

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.*



*Sixth Sunday after the Epiphany
Sixth Sunday in Ordinary Time*

*The Lord's Day
Sixth Sunday after the Epiphany
Sixth 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

As the calendar turns toward St. Valentine's Day and our thoughts turn to love, today's Witness from the Hebrew Scriptures in the Book of Deuteronomy reminds us that in loving God, our lives will be full and that we will thrive as people of faith, people seeking to serve the Holy as beloved faith community. The love of God is the linchpin of faith! Declared in The Shema, the "Hear, O Israel" in Deuteronomy 6:4, we learn that the supreme commandment, referenced boldly and subtly throughout the biblical narrative, has its core in the requirement to love God. In the Gospels, we learn from Jesus that the love of God, of neighbor, and of self is vital to learning the nature of God, the very essence of holiness. In Jesus, we learn that becoming a disciple of Christ, which includes living into Micah's clarion call to do justice, embrace love, and walk humbly with God is at the root of Jesus' radical "extravagant welcome," the epitome of the primacy of hospitality as a biblical and theological paradigm driving who we are as the people of God, beloved faith community, one and all. In so doing, our labor as co-workers with the Divine is the reward of a fulfilling and wonderful life!

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

As people blameless before the One who gives life and walk the way of the Holy,
come and worship the One we long to serve with all our being!

**As truly happy people, we gather as brothers and sisters before the love of our
lives, the One we desire to follow with all our hearts!**

Worship the Holy One, gathering to give thanks to God for all the blessings that are
our reward as creatures created in the image of God!

**Longing for the presence of the Holy in this house of God, we join with heaven
and earth as we worship the God of Abraham and Isaac and Jacob!**

Let us worship God!

The Introit

It Is Well with My Soul

arr. Jason Krug

Tone Chime Choir; Susan Krivichi, director

The Collect

Let us pray to the Lord,

God of life and love, we have gathered as your servant people, coming before you as beloved faith
community; with all of our hearts we have assembled as brothers and sisters all, to worship the
God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, to praise the One who makes us blameless, ashamed of nothing,
who calls us to choose the abundant life and holy love that only comes from you; as co-workers,
laborers in your field at First Congregational United Church of Christ; in this sacred house,
strengthen us, that we may keep your statutes, obeying your commandments even as we seek to
walk in your holy way, obeying your life-giving law; we give you thanks, loving God, for all your
manifold blessings, the rewards that come with being your human creation, made in your divine
image; God of justice, never forsake us or leave us alone to the limitations of our humanity; feed
us with solid food, maturing our faith in you, enabling and enhancing our sacred spiritual journeys
together as a people longing to bless all humanity; 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 Praise to God Who Reigns Above

*The Litany of Praise

All who walk in the way of the Holy are blameless, truly happy people following
God's instructions and commandments!

**As faithful people, we are guardians of the law of God, protecting this gift as a
precious blessing, seeking God with all our hearts!**

O how we long to be strong in faith, following the One who orders our steps, removing our shame and making us whole!

With thankful hearts, we rejoice in the blessings of God, the Holy One who allows us to thrive as a divinely crafted human creation!

We cling to the One we love, the God of Abraham and Isaac and Jacob, the One who rewards the faithfulness of all people everywhere!

Cultivating beloved faith community in our midst, we are co-workers, laboring in God's fields, fertile lands overflowing with the promises of God! 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 apostle Paul confronted the church at Corinth with their jealousy and quarreling. Jesus preached about anger, dishonesty, and estrangement in ways that demanded radical reconciliation. Everything that strains our relationship with others also distances us from God. That is why we come to this time of confession! In the silence and stillness of these moments, let us confess before the Holy.

The Silent Confession

The Corporate Confession²

Let us pray to the Lord,

Loving God, you know the pain of our broken relationships! Some fractures we have tried to mend and others we have tried to ignore. We feel your judgment in our estrangements. Hear us as we remember them before you, God of justice and compassion! We ask for courage to admit our mistakes and the empowerment to overcome them! Show us what we can do to right the wrongs for which we are responsible, and forgive, we pray, what cannot be changed. Empower us that we might be a reconciling people, servants of your holy way!

The Assurance of Pardon³

Beloved faith community, hear the good news. God wants to forgive us, but there is no cheap grace if we are unwilling to change! To all who seek to give up jealousy, insults, anger, quarreling, and self-centered pride, God offers a new life. There is solid food to nurture us in new ways. God draws us into the community of forgiven and forgiving sinners, in which we support, help, and encourage one another as beloved faith community!

Thanks be to God!

The Witness from the Epistles

I CORINTHIANS 3:1-9

And so, brothers and sisters, I could not speak to you as spiritual people but rather as fleshly, as infants in Christ! I fed you with milk, not solid food, for you were not ready for solid food! Even now you are still not ready, for you are still fleshly! For as long as there is jealousy and quarreling among you, are you not fleshly and behaving according to human inclinations? For when one says, "I belong to Paul," and another, "I belong to Apollos," are you not all too human? What then is Apollos? What is Paul? Servants through whom you came to believe, as the Lord assigned to each! I planted, Apollos watered, but God gave the growth! So, neither the one who plants nor the one who waters is anything, but only God who gives the growth! The one who plants and the one who waters have one purpose, and each will receive wages according to their own labor! For we are God's coworkers, working together; you are God's field, God's building!

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

Thanks be to God!

The Response, PSALM 119:1-8

ST. ANNE

*How blest are they whose path is pure, who keep your law aright!
And happy they who by true faith find favor in your sight!*

*The Lord commands that holy law should be our constant guide!
And those who bow to God's decree shall not be cast aside!*

*O may we ever steadfast be in living out your will!
Whose law, our counsel will remain, whose love our comfort still!*

The Witness from the Gospels

MATTHEW 5:21-37

"You have heard that it was said to those of ancient times, 'You shall not murder,' and 'whoever murders shall be liable to judgment!' But I say to you that if you are angry with a brother or sister, you will be liable to judgment, and if you insult a brother or sister, you will be liable to the council! And if you say, 'You fool,' you will be liable to the hell of fire! So, when you are offering your gift at the altar, if you remember that your brother or sister has something against you, leave your gift there before the altar and go! First be reconciled to your brother or sister, and then come and offer your gift! Come to terms quickly with your accuser while you are on the way to court with him, or your accuser may hand you over to the judge and the judge to the guard, and you will be thrown into prison! Truly I tell you, you will never get out until you have paid the last penny! You have heard that it was said, 'You shall not commit adultery!' But I say to you that everyone who looks at a woman with lust has already committed adultery with her in his heart! If your right eye causes you to sin, tear it out and throw it away! It is better for you to lose one of your members than for your whole body to be thrown into hell! And if your right hand causes you to sin, cut it off and throw it away! It is better for you to lose one of your members than for your whole body to go into hell! It was also said, 'Whoever divorces his wife, let him give her a certificate of divorce!' But I say to you that anyone who divorces his wife, except on the ground of sexual immorality, causes her to commit adultery, and whoever marries a divorced woman

commits adultery! Again, you have heard that it was said to those of ancient times, ‘You shall not swear falsely, but carry out the vows you have made to the Lord!’ But I say to you: Do not swear at all, either by heaven, for it is the throne of God, or by the earth, for it is his footstool, or by Jerusalem, for it is the city of the great King! And do not swear by your head, for you cannot make one hair white or black! Let your word be ‘Yes, Yes’ or ‘No, No’! Anything more than this comes from the evil one!”

The Gospel for today!
Thanks be to God!

The Sermon *One Rule and One Rule Only: Be Loving!* Timothy W. Shirley
The Hymn, No. 526 *The Gift of Love* GIFT OF LOVE
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. 272 *The Church’s One Foundation* AURELIA
*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: Deb Stolze

Ushers: Mary Lou Congdon and Carlton Schroeder

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.

***The flowers adorning the Chancel for today's worship are given by
Barb Flaherty who wanted to wish the entire congregation a Happy Valentine's Day!***

¹⁻³ Reprinted by permission United Church Press from *Taught by Love*, by Lavon Bayler. Copyright 2002 by the Pilgrim Press.

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First Congregational UCC - Eagle River, WI

February 12, 2023