

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.*



*Fourth Sunday of Easter
Sunday of the Good Shepherd*

*The Lord's Day
Fourth Sunday of Easter
Sunday of the Good Shepherd
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

It seems a harmonic convergence of a divine kind, quite the liturgical coincidence. It only seems fitting, that at least for this year, the stars have aligned, and the *Sunday of the Good Shepherd* and *Mother's Day* collide in a most wonderful way. *Mother's Day* is a part of the mythological "Hallmark" calendar, a secular observance celebrated in many evangelical or non-liturgically inclined churches. When we think of Jesus as shepherd, we think of loving and tender, compassionate care, all infused with grace, mercy, and peace. Ditto for most mothers! Today, we bask in all the glorious shepherd images that abound throughout the biblical narrative, Hebrew Bible and Christian scriptures alike. It is a day to rest and relax, to be restored with the pleasant pastoral images of the risen Christ! Today, we look at all things of shepherds and sheep. So, why a sermon about shearing sheep? Got to keep it real!

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

Arise, people of God! Greet the One who calls us to this pastoral setting! Come alive to the still speaking Spirit's energy among us, awakening and restoring our souls!

Surely God's goodness and mercy are with us in this holy place, our shepherd God calling us to new ventures, inviting us to a higher quality of life!

Have no fear walking through shadowed valleys of death, for God's love is with us everywhere, quenching our thirst with springs of living water!

We gather in this sacred setting to find comfort and blessing, knowing that the Holy One will guide our search for truth, eternal values guiding our daily walks!

Let us worship God!

The Collect

Let us pray to the Lord,

Shepherd of all who put their trust in you, we have gathered to worship the great Shepherd, to praise the One who restores our souls in worship, for we are tired and needy; lead us by still waters, shepherding us on paths of righteousness, comforting us in death's dark valleys, taking away every fear; feed us with your goodness, anointing us with your grace and mercy in this time together; when we part, may we leave with the assurance of your continuing presence; draw us together, eternal One, from paths of aimless wandering, leading us today toward becoming the beloved faith community you intend; draw the fragments of our lives together into some meaningful whole, helping us deal with present concerns in constructive ways, pointing us beyond ourselves to engage with you in larger issues; help us feed the hunger and quench the thirst of others, leading this your church to make a caring response; may your love fill us, overflowing into our lives that we may impact the lives of others; 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. 558 *Savior, Like a Shepherd Lead Us*

BRADBURY

*The Litany of Praise

Unnumbered multitudes gather in many places to praise the God whom Jesus revealed!

Among the throngs who claim allegiance, we long to respond to God with an honest faith! We hunger and thirst for the bread of life and living water.

The Holy One nourishes us with the sustenance that only comes from God! In our tribulation and in our triumphs, we are drawn to the throne of grace!

Blessing and glory and wisdom and thanksgiving and honor and power and might be to our God.

The promises the Holy One made to our ancestors are also meant for us and for our world today!

We have come to hear good news and to prepare ourselves to share it with others! Thanks be to God! Praise the Lord!

The Witness from the Epistles

REVELATION 7:9-17

After this I looked, and there was a great multitude that no one could count, from every nation, from all tribes and peoples and languages, standing before the throne and before the Lamb, robed in white, with palm branches in their hands. They cried out in a loud voice, saying, "Salvation belongs to our God who is seated on the throne, and to the Lamb!" And all the angels stood around the throne and around the elders and the four living creatures, and they fell on their faces before the throne and worshiped God, singing, "Amen! Blessing and glory and wisdom and thanksgiving and honor and power and might be to our God forever and ever! Amen." Then one of the elders addressed me, saying, "Who are these, robed in white, and where have they come from?" I said to him, "Sir, you are the one that knows." Then he said to me, "These are they who have come out of the great ordeal! They have washed their robes and made them white in the blood of the Lamb. For this reason, they are before the throne of God, and worship him day and night within his temple, and the one who is seated on the throne will shelter them. They will hunger no more, and thirst no more! The sun will not strike them, nor any scorching heat! For the Lamb at the center of the throne will be their shepherd, and he will guide them to springs of the water of life, and God will wipe away every tear from their eyes."

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

Thanks be to God!

The Hymn, No. 78

The Lord's My Shepherd

CRIMOND

The Witness from the Gospels

JOHN 10:22-30

At that time the festival of the Dedication took place in Jerusalem. It was winter, and Jesus was walking in the temple, in the portico of Solomon. So, the Jews gathered around him and said to him, "How long will you keep us in suspense? If you are the Messiah, tell us plainly." Jesus answered, "I have told you, and you do not believe. The works that I do in my Father's name testify to me; but you do not believe, because you do not belong to my sheep. My sheep hear my voice. I know them, and they follow me. I give them eternal life, and they will never perish. No one will snatch them out of my hand. What my Father has given me is greater than all else, and no one can snatch it out of the Father's hand. The Father and I are one."

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

Thanks be to God!

The Sermon

Sheep Stuff! Sheep Story!

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. 80 *My Shepherd, You Supply My Need*

RESIGNATION

*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.

The Northwoods Singers will present a concert "A Journey in Peace" on Thursday, May 12th at 7:00 p.m. at Ely Memorial Church; 4302 County Road B, Land O' Lakes.

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.

Women's Fellowship Spring Luncheon, Tuesday, May 10th, 11:00 a.m. until 1:30 p.m. As First Congregational United Church of Christ gradually comes back to life, the Women's Fellowship is pleased to once again be hosting the **Spring Luncheon**. All First

Congregational women are invited to join us for fine food and friendship in Fellowship Hall. Prior to our lunch together the Northland Pines top forensics and music students will be presenting short performances in the sanctuary. Norma Yaeger will accompany the musicians. You will be able to visit with the students during lunch. The luncheon originated as a way to thank all the First Congregational women who have assisted the church in some way over the past year. Even if you have not been able to be active until now, please come and feel free to extend this invitation to 1 or 2 guests. **RSVPs** are required! Please call Sharon Breit, (715)-477-2163 or Linda Sanborn, (715)-891-5655, (like right now!). A sign-up sheet is available in the sanctuary. Also, please let us know the names of your guests. We look forward to an uplifting mini-concert and the opportunity to enjoy lunch together. See you then!
The Women's Fellowship

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 8, 2022