

**CRESSKILL CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH
UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST**

April 21, 2024 10:00AM

Fourth Sunday of Easter



**The Church We're
Called to Be**

*Our Mission is to inspire seekers to follow Jesus
as we worship, learn and serve our community together.*

Rev. Dr. Kendall Moore, Pastor
Rev. Danielle Dufoe, Guest Preacher
Cheryl Woertz, Music Director
Julie Schmidt, Choir Director
Eileen Andriano, Office Manager

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Welcome to Cresskill Congregational Church, United Church of Christ. We're very glad you've come to this service today and we pray our experience of worship here will renew and inspire you. If you are not familiar with our practices of worship, the following information may be helpful to you:

1. **Bold** print indicates that the congregation reads or sings aloud, in unison.
2. Please silence the ringers of your cell phone. Thanks!
3. Our hymnal is *The New Century Hymnal*, the black book in the pew rack.
4. If you are a guest with us, we invite you to fill out the Connection Card located with your Welcome Packet and place it in the offering plate in lieu of an offering.
5. Everyone is invited to join us after the service for an informal time of fellowship during our Coffee Hour.
6. If you have any questions about life at Cresskill Church or have needs of a personal nature, please speak to the pastor. We are happy to do what we can to help.

WELCOME

Praise God for this day and praise God for you! Thank you for joining us for worship at **your** Cresskill Congregational Church.

We pray that whether you are joining us in person or online, for the first time or 50th time, that you are welcome here with us as we seek the loving kindness of the Holy Spirit. After spending time with us here, we pray that you leave knowing you can breathe easy, because you are safe here. Keep your head up towards God because there's hope here, and that **God loves you just how you are, and there's nothing you can do about it!**

CALL TO WORSHIP *(read responsively)*

One: When we are scattered, Jesus our Good Shepherd gathers us in.

All: When we are lost and lonely, we can depend on Christ's love.

One: When we are oppressed, Jesus our Good Shepherd cares for us.

All: When we are threatened because of who we are, we can depend on Christ's protection.

One: We know Christ, because Christ's tenderness has guided us for generations.

All: Christ knows us by name. Christ will lay down his very life for our sake.

One: Let us worship our Good Shepherd, who cares for all of us with fierce love.

All: Let us give thanks for Christ's presence with us.

INVOCATION

Holy God, you sent us Jesus as our comforter and guide. We give you thanks for the ways he cares for us. Help us be empowered to join him in protecting the oppressed and marginalized. We pray this in gratitude for your provision. Amen.

PRAYER FOR TRANSFORMATION AND NEW LIFE

Shepherding Christ, even as you lay down your life for us, we confess our unwillingness to support those in need. Too often, we may be more like the one who runs away in times of trouble. We aren't always bold enough to protect the powerless; following your example is rarely easy or comfortable. Forgive us. Help us lay down our apathy and follow your example. Remind us that we belong to one another, and to you. Amen.

FIRST READING: Psalm 133: 1-3 NIV

How good and pleasant it is when God's people live together in unity!
It is like precious oil poured on the head, running down on the beard,
running down on Aaron's beard, down on the collar of his robe.
It is as if the dew of Hermon were falling on Mount Zion.
For there the Lord bestows his blessing, even life forevermore.

HYMN: "There Is a Balm in Gilead"

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PRAYERS OF THE PEOPLE

THE PRAYER OF OUR SAVIOR

**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 trespasses,
as we forgive those who trespass against us.
And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil.
For thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory forever. Amen.**

WORDS OF GRACE

One: Beloved of God, receive this comfort. It is impossible to respond to every need in

this complicated world. A full life of faith gives us the grace to lay down our work, take the rest we need, then refocus our energy toward the cause of the oppressed. Rest in the shelter of your Good Shepherd, knowing you can take up the cause again with restored souls.

All: We are forgiven. Thanks be to God!

INVITATION TO GENEROSITY

Jesus offers us fullness of life, protecting us and advocating for our needs. What will you give to join him in the work of building beloved communities in the world?

There are several ways by which the missions of the church can be supported:

- Offerings can be placed in the plate at the rear of the sanctuary at the end of service
- They can be mailed by check to the church address
- Or navigate to the church website at www.cresskillucc.org and Give via tithe.ly.

FOOD PANTRY DEDICATION *(read responsively)*

One: Join me now in our Food Pantry Dedication. Church family, we gather today to celebrate our faith and the love to which we share. For indeed, God has called us to be a people of love.

All: How do we do that?

One: By worshiping God with all of our heart, soul, mind and strength and by loving our neighbor. Today we are reminded of those who are food insecure, whether in our communities or in places outside our reach. By sharing with those we can, through the Food Pantries, we participate in the larger generosity around our country and the world in our love for God.

We can be generous at other times; we can love others, especially those who won't or can't love us back. We can forgive freely, hold fewer grudges, affirm more willingly, and be an example of peace in our splintered, highly political and deeply divided lives. But there is more to what the Lord is telling us.

All: What more does the Lord require of us?

One: To act justly and to love mercy and to walk humbly with our God.

All: Let us be as generous to them as God has been to us.

OFFERING OUR FOOD

One: Let us now bring our food offerings up and dedicate them to God, to our church and to one another. As you come forward to place your bags of food on the altar, we invite you to say these words,

All: *“Lord, bless my offering.”*

PRAYER OF DEDICATION *(read responsively)*

One: Please join me in our prayer of dedication.

All: **We offer this food to you, O God, that those who receive it will be filled. We pray for those who are food insecure, who need such services to eat. Bless them with opportunities. Bless them with health. Bless them with care. Keep us mindful all day long of other ways we can help those who need more. Give us compassion, sympathy and a generous heart. Then, give us another opportunity to help. For we are an important way that you help others. In Jesus' name we pray, Amen.**

CHORAL ANTHEM: “What A Wonderful World”

G.D. Weiss & B. Thiele,
arr. M.A. Brymer

A READING FROM SCRIPTURE: Luke 5:17-20 NIV

SERMON: “The Church We’re Called to Be”

Rev. Danielle Dufoe

CLOSING HYMN: “Alleluia”

Verse 1

Alleluia, Alleluia, Alleluia, Alleluia
Alleluia, Alleluia, Alleluia, Alleluia.

Verse 2:

He’s my Savior...

Verse 3:

I Will Praise Him...

ANNOUNCEMENTS

BENEDICTION

Today you have received the gift of Christ’s protective, unceasing love for you. Because you are beloved, may all that you do and all that you are be a reflection of that love. Fight for the powerless, help the weak, and provide for the needy, because Jesus provides for you. Amen.

Praise God from whom all blessings flow;
Praise God all creatures here below;
Praise God above you Heaven-ly host:
Creator Christ and Holy Ghost. Amen.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

This morning the lay leader is Charlie Waage.


“Birthday” wishes today Howard Vigusin -21 and Christina Abreau -21.

Articles for the May Newsletter are due to the office, tomorrow Monday, April 22nd.

Bible Study with Pastor Kendall will return on Wednesday, May 1st at 6:30pm in the social hall.

PAGEZ Book Club is now reading “Ace of Spades” by Faridah Abike-Iyimide. The group will meet on Thursday, May 2nd at 7pm to discuss the book.

The Women’s Book Club is now reading “Lightning Strike” by William Kent Krueger. The group will meet on Tuesday, May 14th at 1pm in the social hall to discuss the book.



Did you know that the United Church of Christ has a program called 5 for 5? Here is what our denomination says about it:

“The success and sustainability of the United Church of Christ’s national ministries is relying on your church’s contributions to basic operating support and mission. Being 5 for 5 means that your church is a leader, providing support to Our Church’s Wider Mission and the Special Mission Offerings: One Great Hour of Sharing, Strengthen The Church, Neighbors In Need & The Christmas Fund.”

Our church includes Our Church’s Wider Mission in our yearly budget. Watch for information from the Board of Outreach on contributing to each of the four special mission offerings.

Strengthen the Church Offering will be on Sunday, May 12