

Outdoor Worship
September 24, 2023

Welcome

Fellowship of the Church

Opening Praise

Music for Meditation – Just as I am – Bradbury/Johnson

Call to Worship - Psalm 24:1-3, 5-6 NLT

Opening Hymn - CH480 / *Love to Tell the Story*

Opening Prayer

Introduction to Today's Service

Scripture Reading - Psalm 19:1-4

Hymn - Eternal God, Whose Church is Your Creation v. 1

Part One: The Original Building

Testimony - Steve West

Responsive Reading

The word “sanctuary” means “consecrated place” and “a place of worship.” For the past 50 years, the sanctuary has been a consecrated, or holy, place for the congregation of First Christian Church. A place where we have gathered on Sunday mornings for worship through song, baptism, communion and the word proclaimed.

God, we thank you for this place.

This place is filled with memories of significant moments in our life: of weddings and funerals. Of the memories of friends and loved ones we miss.

God, we thank you for this place.

But the word sanctuary also means “a place of refuge and protection.” And it is here that we are reminded of God’s protection and presence through all of life.

God, we thank you for this place.

We give thanks for a previous generation who had the vision and commitment to construct this building that has become such a holy place for us.

God, we thank you for this place.

Once again, we consecrate this sanctuary to God’s glory and pray that it will continue to be a place where we can bring God honor and praise.

God, we thank you for this place.

Hymn - *Eternal God* v. 2

Special Music

Part Two: The Fellowship Hall

Testimony - Roger Baker

Responsive Reading

The Greek word Koinonia is prominent in the New Testament, especially the letters of Paul. According the *New Interpreter's Dictionary of the Bible*, koinonia means *fellowship, participation, and sharing*. Koinonia, or fellowship, was a major part of the early church. We continue to value fellowship, and the gym or fellowship hall provides wonderful space for fellowship to take place here at First Christian Church.

We are a blessed community.

This space has been the location for many meals, conversations, friendships, meetings, Bible studies, Sunday School classes and so much more.

We are a blessed community.

This place has also provided the space for us to host many community organizations, including the Peoria Players, Montessori School, the Tamil School and so many more.

We are a blessed community.

Again, we are blessed by those who had the vision and foresight to construct such a facility. It has truly helped us to become a community of faith.

We are a blessed community.

We rededicate this place that it may continue to be a place where koinonia is lived out, and we continue to be built up as a community of faith.

God, we thank you for this place.

Hymn - *Eternal God* v. 3

Communion Hymn - #546 *Amazing Grace*

Communion

The Lord's Supper - *Spirit of God, Descend Upon My Heart* - arr Wagner

"Here we celebrate that all people are welcome at this table of God's grace."

Part Three - Solar Panels and the Future

Testimony - Dave Sinn

Dedication of Solar Panels

The Book of Genesis tells us that God has given us dominion over all the earth. By His authority, we are caretakers of this sacred gift of creation.

We recognize and respect our holy connection to God, to one another, and to the world around us. .

Therefore, we commit ourselves as individuals and as a congregation to the responsibility of caring for God's creation...all of God's creation!

We pray for the healing of the Earth and all of her people.

With the leadership of the Faith in Justice Ministry, we pledge to continue learning about social disparities and environmental issues. As a people of God we seek justice for oppressed, marginalized, and underrepresented people around the world.

We will seek to find ways that we as individuals and as a congregation can help to alleviate human suffering and global inequality.

As we learn the damage that we have done to our climate, we vow that we will continue to explore how we can make a difference and how we can engage others to find solutions.

As a congregation, we will actively seek to reduce our carbon footprint. And we will expand our efforts to counter the harmful effects of climate change that we have imposed on the Earth.

Today, as stewards of God's creation, we dedicate the installation of our solar panels. We are extremely grateful to all who have been able to contribute monetarily so that we could be fiscally responsible in undertaking and moving forward with this project.

Let us Pray:

Holy Spirit, please be with us and guide us in our efforts to promote ways that sustain life. With Your help we will advocate for eco-justice policies and we will work toward ensuring these efforts are reflected in all the dimensions of our congregation's life. Amen.

Hymn - *Eternal God* v. 4

God's Call - Hank Anderson

Closing Worship

Pastoral Prayer

Offering - *Someone's Praying Lord* – arr. Wagner

Closing Hymn - #583 *Lead Me, Guide Me*

Benediction

Postlude - *Postlude in B-flat* – Simper/Ryan