

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.*



*A Celebration of Epiphany of the Lord
The Manifestation of Christ to the Gentiles
Baptism of the Lord
First Sunday after the Epiphany
First Sunday in Ordinary Time*

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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

Just like with Christmas Day, always December 25th, Epiphany of the Lord always occurs on January 6th, an immovable feast day on the liturgical calendar. Unfortunately, this accounts for the fact that this high and holy festival day is often overlooked or ignored in many churches. After all, who would have come to church for a worship service on this past Friday night? So, on this special day, we combine our celebration of the day of Epiphany with a celebratory observance of Baptism of the Lord, recalling and honoring, giving thanks for our own Baptism. On this day we are reminded that we are all one, baptized in the same baptismal waters, H₂O recycled from the very first baptism performed, water hydrating the world from the beginning of time! Today, we celebrate our unity in Christ, a great way to start a new year together as beloved faith community!

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

Arise, shine, for the light of God has come into the world!

The glory of the Lord has risen upon us!

Lift up your eyes and look all around you! Gather together before the Holy, assembling with all the faithful of the earth!

Like the wise Magi of old, we come bearing our gifts of worship, gathering to proclaim the praise of the Holy One in this sacred setting!

Let us worship God!

The Collect

Let us pray to the Lord,

God of all nations, like many who have come before us, we have come bearing our gifts of worship, praising the Holy One whose light has shone upon all the earth, whose light shines in the thickest darkness; you have made us radiant through the gift of your son; our hearts are thrilled and rejoice in your goodness to us; on this great high and holy festival day we proclaim the praise of the Lord; may your glory rise upon us and your glory appear over us; 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. 173 *As with Gladness*

DIX

*The Litany of Praise

The justice and righteousness of the Holy One is given through a royal son, a child who brings the brightest light of God to all people everywhere!

This son of the most high will defend the cause of the poor, delivering the needy, crushing the oppressor, destroying the arrogance of the mighty and proud!

This one born in our midst is like refreshing rain falling on the mown grass, like showers watering and nurturing the earth, quenching the thirst of all creation!

Those who wield authority shall bow in tribute before this holy messenger of God, a harbinger of grace bringing righteousness and peace to a restless planet!

This child will deliver everyone who is afflicted and has no helper, hearing when they call, heeding the voice of the disenfranchised, the marginalized from every nation!
**This emissary of the Divine brings gifts of compassion to the weak and the oppressed, saving their lives from violence and all who abuse their power!
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 Confession¹

The celebration of Christmas has drawn to a close, slowly fading from the rear-view mirrors of our lives. We are tempted to let the light of God's revelation among us fade into the shadows of our busyness. We stumble as skeptics, and sometimes even as cynics, doubting God's visitation and squandering our inheritance as children of light. God longs for our return! In the silence and stillness of this moment, let us confess before the Holy.

The Silent Confession

The Corporate Confession²

Let us pray to the Lord,

God of gracious goodness, save your people in the light of your perfect peace. You have blessed us with the gift of Christmas, but we often reject your blessed offering to us in our frantic searching and striving. You have chosen us for adoption, but we tend to desire to go our own way. You send the Holy Spirit to lead us, but we often choose to block out awareness of your will for us in favor of our own selfish ambition. Restore to us the ability to discern and respond to the light you offer, to “really learn” of a better way!

The Assurance of Pardon³

Hear the good news of Epiphany and Baptism of the Lord! God promises us rescue and comfort and joy! In Christ we receive forgiveness of our trespasses according to the riches of God's grace! The gospel of salvation is a gift given to all who repent and believe! Christ as eternal Word became flesh to dwell among us and assure us of God's love! Let us give thanks for the truth available for our living!

Thanks be to God!

The Witness from the Hebrew Bible

ISAIAH 60:1-6

Arise, shine, for your light has come, and the glory of the LORD has risen upon you! For darkness shall cover the earth and thick darkness the peoples, but the LORD will arise upon you, and his glory will appear over you! Nations shall come to your light and kings to the brightness of your dawn! Lift up your eyes and look around! They all gather together! They come to you! Your sons shall come from far away, and your daughters shall be carried in their nurses' arms! Then you shall see and be radiant! Your heart shall thrill and rejoice, because the abundance of the sea shall be brought to you! The wealth of the nations shall come to you! A multitude of camels shall cover you, the young camels of Midian and Ephah! All those from Sheba shall come! They shall bring gold and frankincense and shall proclaim the praise of the LORD!

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

Thanks be to God!

The Hymn, No. 172

We Three Kings

KINGS OF ORIENT

The Witness from the Gospels

MATTHEW 3:13-17

Then Jesus came from Galilee to John at the Jordan, to be baptized by him! John would have prevented him, saying, "I need to be baptized by you, and do you come to me?" But Jesus answered him, "Let it be so now, for it is proper for us in this way to fulfill all righteousness!" Then Jesus consented! And when Jesus had been baptized, just as he came up from the water, suddenly the heavens were opened to him, and he saw God's Spirit descending like a dove and alighting on him! And a voice from the heavens said, "This is my son, the beloved, with whom I am well pleased!"

The Gospel for today!

Thanks be to God!

The Sermon

Trouble with the Learning Curve!

Timothy W. Shirley

The Music for Meditation

The Service of Holy Communion

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. 357 *We Call Ourselves Disciples*

LANCASHIRE

*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: Nancy Diepenbrock

Ushers: Luke Aschbrenner and Mary Lou Congdon

The color for Epiphany of the Lord and Baptism of the Lord is White, symbolizing purity and reflecting themes of light, faith, innocence, and glory.

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.

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Today's scripture lessons are from the New Revised Standard Version of the Bible, Updated Edition.

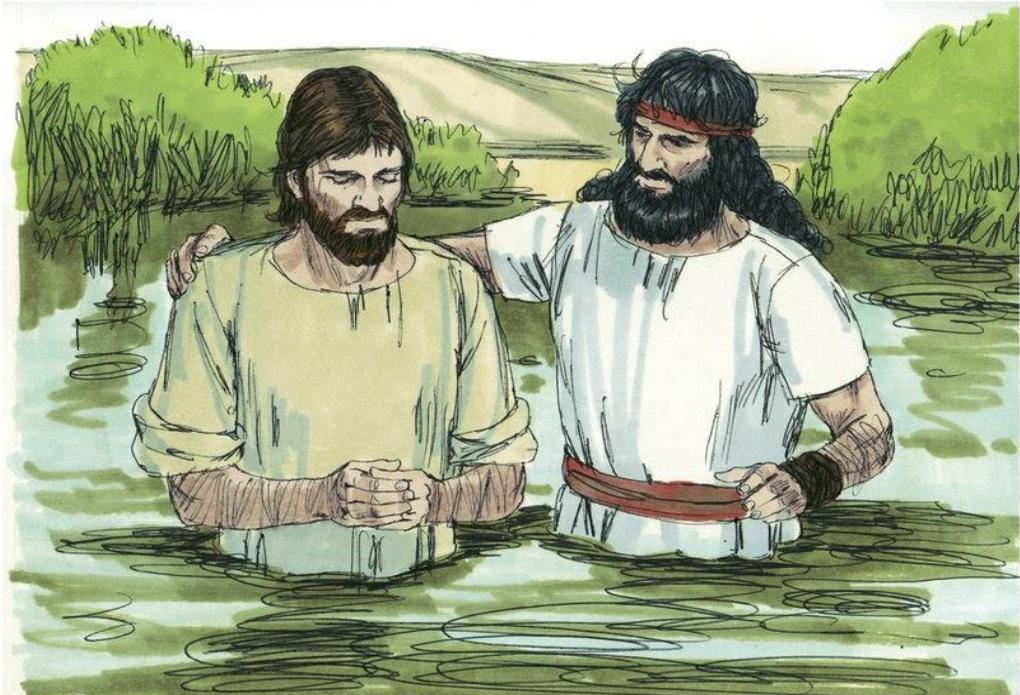
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First Congregational UCC - Eagle River, WI

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