

November 20, 2022

*“Reverse Freedom Rides: the Evil Transport Continues!”*

FORT COLLINS MENNONITE FELLOWSHIP

300 E. Oak Street, Ft. Collins, CO 80524

Worship: 10:00 AM

Pastor: Steve Ramer

Cell: 970-412-7510



*Two unidentified women, residents of Hyannis, Mass., help some of the nine children of Lela Mae Williams (not in photo) off the bus, June 8, 1962 at Hyannis on their arrival from Huttig, Ark. Frank C. Curtin/AP*

Welcoming the transformative work of the Holy Spirit in our congregations, we are liberated from a static understanding of the church, which often makes us allies of the status quo. As we open ourselves to the re-creating and animating power of the Holy Spirit, we become agents of healing and hope in the world.

## 1. GATHERING

### Musical Prelude (John)

### Call to Worship (Steve and Cathy)

Leader: What will you offer the body of Christ today?

**People: Bring all that you have. Bring all that you are.**

Leader: The gifts of silence and the gifts of words are welcome.

**People: The gifts of leading and the gifts of following are welcome.**

Leader: The gifts of doubt and the gifts of faith are welcome.

### Opening Prayer

### Opening Song (John and Cathy)

### Welcome and Passing of the Peace:

- **Leader:** May the peace of Christ be with you.
- **People:** And also, with you.
- **All:** Let us offer one another signs of peace, reconciliation, and love.

**People: The gifts of the head and the gifts of the heart are welcome.**

Leader: The gifts of planning and the gifts of spontaneity are welcome.

**People: May all that we are as individuals come together to strengthen the living body of the church, Christ Incarnate.**

*“We live in the age of the refugee, the age of the exile.” — Ariel Dorfman*

*“Suffering, failure, loneliness, sorrow, discouragement, and death will be part of your journey, but the Kingdom of God will conquer all these horrors. No evil can resist grace forever.”*

*— Brennan Manning*

## 2. HEARING GOD'S WORD

### Scriptures: Romans 1:18-32, 12:1-21 (Martha)

**Romans 1: 18** For the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and wickedness of those who by their wickedness suppress the truth . . .

19 For what can be known about God is plain to them, because God has shown it to them.

28 And since they did not see fit to acknowledge God, God gave them up to a debased mind and to things that should not be done. 29 They were filled with every kind of wickedness, evil, covetousness, malice. Full of envy, murder, strife, deceit, craftiness, they are gossips,

30 slanderers, God-haters, insolent, haughty, boastful, inventors of evil, rebellious toward parents, 31 foolish, faithless, heartless, ruthless.

32 They know God's decree, that those who practice such things deserve to die—yet they not only do them, but even applaud others who practice them.

**Romans 12:1** I appeal to you therefore, brothers and sisters, by the mercies of God, to present your bodies as a living sacrifice, holy and acceptable to God, which is your spiritual worship.

2 Do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your minds, so that you may discern what is the will of God—what is good and acceptable and perfect.

21 Do not be overcome by evil, but overcome evil with good."

### SERMON: "Reverse Freedom Rides: the Evil Transport Continues!" (Steve)



Most of us are aware of the "Freedom Riders" of 1961 — multi-racial groups who tested the desegregation of interstate transport by traveling together on buses through the south. Some were beaten, a few hospitalized, and all arrested and jailed.

But how many of us are aware of what was called, the "Reverse Freedom Rides" of 1962? Poor African Americans from the south were bussed to the north, with promises of jobs and homes that never materialized! Unfortunately nearly 60 years later, what was correctly identified by the New York Times as, "A cheap trafficking in human misery on the part of Southern racists," has returned.

*"I believe that there will ultimately be a clash between the oppressed and those that do the oppressing. I believe that there will be a clash between those who want freedom, justice and equality for everyone and those who want to continue the systems of exploitation."* — Malcolm X

*Riders in Hyannis, MA, 1962 Barnstable Patriot Collection, The William Brewster Nickerson Cape Cod History Archives, The Wilkens Library, Cape Cod Community College, West Barnstable, MA*

## 3. RESPONDING TO GOD'S WORD

### Congregational Singing (John and Cathy)

#### Response (everyone)

#### Joys and Concerns (everyone)

#### Offering & Music (John)

#### Sending (all)

Christ has no body now on earth but ours.

Ours are the only hands with which Christ can do his work,

Ours are the only feet with which Christ can go about the world,

Ours are the only eyes through which Christ's compassion can shine forth on a troubled world.

Christ has no body on earth now but ours.

*"I've learned that fear limits you and your vision. It serves as blinders to what may be just a few steps down the road for you. The journey is valuable, but believing in your talents, your abilities, and your self-worth can empower you to walk down an even brighter path. Transforming fear into freedom - how great is that?"* — Soledad O'Brien