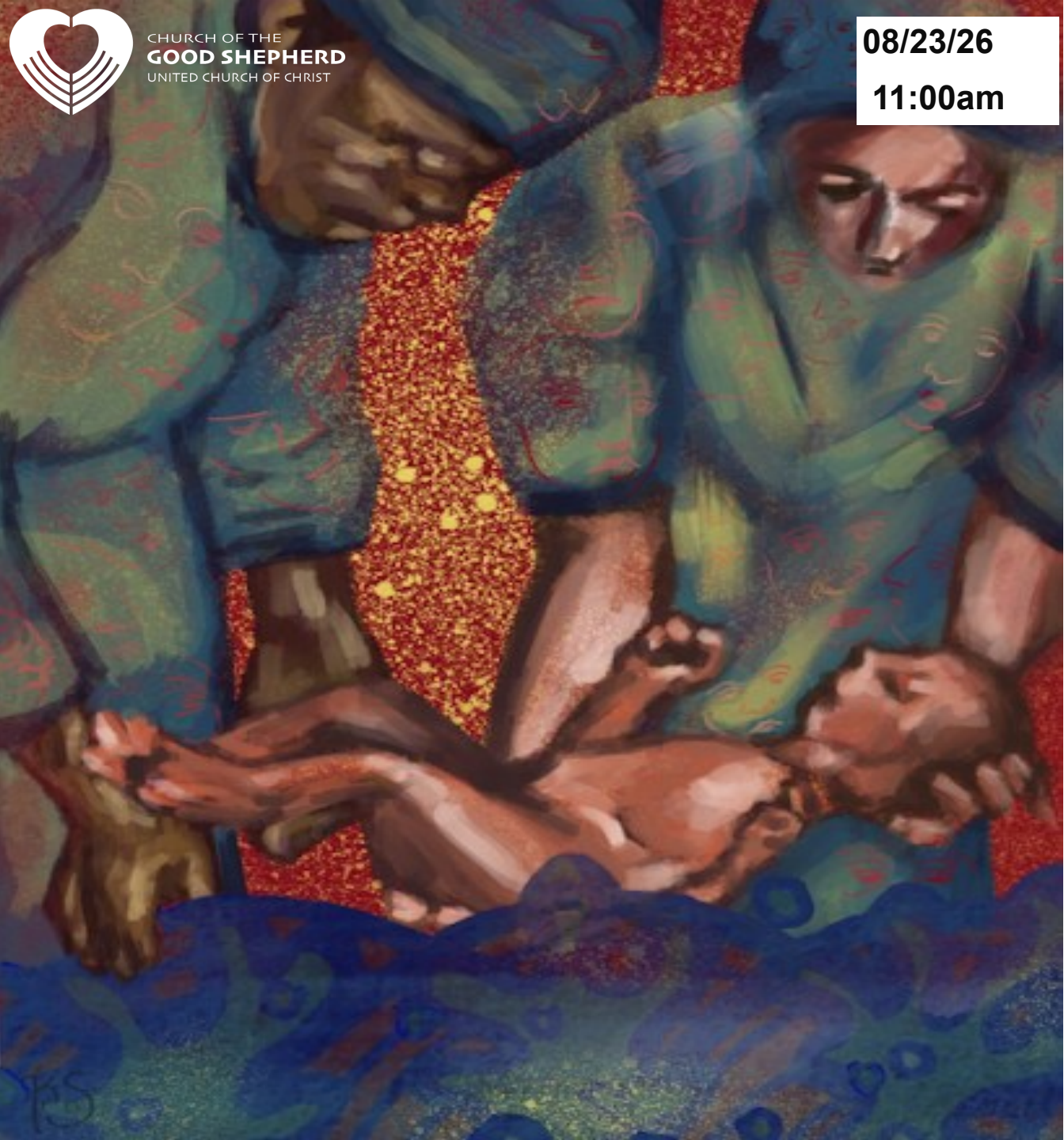




CHURCH OF THE
GOOD SHEPHERD
UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST

08/23/26

11:00am



No matter where you are on life's journey, you are welcome here.

August 23, 2026

WELCOME.....

CALL TO WORSHIP

One: Two midwives, Shiphrah and Puah, stood before Pharaoh's throne.

Many: They did not stand alone. They stood with God and their community.

One: When the powerful commanded death,

All: The women wove a quiet, holy, and creative resistance.

One: God saw their courage and blessed their households.

All: We often find abundance when we choose new life with God and one other.

One: Let us celebrate the God who calls us into holy resistance.

All: Let us celebrate the God who invites us to be bring new life and love into the world.

HYMN #531 “God, Speak to Me that I May Speak” 1,3,4

1 God, speak to me, that I may speak

in living echoes of your tone;

as you have sought, so let me seek

your erring children lost and lone.

3 O fill me with your fullness, God,

your overflowing love to know;

In glowing word and kindling thought,

your love to tell, your praise to show.

4 O use me, God, use even me

just as you will, and when, and where,

until your blessed face I see,

your rest, your joy, your glory share.

OPENING REFLECTION.....

“Inscription of Hope” Words taken from an inscription on cellar walls in Cologne, Germany, Music by Z. Randall Stroege Treble Ensemble

“The Holocaust is a stunning reminder of the tragic results of prejudice and hate toward other people.

But it is also a reminder that hope held firm will eventually reign victorious over the greatest of odds.

The words of this song were inscribed on the walls of a cellar in Cologne, Germany, where Jews were

hiding from the Nazis during World War II. Hope was all they had to hold on to; hope was their only

bridge to a brighter tomorrow.” - Z. Randall Stroege

I believe in the sun, even when it is not shining,

and I believe in love, even when there's no one there.

And I believe in God, even when God is silent;

I believe through any trial, there is always a way.

But sometimes in this suff'ring and hopeless despair,

My heart cries for shelter, to know someone's there.

But a voice rises within me saying hold on my child,

I'll give you strength, I'll give you hope,

May there someday be sunshine
May there some day be happiness
May there someday be love
May there someday be peace

JOYS AND CONCERNS.....

PRAYER.....

SCRIPTURE.....

Exodus 1:8-2:10 New Revised Standard Version Updated Edition

The Israelites Are Oppressed

8 Now a new king arose over Egypt who did not know Joseph. 9 He said to his people, “Look, the Israelite people are more numerous and more powerful than we. 10 Come, let us deal shrewdly with them, or they will increase and, in the event of war, join our enemies and fight against us and escape from the land.” 11 Therefore they set taskmasters over them to oppress them with forced labor. They built supply cities, Pithom and Ramesses, for Pharaoh. 12 But the more they were oppressed, the more they multiplied and spread, so that the Egyptians came to dread the Israelites. 13 The Egyptians subjected the Israelites to hard servitude 14 and made their lives bitter with hard servitude in mortar and bricks and in every kind of field labor. They were ruthless in all the tasks that they imposed on them.

15 The king of Egypt said to the Hebrew midwives, one of whom was named Shiphrah and the other Puah, 16 “When you act as midwives to the Hebrew women and see them on the birthstool, if it is a son, kill him, but if it is a daughter, she shall live.” 17 But the midwives feared God; they did not do as the king of Egypt commanded them, but they let the boys live. 18 So the king of Egypt summoned the midwives and said to them, “Why have you done this and allowed the boys to live?” 19 The midwives said to Pharaoh, “Because the Hebrew women are not like the Egyptian women, for they are vigorous and give birth before the midwife comes to them.” 20 So God dealt well with the midwives, and the people multiplied and became very strong. 21 And because the midwives feared God, he gave them families. 22 Then Pharaoh commanded all his people, “Every son that is born to the Hebrews[a] you shall throw into the Nile, but you shall let every daughter live.” Birth and Youth of Moses

2 Now a man from the house of Levi went and married a Levite woman. 2 The woman conceived and bore a son, and when she saw that he was a fine baby, she hid him three months. 3 When she could hide him no longer she got a papyrus basket for him and plastered it with bitumen and pitch; she put the child in it and placed it among the reeds on the bank of the river. 4 His sister stood at a distance, to see what would happen to him.

5 The daughter of Pharaoh came down to bathe at the river, while her attendants walked beside the river. She saw the basket among the reeds and sent her maid to bring it. 6

When she opened it, she saw the child. He was crying, and she took pity on him. “This must be one of the Hebrews’ children,” she said. 7 Then his sister said to Pharaoh’s daughter, “Shall I go and get you a nurse from the Hebrew women to nurse the child for you?” 8 Pharaoh’s daughter said to her, “Yes.” So the girl went and called the child’s mother. 9 Pharaoh’s daughter said to her, “Take this child and nurse it for me, and I will give you your wages.” So the woman took the child and nursed it. 10 When the child grew up, she brought him to Pharaoh’s daughter, and he became her son. She named him Moses,[b] “because,” she said, “I drew him out of the water.”

Éxodo 1:8-2:10. Nueva Versión Internacional

8 Pero llegó al poder en Egipto un nuevo rey que no había conocido a José 9 y dijo a su pueblo: «¡Cuidado con los israelitas, que ya son más fuertes y numerosos que nosotros! 10 Vamos a tener que manejarlos con mucha astucia; de lo contrario, seguirán aumentando y, si estalla una guerra, se unirán a nuestros enemigos, nos combatirán y se irán del país». 11 Fue así como los egipcios pusieron capataces para que oprimieran a los israelitas. Les impusieron trabajos forzados, tales como los de edificar para el faraón las ciudades de almacenaje Pitón y Ramsés. 12 Pero cuanto más los oprimían, más se multiplicaban y se extendían, de modo que los egipcios llegaron a tenerles miedo; 13 por eso les imponían trabajos pesados y los trataban con crueldad. 14 Les amargaban la vida obligándolos a hacer mezcla, ladrillos y todas las labores del campo. En todos los trabajos de esclavos que los israelitas realizaban, los egipcios los trataban con crueldad. 15 Había dos parteras de las hebreas, llamadas Sifrá y Fuvá, a las que el rey de Egipto ordenó: 16 —Cuando ayuden a las hebreas en sus partos, fíjense en el sexo:[a] si es niño, mátenlo; pero si es niña, déjenla con vida.

17 Sin embargo, las parteras temían a Dios, así que no siguieron las órdenes del rey de Egipto, sino que dejaron con vida a los varones. 18 Entonces el rey de Egipto mandó llamar a las parteras y les preguntó:

—¿Por qué han hecho esto? ¿Por qué han dejado con vida a los varones?

19 Las parteras respondieron:

—Resulta que las hebreas no son como las egipcias, sino que están llenas de vida y dan a luz antes de que lleguemos.

20 De este modo los israelitas se hicieron más numerosos y más fuertes. Además, Dios trató muy bien a las parteras 21 y, por haberse mostrado temerosas de Dios, les concedió tener muchos hijos. 22 El faraón, por su parte, dio esta orden a todo su pueblo:

—¡Tiren al río a todos los niños hebreos que nazcan! A las niñas, déjenlas con vida.

Nacimiento de Moisés

2 Hubo un levita que tomó por esposa a una mujer de su propia tribu. 2 La mujer quedó embarazada y tuvo un hijo, y al verlo tan hermoso lo escondió durante tres meses.

3 Cuando ya no pudo seguir ocultándolo, preparó una cesta de papiro, la embadurnó con brea y asfalto. Después puso en ella al niño y fue a dejar la cesta entre los juncos que había a la orilla del Nilo. 4 Pero la hermana del niño se quedó a cierta distancia para

ver qué pasaría con él.

5 En eso, la hija del faraón bajó a bañarse en el Nilo. Sus doncellas, mientras tanto, se paseaban por la orilla del río. De pronto, la hija del faraón vio la cesta entre los juncos y ordenó a una de sus esclavas que fuera por ella. 6 Cuando la hija del faraón abrió la cesta y vio allí dentro un niño que lloraba, le tuvo compasión y exclamó:

—¡Es un niño hebreo!

7 La hermana del niño preguntó entonces a la hija del faraón:

—¿Quiere usted que vaya y llame a una nodriza hebrea, para que críe al niño por usted?

8 —Ve a llamarla —contestó.

La muchacha fue y trajo a la madre del niño, 9 y la hija del faraón le dijo:

—Llévate a este niño y críamelo. Yo te pagaré por hacerlo.

Fue así como la madre del niño se lo llevó y lo crio. 10 Ya crecido el niño, se lo llevó a la hija del faraón y ella lo adoptó como hijo suyo; además, le puso por nombre Moisés, [b] pues dijo: «¡Yo lo saqué del río!».

Footnotes

1:16 el sexo. Lit. las dos piedras (refiriéndose a los testículos).

2:10 En hebreo, Moisés suena como el verbo que significa sacar.

A TIME FOR ALL AGES.....

HYMN #309 “We Are Your People” 1,2,4,5

1 We are your people,
Spirit of grace,
you dare to make us
Christ to our neighbors
of every culture and place.

2 Joined in community,
treasured and fed,
may we discover
gifts in each other,
willing to lead and be led.

4 Glad of tradition,
help us to see
in all life’s changing,
where Christ is leading,
where our best efforts should be.

5 Give, as we venture,
justice and care
(peaceful, insisting,
risking, resisting),
wisdom to know when and where.

SERMON.....Rev. Dr. Sarah Townes

PASTORAL PRAYER.....

PRAYER OF JESUS

Our Father, Our Mother,
Who is in Heaven, Holy be Your name,
Kin(g)dom come, Your 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 do not lead us into temptation,
But deliver us from evil,
For yours is the Kin(g)dom and the
Power and the glory,
Now and forever, Amen.

SHARING OUR GIFTS.....

OFFERTORY.....

“Carol Red, piano

DOXOLOGY

Praise God from whom all blessings flow.
Praise God all creatures here below.
Alleluia! Alleluia!
Praise God the source of all our gifts.
Praise Jesus Christ whose power uplifts.
Praise the Spirit, Holy Spirit.
Alleluia! Alleluia! Alleluia!

PRAYER OF DEDICATION.....

CLOSING HYMN #397 Thank our God for Sisters, Brothers

1 Thank our God for sisters, brothers,
One by grace, in harmony.
Joining heart to heart with others,
Making strong community.
With the cross of Christ our standard,
Let us as with one voice,
Glory, glory, yours the promise:
We who are the church rejoice.
2 Praise to God for congregations,
Keeping faith with Christ as guide;

Many tongues of many nations
Song and service unified
Sweet the psalm and sweet the carol,
When our song is raised as one.
Glory, glory, yours the glory,
As in heaven your will be done.
3 Holy is your name forever!
Heal divisions that remain;
Bless the church’s new endeavors;
Make our witness one again.
One in Christ and in Christ’s gospel,
Make us one we now implore.
Glory, glory, yours the glory,
Then and now and evermore.

LIFE OF OUR COMMUNITY.....

CLOSING REFLECTION.....

“Where the Light Begins” Music by Susan LaBarr, words by Jan Richardson. Treble Ensemble

*Perhaps it does not begin.
Perhaps it is always.
Perhaps it takes a lifetime to open our eyes,
to learn to see
the luminous line of the map in the dark
the vigil flame in the house of the heart,
the love so searing
we cannot keep from singing, from crying out
Perhaps this day the light begins,
We are where the light begins.
Perhaps it does not begin.
Perhaps it is always.
– excerpted from poem by Jan Richardson,*

BENEDICTION.....

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Thank you for joining us in worship today

We are delighted to have you worshipping with us today!



Church of the Good Shepherd, UCC is a dynamic congregation with a rich history and vibrant ministry in the community. Our church is a part of a blend of five major Protestant denominations that united together in 1957 to form the United Church of Christ: Congregational, Christian, Afro-Christian, German Evangelical and Reformed. We celebrate the words of Pastor John Robinson, who in his farewell remarks to the Pilgrims as they were leaving for the "new world," said, "There is still more light and truth to break forth from God's holy word." We say at our church that "God is still speaking!" "There is still more light and truth to break forth from God's holy word."

- We are a church that:
 - Centers our faith and practice in the life and ministry Jesus Christ.
 - Takes the Bible seriously, not literally.
 - Builds community partnerships across differences.
 - Worships God with joyful hearts and open minds.
 - Includes children in the life and ministry of the church.
 - Celebrates creativity and the arts.
 - Encounters Christ in Creation, community, sacraments, music, scripture, and service.
 - Listens and responds to the movement of the Holy Spirit.
 - Celebrates an open table and seeks to be inclusive of ALL people.
 - Seeks to live out our faith in the world as we build God's reign of love and justice on earth.
 - Believes that growth in wisdom and understanding happens at all stages of life.
 - Embraces solidarity, not just charity.
 - Is committed to work for justice for all people and for the environment.
 - Cares for one another, laughs easily, and rests in God's love.

Vision Statement

Church of the Good Shepherd desires to be an

Mission Statement

The mission of Church of the Good

An Open and Affirming Congregation of the United Church of Christ

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No matter where you are on life's journey, you are welcome here.