

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.*



*Fourteenth Sunday after Pentecost
Twenty Second Sunday in Ordinary Time*

*The Lord's Day
Fourteenth Sunday after Pentecost
Twenty Second 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 Exodus, we read the amazing story of the burning bush, a bush that burned but was not consumed. Many reasons have been given for what was, and still is, an incredible phenomenon. One thing about the story is clear, we all long to experience the presence of God, a manifestation of the Holy, transcendent awe and mystery that overwhelms the senses. In the Witness from the Gospels in Matthew this morning we are brought back to earth with the reminder that this life we live is temporal and that we all have crosses to bear as we make this journey. Somewhere in the middle, perhaps, is the balance we need, a spiritual equilibrium to order our steps and guide our days.

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

We have come to this mountaintop to worship, desiring something unfamiliar, awe-inspiring mystery far beyond the ordinary!

We long to step aside from the routine of rituals, hoping to experience the wondrous sights and awesome sounds that only come from above!

We long for burning bushes and audible voices, knowing we gather before an invisible, transcendent God, always veiled in mystery, and cloaked in wonder!

Truly, we are standing on holy ground as we gather before the great "I Am", the One transcending all generations!

Let us worship God!

The Introit, No. 60 (*Chalice Praise*)

I Love You, Lord

Laurie Klein

The Collect

Let us pray to the Lord,

God of bushes that burn, but are not consumed, the God of Abraham and Isaac and Jacob, to the great "I Am Who I Am," we have turned aside from the ordinary, gathering on holy ground to sing your praises, to tell of all your wondrous works; be with us in this sacred hour, transcendent God of mysterious wonder, that we might know your presence among us in this place; we long to experience transcendence, awe-inspiring mystery, the wonder of burning bushes in our midst, strengthening us to become ever more beloved faith community in this sacred space, living in harmony as your children; 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. 24

The God of Abraham Praise

LEONI

*The Litany of Praise

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

Songs of praise we sing to God, all declaring God's wonderful works!

Let the hearts of those who seek the Holy rejoice! Continually seek the One whose strength and presence is in our midst!

We are mindful of the wonderful works of the Holy, never forgetting God's miracles, always remembering the righteous judgments made for all people!

Offspring of Abraham, of Isaac and Jacob, all chosen children of God, rejoice in all God's wondrous gifts to all people, blessings abounding from the Holy!

Our thanks and praise are raised to the great "I Am," the God of burning bushes, the God of Moses and Aaron, and every one of us! 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

It is our nature as human beings to be complainers more than seekers. We readily proclaim our innocence and justify our anger when so much of life does not go the way we had hoped. We quickly blame God for conditions entrusted to our stewardship. When we do so, we become stumbling blocks rather than facilitators of God's design. Let us seek reconciliation with God and with one another as beloved faith community. 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 burning bushes, of Abraham and Isaac and Jacob, the great "I Am," we have a proclivity to waver in our faith amidst the suffering that may befall us. We often fail to persevere in prayer, forgetting that we are in your hands. We have even dared to claim to be wiser than we really are, sometimes having the audacity to try and correct you. Oft times, we make excuses for ourselves rather than listening for your direction and heeding your call. Our days are so filled with the busyness of this world that we are blinded to your reign among us. We are so weighed down by our own concerns that we have no energy to serve in your realm. Send your cleansing fire among us that we may be made whole.

The Assurance of Pardon³

Beloved faith community, hear the good news! God is ever willing to grant us forgiveness, but we cannot receive that grace if we are unwilling to be challenged by it. As long as we focus on preserving our own lives, protecting our advantages, we will be lost. If we want to be Christ's followers, we will deny ourselves and take up the cross, not as a burden, but as the joyous symbol of loving and giving for all the right reasons. We will overcome evil with good.

Thanks be to God!

The Time for the Children

Deb Stolze

The Witness from the Hebrew Bible

EXODUS 3:1-15

Moses was keeping the flock of his father-in-law Jethro, the priest of Midian. He led his flock beyond the wilderness and came to Mount Horeb, the mountain of God. There the angel of the Lord appeared to him in a flame of fire out of a bush! He looked, and the bush was blazing, yet it was not consumed! Then Moses said, "I must turn aside and look at this great sight and see why the bush is not burned up!" When the Lord saw that he had turned aside to see, God called to him out of the bush,

“Moses, Moses!” And he said, “Here I am!” Then he said, “Come no closer! Remove the sandals from your feet, for the place on which you are standing is holy ground!” He said further, “I am the God of your father, the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob!” And Moses hid his face, for he was afraid to look at God. Then the Lord said, “I have observed the misery of my people who are in Egypt. I have heard their cry on account of their taskmasters. Indeed, I know their sufferings, and I have come down to deliver them from the Egyptians and to bring them up out of that land to a good and spacious land, to a land flowing with milk and honey, to the country of the Canaanites, the Hittites, the Amorites, the Perizzites, the Hivites, and the Jebusites. The cry of the Israelites has now come to me! I have also seen how the Egyptians oppress them. Now go, I am sending you to Pharaoh to bring my people, the Israelites, out of Egypt!” But Moses said to God, “Who am I that I should go to Pharaoh and bring the Israelites out of Egypt?” God said, “I will be with you, and this shall be the sign for you that it is I who sent you: when you have brought the people out of Egypt, you shall serve God on this mountain.” But Moses said to God, “If I come to the Israelites and say to them, ‘The God of your ancestors has sent me to you,’ and they ask me, ‘What is God’s name?’ what shall I say to them?” God said to Moses, “I am who I am!” God further said, “Thus you shall say to the Israelites, ‘I am has sent me to you!’” God also said to Moses, “Thus you shall say to the Israelites, ‘The Lord, the God of your ancestors, the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob, has sent me to you. This is my name forever, and this my title for all generations.’”

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

Thanks be to God!

The Singing Response: PSALM 105:1-6, 23-26, 45c

KINGSFOLD

*Sing songs of praise and thanks to God, who wondrous deeds has done!
By whose design was life ordained, God’s strength, the battle won!
The judgments of the Lord are just, earth moves beneath God’s voice!
The righteous glory in God’s might, and faithful hearts rejoice!
Remember well when God’s beloved in bondage bore the chains,
Endured the test of faith and won God’s favor yet again!
The ones redeemed through their belief; the tyrant’s rod destroyed!
They claimed the blessings of the land which masters once enjoyed!*

The Witness from the Gospels

MATTHEW 16:21-28

From that time on, Jesus began to show his disciples that he must go to Jerusalem and undergo great suffering at the hands of the elders and chief priests and scribes and be killed and on the third day be raised. And Peter took him aside and began to rebuke him, saying, “God forbid it, Lord! This must never happen to you!” But he turned and said to Peter, “Get behind me, Satan! You are a hindrance to me, for you are setting your mind not on divine things but on human things.” Then Jesus told his disciples, “If any wish to come after me, let them deny themselves and take up their cross and follow me. For those who want to save their life will lose it, and those who lose their life for my sake will find it. For what will it profit them if they gain the whole world but forfeit their life? Or what will they give in return for their life? “For the Son of Man is to come with his angels in the glory of his Father, and

then he will repay everyone for what has been done. Truly I tell you, there are some standing here who will not taste death before they see the Son of Man coming in his realm!"

The Gospel for today!

Thanks be to God!

The Sermon	<i>Burning Bushes, Carrying Crosses!</i>	Timothy W. Shirley
The Anthem	<i>We Remember Thee</i>	Jay Althouse
	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. 587 *Jesus, Keep Me Near the Cross*

NEAR THE CROSS

*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: Barbara Helmick
 Ushers: Deb Stolze and Mike Mettler

***The flowers adorning the Chancel for worship today are given by
 Ken and Susan Krivichi in honor of their 34th 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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