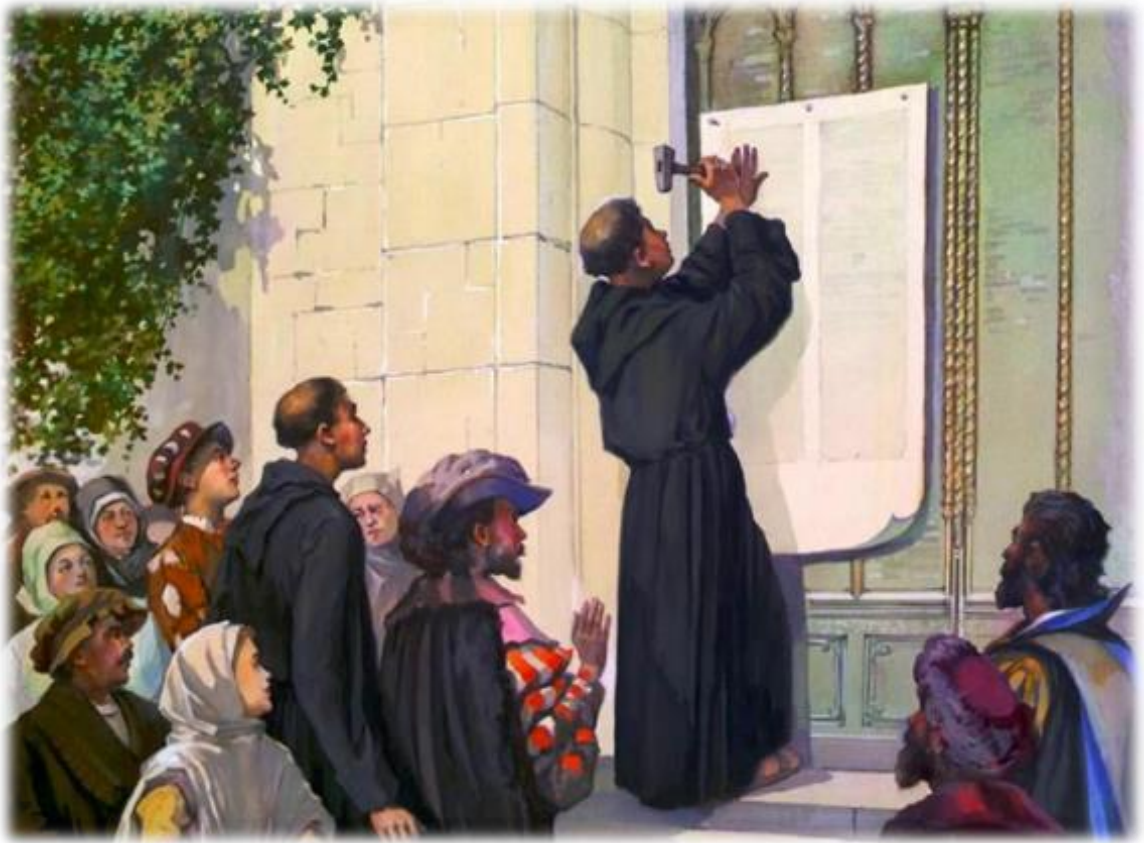


# First Congregational United Church of Christ

*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.*



Twenty Second Sunday after Pentecost  
Twenty Eighth Sunday in Ordinary Time  
A Celebration of Reformation and Confirmation

*The Lord's Day*  
*Twenty Second Sunday after Pentecost*  
*Twenty Eighth Sunday in Ordinary Time*  
*A Celebration of Reformation and Confirmation*  
*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**

A Celebration of Reformation is observed on the Sunday nearest October 31<sup>st</sup>, the anniversary of the day in 1517 when Martin Luther posted his ninety-five theses on the door of the Castle Church, Wittenberg, Germany, to protest myriad papal and other ecclesiastical abuses within the Roman Catholic Church. Much like our own times, the Reformation of the sixteenth century was a period of intense conflict and change. Out of this ferment arose numerous reformers who called the Church back to its original purpose and center in Jesus Christ. We remember and honor those courageous individuals. The themes of our celebration will be those of the reformers themselves: *sola gratia* (by grace alone), *sola fide* (by faith alone), and *sola scriptura* (by scripture alone). We dedicate ourselves to the unfinished task of reformation in our own day. It is indeed fitting that we confirm Ayla Jean Moore Shepherdson, Iland Moore Shepherdson, and Wyatt Richard Stebbeds as we celebrate a heritage of Reformation as Protestants on this special high and holy festival day. These confirmands not only represent the future of the Church but will also be a part of an ongoing ecclesial revolution, continuing evolution, the kind of reform that began with Jesus and continued with Martin Luther and countless others down through the ages.

### **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

Rejoice and be glad, for the One whose steadfast love endures forever invites us into the presence of the Holy!

**We have come to worship the One who has been our dwelling place in all generations, the God of our ancestors!**

Full of the Spirit of wisdom, we gather before the God of Moses and David and Christ Jesus, longing to be renewed by the One so dear to us!

**With all our hearts and souls and minds, we offer ourselves before the Holy in this sacred hour!**

Let us worship God!

The Introit

*Ein' Feste Burg*

Martin Luther

Ursula Charaf, soprano; William Charaf, bass

The Collect

Let us pray to the Lord,

God of Moses and David and Christ Jesus our Lord, with much gladness and great rejoicing we have gathered to worship the One whose steadfast love endures forever, the One who satisfies our longing for the presence of the Holy, who dwells among us as the people of God in this sacred setting; with all our hearts and souls and minds, we offer to you our praise and adoration on this high and holy festival day of Reformation and Confirmation; all this we pray through Jesus Christ our Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, forever and ever.

**Amen.**

\*The Opening Hymn, No. 65      *A Mighty Fortress Is Our God*      EIN' FESTE BURG

\*The Litany of Praise

Give praise to God, the Holy One who has been our dwelling place in all generations!  
**Before the mountains were brought forth, before the world was formed, from everlasting to everlasting you are God!**

A thousand years in the sight of God are like yesterday when it is past!

**For our days are swept away like a dream, like grass that is renewed in the morning!**

The Holy One satisfies our hearts with a steadfast love, making us joyful and glad for all our days!

**Let the favor of God be upon us and prosper the work of our hands as servants of the Most High! 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 Confession<sup>1</sup>

The word of God comes to us through Moses: “You shall be holy, for I, your God, am holy!” But we tend to take little delight in holiness, scoffing at pretensions of saintliness. Wickedness seems more attractive than righteousness, not only for our entertainment but also to boost our success in the marketplace. Do we want to change our accommodation to meet the low standards portrayed by society? 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,

**God of all generations, we often miss your signs and wonders because we are so busy creating our own. Those around us who pretend to be your prophets offer little to which we aspire. Yet, we would pray with the psalmist, “Satisfy us in the morning with your steadfast love, so we may rejoice and be glad all our days.” Where is the meaning we have missed in all our striving? Does Jesus hold the key when he says, “Love God with all your being!” and “Love your neighbor as yourself?” We long to make sense out of life. Help us to follow your way!**

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

Hear the good news of Reformation and Confirmation! It takes courage to question the way things are, especially when present arrangements are to our benefit. We who are privileged seldom notice those who suffer and are shamefully mistreated. Yet we cannot ignore them. We can only suppress knowledge of the evil around us for a little while. God is even now nudging us gently, caring tenderly for us amid our confusion and inner turmoil. The favor of God is upon us, entrusting us with the gospel for our own lives and for the world. Receive forgiveness and blessing as good news!

**Thanks be to God!**

## The Time for the Children

Patricia Tucker

### The Service of Confirmation<sup>4</sup> (insert)

Sharon Rose Breit and Timothy W. Shirley

Confirmand, Ayla Jean Moore Shepherdson

Sponsors, Terri and Jeff Jarvi; Lara and Mike Shepherdson

Confirmand, Iland Moore Shepherdson Sponsors, Tammi  
and Leslie Stunkel; Marina and Dan McKissack

The Confirmation Song, No. 60 (*Chalice Praise*)     *I Love You Lord*

Laurie Klein

## The Witness from the Epistles

I THESSALONIANS 2:1-8

You yourselves know, brothers and sisters, that our coming to you was not in vain, but though we had already suffered and been shamefully mistreated at Philippi, as you know, we had courage in our God to declare to you the gospel of God in spite of great opposition. For our appeal does not spring from deceit or impure motives or trickery, but, just as we have been approved by God to be entrusted with the message of the gospel, even so we speak, not to please mortals but to please God, who tests our hearts. As you know and as God is our witness, we never came with words of flattery or with a pretext for greed, nor did we seek praise from mortals, whether from you or from others, though we might have made demands as apostles of Christ. But we were gentle among you, like a nurse tenderly caring for her own children. So deeply do we care for you that we are determined to share with you not only the gospel of God but also our own selves, because you have become very dear to us.

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

**Thanks be to God!**

## The Responsorial Psalm (insert)

PSALM 90:1-6, 13-17

Phoebe Spier-Olsen, cantor

## The Witness from the Gospels

MATTHEW 22:34-46

When the Pharisees heard that Jesus had silenced the Sadducees, they gathered together, and one of them, an expert in the law, asked him a question to test him. "Teacher, which commandment in the law is the greatest?" He said to him, "You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind! This is the greatest and first commandment. And a second is like it: 'You shall love your neighbor as yourself. On these two commandments hang all the Law and the Prophets.'" Now while the Pharisees were gathered together, Jesus asked them this question: "What do you think of the Messiah? Whose son is he?" They said to him, "The son of David!" He said to them, "How is it then that David by the Spirit calls him Lord, saying 'The Lord said to my Lord, Sit at my right hand, until I put your enemies under your feet?' If David thus calls him Lord, how can he be his son?" No one was able to give him an answer, nor from that day did anyone dare to ask him any more questions!

The Gospel for today!

**Thanks be to God!**

The Sermon

*Reformation Confirmation!*

Timothy W. Shirley

The Anthem

*Praise to the Lord*

arr. John M. Rasley

Chancel Choir

A Stewardship Moment

Barbara Helmick

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. 67      *O God, Our Help in Ages Past*

ST. ANNE

\*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: Cathy Palmer

Ushers: Kammie Kolb and Carlton Schroeder

*The flowers adorning the Chancel for worship today are given in  
honor of Tom and Barbara Helmick's 33<sup>rd</sup> wedding anniversary.  
Flowers are also given in honor of Ayla Jean Moore Shepherdson,  
Iland Moore Shepherdson, and Wyatt Richard Stebbeds  
on the celebration of their Confirmation.*

# Confirmation



*The color for A Celebration of Reformation is Red, representing the crusading march of the Protestant Reformers and symbolizing the blood of those who were martyred in the cause, giving their lives for the freedom and liberty of Christ's Church. Red is also a celebratory color appropriate for Confirmation.*

*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.

<sup>4</sup> Adapted from *Book of Worship: United Church of Christ*, reprinted 2020, United Church of Christ, Local Church Ministries, Cleveland, OH. Today's scripture lessons are from the New Revised Standard Version of the Bible, Updated Edition.

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## UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST

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*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**

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*Kristen Anchor*

*Steve Burrill*

*Carol Marshall*

*Trisha Moore*

*Eric Olsen*

*Deb Stolze*

*Clerk, Norma Yaeger*

*Pastor Parish Relations, Tobi Johamsen*

*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*

*Service Support Team, Joy Turpin*

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First Congregational UCC - Eagle River, WI

October 29, 2023