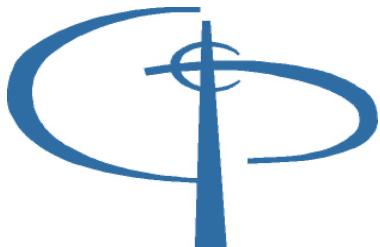


East County Shared Ministry

**First Congregational
Church of Antioch**



**Community
Presbyterian Church
of Pittsburg, CA**

*Presbytery of San Francisco, PC (USA)
Northern California Nevada Conference, UCC*

**New Year Sunday
January 7th, 2023 • 10:00 am**



"Our deepest fear is not that we are inadequate. Our deepest fear is that we are powerful beyond measure. It is our light, not our darkness that most frightens us. We ask ourselves, who am I to be brilliant, gorgeous, talented and fabulous. Actually, who are you not to be? You are a child of God. Your playing small doesn't serve the world. There is nothing enlightened about shrinking so that other people won't feel insecure around you. We are born to make manifest the glory of God that is within us. It's not just in some of us, it's in everyone, and as we let our own light shine, we consciously give other people permission to do the same. As we are liberated from our own fear, our presence automatically liberates others."

- Nelson Mandela, 1994 Inaugural Speech

CELEBRATING GOD'S LOVE

NO MATTER WHO YOU ARE, OR WHERE YOU ARE ON LIFE'S JOURNEY, YOU ARE WELCOME HERE.

"I see Christianity increasingly identified not with peace on earth or building wholeness, but with blessing tribal attitudes, justifying lingering prejudices, and violating those different by race, religion, gender and sexual orientation."

- John Shelby Spong

PRELUDE

Today is the First Day

by Audrey Mieir

*Today is the first day of the rest of my life;
Yesterday is gone with all its toil and its strife.
I will entrust Him with all my tomorrows,
I will accept all its joys and its sorrows.*

*Now is the moment, the past is all done.
The rest of my days have now already begun.
I'll make today the best of my life
For today is the first day of the rest of my life.*

WELCOME, ANNOUNCEMENTS & PASTORAL WELCOME

Rev. Will McGarvey

LIGHTING THE PEACE CANDLE & MINISTER WELCOME

Ariel Vegosen

REMEMBERING ANCESTORS

Ariel Vegosen

AFRICAN LIBATION

INTROIT

HEART OF CREATION

by Michael Stillwater

**I am one with the heart of Creation. I am one with the heart of love.
I am one with the soul of the Spirit. I am one with God
Ave Maria. Kyrie Eleison.**

*CALL TO WORSHIP

Please join me for the call to worship from the Sermon on the Mount

One: *Jesus says: Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.*

All: **Blessed are those who mourn, for they will be comforted.**

One: *Blessed are the meek, for they will inherit the earth.*

All: **And blessed is the church that serves with the love of God to eradicate systemic poverty.**

One: Jesus says: *Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness, for they will be filled. Blessed are the merciful, for they will receive mercy.*

All: **Blessed are the pure in heart, for they will see God. And blessed is the church that trusts in the grace of Christ to build congregational vitality.**

One: Jesus says: *Blessed are the peacemakers, for they will be called children of God. Blessed are those who are persecuted for righteousness' sake, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.*

All: **Blessed are you when people revile you and utter all kinds of evil against you falsely on my account. And blessed is the church that seeks by the power of the Spirit to dismantle structural racism.**

*OPENING Hymn

For Everyone Born
by Shirley Erena Murray, Brian R. Mann, Will McGarvey

Purple Hymnal 769

For everyone born, a place at the table, for everyone born, clean water and bread; a shelter, a space, a safe place for growing, for everyone born, a star overhead.

Refrain:

And God will delight when we are creators of justice and joy, compassion and peace: yes God will delight when we are creators of justice, justice and joy.

**For firm and infirm, a place at the table,
For wheelchairs and canes, a child's running feet,
For sighted and blind, all joining the chorus,
The hearing impaired, all feeling the beat.**

Refrain:

**For housed and unhoused, a place at the table,
for hungry and fed, a table for all;
A place to dig deep in soil that grows gardens,
communion at home, new ways to belong.**

Refrain:

**For gay and for straight, a place at the table,
transgender and queer in one single tree,
engaging each gift and blessing each covenant,
for gay and for straight, a new way to be.**

Refrain:

*UNISON PRAYER

Please join me as we pray together.

Holy God, by your Word and Spirit, come and transform your church to be a living sign of your love for the world — where the poor are filled with good things, the dividing walls are broken down, and the dead are raised to new life; through Jesus Christ our example, teacher and Lord. Amen.

*RESPONSE

Glory to God, Whose Goodness Shines on Me *Purple Hymnal 582*

**Glory to God, Whose goodness shines on me,
And to the Son, Whose grace has pardoned me,
And to the Spirit, Whose love has set me free.
As it was in the beginning, Is now and ever shall be. Amen.**

**World without end, - without end. Amen.
World without end, - without end. Amen.
World without end, - without end. Amen.
Is now and ever shall be. Amen.**

*WORDS OF PEACE

One: The energy that flows through Jesus to us is an active peace of Christ. As you reach out, may this peace of Christ be with you.

All: And also with you.

One: Let us offer each other a sign of Christ's Peace.

PREPARING OUR HEARTS

Lord, Listen to Your Children Praying

Purple Hymnal 469

Lord, listen to your children praying. (singing)

Lord, send your Spirit in this place.

Lord, listen to your children praying. (singing)

Send us love, send us power, send us grace.

JOYS & CONCERNS, SILENT & MORNING PRAYERS

Rev. Will McGarvey

Silent Prayer, Pastoral Prayer, The Lord's Prayer adapted from William L. Wallace

O God of Sky and Earth, we reverence your presence, both within us and beyond. May what we eat sustain us in the Way of compassionate sharing. Help us to be forgiving — forgiving others, forgiving ourselves. Liberate us from guilt, that learning from our mistakes we may move beyond self-centeredness to that depth of being in which we are one with all things. This Way of love, peace and justice is for all the Earth, for human beings and for all living creatures. Both now and forever. Amen.

INTRODUCTION TO THE READINGS:

HYMN

The Dove Will Fly on Mended Wing

by Tim Reaburn, to the tune of O Waly Waly

**Religion, culture, creed and race, each human spirit and each face
We celebrate, we dance and sing the talents here each one might
bring.**

**And take away a new found song, a new found voice to act on
wrongs. To trust, to heal, to help us cope, to stand as one,
renewing hope.**

**A people stand, a people call: Come gather here and welcome all.
Diversify and celebrate that hopelessness is not our fate.**

**And chains will fall, the shackles break, the earth will rise, and
powers quake, Justice will roll, and freedom sing, the dove will fly
on mended wing.**

HEBREW SCRIPTURE READING

Text Study: Six Genders in Talmud

Babylonian Talmud Yevamot 64b

R. Isaac said: Why were our ancestors (Abraham and Sarah, Isaac and Rebecca) infertile? Because the Holy One, blessed be, longs to hear the prayer of the righteous.

R. Isaac further stated: Why is the prayer of the righteous compared to a pitchfork? As a pitchfork turns the sheaves of grain from one position to another, so does the prayer of the righteous turn the heart of the Holy One, blessed be, from the attribute of strict judgment to the attribute of compassion.

R. Ammi said: Abraham and Sarah were originally tumtums, for it is said, “Look to the rock you were hewn from, and the hollow of the pit from which you were dug” (Isaiah 51:1), and this is followed by the text, “Look to Abraham your father and to Sarah who bore you.”

R. Nachman said in the name of Rabbah b. Abbuha: Our mother Sarah was an aylonit, for it is said, “And Sarai was barren, she had no child” (Genesis 11:30). [The verse says both “was barren” and “had no child” to tell us that] she didn’t even have a womb. (See *insert on pages 11-12 for the definitions, questions and credits*)

Leader: *This is a Word of God.*

Response: Thanks be to God.

Leader: *All creation is a word of God.*

Response: All creation speaks volumes of God.

PROMPTING

Ariel Vegosen

“Abraham & Sarah: Six Genders in the Talmud”

RETURNING OUR GIFTS TO GOD

Invitation

Offertory

O Love That Wilt Not Let Me Go

Purple Hymnal 833

*O love, that wilt not let me go, I rest my weary soul in thee,
I give thee back the life I owe, That in thine ocean depths its flow
May richer, fuller be.*

*O joy that seekest me through pain, I cannot close my heart to thee,
I trace the rainbow through the rain, And feel the promise is not vain
That morn shall tearless be.*

*Doxology

(to the tune of: O Come, O Come Emmanuel)

Praise God from whom all blessings flow

Praise God, all Spirit messengers below.

Praise God, the source of all our gifts!

Praise Jesus Christ, whose power uplifts!

Rejoice! Rejoice!

Emmanuel shall come to thee, O Israel.

Prayer of Dedication

COMMUNION

(We practice open communion and serve grape juice and a wafer in personal sized, communion kits. Everyone is welcome to participate. It is our custom to hold the elements until all are served so we can share in this holy meal together.)

INVITATION AND WELCOME TO THE TABLE

Words of Institution & Sharing in the Sacrament

.... "Share this bread among you; this is my body, broken for justice. Do this to remember me."

The bread of life for all who hunger.

....May this meal be food and drink for our journey —
renewing, strengthening, and sustaining us.

The cup of compassion for a broken world.

Communion Hymn

One Bread, One Body

Purple Hymnal 530

Refrain:

***One bread, one body, one Lord of all,
one cup of blessing which we bless.***

***And we, though many, throughout the earth,
we are one body in this one Lord.***

Prayer After Communion

God of love, we give you thanks for satisfying our hungry hearts with this meal. Send us from here to reveal your love in the world. Inspire in us the resolve and the courage, the compassion and the passion, to do justice, to love kindness, and to walk humbly with you. Amen.

*CLOSING SONG

Live into Hope

Purple Hymnal 772

**Live into hope of captives freed, Of sight regained the end of greed.
The oppressed shall be the first to see The year of God's own jubilee!**

**Live into hope the blind shall see With insight and with clarity,
Removing shades of pride and fear A vision of our God brought near.**

**Live into hope of liberty, The right to speak, the right to be,
The right to have one's daily bread, To hear God's word and thus be fed.**

Live into hope of captives freed, From chains of fear or want or greed, God now proclaims our full release To faith and hope and joy and peace.

***SENDING FORTH**

adapted from William L. Wallace

Let us send each other forth with these words.

We affirm that we are part of a wonderfully mysterious universe, that all life is inter-related in one vast web, that our role lies in nurturing all life and the planet itself, that human beings are genetically one family and of equal value, that every human being has the right to the basic necessities of life, that each of us is on an evolving spiritual journey, and that we are called to work to create a world of justice and peace, compassion and respect.

BENEDICTION

Ariel Vegosen

***POSTLUDE**

*Make me a Channel of Your Peace
Instrumental*

by St. Francis

Sharing with each other



Leading Worship This Morning

Worship Leaders

Rev. Will McGarvey

Gender Illumination, Ariel Vegosen

Liturgists

Myrdel Dybdal

Ministers of Music

Michael Miller

Rev. Karen Hastings-Flegel

Elaine Palmer

Joan Schmitt

Jane Fish

Gayle Namanny

Donald Lang



<https://zoom.us/j/493430519?pwd=Y3NqSCtidkVSd3ExdVJCb01ZTkxHUT09>

Meeting ID: 493 430 519

Password: 079960

+1669-900-9128,,493430519#, #,079960#

If you are calling in, call the first number, then when prompted type in the meeting id, then #, then, when prompted, enter the password, and then #



www.genderillumination.com

www.Shinediversity.com

Text Study: Six Genders In Talmud

In the Talmud, rabbis and scholars recorded their conversations and disagreements about the laws of the Mishna. The Talmud contains conversations within and across generations and includes contributions from about 200 C.E. to 600 C.E.

The Talmud references six genders. It is important to note that these gender categories do not map neatly onto current gender categorizations. For example, some of the Talmud terms conflate gender and sex, whereas today we understand gender and sex as distinct categories. The mention of non-binary genders does not mean a just world existed where the Rabbis gave equal treatment to all genders. These categories were designed by men rather than by the people who lived these genders. In today's world a big part of gender justice is giving space for people to define and label their own gender identities.

Zachar/ זכר: This term is derived from the word for a pointy sword and refers to a phallus. It is usually translated as "male" in English.

Nekeivah/ נקבָה: This term is derived from the word for a crevice and probably refers to a vaginal opening. It is usually translated as "female" in English.

Androgynos/ אנדראוגינוס: A person who has both "male" and "female" sexual characteristics. 149 references in Mishna and Talmud (1st-8th Centuries CE); 350 in classical midrash and Jewish law codes (2nd -16th Centuries CE).

Tumtum/ טומטום A person whose sexual characteristics are indeterminate or obscured. 181 references in Mishna and Talmud; 335 in classical midrash and Jewish law codes.

Ay'lionit/ אילוניית: A person who is identified as "female" at birth but develops "male" characteristics at puberty and is infertile. 80 references in Mishna and Talmud; 40 in classical midrash and Jewish law codes.

Saris/ סריס: A person who is identified as "male" at birth but develops "female" characteristics as puberty and/or is lacking a penis. A saris can be "naturally" a saris (saris hamah), or become one through human intervention (saris adam). 156 references in mishna and Talmud; 379 in classical midrash and Jewish law codes.



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Text Study: Abraham and Sarah as Tumtum:

Study the text from *Yevamot 64b* in Chevruta (partners) and answer the questions.

Babylonian Talmud Yevamot 64b

R. Isaac said: Why were our ancestors (Abraham and Sarah, Isaac and Rebecca) infertile? Because the Holy One, blessed be, longs to hear the prayer of the righteous.

R. Isaac further stated: Why is the prayer of the righteous compared to a pitchfork? As a pitchfork turns the sheaves of grain from one position to another, so does the prayer of the righteous turn the heart of the Holy One, blessed be, from the attribute of strict judgment to the attribute of compassion.

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Questions for Text Study:

1. What is the significance of Abraham being a tumtum and Sarah being aylonit? What does that mean to you?
2. These texts describe our founding foremother and forefather as neither male nor female. How does that change your understanding of the way society does gender?
3. This text expresses a major transition in Abraham and Sarah's lives and bodies. Can you relate to this in your own personal life? Share a time in your life that you experienced a major transition and how that affected you.

Credits and Gratitude: Text Study Created by Ariel Vegosen. English translation of the six genders provided by Rabbi Elliot Kukla. Gratitude for the inspiration Jhos Singer.