



Abiding Love  
First Congregational Church of Dundee  
Celebrating 175 years

Worship Devotional

Created by Rev. Paige Wolfanger to accompany FCC Dundee's  
Abiding Love worship series: September-November, 2017

**Sunday, September 11, 2016**

**“Abiding Love”**

**Rev. Aaron James**

**John 15:9-12**

*9As the Father has loved me, so I have loved you; abide in my love. 10If you keep my commandments, you will abide in my love, just as I have kept my Father’s commandments and abide in his love. 11I have said these things to you so that my joy may be in you, and that your joy may be complete. 12“This is my commandment, that you love one another as I have loved you.”*

*“The history of a church is the history of its people. Those members who participated through the years in its ideals, its struggles, its triumphs, are the writers of this story which the century reveals.*

*In this brief sketch the highlights alone can be portrayed, of persons, experiences and achievements that stand out in retrospective importance.*

*It has been high privilege to compile this chronicle, although none can be more conscious of its inadequacies than its writer. If, for a moment, these memories may bring to mind precious scenes that deepen the abiding love that one feels for our century-old church, the effort will have been worthwhile.”*

- Victoria Mills Haeger

*A Century and a Decade, pg. 3*

**Questions for further discussion or study:**

- This passage from John 15 comes as part of what is known as “The Farewell Discourse,” Jesus’ final teachings to his disciples before his crucifixion. What do you think Jesus may have meant when he told the disciples to “abide in my love?” What do you think the disciples heard? What do you understand it to mean?
- We will never get to meet, in this life, Mrs. Haeger, or the people she writes about in the history of FCC. Nor, for that matter, will we have the opportunity to meet the Apostles, St. Paul, Martin Luther, or any of the others who we know from our past. How, if at all, are our modern lives and faith experiences connected to and affected by those who have gone before us?
- Who do you think Jesus meant when he commanded us to love “one another?” Did he mean other Christians? Other people who believe like us? Other people who look

like us? Other humans? Who is the “other” we must love?

- What does it mean to love another person?
- What does it mean to love another person like Jesus has loved us?
- Is there a limit to who we love, and how we love them? For instance, can a person behave in such a way that we are exempted from loving them? What might this look like?
- What do you think the phrase “abiding love” means?

**Sunday, September 18, 2016**

**“A Litany of Unpromising People”**

**Rev. Aaron James**

**Matthew 4:18-22**

*18As he walked by the Sea of Galilee, he saw two brothers, Simon, who is called Peter, and Andrew his brother, casting a net into the sea—for they were fishermen. 19And he said to them, “Follow me, and I will make you fish for people.” 20Immediately they left their nets and followed him. 21As he went from there, he saw two other brothers, James son of Zebedee and his brother John, in the boat with their father Zebedee, mending their nets, and he called them. 22Immediately they left the boat and their father, and followed him.*

*“This place (Dundee) is on the Fox River five miles above Elgin. It is a small village, and at present its appearance is not very promising. Its want of promise, however, is more owing to the character of its inhabitants than its location.*

*It has a flouring mill, a saw mill, a store and a tavern, at both of which places are sold intoxicating liquors. A distillery is nearly ready to send forth its stream of poison. There is also a doctor, a lawyer, and a number of mechanics.*

*In the village there are but very few professors of religion.*

*Yours in the bonds of the Gospel,*

*N.C. Clark”*

*- N.C. Clark, from his first letter to the Mission Board*

**Questions for further discussion or study:**

- Have you ever had to put together a team to accomplish a task at work, church, or in another organization? How did you decide who to recruit to be on your team? If you haven't, what criteria do you imagine you might use to decide who should be part of a team?
- Have you ever felt not quite up to a particular task? What is that feeling like? How do you deal with it when you feel inadequate to the work before you?
- Do you think God calls people to certain ministries because of their strengths, or maybe in spite of them?
- St. Paul wrote in 2 Corinthians 12:9-10. "9but he (God) said to me, 'My grace is sufficient for you, for power is made perfect in weakness.' So, I will boast all the more gladly of my weaknesses, so that the power of Christ may dwell in me. 10Therefore I am content with weaknesses, insults, hardships, persecutions, and calamities for the sake of Christ; for whenever I am weak, then I am strong." What do you think he meant by this? How can "power be made perfect in weakness"? Relate this to Christ's death on the cross.
- In what ways has God worked through your strengths and weakness to do something good in the world?
- What, if anything, is holding you back from trusting God do amazing things in and through you? What would a leap of faith look like?

**Sunday, September 24, 2016**

**"Something Holy is About to Happen"**

**Rev. Paige Wolfanger**

**Exodus 19:16-20**

*16On the morning of the third day there was thunder and lightning, as well as a thick cloud on the mountain, and a blast of a trumpet so loud that all the people who were in the camp trembled. 17Moses brought the people out of the camp to meet God. They took their stand at the foot of the mountain. 18Now Mount Sinai was wrapped in smoke, because the Lord had descended upon it in fire; the smoke went up like the smoke of a kiln, while the whole mountain shook violently. 19As the blast of the trumpet grew*

louder and louder, Moses would speak and God would answer him in thunder. 20When the Lord descended upon Mount Sinai, to the top of the mountain, the Lord summoned Moses to the top of the mountain, and Moses went up.

*“This is the first mention of our present church bell. For many years it was the only bell in Dundee. Through the century its tuneful beats have become the very heart-pulse of our church. Joyously it has announced a marriage, or it has tolled a requiem of death; through World War II (1941-45) it became the evening Vesper Bell for prayers. And, at the close of the war this bell carried the message of peace in tones of the deepest thanksgiving.*

*High overhead, with its belfry old,  
Our church bell hangs, reminder of the days  
When proud hearts gladly, in a psalm of praise  
First sang with it. In sorrow it has tolled  
Its sympathy; in suffering, consoled;  
And through these many years has led our ways  
To worship. And in gladness still ‘twill raise  
Its voice, to welcome all within its fold.*

*Symbol of Faith and tone of kindly friend,  
We heed your joyous peal out on the air.  
Through centuries more your worthy reign extend  
As your sweet voice calls to the House of Prayers.  
May little children grow to age, and tell  
The glorious story of our old church bell.”*

- Victoria Mills Haeger

A Century and a Decade, pgs. 17 & 18

**Questions for further discussion or study:**

- What is “sacred space”? Where, and when, does “sacred space” reside?
- What are some of the physical signs or symbols that signal to you that you are in sacred space?
- How do you know when God is near? Or rather, do you know when God is near, or is that a struggle for you?

- In what ways do you observe the holy moments and events that happen, not just in church, but in daily human life?
- What does it mean to you to be present in the moment? Is this easy, or hard? What are some tools you use to be fully present?

**Sunday, October 2, 2016**

**“What Does the Lord Require?”**

**Rev. Aaron James**

**Micah 6:6-8**

*6“With what shall I come before the Lord, and bow myself before God on high? Shall I come before him with burnt offerings, with calves a year old? 7Will the Lord be pleased with thousands of rams, with ten thousands of rivers of oil? Shall I give my firstborn for my transgression, the fruit of my body for the sin of my soul?” 8He has told you, O mortal, what is good; and what does the Lord require of you but to do justice, and to love kindness, and to walk humbly with your God?”*

*“Almost 15 years before the Civil War, a resolution was passed (1846) denouncing slavery as a heinous crime . . . In 1855, to uphold their determined views on Temperance, the church voted ‘the deacons should obtain raisins and soak them, and use the liquid thus obtained, for sacramental purposes . . .’”*

- Victoria Mills Haeger

A Century and a Decade, pg. 18

*“A dramatic instance of his (Osher Schlaifer) humanitarianism was shown during the calamitous epidemic of flu that was world wide in its dreadful devastation (in the early 1920s). In Dundee many deaths had occurred, and in the Italian colony the disease was rampant—whole families lay sick and dying with no one to care for them. Hospitals were overcrowded, and no space available. At Mr. Schlaifer’s suggestion, Mrs. Alicia Oatman and Mrs. Ella Egger, officers of the Dundee Welfare Club, helped him improvise a hospital in the vacant parsonage. No ambulances were available, and with great risk to their own health, Mr. Schlaifer and Edmund Haeger transported all the patients that the improvised hospital could hold. The club furnished a nurse; Mr. Schlaifer looked after the furnace; and Mrs. Oatman and Mrs. Egger furnished hot soup for the patients.”*

- Victoria Mills Haeger

A Century and a Decade, pg. 41

*"The Walkers became members on May 20, 1843. Many stories are told of Eaton Walker's intrepidity. During the Civil War, his home became a 'station' of the Underground Railway for fugitive slaves. In his basement was a secret panel which led to an inner room where runaway slaves were safely hidden overnight."*

- Victoria Mills Haeger

A Century and a Decade, pg. 80

**Questions for further discussion or study.**

- What is justice? Are there different kinds of justice? To what kind of justice is the prophet Micah referring in the above passage?
- What does it mean to be kind? Is it the same thing as being nice?
- What might it mean to walk humbly? Does that mean you can't stand up for yourself, or celebrate your successes?
- What are some antonyms for justice, kindness and humility? Be creative in your choices.
- \* Can a church be both active in working toward social justice and, as an institution, politically neutral? Is neutrality a good thing?
- What is the mission of a Christian, and a church, in the world? How are we, as people of faith, to interact with the world outside our church doors?
- What do you think some of these people from the past history of FCC, like Osher Schlaifer and Easton Walker, would make of FCC in 2016? What would they make of the Hilltop Suppers? Adult and High School Mission Trips? Our stance on fully welcoming the Gay, Lesbian, and Transgender community? Our involvement with the Crisis Center and Habitat for Humanity? How are we doing on issues of race? On immigration? On poverty?
- How do **you** think we are doing?

**Sunday, October 9, 2016**

**“New Occasions – New Duties”**

**Rev. Aaron James**

**Exodus 35:20-29**

*20Then all the congregation of the Israelites withdrew from the presence of Moses. 21And they came, everyone whose heart was stirred, and everyone whose spirit was willing, and brought the Lord's offering to be used for the tent of meeting, and for all its service, and for the sacred vestments. 22So they came, both men and women; all who were of a willing heart brought brooches and earrings and signet rings and pendants, all sorts of gold objects, everyone bringing an offering of gold to the Lord. 23And everyone who possessed blue or purple or crimson yarn or fine linen or goats' hair or tanned rams' skins or fine leather, brought them. 24Everyone who could make an offering of silver or bronze brought it as the Lord's offering; and everyone who possessed acacia wood of any use in the work, brought it. 25All the skillful women spun with their hands, and brought what they had spun in blue and purple and crimson yarns and fine linen; 26all the women whose hearts moved them to use their skill spun the goats' hair. 27And the leaders brought onyx stones and gems to be set in the ephod and the breastpiece, 28and spices and oil for the light, and for the anointing oil, and for the fragrant incense. 29All the Israelite men and women whose hearts made them willing to bring anything for the work that the Lord had commanded by Moses to be done, brought it as a freewill offering to the Lord.*

*“About six weeks since, a Sabbath School was organized in connection with our congregation. It consists of 24 members and promises well. A library of 150 volumes has been furnished this school by the members of a Sabbath school in Essex, Mass. The Sabbath schools of the east can do much good by furnishing destitute schools of the west, with libraries.”*

-N. C. Clark, in his first letter to the Mission Board

*“John and Abigail Giddings, and Thomas and Elizabeth Perkins were the next signers of the charter. Mrs. Giddings and Mrs. Perkins were sisters, and the two young families has come west together in 1838, from Essex, Massachusetts. It was their home church in Essex that sent the library of 150 volumes to the Dundee pioneers, mentioned in Father Clark's first letter.”*

- Victoria Mills Haeger

A Century and a Decade, pg. 12

*“This church which had been assisted by missionary aid in the beginning, in turn developed a strong missionary interest, and launched a program of benevolences which surpassed that of churches of even larger membership.”*

- Victoria Mills Haeger

A Century and a Decade, pg. 30

*“Just after the Civil War, 1865, with membership depleted as it must have been, the church was at low ebb financially, and it was voted to tax the pews for the purpose of raising money.*

*In November, 1888, a dining room and kitchen wing were added to the brick church. This was an ultra-modern innovation in that day, and it was vehemently protested by conservative members.”*

- Victoria Mills Haeger

A Century and a Decade, pg. 20

*“For about ten years during this pastorate (1920s) and that of the succeeding minister, public paid suppers and bazaars were definitely discouraged. The new idea was just being introduced of having an Every Member Canvas, and it was recommended that members should be solicited to subscribe the full amount which they were able to pay, with the tacit pledge that no other solicitations would be made for money during the year.”*

- Victoria Mills Haeger

A Century and a Decade, pg. 40

### **Questions for further discussion or study:**

- One definition of stewardship is “the conducting, supervising, or managing of something; especially: the careful and responsible management of something entrusted to one's care.” What might this definition mean in the context of a faith community?
- List some of the things of which we, as people of faith **and** members of an historic faith community, might be called to be stewards.
- The scripture passage from the book of Exodus tells how all the Hebrew people gave what they could to build the tabernacle, God's home for the 40 years that they wandered in the desert. What gifts do we have to bring this congregation, and how do those gifts help make this place a home for God?

- Which is harder, do you think? Being called to be a giver of gifts, or being in the position to receive gifts? Why is it so difficult for us to receive help when we are in need of it? What might a theology of stewardship have to say about this?
- This piece of FCC's history, which recalls our founding, with the help of others, and moves forward to celebrate our ability in later years to pass on the abundance we once received, suggests that generosity flows from gratitude. What are some of the things in your life for which you are grateful? How do you see those things coming from the love of God?
- A close read of our history also shows that there have always been seasons when finances have been tight, and the gathered community has had to explore what it means to be stewards of this place. How might our past inform and inspire our future?
- Why is it so difficult to talk about money in church? Do you think this has always been the case? How can we make the discussion of money a more natural part of our life of faith?

**Sunday, October 16, 2016**

**"Lifeblood" (Woman's Day) Or: "Mansplaining the History of Women at FCC"**

**Rev. Aaron James**

**Luke 8:1-3**

*8* Soon afterwards he (Jesus) went on through cities and villages, proclaiming and bringing the good news of the kingdom of God. The twelve were with him, *2* as well as some women who had been cured of evil spirits and infirmities: Mary, called Magdalene, from whom seven demons had gone out, *3* and Joanna, the wife of Herod's steward Chuza, and Susanna, and many others, who provided for them out of their resources.

**Luke 23:49, 55-56**

*49* But all his acquaintances, including the women who had followed him from Galilee, stood at a distance, watching these things. *55* The women who had come with him from Galilee followed, and they saw the tomb and how his body was laid. *56* Then they returned, and prepared spices and ointments. On the sabbath they rested according to the commandment.

## **Luke 24:1-12**

*24But on the first day of the week, at early dawn, they came to the tomb, taking the spices that they had prepared. 2They found the stone rolled away from the tomb, 3but when they went in, they did not find the body. 4While they were perplexed about this, suddenly two men in dazzling clothes stood beside them. 5The women were terrified and bowed their faces to the ground, but the men said to them, "Why do you look for the living among the dead? He is not here, but has risen. 6Remember how he told you, while he was still in Galilee, 7that the Son of Man must be handed over to sinners, and be crucified, and on the third day rise again." 8Then they remembered his words, 9and returning from the tomb, they told all this to the eleven and to all the rest. 10Now it was Mary Magdalene, Joanna, Mary the mother of James, and the other women with them who told this to the apostles. 11But these words seemed to them an idle tale, and they did not believe them. 12But Peter got up and ran to the tomb; stooping and looking in, he saw the linen cloths by themselves; then he went home, amazed at what had happened.*

*"John and Abigail Giddings, and Thomas and Elizabeth Perkins were the next signers of the charter. Mrs. Giddings and Mrs. Perkins were sisters, and the two young families has come west together in 1838, from Essex, Massachusetts. It was their home church in Essex that sent the library of 150 volumes to the Dundee pioneers, mentioned in Father Clark's first letter."*

- Victoria Mills Haeger

A Century and a Decade, pg. 12

*"The next few decades during the 1870's, '80's, '90's and on into the new century, saw the church steadily rising to its highest pinnacles of prosperity. Many influential families during these years created a strong membership, and all social activities were centered in the church, making it the spiritual and social influence of the whole community. This was the days before Women's Clubs, Bridge Clubs, Garden Clubs, and every other kind of club divided up the increased leisure that had come to women, and their energies were tireless in planning church 'sociables,' packing missionary barrels, attending midweek prayer meetings, and Sabbath services morning and evening, and in countless ways making successful the work of the church. So potent was the influence of these families upon the social and religious life of the community that dancing and card playing were frowned upon, practically up to the time of the First World Ward (1917)."*

- Victoria Mills Haeger

A Century and a Decade, pg. 21

### **Questions for further discussion or study.**

- In Luke 8:3, we are told a group of women “provided for them (Jesus and the Twelve,) out of their resources.” In a time when the majority of women did not have jobs or independent income, how do you think they did this? What sacrifices would they have had to make?
- There are hints, all throughout the Gospels, that women played a significant role in the earthly ministry of Jesus of Nazareth, and may in fact have been a part of his “inner circle.” Why then, does the story of the growth of “the Church” seem to be dominated by men?
- Women were instrumental in the founding and growth of First Congregational Church of Dundee, as well as most other church congregations in America. Who are some of the women who have had an impact on your and your faith development?
- Throughout the history of FCC, and the universal Church, the role of woman has changed as have political and social realities. What do you think the future may look like for women, and men, in FCC?
- Talk about some of the gifts that women bring to the church. Men? Children? Senior citizens? What would our faith community be like without them? What might we be missing out on because we don't have even more diversity?
- How can we, as a faith community, help empower more of our members to use their gifts and graces to help our church grow and flourish?

**Sunday, October 23, 2016**

**“That They May All Be One”**

**Rev. Paige Wolfanger**

**John 17:20-26**

20“I ask not only on behalf of these, but also on behalf of those who will believe in me through their word, 21that they may all be one. As you, Father, are in me and I am in you, may they also be in us, so that the world may believe that you have sent me. 22The glory that you have given me I have given them, so that they may be one, as we are one, 23I in them and you in me, that they may become completely one, so that the world may know that you have sent me and have loved them even as you have loved me.

24Father, I desire that those also, whom you have given me, may be with me where I am, to see my glory, which you have given me because you loved me before the foundation of the world. 25“Righteous Father, the world does not know you, but I know you; and these know that you have sent me. 26I made your name known to them, and I will make it known, so that the love with which you have loved me may be in them, and I in them.”

“About this time (between 1922-26) the Baptist Church disbanded, several of its members being welcomed into this congregation. Mr. Koster made a zealous attempt to bring about a federation with the remaining Methodists, but this was not accomplished.”

- Victoria Mills Haeger

A Century and a Decade, pg. 43

“Church unity is one of the progressive forces to be sought and hoped for in the coming century; but the proposed ‘merger’ of the Congregational Church and the Evangelical and Reformed Church was a warmly contested issue, both nationally and locally, in 1948. In our local church it was voted down in April, a ratio of nine to one. (Note: The merger was accomplished in 1957, resulting in our denomination, The United Church of Christ.)

The church is the one institution that can unify the world, and the Federations that have already begun to be achieved on a large scale are one of the hopeful signs of the new century.” - Victoria Mills Haeger

A Century and a Decade, pg. 62

### **Questions for further discussion or study.**

- In John 17:21, Jesus prays that his followers, both those present with him, and those to come, may “all be one.” What might it mean for such a diverse and disparate group of people to all be one?
- To be one, must we all those involved have similar backgrounds? Similar economic statuses? Similar racial and ethnic roots? The same political affiliation? The same worldviews? Or is sameness even to be desired in oneness?
- To be one, must we all believe the same things about God?
- In other words, what things divide us as Christians? What is at stake in these divisions, and historically, why have we fought over them so vigorously?
- One of the guiding principles for the United Church of Christ, as well as many other denominations, is this phrase, attributed to St. Augustine: “In essentials unity, in non-essentials liberty, in all things charity.” What are the essential things that require unity? Who decides what is essential?
- Are Christian denominations a good or bad thing?
- Mrs. Haeger, despite her opposition to the proposed denominational merger, thought that “the church is the one institution that can unify the world.” Do you believe this? Should this be something toward which we as Christians strive?
- The key seems to be charity, in the words of Augustine, or love, in the words of Christ. How might love work, practically, to hold us all together? What is our obligation?

**Sunday, October 30, 2016**

**“A Church for All Seasons”**

**Rev. Aaron James**

**Ecclesiastes 3:1-8**

*3For everything there is a season, and a time for every matter under heaven: 2a time to be born, and a time to die; a time to plant, and a time to pluck up what is planted; 3a time to kill, and a time to heal; a time to break down, and a time to build up; 4a time to weep, and a time to laugh; a time to mourn, and a time to dance; 5a time to throw away stones, and a time to gather stones together; a time to embrace, and a time to refrain from embracing; 6a time to seek, and a time to lose; a time to keep, and a time to throw away; 7a time to tear, and a time to sew; a time to keep silence, and a time to speak; 8a time to love, and a time to hate; a time for war, and a time for peace.*

*“In 1917 the Rev. John Bushnell came to Dundee. He was a young man of gifted tongue and eloquent oratory. This was the year when the First World War loomed large on the horizon of America. Time was largely measured in terms of bandages rolled; and food, meat, sugar, coal were all measured in terms of conservation. Houses were not heated then by oil or gas, and throughout the community families were doubling up to save coal for the government. The church voted to close the main auditorium through the winter, and heat only the lecture room for Sunday morning service. Evening services were dispensed with for the first time.*

*Rev. Bushnell's impassioned discourses upon the war situation were brought to a sudden termination with his resignation as he enlisted to go to the front in his country's service.”*

*- Victoria Mills Haeger*

*A Century and a Decade, pg. 38*

*“Little could anyone foresee that in three month's time (September, 1941,) our country would again be in the throes of the world's worst war since history began. All available man power was conscripted - over 300 from this small community, and nearly 100 from our church.*

*One of the last duties that Rev. Mr. Hill gave to this pastorate, was a little war-time ritual which he consecrated as a part of his war-time services; every evening at the hours when families were gathered for their evening meal, Rev. Hill, himself rang church bell. As the vesper bell pealed forth, the community paused for a moment of prayer for peace.”*

*- Victoria Mills Haeger*

*A Century and a Decade, pg. 58*

### **Questions for further discussion or study.**

- What do you think is the role of the church during times of war and conflict?
- What does our faith, and the history of Christianity, have to say about war and armed conflict? Talk about the different ways different Christian communities have answered this question. Can these opinions coexist?
- Is it possible to be a pacifist, or disagree with a particular war, and still show love, grace, and practical support to those engaged in fighting it? What might that look like?
- Is there such a thing as a Just War? What might that look like?
- Should the church have the same message in good times as in bad? What is that message? Does the way we proclaim it change as the world changes?

**Sunday, November 6, 2016**

**“Oatman Sunday”**

**Rev. Aaron James**

*On this Sunday, we celebrate David and Janet Oatman, and their family. The Oatmans are the last of the founding families still actively worshipping at First Congregational. We take time today to celebrate them through some of their favorite scriptures, hymns and memories. We do this not just because David and Janet are wonderful people who have given much to this congregation – which they are, and have – but also because they represent a rootedness to our foundation, a connectedness to our identity, a living legacy of the grace of God, and a glimpse into the changing ways in which people have been and are the Church.*

### **Questions for further discussion or study.**

- What does it mean to be a rooted people? Is it just something we say, or is about real people and real visions?
- How do we honor the work and legacy of the past, and the real people who brought us to where we are, while also embracing our future?
- Talk about the ways that church, and the ways we are the church and the ways we do church, have changed over the years. What does this change mean?

- If there is one thing we have learned from studying the 175 year history of FCC, it is that nothing stays the same. Thus church always has adapted to the changing world. But what does that mean? Does our message change? Our medium? Our values? Ourselves? Is change good, bad, or neutral?

**Sunday, November 13, 2016**

**“A Joyful Noise”**

**Rev. Paige Wolfanger**

**Psalm 100**

*1 Make a joyful noise to the Lord, all the earth.*

*2 Worship the Lord with gladness; come into his presence with singing.*

*3 Know that the Lord is God. It is he that made us, and we are his; we are his people, and the sheep of his pasture.*

*4 Enter his gates with thanksgiving, and his courts with praise. Give thanks to him, bless his name.*

*5 For the Lord is good; his steadfast love endures forever, and his faithfulness to all generations.*

**Acts 16:25**

*25 About midnight Paul and Silas were praying and singing hymns to God, and the prisoners were listening to them.*

*“Music is one of the art-paths to God; and by its setting in worship it leads us all, in devious ways, along its broad highway. There are churches and there are groups of people joined together in religious fellowships who believe music to be an impediment to worship; and they have their reasons, which to them are adequate. But to we who are accustomed to beginning and ending our services of worship with the ennobling strains of the organ and to joining together in the singing of the great hymns of the church which are an integral part of our Christian heritage, music does belong in worship, and most of us would find it difficult to believe that we have participated in worship through a service in which music was left out. We do not believe that music is a purely human accomplishment, and we do believe that there is an element of the divine with in the inspiration by which great music is composed, that it may well awaken a sense of the divine presence in both those who perform great music and those who hear it.”*

- Rev. George D. Alley

“Your Minister Says,” January 16, 1949 Chapel Chimes

**Questions for further discussion or study:**

- What is worship? Miriam Webster defines worship as “the act of showing respect and love for a god especially by praying with other people who believe in the same god: the act of worshipping God or a god.” Does this strike you as a complete definition?
- What elements must be present for you to feel you have worshipped?
- What role does music play in your day to day life?
- What role does music play in your worship experience? Does it center you? Calm you? Encourage you? Do you prefer to participate in music, or simply to hear it?
- What is your preference for music used in worship? Are there some uses of music, or kinds of music, that push you out of the worship experience?
- How does a diverse group of people, with different tastes and sympathies, worship together, as a group?

**Sunday, November 20, 2016**

**“The Church in a Changing World”**

**Rev. Aaron James**

**Romans 8:14-23**

*For all who are led by the Spirit of God are children of God. For you did not receive a spirit of slavery to fall back into fear, but you have received a spirit of adoption. When we cry, “Abba! Father!” it is that very Spirit bearing witness with our spirit that we are children of God, and if children, then heirs, heirs of God and joint heirs with Christ—if, in fact, we suffer with him so that we may also be glorified with him. I consider that the sufferings of this present time are not worth comparing with the glory about to be revealed to us. For the creation waits with eager longing for the revealing of the children of God; for the creation was subjected to futility, not of its own will but by the will of the one who subjected it, in hope that the creation itself will be set free from its bondage to decay and will obtain the freedom of the glory of the children of God. We know that the whole creation has been groaning in labor pains until now; and not only the creation, but we ourselves, who have the first fruits of the Spirit, groan inwardly while we wait for adoption, the redemption of our bodies.*

*“Again in this short decade we have seen our whole nation filled with unrest; -the forces of socialism and communism insidiously appearing in high places in our own government. To be sure, our people want social progress, but not at the expense of our beloved American freedom.”*

- Victoria Mills Haeger

A Century and a Decade, pg. 56

*“With airplanes [aeroplanes in 1941 version] roaring overhead; with streamlined trains like great steel shuttles weaving across the continent; with never ending lines of Sunday traffic; in a chaos of international conflict – this heritage, and this challenge are to be accepted, with the tacit understanding that our quest is to **keep** this church, and its sheltering might, for the years to come. We can accept this charge only with an uplifting belief in a Power that is more than human; and with an awakening to the need of faith and prayer, - “prayer that has a power to shape the future,” and faith that is deathless and dauntless.”*

- Victoria Mills Haeger

A Century and a Decade, pg. 54

*“And so the wheel of time has turned again. In terms of the age-old history of religion, the life of our hundred-and-ten year old church is but a short experience; but in terms of its service to this community, its life-span lengthens into a richly constructive record. A rich past is a good thing to have. With a tradition of achievements behind us, we have the accumulated experiences of generations to guide us in the happenings of tomorrow’s new morning. Every generation must carry its own weight; and as our forefathers met, and overcame their problems by their faith in the Living God, so today shall we . . . Faith in God is timeless. And it will remain the same fresh and vital factor through the endless years ahead for our descendants, that it is today.”*

- Victoria Mills Haeger

A Century and a Decade, pg. 74

**Questions for further discussion or study:**

- What is the future of FCC? In what ways has our history prepared us to embrace this future? What parts of this legacy have become especially meaningful to you?
- The year 2191 is 175 years from now. What is our responsibility to those who will come 175 years after us? What would you like for future FCC members to remember and celebrate about who we are and what we are doing now? What will be our legacy?