

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 of Easter

*The Lord's Day
Fifth Sunday of Easter
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 Christian Scriptures in the Book of Acts we find a sudden turning point as we read about Cornelius' and Peter's almost simultaneous but very different conversions. Despite Jesus' influence Peter had remained a staunch and stubborn, loyally Kosher, Jew, steadfastly refusing to embrace the "extravagantly welcoming," expansively inclusive, radically hospitable, and vulnerably open requirements set forth in Jesus' gospel, though nothing new, clearly intimated in the Hebrew Bible. In today's reading we learn of Peter's day of reckoning, a disciple no longer allowed his narrow, inflexible, and exclusivist theology. The "Rock" learned a great and valuable lesson that we must continue to discover and live, that "No matter who you are or where you are on life's journey, you are welcome. . . ." Thanks be to God!

Gathering Music

The Paschal Greeting

Alleluia! Christ is risen!

The Lord is risen indeed! Alleluia!

The Call to Worship and Welcome

The Spirit of the still speaking God be with you!

And also with you.

The Music for Piano

The Lighting of the Altar Candles

The Gathering

All you faithful people, gather for worship! Come, for God welcomes you in this sacred hour, as close as our next breath! The Holy One rules over all the earth!

Sun, moon, and stars shine forth God's praise, everything created to show the glory of God! We rejoice that God has a place for us in creation!

Mountains and hills, trees, and animals echo God's praise! The Holy One instructs and equips us for service in God's realm!

Let everyone who has breath give praise to the Holy One, the One who provides abundantly for our needs, making us one family dwelling on earth!

Let us worship God!

The Collect

Let us pray to the Lord,

God of glorious creation, we bring our praises before you in worship, celebrating your presence with us; your glory fills all heaven and earth, all time and space; your gifts surround us and dwell within us; we are your children; come to wipe away our tears and comfort us in our distress; come to heal our divisions and overcome our prejudices; come, that we might be loved into discipleship; 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. 22

LASST UNS ERFREUEN

All Creatures of Our God and King

*The Litany of Praise

God is near to all who call upon the Holy, close to everyone who approaches the author of love in truth!

We look to God who supplies our every need, fulfilling the desires of those who seek God's aid and comfort!

God is faithful and gracious in word and deed, raising and upholding those who are bowed down and fallen!

We seek God's kindness and justice amid our tears and our hopes!

With open hands God welcomes us and preserves us from all evil and wickedness!

Our mouths will speak the praise of God. Let all flesh bless God's holy name forever and ever! Praise the Lord!

The Witness from the Christian Scriptures

ACTS 11:1-18

Now the apostles and the believers who were in Judea heard that the Gentiles had also accepted the word of God. So, when Peter went up to Jerusalem, the circumcised believers criticized him, saying, "Why did you go to uncircumcised men and eat with them?" Then Peter began to explain it to them, step by step, saying, "I was in the city of Joppa praying, and in a trance, I saw a vision. There was something like a large sheet coming down from heaven, being lowered by its four corners. And it came close to me. As I looked at it closely, I saw four-footed animals, beasts of prey, reptiles, and birds of the air. I also heard a voice saying to me, 'Get up, Peter! Kill and eat!' But I replied, 'By no means, Lord! For nothing profane or unclean has ever entered my mouth.' But a second time the voice answered from heaven, 'What God has made clean, you must not call profane!' This happened three times! Then everything was pulled up again to heaven. At that very moment three men, sent to me from Caesarea, arrived at the house where we were. The Spirit told me to go with them and not to make a distinction between them and us. These six brothers also accompanied me, and we entered the man's house. He told us how he had seen the angel standing in his house and saying, 'Send to Joppa and bring Simon, who is called Peter! He will give you a message by which you and your entire household will be saved!' And as I began to speak, the Holy Spirit fell upon them just as it had upon us at the beginning. And I remembered the word of the Lord, how he had said, 'John baptized with water, but you will be baptized with the Holy Spirit.' If then God gave them the same gift that he gave us

when we believed in the Lord Jesus Christ, who was I that I could hinder God?" When they heard this, they were silenced. And they praised God, saying, "Then God has given even to the Gentiles the repentance that leads to life."

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

Thanks be to God!

The Witness from the Gospels

REVELATION 21:1-6

Then I saw a new heaven and a new earth! For the first heaven and the first earth had passed away, and the sea was no more. And I saw the holy city, the new Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband. And I heard a loud voice from the throne saying, "See, the home of God is among mortals! God will dwell with them! They will be God's peoples! And God will be with them! God will wipe every tear from their eyes! Death will be no more! Mourning and crying and pain will be no more, for the first things have passed away!" And the one who was seated on the throne said, "See, I am making all things new!" Also, God said, "Write this, for these words are trustworthy and true!" Then God said to me, "It is done! I am the Alpha and the Omega, the beginning, and the end! To the thirsty I will give water as a gift from the spring of the water of life!"

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Thanks be to God!

The Sermon

Everybody: A Hospitably Tableau

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. 494 *They'll Know We Are Christians*

ST. BRENDAN'S

*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 Easter Day, the Resurrection of the Lord, and for the Season of Easter, known as Eastertide, is White, symbolizing purity and victory, and remind us of Jesus' victory over death on the cross and his glorious resurrection.

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.

Prayer Concerns: As we worship today our thoughts are 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.

We are resuming Coffee Hour today in the parlor following each Sunday service. We are looking for people to provide goodies to share along with the beverages. These can be homemade or purchased. You can contribute cookies, muffins, or other baked goods. If you would be willing to volunteer, please put your name on the sign-up sheet or email or call Debbie Brown in the Church Office. An email will be sent at the beginning of the month to those who are providing snacks for that month.

GAME NIGHT COMING SOON

Mark your calendar for Wednesday, May 18th at 6:00 p.m. in Fellowship Hall! Come one, come all! Young (kids welcome) or old, brainchild or dunce...*if you like to play games and have fun*, this night is for you. The games will have you laughing your socks off (sorry, Tim...laughing your shoes off????) with absolutely NO pressure to win (although for you competitive types, there will be a grand champion prize.) No board games, no intricate rules to learn, just lots of silliness, camaraderie, and jollies. And no entry fee! Bring your family, bring your friends (non-First Congregational players welcome) and come and enjoy. Coffee, water, and soda will be provided. If you would like to bring a finger food snack to share, that would be a welcome addition but is not required. We anticipate that the evening will last for 2-3 hours depending on the number of participants. You do not need to pre-register, although it would be helpful in planning if we had an idea of the expected head count. Please contact Barb Helmick or Nancy Diepenbrock if you plan to attend. Or you may put your name(s) on the sign-up sheet at the back of the church. If by chance you do not pre-register, you are welcome to come anyway! There will be room for everyone, and we will make it work! The past two COVID years have been tough on us all. It has been far too long since we spent an evening together in fellowship! Please come and join us and help us get back to some form of normalcy and be ready to have some FUN! Barb Helmick, helmickjanesh@ymail.com; (920)-412-4782 or Nancy Diepenbrock, petsX5@gmail.com; (715)-479-2498.

First Congregational United Church of Christ

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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

May 15, 2022