

# 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.*



*Eighth Sunday after Pentecost  
Sixteenth Sunday in Ordinary Time*

*The Lord's Day  
Eighth Sunday after Pentecost  
Sixteenth 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**

In the Gospel of Matthew today Jesus tells a harvest story about wheat and weeds. Conventional wisdom says to pull up the weeds, to kill 'em all, but alas, when we do so, we also risk pulling up the good stuff. There just was no "Roundup" back in the day! (And, given what we know about what Roundup does to the environment, there should not be any today!) The reality is that all of us are wheat and weeds and all at the same time, constantly wrestling within ourselves to be the better of the two. Today, we explore, not *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, but a midsummer harvest. God give us grace for the journey!

### **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

With eager longing, come to this awesome place to encounter the God of Abraham and Isaac and Jacob!

**Surely the Lord is in this place, for this place is holy, none other than the house of God! This is the gateway to heaven!**

Led by the Holy Spirit, God searches us, knows us, and blesses us as children of the Most High!

**With all the wonders of creation, we gather before the One whose presence surrounds us with the hope of our salvation!**

Let us worship God!

## The Introit (insert)

*Lord, Let My Heart Be Good Soil*

Handt Hanson

## The Collect

Let us pray to the Lord,

Creator God, we have gathered in this awesome place to worship the God of Abraham and Isaac and Jacob; we have come to this holy place to experience your presence, to celebrate the hope that is our redemption as your children; search us, O God, and know our hearts; test us even as you know our thoughts, that we might be led by your holy and still speaking Spirit, showing us the way everlasting; 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. 718

ST. GEORGE'S WINDSOR

*Come, Ye Thankful People, Come*

## \*The Litany of Praise

The creator searches, examines, and tests us, knowing us from our sitting down to our rising up, discerning all our thoughts, holding us steady by a holy hand!

**God searches our paths, comprehending our plans, fully acquainted with all our ways, knowing our words even before they roll off our tongues!**

The Holy One delightfully surrounds us, a ubiquitous God behind and before us, always there! God is everywhere we look! Wherever we go, there God is!

**Such knowledge is too wonderful for us, so high that our reach cannot attain it, so deep that we cannot comprehend it!**

We cannot flee the presence of the Holy, nor escape the grasp of God! God's Holy Spirit goes with us from the highest heaven to the deepest sea!

**Even in the dark of night, the Holy One brings light to our world as if it were the brightest day, leading us on to paths to the eternal! Praise the Lord!**

*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>

When we run away from our problems, we discover that we cannot run away from ourselves, much less from God! Yet, God is present with us to hear our confession and offer forgiveness. God brings us back to face what we have left behind in order that we may claim the promise of reconciliation and wholeness. 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,

**Creator God, search us and test us, that everything inhibiting our full humanity be purged from us. Save us from our futile striving after our own advantage. Reshape our will to conform with your intentions for us. We confess that we have allowed weeds to grow in our lives. Our focus has drifted from the harvest you intend to the fears and greed, the anxieties and insecurities that hold us hostage. Release us from everything that limits our human capacity to love God and be in relationship with others. May we grow in likeness to Christ Jesus. We want to bear fruit for you. Turn us to the brightness of a new day.**

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

Beloved faith community, hear the good news. If by the holy and still speaking Spirit we put to death anything that diminishes our best selves, we will be made more whole, able to achieve all that God desires from us. We are set free from bondage to death to claim the freedom of the glory of the children of God. Live in the hope God offers, waiting with patience for all that God will yet reveal. You will shine like the sun in the realm of God who leads us in the way everlasting.

**Thanks be to God!**

### The Time for the Children

Pat Tucker

#### The Witness from the Epistles

ROMANS 8:12-25

So then, brothers and sisters, we are obligated, not to the flesh, to live according to the flesh for if you live according to the flesh, you will die, but if by the Spirit you put to death the deeds of the body, you will live. For all who are led by the Spirit of God are children of God. For you did not receive a spirit of slavery to fall back into fear, but you received a spirit of adoption. When we cry, "Abba Father!" it is that very Spirit bearing witness with our spirit that we are children of God, and if children, then heirs, heirs of God and joint heirs with Christ, if we in fact suffer with him so that we may also be glorified

with him. I consider that the sufferings of this present time are not worth comparing with the glory about to be revealed to us. For the creation waits with eager longing for the revealing of the children of God, for the creation was subjected to futility, not of its own will, but by the will of the one who subjected it, in hope that the creation itself will be set free from its enslavement to decay and will obtain the freedom of the glory of the children of God. We know that the whole creation has been groaning together as it suffers together the pains of labor, and not only the creation, but we ourselves, who have the first fruits of the Spirit, groan inwardly while we wait for adoption, the redemption of our bodies. For in hope we were saved! Now hope that is seen is not hope, for who hopes for what one already sees? But if we hope for what we do not see, we wait for it with patience!

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

**Thanks be to God!**

The Singing Response: Psalm 139:1-12, 23-24

BEACH SPRING

*You, O Lord, have searched and known us, when we rest, and when we rise!*

*Not a single thought we cherish is kept secret from your eyes!*

*Ev'ry word our lips would murmur needs no speech to make it known!*

*All we do, when all is started, is as done to you alone!*

*Whither shall we flee your spirit? From your presence, vanish where?*

*Heights of heaven, darkest shadows hide us not, for you are there!*

*If we take the wings of morning and in earth's far corner stand,*

*Even there your love will find us, hold us fast within your hand!*

*In the brilliance of your glory, darkest night is bright as day!*

*Shadows flee the path before us when your wisdom lights our way!*

*You who knit our parts together, knew our lives before our birth,*

*Sees our faults yet trusts our promise far beyond our feeble worth!*

*Lord, how precious is your favor shown in your goodwill to free!*

*To the heartless in their rancor, let us your confessor be.*

*Search, O Lord, our heart's ambitions, thoughts our mouth would dare not say!*

*Judge with mercy and preserve us in your everlasting way!*

The Witness from the Gospels

MATTHEW 13:24-30; 36-43

He put before them another parable. "The realm of heaven may be compared to someone who sowed good seed in his field, but while everybody was asleep an enemy came and sowed weeds among the wheat and then went away. So, when the plants came up and bore grain, then the weeds appeared as well. And the slaves of the householder came and said to him, 'Master, did you not sow good seed in your field? Where, then, did these weeds come from?' He answered, 'An enemy has done this!' The slaves said to him, 'Then do you want us to go and gather them?' But he replied, 'No, for in gathering the weeds you would uproot the wheat along with them. Let both of them grow together until the harvest, and at harvest time I will tell the reapers, Collect the weeds first and bind them in bundles to be burned, but gather the wheat into my barn.'" Then he left the crowds and went into the house. And his disciples approached him, saying, "Explain to us the parable of the weeds of the field." He answered, "The one who sows the good seed is the Son of Man. The field is the world, and the good seed are the children



## The Music for Reflection

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

***The flowers adorning the Chancel for worship today are given by Bruce and Sandy Kaitchuck in honor of the marriage of their son Matt to Briggs LeSavage on the 22<sup>nd</sup>.***

Announcements: Joy Turpin

Lector: Ayla Sheperdson

Ushers: Kamie Kolb and Mike Mettler

*The color for the Season after Pentecost is Green, symbolizing the growth and development of the Church. Various symbols of the Trinity, such as the Trefoil and Triangle designs are frequently used to 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, Comforter, and Holy Companion; our 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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# UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST

### **CHURCH STAFF**

*Timothy W. Shirley, Pastor*

*Debbie Brown, Church Administrator*

*Sharon Breit, Director of Christian Education*

*Lori Lee Hunter, Director of Music*

*Norma Yaeger, Pianist*

*Christine Clough, Cleaning Service*

### **CHURCH COUNCIL**

*President, Donna Adams*

*Vice President, Mark Johannsen*

*Trisha Moore*

*Cathy Palmer*

*Deb Stolze*

*Steve Burrill*

*Clerk, Norma Yaeger*

*Pastor Parish Relations, Tobi Johannsen*

*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*

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First Congregational UCC - Eagle River, WI

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