

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 Fourth Sunday after Pentecost

Thirtieth Sunday in Ordinary Time

A Celebration of Stewardship

The Lord's Day
Twenty Fourth Sunday after Pentecost
Thirtieth Sunday in Ordinary Time
A Celebration of Stewardship
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 the book of Joshua, we read where the children of Israel had crossed the Jordan River and entered the land they believed had been promised to them by God. But before they could get settled there was one matter of business left to be conducted, would they serve God, or would they cling to one of the gods their ancestors worshipped. It was a covenant decision that had to be made! Every day we make decisions about every aspect of our lives, some major and some minor, but all nonetheless important. Today we are talking about our stewardship decisions, every choice we make regarding our faithful participation in this beloved faith community called the First Congregational United Church of Christ, Eagle River. As our reading from Matthew tells us this morning, it is all about the oil to light our lamp!

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 *Lord, I Want to Be a Christian* arr. Ron Mallory
Chime Choir; Susan Krivichi, director; Norma Yaeger, piano

The Lighting of the Altar Candles

The Gathering

Gather to worship a holy and jealous God! Come with reverence before the One we long to serve in sincerity and faithfulness!

Wise and foolish all, we have come to meet the bridegroom in this holy place!

Our hearts are inclined to the Holy in this sacred setting, our ears attuned to a word from God!

Alert us to your surprising presence, covenant God! Awaken us that we might be ready to receive you in our midst!

Let us worship God!

The Introit, No. 354

Seek Ye First

Karen Lafferty

The Collect

Let us pray to the Lord,

Holy and jealous God, we have gathered in this sacred place and time to present ourselves to you, to meet the God of our ancestors, the God of Abraham and Isaac and Jacob; with reverence before the Holy, we come before the One we long to serve with sincerity and faithfulness; alert and awaken us, covenanting God, to your advent in our midst; be present with us not only in this sacred hour, but also in the many ways you come to us in all of the serendipitous and spontaneous moments of our lives; 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. 2

Joyful, Joyful, We Adore Thee

HYMN TO JOY

*The Litany of Praise

Listen, O people, to the voice of God! Incline your ear to hear words declared from the mouth of the Holy One!

The teachings of the Holy have been revealed to us, made known in proverbs and riddles mysteriously hidden in parables, spoken to our ancestors long ago!

We have heard these lessons and have learned them well, insights we have gleaned from those who have gone before us!

Never will we hide them from our children but will instruct coming generations of the glorious deeds of God, the wondrous works that the Holy One has done!

We long for our children to know the decrees that God has set before us, teaching these commands to their children, assuring us that the next generation will know them!

We long to be empowered by our hope in God, never forgetting the works manifest in the Holy, but keeping the commandments vital to our covenant relationship! 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

How seriously do we regard the decrees of our spiritual ancestors, our forebears in the faith? The psalmist commands that we teach the law of God to our children, that we and they will never forget all that God has done. Obedience to the way of life God sets before us makes hope real. 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,

If sin means cutting ourselves off from God and being unprepared to respond to the presence of the Holy and the needs of others, then surely, we are guilty as charged. So very often, the lamps of our lives are not trimmed, impeding our ability to be ready to respond to the trumpet call of your goodness and grace. Oft times, we do not listen attentively to the Holy Spirit, thereby failing to encourage one another in the faith. The distraction of many things keeps us from consistent meditation and prayer. We are witnesses against ourselves when we are disloyal to God, going our own way. Merciful God, we seek your gracious forgiveness!

The Assurance of Pardon³

Beloved faith community, hear the good news as we celebrate Stewardship. God brought our spiritual ancestors out of bondage and protected them along their way. We believe God is eager to free us from all that imprisons us. Our days on earth are a trust from God, and we serve God best by investing our time in learning and living the intentions God has for us. It is the will of God that we live in harmony with one another, that we learn to love all those valued as the children of God. The Holy One extends full pardon to each one of us. Praise God for forgiveness and unlimited second chances!

Thanks be to God!

The Time for the Children

Lori Hunter

The Witness from the Hebrew Bible

JOSHUA 24:1-3a, 14-25

Then Joshua gathered all the tribes of Israel to Shechem and summoned the elders, the heads, the judges, and the officers of Israel, and they presented themselves before God. And Joshua said to all the people, “Thus says the LORD, the God of Israel: Long ago your ancestors — Terah and his sons Abraham and Nahor — lived beyond the Euphrates and served other gods. Then I took your father Abraham from beyond the river and led him through all the land of Canaan and made his offspring many. I gave him Isaac. Now, therefore, revere the LORD and serve God in sincerity and in faithfulness. Put away the gods that your ancestors served beyond the river and in Egypt and serve the LORD. Now if you are unwilling to serve the LORD, choose this day whom you will serve, whether the gods your ancestors served in the region beyond the river or the gods of the Amorites in whose land you are living, but as

for me and my household, we will serve the LORD!” Then the people answered, “Far be it from us that we should forsake the LORD to serve other gods, for it is the LORD our God who brought us and our ancestors up from the land of Egypt, out of the house of slavery, and who did those great signs in our sight. God protected us along all the way that we went and among all the peoples through whom we passed, and the LORD drove out before us all the peoples, the Amorites who lived in the land. Therefore, we also will serve the LORD, for the Holy One is our God.” But Joshua said to the people, “You cannot serve the LORD, for God is a holy God! God is a jealous God! God will not forgive your transgressions or your sins! If you forsake the LORD and serve foreign gods, then God will turn and do you harm and consume you, after having done you good.” And the people said to Joshua, “No, we will serve the LORD!” Then Joshua said to the people, “You are witnesses against yourselves that you have chosen the LORD, to serve God!” And they said, “We are witnesses!” He said, “Then put away the foreign gods that are among you, and incline your hearts to the LORD, the God of Israel!” The people said to Joshua, “The LORD our God we will serve, and God we will obey!” So, Joshua made a covenant with the people that day and made statutes and ordinances for them at Shechem.

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

Thanks be to God!

The Singing Response: PSALM 78:1-7

BROTHER JAMES' AIR

“Give ear, my people, to my law,” thus did the Lord command!

“My words, though cast in parable, your hearts can understand!

To tell your children of my might is all that I demand!”

Each passing generation sings the wonders of the Lord,

That those who follow in their steps may be of one accord!

To keep God’s law above all else, and hold God yet adored!

How marvelous the Lord preserved our kindred in distress!

The sea a path did yield, and springs did feed the wilderness!

No less are we today the heirs of truth and righteousness!

The Witness from the Gospels

MATTHEW 25:1-13

“Then the realm of heaven will be like this. Ten young women took their lamps and went to meet the bridegroom. Five of them were foolish, and five were wise. When the foolish took their lamps, they took no oil with them, but the wise took flasks of oil with their lamps. As the bridegroom was delayed, all of them became drowsy and slept. But at midnight there was a shout, ‘Look! Here is the bridegroom! Come out to meet him.’ Then all those young women got up and trimmed their lamps. The foolish said to the wise, ‘Give us some of your oil, for our lamps are going out.’ But the wise replied, ‘No! There will not be enough for you and for us. You had better go to the dealers and buy some for yourselves.’ And while they went to buy it, the bridegroom came, and those who were ready went with him into the wedding banquet, and the door was shut. Later the other young women came also, saying, ‘Lord, lord, open to us!’ But he replied, ‘Truly I tell you! I do not know you!’ Keep awake, therefore, for you know neither the day nor the hour!”

The Gospel for today!

Thanks be to God!

The Sermon

Oil Your Lamp!

Timothy W. Shirley

The Music for Meditation

A Stewardship Moment

Bill Marshall

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

We're Marching to Zion arr. Tedd Smith and Don Hustad
Lori Hunter, organ; Norma Yaeger, piano

*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. 470

When the Church of Jesus

KING'S WESTON

*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: Mark Johannsen

Ushers: Jean Hack and Kamie Kolb

The flowers adorning the Chancel for worship today are given by Mark and Tobi Johannsen in gratitude for our church family who give of their time, talent, and money to keep this Spirit-led church humming!

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 used in our sanctuary, 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 and Comforter; 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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*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*

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Gifts and Endowments, Bill Marshall
Safety and Security, Carlton Schroeder
Scholarship, Ursula Charaf
Service Support Team, Joy Turpin*

First Congregational United Church of Christ

105 North First Street ~ PO Box 1385 ~ Eagle River, Wisconsin 54521

Website: eagleriverucc.org Church Office: 715-802-8501 Email: office@eagleriverucc.org

Timothy W. Shirley: pastortim@eagleriverucc.org timwshirley@gmail.com



First Congregational UCC - Eagle River, WI

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