

First Congregational United Church of Christ

*Empowered by the Holy Spirit and with the help of God,
we open our doors and
our hearts to all, in service and love as modeled by Jesus Christ.*



**MANNA
&
QUAIL**



*Seventeenth Sunday after Pentecost
Twenty Fifth Sunday in Ordinary Time*

*The Lord's Day
Seventeenth Sunday after Pentecost
Twenty Fifth 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 Gospels Jesus tells a parable, these kinds of stories infrequent in the Gospel of Matthew, a rare Matthean literary device. The story is striking because it wreaks with a lack of fairness and equity. The day laborers who came to work late were paid exactly the amount as those who came early and toiled all day by the sweat of their brow. What's up with that? "Jesunomics!" The subtle, or perhaps not so subtle, message to those who had the ears to hear, bent back as they surely were, was that a new day had arrived. As far as Jesus was concerned, a new era was on the horizon, the dawn of lovingly gracious inclusion now extended even unto Gentiles who were now welcome at the table. There's your sign! All people were and are invited fully into the realm of God!

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

O give thanks to the Lord! Call upon God's holy name amidst all the people!

We have come to sing praises to the Holy, to declare God's wonderful works!

Draw near to God, preparing your hearts and minds to receive the bread that only comes from above!

In this time together, we seek the One whose presence feeds us with an abundance of goodness and grace!

Let us worship God!

The Introit, No. 99 (*Chalice Praise*)

Make Me a Servant

Kelly Willard

The Collect

Let us pray to the Lord,

God of the first and the last, we have come into this sacred space to give thanks to you, to call on your holy name, to sing praises to the One whose wonderful works are all around us; feed us with your holy presence as we seek to follow after you; be with us in all our spiritual journeys, surrounding us with your love even as you accompanied the children of Israel as they sojourned in their wilderness exile so very long ago; as your children, lead us to the lands of promise you have prepared before us; 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. 622

Guide Me, O Thou Great Jehovah

CWM RHONDDA

*The Litany of Praise

O give thanks to the Holy One, calling on God's name, making known God's deeds among all people!

Songs of praise we lift to the Holy, telling of all God's wonderful works!

Glory in God's holy name! Seek after the Holy One! Let the hearts of those who seek the Lord rejoice! Sing out with joy all you people!

The Holy One keeps us from stumbling, making us glad as God's chosen, always remembering sacred promises once made and forever kept!

Seek God's presence continually, always mindful of the wondrous works God has wrought, the miracles and judgments performed in the presence of all people!

For the covenant made before all people is always on the mind of the Holy, empowering us to keep covenant with the Holy One! 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

Like the Israelites in the wilderness, we too have been known to complain, God always within earshot of our grumbling. God is often blamed for calamities more than praised for the sustaining presence that works for our good. It is far easier for us to be jealous of others than to rejoice in the opportunities God gives them. 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 our bad times, good times, every time and all the time, as the human creature, it is normal, a natural inclination to be people of the flesh rather than people of the Spirit because it offers an easier road, providing a path of least resistance. In our worst moments, we are filled with guilt and shame, believing a false narrative that our lives are not worthy of the gospel of Christ. We admit our resentment when some people we deem unworthy benefit from your generosity. We confess our lack of attention to your laws, your living word, the prompting of your Holy Spirit. You alone are our salvation and our healing, blessing us with the grand opportunity to serve Christ. We choose to belong to you. Accept and change us, we pray.

The Assurance of Pardon³

Beloved faith community, hear the good news! God has offered us a presence we often overlook, failing to recognize, bread we are wont to avoid or ignore, and compassionate grace and forgiveness we erroneously believe we have not deserved, egregiously buying into a most unhealthy and debilitatingly false narrative. The holy food from heaven is offered to us daily, freely given to all who are open to receive it. Let us rejoice in this moment of God's amazing generosity, opening our lives to the gifts of God, that we might share them with others.

Thanks be to God!

The Time for the Children

Carol Marshall

The Witness from the Hebrew Bible

EXODUS 16:2-15

The whole congregation of the Israelites complained against Moses and Aaron in the wilderness. The Israelites said to them, "If only we had died by the hand of the LORD in the land of Egypt, when we sat by the pots of meat and ate our fill of bread, for you have brought us out into this wilderness to kill this whole assembly with hunger!" Then the LORD said to Moses, "I am going to rain bread from heaven for you, and each day the people shall go out and gather enough for that day. In that way I will test them, whether they will follow my instruction or not. On the sixth day, when they prepare what they bring in, it will be twice as much as they gather on other days." So, Moses and Aaron said to all the Israelites, "In the evening you shall know that it was the LORD who brought you out of the land of Egypt, and in the morning, you shall see the glory of the LORD, because God has heard your complaining against

the LORD. For what are we, that you complain against us?” And Moses said, “When the LORD gives you meat to eat in the evening and your fill of bread in the morning, because the LORD has heard the complaining that you utter against God—what are we? Your complaining is not against us but against the LORD!” Then Moses said to Aaron, “Say to the whole congregation of the Israelites: ‘Draw near to the LORD, for God has heard your complaining.’” And as Aaron spoke to the whole congregation of the Israelites, they looked toward the wilderness, and the glory of the LORD appeared in the cloud. The LORD spoke to Moses, “I have heard the complaining of the Israelites! Say to them, ‘At twilight you shall eat meat, and in the morning you shall have your fill of bread. Then you shall know that I am the LORD your God!’” In the evening quails came up and covered the camp, and in the morning, there was a layer of dew around the camp. When the layer of dew lifted, there on the surface of the wilderness was a fine flaky substance, as fine as frost on the ground. When the Israelites saw it, they said to one another, “What is it?” For they did not know what it was. Moses said to them, “It is the bread that the LORD has given you to eat!”

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

Thanks be to God!

The Singing Response: PSALM 105:1-6, 37-45

ST. PETER

*Rejoice, you 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 20:1-16

“For the realm of heaven is like a landowner who went out early in the morning to hire laborers for his vineyard. After agreeing with the laborers for a denarius for the day, he sent them into his vineyard. When he went out about nine o'clock, he saw others standing idle in the marketplace, and he said to them, ‘You also go into the vineyard, and I will pay you whatever is right.’ So they went. When he went out again about noon and about three o'clock, he did the same. And about five o'clock he went out and found others standing around, and he said to them, ‘Why are you standing here idle all day?’ They said to him, ‘Because no one has hired us!’ He said to them, ‘You also go into the vineyard.’ When evening came, the owner of the vineyard said to his manager, ‘Call the laborers and give them their pay, beginning with the last and then going to the first.’ When those hired about five o'clock came, each of them received a denarius. Now when the first came, they thought they would receive more. But each of them also received a denarius. And when they received it, they grumbled against the landowner, saying, ‘These last worked only one hour, and you have made them equal to us who have borne the burden of the day and the scorching heat.’ But he replied to one of them, ‘Friend, I

am doing you no wrong! Did you not agree with me for a denarius? Take what belongs to you and go! I choose to give to this last the same as I give to you. Am I not allowed to do what I choose with what belongs to me? Or are you envious because I am generous?' So, the last will be first, and the first will be last!"

The Gospel for today!

Thanks be to God!

The Sermon *Messages from God: God is Still Speaking* Rev. Elizabeth Hazel

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. 458 *In the Midst of New Dimensions* OURS THE JOURNEY

*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: Marilyn Preisler
Ushers: Mary Lou Congdon and Susan Krivichi
Worship Assistant: Lori Hunter

The flowers adorning the Chancel for worship today are given by Marilyn Preisler.

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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OF CHRIST

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First Congregational UCC - Eagle River, WI

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