

First Congregational United Church of Christ

*Empowered by the Holy Spirit and with the help of God,
we open our doors and hearts to all,
in service and love as modeled by Jesus Christ.*



Fifth Sunday in Lent

*The Lord's Day
Fifth Sunday in Lent
Half Past Seven in the Morning*

The Worship of God

Worship is the submission of all our nature to God. It is the quickening of the conscience by God's holiness; the nourishment of the mind with God's truth; the purifying of the imagination by God's beauty; the opening of the heart to God's love; the surrender of the will to God's purpose—all of this gathered up in adoration.

~William Temple

The Prologue

In today's Witness from the Gospels in John, we read a tale of two followers. The heroine in the story is Jesus' closest disciple, Mary, who took a pound of costly perfume and anointed her Rabbi's feet in front of God and everybody. It was a salaciously titillating moment! Judas, the usual fall-guy, the villain in our on-going passion play, observes from a safe distance, becoming increasingly incensed, appalled at this wasteful display, not to mention the suggestive interaction taking place between a man and a woman! Perhaps like Peter in a non-canonical text, Judas was jealous of Mary's close relationship to Jesus, a union that scholars have described in a variety of intimate ways. As always, life and its living, and the way we read these ancient narratives, is always about context! It is context, context, context, every time, all the time! Once again, Mary chose the better thing! Her actions were wastefully divine! Perhaps one of the lessons implied in this text is that, despite being frequently blamed for any number of insignificant and irrelevant indiscretions, a direct result of that whole "original sin" nonsense, women usually make the right decisions, amazingly intuitive in a uniquely feminine way! Some men fail to get the memo and have not learned that not so big secret. These tone deaf sorts desperately need to get with the program in a hurry!

Gathering Music

The Greeting

The Spirit of the still speaking God be with you.

And also with you.

The Call to Worship and Welcome

The Music for Piano

The Lighting of the Altar Candles

The Collect

Let us pray,

Wasteful God, we have gathered to worship the One who anoints us with the still speaking Spirit of the Holy, to praise the One whose promises equip us to receive the vitality that only comes from God; may our faith in Christ Jesus empower us to an emboldened discipleship, inspiring within us the joy of serving you while setting a vision before us to which we can all aspire; God of the poor and oppressed, whose mercy and pardon are for all those who put their trust in you, teach us to be faithful to all we have learned from Christ Jesus; we seek the power of resurrection faith and the strength to achieve the goals you set before us; may we answer your call and bear fruit for your realm, attracting others to your loving embrace; all this we pray through Jesus Christ, our Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy and still speaking Spirit, one God now and forever.

Amen.

*The Opening Hymn, No. 6

MIT FREUDEN ZART

Sing Praises to God Who Reigns Above

*The Gathering

Come and sit at the feet of Jesus! Come and worship God, listening for a message from the Holy! In this sacred hour, we count everything else as loss!

Gather before the One who has done great things for us, the One who is doing a new thing among us now!

We have gathered in this sacred setting not because we are righteous, but because of the faith instilled within us! The power of Christ's resurrection is ours to proclaim and to share!

Forgetting what lies behind, we press toward the goal of the upward call of God in Christ Jesus, sensitive to the voice of the still speaking Spirit!

The Witness from the Hebrew Bible

ISAIAH 43:16-21

Thus says the Lord, who makes a way in the sea, a path in the mighty waters, who brings out chariot and horse, army and warrior. They lie down, they cannot rise, they are extinguished, quenched like a wick! Do not remember the former things, or consider the things of old! I am about to do a new thing! Now it springs forth, do you not perceive it? I will make a way in the wilderness and rivers in the desert. The wild animals will honor me, the jackals and the ostriches. For I give water in the wilderness, rivers in the desert, to give drink to my chosen people, the people whom I formed for myself so that they might declare my praise!

Listen to what the Spirit of the still speaking God is saying!

Thanks be to God!

The Witness from the Gospels

JOHN 12:1-8

Six days before the Passover Jesus came to Bethany, the home of Lazarus, whom he had raised from the dead. There they gave a dinner for him. Martha served, and Lazarus was one of those at the table with him. Mary took a pound of costly perfume made of pure nard, anointed Jesus' feet, and wiped them with her hair. The house was filled with the fragrance of the perfume. But Judas Iscariot, one of his disciples (the one who was about to betray him), said, "Why was this perfume not sold for three hundred denarii and the money given to the poor?" (He said this not because he cared about the poor, but because he was a thief! He kept the common purse and used to steal what was put into it.) Jesus said, "Leave her alone. She bought it so that she might keep it for the day of my burial. You always have the poor with you, but you do not always have me!"

Listen to what the Spirit of the still speaking God is saying!

Thanks be to God!

The Sermon

Waste Not, Want Not!

Timothy W. Shirley

The Music for Meditation

The Concerns of the Church

The Pastoral Prayer and Lord's Prayer

**Our Father 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.**

*The Closing Hymn, No. 618 *How Firm a Foundation* FOUNDATION
*The Benediction
*The Fellowship Song *Let There Be Peace on Earth* WORLD PEACE
 *Let there be peace on earth, and let it begin with me.
 With every step I take, let this be my joyous creed.
 To take each moment and
 live each moment in peace, eternally!
 Let there be peace on earth, and let it begin with me.*

The Music for Piano

*You are invited to stand as you are able.

The color for the Sundays in Lent is Purple, symbolizing the penitential nature of this holy season.

Worship Notes:

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Concerns of the Church

In accordance with CDC guidelines, wearing of masks is now optional. We will continue to sign in for worship. If we have cases of COVID within our congregation brought to our attention, we will notify everyone as soon as possible.

In case of inclement weather, if you have any question as to whether we will have Sunday services, please call the church office and you will find a message if services have been cancelled.

We need volunteers to be readers at the Maundy Thursday Tenebrae service and for the Palm/Passion liturgy on Sunday, April 10th. We would like to have as many readers as possible. First come, first serve!

Lent has arrived! Each week during Lent we will offer a soup supper beginning at Six O'clock in the Evening, followed by a brief worship service, hopefully with some discussion. Those dates are: April 6th. Maundy Thursday worship, April 14th, will begin at Six O'clock in Fellowship Hall with an Agape Meal, followed by Holy Communion, Footwashing, and the Service of Tenebrae in the Sanctuary. On Good Friday, April 15th, the Sanctuary will be open for meditation, prayer, and reflection from Noon until Three O'clock in the Afternoon. Finally, we will have a unity service at Nine O'clock in the Morning on Palm/Passion Sunday and Easter Day. We hope to see you there!!! Volunteers are needed. Sign-up sheets are located in the back of the Sanctuary or call Sharon Breit (715-477-2163) or Linda Sanborn (715-891-5655). Also, we invite you to please sign up for the Wednesdays you plan to attend to help us know how many people will be in attendance.

Online Giving is now available on the church website. If you have questions on how to get started with online giving feel free to reach out to Alex at alex@eagleriverucc.org or give him a call at 715-802-8501, Option 8.

As a church family, we are ready, willing, and able to share with you in your prayers of sadness and celebration. Please feel free to share your prayer with us on the church website, under the Ministries heading, or by calling the church office at 715-802-8501. To protect the privacy of all individuals please only share prayers for those, you have received direct permission to share on their behalf. We ask that any prayer requests mentioned from the pulpit have the permission of the one desiring prayer. Thank you for your understanding. Prayer Concerns: As we worship today our thoughts are with the family and friends of Nan Pophal and with our Ukrainian brothers and sisters.

Scripture readers, ushers, and camcorder operators are always needed as well as readers for the Concerns of the Church. You may sign up by visiting our website; or you may also contact Joy Turpin at: joyfaithchapinturpin@gmail.com or (715) 479-6560.

Just a friendly reminder! The last Sunday of the month is always A Unity Service, meeting at Nine o'clock in the Morning. Please put these services on your calendar. (Please take note, the Palm/Passion and Easter Day services will be unity services.)

Church Staff

Timothy W. Shirley, Pastor

Debbie Brown, Church Administrator

Jonathan Alexander (Alex) Fluegel, Information and Technology Director

Sharon Breit, Director of Christian Education

Lori Lee Hunter, Director of Music

Linda Brainard, Pianist

Norma Yaeger, Pianist

Christine Clough, Cleaning Services

First Congregational United Church of Christ

105 North First Street ~ PO Box 1385

Eagle River, Wisconsin 54521



First Congregational UCC - Eagle River, WI

April 3, 2022

Church Office: 715-802-8501, office@eagleriverucc.org,

Timothy W. Shirley: pastortim@eagleriverucc.org

Website: www.eagleriverucc.org