.

***APOSTLES' CREED**

Pastor: Please rise and join me in confessing what Christians have believed throughout history in the words of the Apostles' Creed.

**All: I believe in God, the Father almighty,
creator of heaven and earth.**

I believe in Jesus Christ, his only Son, our Lord.

**He was conceived by the power of the Holy Spirit
and born of the Virgin Mary.**

**He suffered under Pontius Pilate,
was crucified, died, and was buried.**

He descended to the dead.

On the third day he rose again.

**He ascended into heaven,
and is seated at the right hand of the Father.**

He will come again to judge the living and the dead.

**I believe in the Holy Spirit,
the holy universal Christian Church,
the communion of saints,
the forgiveness of sins,
the resurrection of the body,
and the life everlasting. Amen.**

OFFERTORY

"I Sing Praises"

Terry MacAlmon arr. Mark Hayes Copyright © 1989 Integrity's Hosanna! Music ARR UBP ICS
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***DOXOLOGY**

Old Hundredth

***Praise God from whom all blessings flow;
Praise God all creatures here below;
Praise God above ye heav'nly host;
Praise Father, Son, and Holy Ghost. Amen.***

***PRAYER OF DEDICATION**

Liturgist

Liturgist: Generous God, everything we possess comes first from your gracious hand. Receive these gifts and use them for the healing of your world, the proclamation of the Gospel, and the service of our neighbors. As we offer these gifts, teach us also to offer ourselves—not simply to those who love us, but wherever mercy, reconciliation, and peace are needed. Make our generosity one more way that evil is overcome with good; through Jesus Christ our Lord.

All: Amen.

***CLOSING HYMN**

"Make Me a Channel of Your Peace"

#587

Prayer of St. Francis

Sebastian Temple arr. Jane Holstein Words and Music © 1967 OCP Publications
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***BENEDICTION**

Pastor: May the LORD bless you and keep you. May the LORD make his face shine upon you and be gracious. May the LORD look upon you with favor and grant you peace. Go in peace and serve the Lord.

People: Thanks be to God!

***BENEDICTION RESPONSE**

*O God of love, help me to be more loving.
God of forgiveness, help me to forgive.
God of all grace, help me to be more gracious.
God of all gifts, help me more freely give.
O God of truth, help me to work for justice.
O God of mercy, help me to be kind.
O God of peace and goodness, help me serve you,
with all my heart and strength and mind.*

"Benediction" Composed by Laurie Matheson. Used by permission.

POSTLUDE

"Dear Christians, One and All, Rejoice"

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August 30, 2026

From Our Prayer Chain

Please Remember in Your Prayers

Joan Wolfram, Katie Elvidge, Larry Huckile, Martha Crookshank,
Clint Whitrock, Robin Reynolds, Marian Simpson-Rorick,
Helen Johnson, Steve Martin, Kelly Gonzalez, Dean Lorbach,
Robert Bean, Norma Morrison, Tom Irwin, Margaret,
Diana Kitchell, Jennifer K, Brad Johnson, Becky Corbin,
Nancy Leoucis, Marilee Gordon, Letsa, Randy Habbe,
Eric Wolfram, Don S, Mary Stewart, Murray Elliott,
John & Lois Pennock, Richard Laswell, Ellen Heavner,
Tom Cooley, Matt, Olivia Wernecke Dees, Kerry Waltenbaugh,
Glenn Wolfram, Jerrold Fallstrom, Laura Fankhauser,
Pat Woodcock, Erika Kelley, Meg Phillips, Shelly Long,
Michelle, Mathew Clary, Gary Heymen, Erica Moster, David Marshal,
Jason Mumm, Norma Lingenfelter, Rick Bein, Sheila S,
Malinda Callaway, Ty Ditty, Lexi Boyer, Kim Leon, Ryan Habbe,
Band Family, Aaron Heartt, Carl Erbsen, Michelle Unruh, Connie Hall,
Jodie Trembe, Kay Penk-Burrus, Heather, Quinton Lefler, Mike Travis,
Jeannie Miseles, August Scherer, Noah Gallion, Barbara Wence,
Sam Miller, Liz Lynch, Sue, Madeline Mitchell, Larry Elvidge,
Rhett Ruecker, PJ Patterson, Lucas, Jessica, Maddy,
Marcus' sister, Melba, Tom and wife, Sharon Whitten,
George and Kathleen Stevens, Judy Schwartz,
Michaela Council, Julie Fallstrom, Sally, Betty Henry.

Sympathy Prayers for Family & Friends

Shelly Morse