

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.*



*Eleventh Sunday after Pentecost
Nineteenth Sunday in Ordinary Time*

*The Lord's Day
Eleventh Sunday after Pentecost
Nineteenth 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

Today, we read that familiar story of Jesus walking "on" the water. Or was it "by" the water, "in" the water, "beside" the water, or even "under" the water? Jesus as our snorkeling Lord! It is all Greek to all of us because the nuance is forever lost in the Greek! New Testament Greek has precious few prepositions and each one can contain several meanings, leaving it up to the reader to precariously pick and choose. Well, we all know which one was preferred, and thus selected for the narrative, as Jesus takes his early morning stroll. Today, we explore miracle and the miraculous, acknowledging the necessity of reimagining the miraculous in light of twenty first century postmodern interpretations. As we read these ancient tales, full of all their first century mythological understandings, the answer is found "in" the details!

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

Gather for worship all you faithful, all who are struggling with doubt and fear or anything that challenges the faith by which we walk!

With all our being, Jesus bids us come as we are, welcoming us with open and loving arms!

Come and glory in the salvation of the Holy One, giving thanks from all the faithful who trust in the Holy, praising the name of God in the midst of the congregation!

With voices united, we raise our songs of thanksgiving, declaring the wondrous deeds of God, telling of all God's miracles, the works of God's hands!

Let us worship God!

The Introit, No. 139 (*Chalice Praise*) *Take, O Take Me As I Am*

fr. the Iona Community

The Collect

Let us pray to the Lord,

God of miracle and wonder, we come before you with all our humanity, full of fear and doubt, full of belief and faith in you; we gather to give thanks to the Holy this day, to rejoice in God, calling on the name of the One whose salvation is upon us all; we come into this sacred setting to sing praises to the God whose wonderful works, whose miracles are all around us; we long for your presence in worship, to experience your glory in our midst; 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. 25 *Praise to the Lord, the Almighty*

LOBE DEN HERREN

*The Litany of Praise

O give thanks to the Lord, making known God's deeds among the peoples! Sing unto God joyous praises, seeking the Holy in this sacred space!

We raise our joyful songs of praise, declaring God's wonderful works in the midst of the congregation!

Glory in the wondrous deeds of God, calling on the name of the Holy One! Let the hearts of those who seek God's presence, rejoice!

Our faith is in God, finding the strength the Holy One offers us, continually seeking God's presence!

We remember the justice declared by the Holy, miracles great and small performed in our midst!

As the offspring of Abraham, children of Jacob, the very chosen of God, we are the inheritors of a great legacy, all the gifts and promises of the Holy One! 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 Confession¹

We profess our faith in God, yet we are prone to rely more heavily on our own ingenuity than the God we profess. We say we believe, but somehow, we settle for taking paths of least resistance, choosing life's least common denominators, failing to show confident trust in God. We want to care as Jesus did, but we are often ready, as were Joseph's brothers, to sell off those with whom we disagree, dismissing their ideas as trivial or irrelevant. Who can save us from ourselves? 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,

God of miracle and wonder, we confess that on occasion we are dreamers more intent on our own importance than on your vision for us. Sometimes, we lean too heavily into the limitations of our own humanity, trusting only our best selves, favoring our positions, choosing to go it alone rather than trusting in community and the God who loves us. We want to walk on water before we have even learned to stand upright on the land. We are not at our best when we choose to place ourselves above others rather than reaching out with helping hands, that all might be uplifted by you. We pray for pardon, for greater insight, for another chance to live and serve with faithfulness.

The Assurance of Pardon³

Beloved faith community, hear the good news. O you of little faith, why do you doubt? Take heart! Do not be afraid! The harsh winds will abate. The seas will not overwhelm. The treachery of some will not wipe out the good of others, much less the goodness of God. God loves everyone willing to call on God's name. Remember God's wonderful works as we share the good news. Let all humankind praise God!

Thanks be to God!

The Time for the Children

Nancy Diepenbrock

The Witness from the Epistles

ROMANS 10:5-15

Moses writes concerning the righteousness that comes from the law, that “the person who does these things will live by them.” But the righteousness that comes from faith says, “Do not say in your heart, ‘Who will ascend into heaven?’” (that is, to bring Christ down) “or ‘Who will descend into the abyss?’” (that is, to bring Christ up from the dead). But what does it say? “The word is near you, in your mouth

and in your heart” (that is, the word of faith that we proclaim), because if you confess with your mouth that Jesus is Lord and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved. For one believes with the heart, leading to righteousness, and one confesses with the mouth, leading to salvation. The scripture says, “No one who believes in him will be put to shame!” For there is no distinction between Jew and Greek! The same Lord is Lord of all and is generous to all who call on him. For “everyone who calls on the name of the Lord shall be saved!” But how are they to call on one in whom they have not believed? And how are they to believe in one of whom they have never heard? And how are they to hear without someone to proclaim him? And how are they to proclaim him unless they are sent? As it is written, “How beautiful are the feet of those who bring good news!”

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

Thanks be to God!

The Singing Response: PSALM 105:1-6, 16-22, 45b

AZMON

*Rejoice, all faithful, in the Lord, a song of thanks now raise!
For all the goodness to us giv'n, unite to sing God's praise!*

*The miracles God's grace fulfills are wrought for our avail!
How blest are they whose hearts confirm God's love will never fail!*

*The just rewards of unbelief are fashioned through our fears!
And nightmares, once imagined, gain their flesh when doubt appears!*

*But to the stalwart in their faith God's blessings are displayed!
They sing with joy, the chosen ones whose hope in God is stayed!*

The Witness from the Gospels

MATTHEW 14:22-33

Immediately he made the disciples get into a boat and go on ahead to the other side while he dismissed the crowds. And after he had dismissed the crowds, he went up the mountain by himself to pray. When evening came, he was there alone, but by this time the boat, battered by the waves, was far from the land, for the wind was against them. And early in the morning he came walking toward them on the sea. But when the disciples saw him walking on the sea, they were terrified, saying, “It is a ghost!” And they cried out in fear. But immediately Jesus spoke to them and said, “Take heart, it is I! Do not be afraid!” Peter answered him, “Lord, if it is you, command me to come to you on the water.” He said, “Come!” So, Peter got out of the boat, started walking on the water, and came toward Jesus. But when he noticed the strong wind, he became frightened, and, beginning to sink, he cried out, “Lord, save me!” Jesus immediately reached out his hand and caught him, saying to him, “You of little faith, why did you doubt?” When they got into the boat, the wind ceased. And those in the boat worshiped him, saying, “Truly you are the Son of God!”

The Gospel for today!

Thanks be to God!

The Sermon

Getting Out of the Boat!

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. 618
*The Procession of the Light
*The Benediction and Blessing

How Firm a Foundation

FOUNDATION

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: Susan Krivichi, Cathy Palmer, and Jean Haack

*The flowers adorning the Chancel for worship today are given by Barb Flaherty
wishing everyone a "Happy Summer!"*

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.

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UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST

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First Congregational UCC - Eagle River, WI

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