

# 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 after the Epiphany  
Fourth Sunday in Ordinary Time*

*The Lord's Day*  
*Fourth Sunday after the Epiphany*  
*Fourth Sunday in Ordinary Time*  
*Nine o'clock 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**

For most of us who read today's texts, a feeling of guilt envelops us. These lessons make us feel small and far away from the realm of God. We would like to think that we are just, kind, and humble, but are we really? We would like to think that we do the things demanded by the Psalmist to dwell with God, but do we really? And if Jesus' understanding of blessing is true, then none of us are truly blessed. The so-called Beatitudes oft serve as a painful mirror, a reflection that truly reveals the ways we are lacking. To be honest, none of us desires to be poor in spirit, mournful or meek, much less reviled and persecuted! As for the rest of the Beatitudes, they all seem like a long shot at best. Once again, we are reminded of how much we need the grace of God and of one another for the living of these days. Today, we explore the prophet Micah and the Beatitudes, two very rich and symbiotic text. Today we ponder a new attitude!

### **Gathering Music**

#### **The Call to Worship and Welcome**

The Spirit of the still speaking God be with you.

**And also with you.**

#### **The Music for Contemplation**

#### **The Lighting of the Altar Candles**

## The Gathering

What shall we bring before the Lord our God?

**Shall we bring cars or boats, stocks or bonds, empty praises, hollow promises, or even the best of our solemn assemblies in worship services like this one?**

The Lord has told us what is good, what is required of us, to do justice, to love kindness, and to walk humbly with our God!

**Come and worship the Holy One, gathered before a good and gracious God, all our being overflowing with the desire to live justice, kindness, and humility!**

Let us worship God!

## The Collect

Let us pray to the Lord,

God of justice, kindness, and humility, we come before you this day presuming to believe that we are the most blessed people of earth; you have given us far more than we could ever give you; yet, even so, we bring before you this day our gift of worship; grant us your presence here, God of justice and faithful love; fill us with the wisdom that only comes from you, that we might bring your justice, kindness, and humility into all that we do as children touched by your goodness and grace; we long to live fully Jesus' Beatitudes in our lives; all this we pray through Jesus Christ our Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the holy and still speaking Spirit, one God, forever and ever.

**Amen.**

\*The Opening Hymn, No. 595      *Be Thou My Vision*

SLANE

\*The Litany of Praise

Faithfully loving God, as people of promise, we long to abide in your house, to dwell on your holy hill, doing justice, loving kindness, walking humbly with our God!

**Our eternal desire is to live in the courts of the Holy One, seeking to walk blamelessly before God, doing what is right as people called to do justice!**

We long to speak the truth of God's love, sincerely striving to never bring harm to our neighbors, fully living the loving kindness, compassion, and mercy of the Holy!

**To honor God with all our being would be our greatest joy, bringing us a happiness unlike any other as we seek to walk humbly with our God!**

The Holy One guides our paths, never letting us stumble, our lives dedicated to bringing honor to God as faithful people who love the Lord!

**Everyone who does these things shall abide in the house of the Holy One forever!  
Praise the Lord!**

\*The Gloria

GREATOREX

*Glory to the Creator, and to the Christ, and to the Comforter!  
As it was in the beginning, is now, and ever shall be,  
World without end! Amen! Amen!*

The Call to Confession<sup>1</sup>

As we come to this time of repentance, God knows the intent of our hearts. Are we intent on doing justice? Do we love mercy? Are we ready to walk humbly with our Creator? If so, God is ready to hear our prayers! In the silence and stillness of these moments, let us confess before the Holy.

The Silent Confession

The Corporate Confession<sup>2</sup>

Let us pray to the Lord,

**God of justice, kindness, and humility, we confess that we often choose to accept the world's wisdom as our guide. We are frequently impressed, tempted by the power of weapons and the importance of high positions. We are prone to measure worth by the number of possessions we command. We can be unkind in our speech and uncaring in our deeds, doubting the power of the cross to inform, enlighten, and illumine our lives. Turn us around, holy God, that we might be blessed!**

The Assurance of Pardon<sup>3</sup>

Beloved faith community, hear the good news! God destroys the wisdom of those who think themselves wise. God chooses the weak and foolish to shame those who think themselves strong and all-knowing. The God who forgives calls us to a life of kindness in word and deed, mercy toward both friend and foe, and justice in all our dealings. Thank God for setting before us standards that surpass our highest aspirations, along with the possibility for joyous fulfillment.

**Thanks be to God!**

The Witness from the Hebrew Bible

MICAH 6:1-8

Hear what the LORD says: "Rise, plead your case before the mountains, and let the hills hear your voice! Hear, you mountains, the case of the LORD, and you enduring foundations of the earth, for the LORD has a case against the people of God and the Holy One will contend with Israel! O my people, what have I done to you? In what have I wearied you? Answer me! For I brought you up from the land of Egypt and redeemed you from the house of slavery, and I sent before you Moses, Aaron, and Miriam! O my people, remember now what King Balak of Moab devised, what Balaam son of Beor answered him, and what happened from Shittim to Gilgal, that you may know the saving acts of the LORD!" "With what shall I come before the LORD and bow myself before God on high? Shall I

come before God with burnt offerings, with calves a year old? Will the LORD be pleased with thousands of rams, with ten thousands of rivers of oil? Shall I give my firstborn for my transgression, the fruit of my body for the sin of my soul?" The Holy One has told you, O mortal, what is good, and what does the LORD require of you but to do justice and to love kindness and to walk humbly with your God?

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

**Thanks be to God!**

The Response, PSALM 15

CANONBURY

*Lord, who may in your temple dwell, upon your holy hill abide?  
Who shows forth love instead of hate, humility in place of pride?*

*A blameless life help me to live, free from contempt and selfish will!  
When I through mortal frailness fail, God deigns by grace to love me still!*

The Witness from the Gospels

MATTHEW 5:1-12

When Jesus saw the crowds, he went up the mountain, and after he sat down, his disciples came to him! And he began to speak and taught them, saying: "Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven! Blessed are those who mourn, for they will be comforted! Blessed are the meek, for they will inherit the earth. Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness, for they will be filled! Blessed are the merciful, for they will receive mercy! Blessed are the pure in heart, for they will see God! Blessed are the peacemakers, for they will be called children of God! Blessed are those who are persecuted for the sake of righteousness, for theirs is the realm of heaven! Blessed are you when people revile you and persecute you and utter all kinds of evil against you falsely on my account! Rejoice and be glad, for your reward is great in heaven, for in the same way they persecuted the prophets who were before you!"

The Gospel for today!

**Thanks be to God!**

The Sermon

*If Only It Were That Easy!*

Timothy W. Shirley

The Music for Meditation

The Concerns of the Church

The Pastoral Prayer

The 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 Receiving of Our Gifts

The Offertory

\*The Doxology

OLD HUNDREDTH

*Praise God, from whom all blessings flow!*

*Praise Christ all creatures here below!*

*Praise Holy Spirit, evermore!*

*Praise triune God whom we adore!*

\*The Prayer of Thanksgiving

\*The Closing Hymn, No. 687 *In Christ There Is No East or West*

ST. PETER

\*The Extinguishing of the Altar Candles

\*The Procession of the Light

\*The Benediction and Blessing

To our guests! At your choosing, we invite you to join us in a long-standing tradition at First Congregational United Church of Christ as we form a circle as one, joining hands and singing together our Fellowship Song.

\*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 Reflection

\*You are invited to stand as you are able.

Lector: Barbara Helmick

Ushers: Kamie Kolb and Susan Krivichi

*The color for the Sundays after the Epiphany is Green, symbolizing the growth and development of the Church. Various symbols of the Trinity, such as the Trefoil and Triangle designs, remind us of the coming of the Holy Spirit at Pentecost and the Triune nature of God as Father, Son, and Holy Spirit; Parent, Child, Advocate and Comforter; Creator, Redeemer, and Sustainer.*

*Ordinary Time refers to that part of the Church Year that does not fall within one of the major seasons and does not observe any specific aspect of the Mystery of Christ. It consists of thirty-four Sundays in the liturgical year and emphasizes personal faith development and nurture, and the growth and enhancement of the Church and the churches. Ordinary Time begins with Baptism of the Lord and encompasses the Sundays after Epiphany including Transfiguration and the Sundays after Pentecost including Reign of Christ. An interesting bit of liturgical trivia is that Baptism of the Lord is counted but is not named as the first Sunday in Ordinary Time.*

<sup>1-3</sup>Reprinted by permission United Church Press from *Taught by Love*, by Lavon Bayler. Copyright 2002 by the Pilgrim Press.

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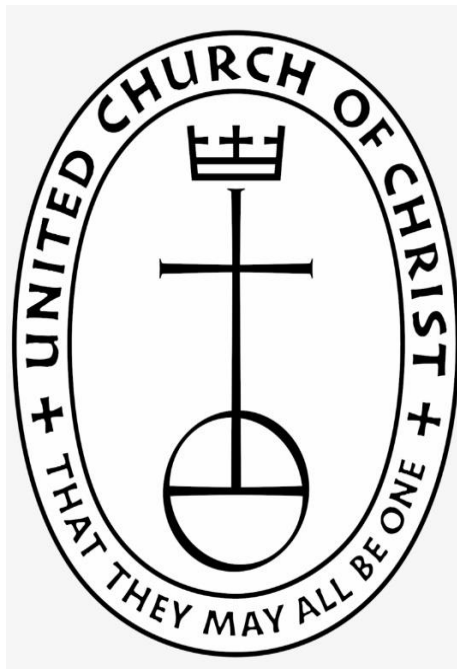
***The flowers adorning the Chancel for today's worship are given by  
Don and Paula Hendrickson in honor of Granddaughter Morgan Hendrickson's  
6<sup>th</sup> birthday and Granddaughter Jade Hendrickson's 9<sup>th</sup> birthday.***

## **CHURCH STAFF**

*Timothy W. Shirley, Pastor*  
*Debbie Brown, Church Administrator*  
*Sharon Breit, Director of Christian Education*  
*Lori Lee Hunter, Director of Music*  
*Linda Brainard, Pianist*  
*Norma Yaeger, Pianist*  
*Christine Clough, Cleaning Service*

## **CHURCH COUNCIL**

*President, Donna Adams*  
*Vice President, Mark Johansen*  
*Trisha Moore*  
*Cathy Palmer*  
*Luke Aschbrenner*  
*Deb Stolze*  
*Steve Burrill*  
*Clerk, Norma Yaeger*  
*Pastor Parish Relations, Tobi Johanssen*  
*Women's Fellowship, Sharon Breit*  
*Sanctuary Arts Group, Patti Roberts*  
*Facilities, Donna Adams*  
*Finance, Paula Hendrickson*  
*Gifts and Endowments, Bill Marshall*  
*Safety and Security, Carlton Schroeder*  
*Scholarship, Ursula Charaf*



# First Congregational United Church of Christ

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First Congregational UCC - Eagle River, WI

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