

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.*



*Tenth Sunday after Pentecost
Eighteenth Sunday in Ordinary Time*

*The Lord's Day
Tenth Sunday after Pentecost
Eighteenth 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 today's Witness from the Hebrew Bible in Genesis we read the amazing story of Jacob wrestling with God by the Jabbok River, a conflagration of the ages. Yes, for all the marbles! Evidently, it was quite a face off, quite a throw down, Jacob and God in full battle mode all through the night. Jacob won! God did not lose! This text is a reminder that faith does not come easily, nor should it if it is worth its salt. Indeed, we have to earn it! We have to fight for it with all our being. Otherwise, what value is it? What good is it? Truly, we have permission, an expectation, to doubt, to be skeptical, even cynical, the freedom to struggle with the theology that feeds and fuels our belief and faith and vice versa.

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

Nameless God, we gather before your holy face, longing to worship you in these sacred moments!

We long to know and be blessed by One whose transcendence is shrouded in mystery, awe, and wonder!

Incline your ear and listen to us, faithfully loving God! Hear our words as we call upon you in this sacred time and space!

We wrestle with One who is known and yet who is beyond our knowing!

Let us worship God!

The Introit, No. 354

Seek Ye First

Karen Lafferty, SEEK YE FIRST

The Collect

Let us pray to the Lord,

Blessing God, we have gathered in this holy place to worship you, to wrestle with the One whose face is beyond our vision, whose name we long to know, yet is so wondrously shown to us in steadfast love; incline your ear to us, faithfully loving God; hear our words and answer us as we seek your presence this day; may we ever speak the truth in love in Christ in this place, ever blessing the One who blesses us and names us as God's own; 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. 66 *Immortal, Invisible, God Only Wise*

ST. DENIO

*The Litany of Praise

The Holy One hears our cries and gives ear to the prayers of our lips! Our vindication comes from the Holy, whose eyes see the best in all of us!

God tries our hearts and tests us, visiting us by night, finding no wrong or fault within us!

Our mouths shall never transgress the Holy, nor the words of our lips speak violence in the presence of God!

The Holy One orders our steps that our feet never slip! God inclines an ear to us, hearing our words, listening when we call!

God's faithful love is wondrously shown in amazing ways to all who seek refuge at the right hand of the Holy!

The strong hand of the righteous One offers salvation to all, showing us the face of the Holy, revealing the full image 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

All of us spend times wrestling with God over issues in our lives. These moments of confession offer us one such opportunity. Bring your own distress to this time of communal confession in which all of us are invited to participate. 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 justice and righteousness, whose compassion for humankind was expressed so vividly in Jesus of Nazareth, we bring to you our sorrow and anguish, recalling the times that we have failed to follow faithfully in the footsteps of Jesus. Unkindness and deceit are all around us. We have sometimes joined in destructive ways, even delighting in them because of their intoxicating effect. We waste resources you have entrusted to us. Sometimes we fear that we cause others to stumble and fall. Take away any wrongs and the faults within us and restore your covenant among us.

The Assurance of Pardon³

Beloved faith community, hear the good news. God is merciful, patient, kind, and loving! All creation is subject to God's care and concern. God attends to our cries and frees our lips from deceit. In Christ, our brokenness finds healing, and relationships are mended, strengthened, and restored. God feeds us in ways beyond our knowing and prompts our generosity. Know the glory of God surrounding us here as we worship. Celebrate the refreshment God offers!

Thanks be to God!

The Time for the Children

Carol Marshall

The Witness from the Hebrew Bible

GENESIS 32:22-31

The same night he got up and took his two wives, his two maids, and his eleven children and crossed the ford of the Jabbok. He took them and sent them across the stream, and likewise everything that he had. Jacob was left alone, and a man wrestled with him until daybreak. When the man saw that he did not prevail against Jacob, he struck him on the hip socket, and Jacob's hip was put out of joint as he wrestled with him. Then he said, "Let me go, for the day is breaking." But Jacob said, "I will not let you go, unless you bless me." So, he said to him, "What is your name?" And he said, "Jacob!" Then the man said, "You shall no longer be called Jacob, but Israel, for you have striven with God and with humans and have prevailed." Then Jacob asked him, "Please tell me your name!" But he said, "Why is it that you ask my name?" And there God blessed him. So, Jacob called the place Peniel, saying, "For I have seen God face to face, yet my life is preserved." The sun rose upon him as he passed Peniel, limping because of his hip.

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

Thanks be to God!

*Hear, O Lord, our pleas for justice! Listen to our heartfelt prayer!
In your just deliberation may we find redemption there!*

*Test our hearts for sad affliction, purify our souls with fire!
Let our mortal tongues speak wisdom, righteousness be our desire!*

*Keep us, Lord, in your protection, as the apples of your eye!
Shelter us beneath your shadow when our hour of death draws nigh!*

*In its wake send vindication, to its darkness, show your face!
Bring us to our resurrection clothed in garments of your grace!*

The Witness from the Gospels

MATTHEW 14:13-21

Now when Jesus heard this, he withdrew from there in a boat to a deserted place by himself. But when the crowds heard it, they followed him on foot from the towns. When he went ashore, he saw a great crowd, and he had compassion for them and cured their sick. When it was evening, the disciples came to him and said, "This is a deserted place, and the hour is now late. Send the crowds away so that they may go into the villages and buy food for themselves." Jesus said to them, "They need not go away! You give them something to eat!" They replied, "We have nothing here but five loaves and two fish." And he said, "Bring them here to me!" Then he ordered the crowds to sit down on the grass. Taking the five loaves and the two fish, he looked up to heaven and blessed and broke the loaves and gave them to the disciples, and the disciples gave them to the crowds. And all ate and were filled, and they took up what was left over of the broken pieces, twelve baskets full. And those who ate were about five thousand men, besides women and children.

The Gospel for today!

Thanks be to God!

The Sermon

Wrestlemania!

Timothy W. Shirley

The Anthem

Come to the Table

Jean Anne Shafferman and Steve Kupferschmid

Chancel Choir

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. 595

Be Thou My Vision

SLANE

*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: Bill Marshall

Ushers: Miriam Chenault and Kamie Kolb

The flowers adorning the Chancel for worship today are given by Don and Paula Hendrickson in honor of their granddaughter Piper Hendrickson's 8th birthday and in honor of Don and Paula's 46th wedding anniversary.

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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