



"Haman and Mordecai" by Paul Alexander Leroy

August 2, 2026
Communion Sunday Worship

First Congregational United Church of Christ
945 G Street NW, Washington, DC

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

ORDER OF WORSHIP

*During the prelude, we invite you to quiet your heart,
meditating on God's presence as we prepare for worship.*

PRELUDE

Come Sunday

Duke Ellington

WELCOME

Rev. Amanda Hendler-Voss

*OPENING HYMN

"Morning Has Broken"

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PRAYER OF CONFESSION & SILENT PRAYER

Polly Gordon

O God, we confess that we have not loved you with fullness of heart, soul, strength and mind. We have not loved our neighbors with a deep and abiding compassion. And we have not loved ourselves but instead neglected our own truest needs. Transform our lack, enliven our deadness, heal our wounds, and forgive us again, O God. Renew us today with the bread of life. Amen.

WORDS OF ASSURANCE

Beloved Community, hear the good news made known in Jesus Christ: God's mercies are from everlasting to everlasting. We are forgiven. Thanks be to God!

* PASSING THE PEACE OF GOD

Rev. Amanda Hendler-Voss

Please greet those around you with words such as "The peace of God be with you." For those joining us online, please unmute to pass the peace. Let us bless one another with deep peace across time and space.

FIRST READING FROM THE HEBREW SCRIPTURES

Susan Anderson

Esther 4:1-8

When Mordecai learned all that had been done, he tore his clothes and put on sackcloth and ashes and went through the city, wailing with a loud and bitter cry; he went up to the entrance of the king's gate, for no one might enter the king's gate clothed with sackcloth. In every province, wherever the king's command and his decree came, there was great mourning among the Jewish people, with fasting and weeping and lamenting, and most of them lay in sackcloth and ashes.

When Esther's maids and her eunuchs came and told her, the queen was deeply distressed; she sent garments to clothe Mordecai, so that he might take off his sackcloth, but he would not accept them. Then Esther called for Hathach, one of the king's eunuchs who had been appointed to attend her, and ordered him to go to Mordecai to learn what was happening and why. Hathach went out to Mordecai in the open square of the city in front of the king's gate, and Mordecai told all that had happened to him and the exact sum of money that Haman had promised to pay into the king's treasuries for the destruction of the Jews. Mordecai also gave him a copy of the written decree issued in Susa for their destruction, that he might show Esther, explain it to her, and charge her to go to the king to make supplication to him and to entreat him for her people.

SECOND READING FROM THE HEBREW SCRIPTURES

Rev. Jason Carson Wilson

Esther 4:9-17

Hathach went and told Esther what Mordecai had said. Then Esther spoke to Hathach and gave him a message for Mordecai: "All the king's servants and the people of the king's provinces know that, if any man or woman goes to the king inside the inner court without being called, there is but one law: to be put to death. Only if the king holds out the golden scepter to someone may that person live. I myself have not been called to come in to the king for thirty days." When they told Mordecai what Esther had said, Mordecai told them to reply to Esther, "Do not think that in the king's palace you will escape any more than all the other Jews. For if you keep silent at this time, relief and deliverance will rise for the Jewish people from another place, but you and your father's family will perish. Who knows? Perhaps you have come to royal dignity for just such a time as this." Then Esther said in reply to Mordecai, "Go, gather all the Jews to be found in Susa, and hold a fast on my behalf, and neither eat nor drink for three days, night or day. I and my maids will also fast as you do. After that I will go to the king, though it is against the law, and if I perish, I perish." Mordecai then went away and did everything as Esther had ordered him.

SERMON

Rev. Amanda Hendler-Voss

MUSICAL OFFERING

Why I'm Here

Paul Morton Jr. &
Samara Joy McLendon

Andrew Hamilton, guitar & vocals; Dwan Reece, vocals

OFFERING

Rev. Amanda Hendler-Voss

As we worship virtually and in person, we invite you to give in a variety of ways. Place your offering in the plate, send your check to the office, or [give online](#) via PayPal or Vanco. Consider signing up for auto-giving.

PRAYERS OF THE PEOPLE

Rev. Sam McFerran

INVITATION TO COMMUNION

Rev. Amanda Hendler-Voss & Rev. Sam McFerran

At First Church, all are welcome to God's table to celebrate the sacrament of communion, including children. We receive communion in the round, gluten free bread is available and all the cups are filled with grape juice. For those joining us online, please set your table with a form of bread and cup, which we will bless and break together. Taste and see that God is good!

Communion Prayer

Prayer of our Savior

Our God, 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.

Words of Institution

Sharing of the Bread and Cup

Communion Song

Prayer

"You Are My All in All"

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* Indicates "Please Rise in Body or in Spirit"

CELEBRATING TIME

Morning Has Broken 664



1 Morn-ing has bro - ken like the first morn - ing; black-bird has
 2 Sweet the rain's new fall sun - lit from heav - en, like the first
 3 Mine is the sun - light! Mine is the morn - ing, born of the



spo - ken like the first bird. Praise for the sing - ing! Praise for the
 dew - fall on the first grass. Praise for the sweet-ness of the wet
 one light E - den saw play! Praise with e - la - tion; praise ev - ery



morn - ing! Praise for them, spring - ing fresh from the Word!
 gar - den, sprung in com - plete - ness where God's feet pass.
 morn - ing, God's re - cre - a - tion of the new day!

This 20th-century text was created to provide words for this traditional tune named for a small village on the Isle of Mull, off the west coast of Scotland. Through repeated use of "new" and "first," each morning is treated as a re-creation of the promise of the original day.

TEXT: Eleanor Farjeon, 1931, alt.
 MUSIC: Gaelic melody; arr. Beverly A. Howard, 2012
 Text © David Higham Assoc., Ltd.
 Music Arr. © 2012 Beverly A. Howard

BUNESSAN
 5.5.5.4.D

You Are My Strength When I Am Weak 519

You Are My All in All

Capo 5: (C) (G) (Am7) (Em) (C)
F C Dm7 Am F

You are my strength when I am weak; you are the trea-sure that I

(Dm7) (C) (G7) (C) (G7) (C) (G)
Gm7 F C7 F C7 F C

seek; you are my all in all. When I fall down, you pick me

(Am7) (Em) (C) (Dm7) (C) (G7) (F) (C)
Dm7 Am F Gm7 F C7 B^b F

up; when I am dry, you fill my cup; you are my all in all.

(C) (G) (Am7) (Em) (Dm7) (C) (G) (C) (G7)
F C Dm7 Am Gm7 F C F C7

Je - sus, Lamb of God, wor - thy is your name!

(C) (G) (Am7) (Em) (Dm7) (C) (G7) (F) (C)
F C Dm7 Am Gm7 F C7 B^b F

Je - sus, Lamb of God, wor - thy is your name!

**May be sung as a canon.*

The expression "all in all," meaning "everything," owes much of its endurance in English usage to its appearance in 1 Corinthians 15:28, though many phrases leading up to it here have parallels in Hebrew Scripture. The second section echoes the song to the Lamb in Revelation 5:12.

This Little Light/This Joy I Have

Matt. 5:14-16

African-American spiritual

1 This lit-tle light of mine, I'm gon-na let it shine.
 1 This . . . joy I have, the world did-n't give to me.

I am gon-na let it, let it shine,
 oh, the world did not give to me,

This lit-tle light of mine, I'm gon-na let it shine.
 This joy . . . I have, the world did-n't give to me.

This lit-tle light of mine, I'm gon-na let it shine,
 This . . . joy I have, the world did-n't give to me.

Hal - le-lu - jah,
 Hal - le-lu, the

let it shine, let it shine, let it shine, (oh let it shine.)
 No, the world did-n't give it, the world can't take it a - way.

"This Little Light" continued:

- 2 Ev-ery-where I go . . .
- 3 All-through the night . . .

"This Joy I Have" continued:

- 2 This love I have . . .
- 3 This hope I have . . .
- 4 This faith I have . . .
- 5 This peace I have . . .

Welcome to First Congregational UCC in Washington DC!

Connect with us!

If you are worshipping from afar but would like to connect with the First Church community, please [click here](#) to fill out an online Visitor's Card and check out our newsletters at our website, www.firstuccdc.org. We welcome you warmly!

Families with Children

Children, complete with their wiggles and noises, are welcome in worship! At First Church, we provide Sunday school during the academic school year for preschool - 6th Grade and nursery care for infants and toddlers in our Christian Education (CE) suite on the second floor. Over the summer, Sunday school will focus on the summer theme "Unsung Heroes," and will be held on the following dates: August 2 and 30. The nursery will also be open on those dates. For other summer Sundays, we invite children and youth to worship with us in the sanctuary. If you would like to be added to our listserv for First Church families, please contact Rev. Sam at mcferran.sam@gmail.com. We are so grateful to welcome your children into our life together at First Church!

Assisted Listening Devices

We offer assisted listening devices with either headphones or loops to connect directly to hearing aids. Please see an usher if you would like to use an assisted listening device.

Coffee Hour Following Worship

All are invited to join us for coffee, light refreshments, and fellowship in the lobby immediately following worship. Upcoming Coffee Hour Hosts:

August 9: Michael Enseki-Frank, Jaimie Orr

August 16: Trevor Bakker, Abby Johnson

Invitation Cards

Stop by the Usher's Table to pick up one or more of the invitation cards. We invite members to use them to invite someone in your circle to come to First Church with you.

Thank You to Today's Worship Participants & Volunteers

Worship Leaders: Rev. Amanda Hendler-Voss, Rev. Sam McFerran

Music: Dennis Turner, Andrew Hamilton, Dwan Reece

Speakers & Liturgists: Polly Gordon, Susan Anderson, Rev. Jason Carson Wilson, Thaddaeus Elliott

Sanctuary Setup: Ann Bushmiller, Reshmina William

Coffee Hour Hosts: Michael Enseki-Frank, Chris Byrne

Ushers: Kristen & Whit Wheeler

Zoom Moderator: Erin Williams

A/V Technician: Joseph Hiep

Sunday Morning Coordinator: Moe Shorter

Happening at First Church

Summer Theme: Unsung Heroes

This summer in worship, as our nation marks the 250th anniversary of our independence, we will uplift the legacy of ancestors who stood for justice and worked for liberation whose names and stories we may not know, both in American history and in the Bible. What does it mean to train our eyes on the margins, seeing history or the gospel from this perspective? Which unlikely figures, the poor and dispossessed, has God used to build the beloved community? How can we relearn our history and theology from their stories? How does Jesus' solidarity with the "crucified peoples of the world" transform our faith? Join us this summer for intimate worship settings as we deepen our understanding of liberation and delve into a variety of special music offerings.

Lean into Summer Worship

This summer, when you hear the singing bowl invite us into holy time, the musical prelude marks the shift between the noise of the world and the sanctuary of God's house. We invite you to consider the prelude as a spiritual practice; a cue to breathe deeply and quiet the heart, to return to the life-giving love of God. Throughout the summer, you will notice our sanctuary is set for a more intimate gathering. Please join us in the chairs on the floor of the sanctuary as we sit in the round, so we can see one another and worship side-by-side. Special music will minister to us weekly, and we will enjoy a deep bench of preachers from the pews: Abigail Cipparone, Trevor Bakker, Diana Gomez de Molina, and Sandy Sorensen, along with Rev. Amanda and Rev. Sam. Lean in this summer as together we invite the gospel message of liberation and love to wash over us here in the nation's capital.



Crafting a Labyrinth for First Church

Calling all crafters! First Church is looking for volunteers willing to help design and implement a portable cloth labyrinth for use as a physical meditation practice following worship. Labyrinths are a great way to get folks "out of their heads" and moving into a space of quiet contemplation that engages mind, spirit, and body. We're looking for volunteers who are willing to assist with procuring materials, designing, sewing, or painting to help create First Church's own labyrinth. With enough volunteers, this should only take a few hours: many hands make light work! If interested in learning more, please reach out to Reshmina William at reshmina.william@gmail.com.



For more information on the life and ministry
of First Church, scan the QR code to view
our most recent weekly newsletter.



Prayer List

Prayers of comfort for the family of the Rev. Susan Henderson, following her death. Rev. Henderson served in many settings of the United Church of Christ, including at First Church. Prayers of joy for the Rev. Dr. LaTayna Purnell, officially called to serve as the new Associate Minister of Care and Community at Christ Congregational Church UCC in Silver Spring, MD.

Prayers of mercy for the people of Venezuela following the devastating earthquakes. Prayers of joy for the birth of Josephine Cheng Meekins to Alyx and Matthew. Welcome to the world, beloved child of God!

Prayers of comfort for the family of Rev. Laura Simmons, whose father passed away after battling cancer.

Prayers for peace in Iran and for all those impacted by the war.

Prayers of compassion and care for all federal workers facing chaos, cruelty, and uncertainty.

Prayers of courage and strength for our democracy.

Prayers of support for Dale Ostrander, living with memory loss.

Prayers for peace and rebuilding in Gaza.

Prayers of peace and liberation for Sudan, Ukraine, Nicaragua, Cuba, and Haiti.

Prayers of mercy for families struggling to eat and make ends meet.

Prayers for Peoples Congregational UCC, our sibling congregation.

Prayers of strength for Rev. Laura Simmons and Rev. Diana Gomez de Molina, serving as chaplains.

Welcome to First Congregational UCC. We were founded in 1865 by abolitionists as one of the first racially integrated church in Washington, D.C. In 1867 our mission committee played a prominent role in the founding of Howard University. The church has been located at its present site at 10th and G Streets NW since 1868. In more recent years, the church affirmed its vision as an Open and Affirming (ONA) Church (1987), a Just Peace Church (1985), Multiracial/Multicultural Church (2003), and an Anti-Racist Church (2021). Our new building, constructed according to Gold LEED standards, was dedicated in 2012. First Church continues to follow its faith journey into the future and to be a prophetic voice for the Spirit in the nation's capital. If you would like to know more about First Church or would like to make it your spiritual home and community, please contact churchoffice@FirstUCCDC.org or 202.628.4317.



Ministers – Friends & Members of the Church

Senior Minister – Rev. Amanda Hendler-Voss

Associate Minister – Rev. Sam McFerran

Interim Director of Music – Dennis Turner

Building Manager – Byron Adams

Sexton – Ines Marquez

Administrative Assistant – Whitney McColley

Member in Discernment – Lynaya Morris

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