

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.



Third Sunday in Lent

*The Lord's Day
Third Sunday in Lent
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

Throughout the ancient world, each city, town, or village had its own well, always in close proximity to its citizens. The well was known as a popular place to meet friends and neighbors, engage in small talk and local issues, and to meet strangers as they traveled on their long and tiresome journeys. The well also served like bars today, as a pick-up place. And not only that, in its capacity as a rest stop for weary travelers, the well also functioned as a medium for servicing the world's oldest profession! The conversation between Jesus and the Samaritan woman is rather provocative, nothing less than mildly suggestive, nothing unusual at this particular location. Jesus uses a line that no doubt had been used thousands of times before. No, it was not "come here often?" Instead, he asks for a drink, a big no no! No Jewish man worth his salt would dare speak to a Samaritan woman! What a line! This was a ritual, a dance, the exercise of which was all too familiar. This woman was accustomed to being "hit on," but not by a Jew! It was, however, a "here we go again" moment. At least it paid the bills! But, this time, the outcome for her is surprisingly different. Meetings with Jesus, the very incarnate Christ of God, always have a different kind of happy ending! The offer is too good to be true, too good to ignore, too good to refuse! We, too, are invited to the well . . . for conversation and for living water, as we journey the Lenten road to the cross and beyond.

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

In spirit and in truth, come let us sing to the Lord, offering songs of praise, raising a joyful noise to the rock of our salvation!

With thankful hearts, we gather in the presence of the Holy, shouting joyfully to God, the One who is great in all the earth!

Worship and bow down before the Holy, kneeling before God our maker!

For the Lord is our God and we are the people of God's pasture, sheep in God's hands!

Let us worship God!

The Introit (*Chalice Praise*), No. 15 *Great Is the Lord* Deborah D. Smith; Michael W. Smith

The Collect

Let us pray to the Lord,

Great God in our midst, we have gathered as the faithful to worship you this day, to offer our praises before you, singing to the Lord our God, making joyful noises to the rock of our salvation; we come to you much like the woman at the well, in need of the living water that only comes from you; be with us in this sacred hour, accepting our worship in spirit and in truth this day, God of living water, as we listen for your seductive voice this day; 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, (insert) *Let Us Build a House* TWO OAKS

*The Litany of Praise

Great is the Holy One, reigning above all gods! The heights of the mountains belong to God, the One in whose hands belong the depths of the earth!

Let all people sing to the One who rules in all the world! The sea belongs to God, for God has made it! The dry land belongs to God, for God has formed it!

Make joyful noises to the rock of our salvation! Shout joyfully to the Holy, bringing our tributes to God, gladly singing songs of praise and psalms of adoration!

Our hearts are open to God, the One who provides places of rest for all humanity, keeping the sacred promises in covenant relationship!

Our ancestors in the wilderness dared to test the Holy One! God hardened their hearts in their demand for proof, despite seeing firsthand the works of the Holy!

Our faithful praises will ever be true, forever lifted to God, always listening for the subtle voice of the Spirit! 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

Just as our ancestors in the faith quarreled and complained and tested God, we are tempted to do the same! Sadly, we often harden our hearts, refusing to open them to the Holy, the subtly seductive Spirit, turning away from the source of life. Yet God comes to us, offering reconciling grace. Are we ready to return to the relationship God intends for us? 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,

Great God in all the earth, what will you do with us? We are rarely satisfied with our lot in life, rebelling and complaining when things do not go our way. Our nature is to chase after things that become gods to us and consume our time, energy, and attention. We tend to spend little time in communion with you, frequently doubting your presence. You seem far away and unavailable, but it is we who create barriers that separate ourselves from you and from one another. Send your living water to cleanse us, reconciling God! Empower us to worship in spirit and in truth!

The Assurance of Pardon³

Beloved faith community, hear the good news of Lent. In Jesus' death the vastness of God's love was demonstrated for all humanity, bringing reconciliation and the assurance of salvation. We are offered a new quality of life in which faithfulness is valued more highly than security. Rise up, all who have been drifting through life! Christ has come to lead us through the shadowed valleys! Let us respond in spirit and truth!

Thanks be to God!

The Witness from the Hebrew Bible

EXODUS 17:1-7

From the wilderness of Sin the whole congregation of the Israelites journeyed by stages, as the LORD commanded! They camped at Rephidim, but there was no water for the people to drink! The people quarreled with Moses and said, "Give us water to drink!" Moses said to them, "Why do you quarrel with me? Why do you test the LORD?" But the people thirsted there for water! The people complained against Moses and said, "Why did you bring us out of Egypt, to kill us and our children and livestock with thirst?" So Moses cried out to the LORD, "What shall I do for this people? They are almost ready to stone me!" The LORD said to Moses, "Go on ahead of the people and take some of the elders of Israel with you! Take in your hand the staff with which you struck the Nile and go! I will be standing there in front of you on the rock at Horeb! Strike the rock! Water will come out of it so that

the people may drink!” Moses did so in the sight of the elders of Israel! He called the place Massah and Meribah because the Israelites quarreled and tested the LORD, saying, “Is the LORD among us or not?”

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

Thanks be to God!

The Response, PSALM 95

MIT FREUDEN ZART

*Come, let us sing unto the Lord, the rock of our salvation!
May we rejoice in songs of praise before the God of creation,
By whose design the earth was planned! The seas were filled at God's command,
The God of ev'ry nation!*

*Come, let us praise the Lord of lords, who brings us life and pleasure!
A Shepherd who attends the flock with care that none can measure!
Give us desire to hear your voice! The will to make your way our choice!
Your love our fondest treasure!*

The Witness from the Gospels

JOHN 4:5-42

So, he came to a Samaritan city called Sychar, near the plot of ground that Jacob had given to his son Joseph. Jacob's well was there, and Jesus, tired out by his journey, was sitting by the well. It was about noon! A Samaritan woman came to draw water! Jesus said to her, “Give me a drink!” (His disciples had gone to the city to buy food.) The Samaritan woman said to him, “How is it that you, a Jew, ask a drink of me, a woman of Samaria?” (Jews do not share things in common with Samaritans.) Jesus answered her, “If you knew the gift of God and who it is that is saying to you, ‘Give me a drink,’ you would have asked him, and he would have given you living water!” The woman said to him, “Sir, you have no bucket, and the well is deep! Where do you get that living water? Are you greater than our ancestor Jacob, who gave us the well and with his sons and his flocks drank from it?” Jesus said to her, “Everyone who drinks of this water will be thirsty again, but those who drink of the water that I will give them will never be thirsty! The water that I will give will become in them a spring of water gushing up to eternal life!” The woman said to him, “Sir, give me this water, so that I may never be thirsty or have to keep coming here to draw water!” Jesus said to her, “Go, call your husband, and come back!” The woman answered him, “I have no husband!” Jesus said to her, “You are right in saying, ‘I have no husband,’ for you have had five husbands and the one you have now is not your husband! What you have said is true!” The woman said to him, “Sir, I see that you are a prophet! Our ancestors worshiped on this mountain, but you say that the place where people must worship is in Jerusalem!” Jesus said to her, “Woman, believe me, the hour is coming when you will worship the Father neither on this mountain nor in Jerusalem! You worship what you do not know! We worship what we know, for salvation is from the Jews! But the hour is coming and is now here when the true worshipers will worship the Father in spirit and truth, for the Father seeks such as these to worship God! God is spirit and those who worship God must worship in spirit and truth!” The woman said to him, “I know that Messiah is coming” (who is called Christ)! “When he comes he will proclaim all things to us!” Jesus said to her, “I am he, the one who is speaking to you!” Just then his disciples came!

They were astonished that he was speaking with a woman, but no one said, “What do you want?” or, “Why are you speaking with her?” Then the woman left her water jar and went back to the city. She said to the people, “Come and see a man who told me everything I have ever done! He cannot be the Messiah, can he?” They left the city and were on their way to him. Meanwhile the disciples were urging him, “Rabbi, eat something!” But he said to them, “I have food to eat that you do not know about!” So, the disciples said to one another, “Surely no one has brought him something to eat?” Jesus said to them, “My food is to do the will of the One who sent me and to complete God’s work! Do you not say, ‘Four months more, then comes the harvest’? But I tell you, look around you, and see how the fields are ripe for harvesting! The reaper is already receiving wages and is gathering fruit for eternal life, so that sower and reaper may rejoice together! For here the saying holds true, ‘One sows and another reaps!’ I sent you to reap that for which you did not labor! Others have labored and you have entered into their labor!” Many Samaritans from that city believed in him because of the woman’s testimony, “He told me everything I have ever done!” So, when the Samaritans came to him, they asked him to stay with them, and he stayed there two days. And many more believed because of his word! They said to the woman, “It is no longer because of what you said that we believe, for we have heard for ourselves, and we know that this is truly the Savior of the world!”

The Gospel for today!
Thanks be to God!

The Sermon
 The Concerns of the Church
 The Pastoral Prayer
 The Lord’s Prayer

Codependency!

Dale Bishop

**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. 241 *Holy Spirit, Truth Divine*

MERCY

*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: Kay Scharpf

Ushers: Barb Flaherty and Carlton Schroeder

*The color for the Sundays in Lent is Purple, symbolizing
the penitential nature of this holy season.*

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First Congregational UCC - Eagle River, WI

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