

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.



Last Sunday after Pentecost
Last Sunday in Ordinary Time
Reign of Christ

The Lord's Day
Last Sunday after Pentecost
Last Sunday in Ordinary Time
Reign of Christ
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

For those of us who came out of evangelistic or evangelical denominational traditions, we were reared on a steady diet demanding that we believe by faith, to “get saved,” assuring us of our salvation. For many of us this required reciting a public profession of faith, articulating a personal understanding that Jesus died for our sins to keep us safe from the fires of hell's eternal damnation. In the parable from Matthew that technically is not a parable, this apocalyptic text demands works as the way, a means to salvation, disregarding our faithfulness to a specific belief system, ignoring the need for dogmatic understandings and/or interpretations describing the person of Jesus or the nature of Christ. In terms of works-righteousness, doing for neighbor, the sheep did! The goats did not! Always better to be a sheep than a goat! Obviously, GOAT did not stand for GREATEST OF ALL TIME!

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

Make a joyful noise to the Lord, all the earth! Worship the Lord with gladness in this sacred setting! Come into God's presence with singing!

Know that the Lord is God, the One who made us! We belong to God as people of the Holy One, the sheep of God's pasture!

Enter the gates of the Holy with thanksgiving, God's courts with thanks and praise, gathering to bless the holy name of God!

For the Lord is good, the steadfast love of God enduring forever, faithful to all generations!

Let us worship God!

The Introit, No. 31 (*Chalice Praise*) *All Hail King Jesus*

Dave Moody

The Collect

Let us pray to the Lord,

Shepherding God, we have come into your presence to make a joyful noise to the Lord, to sing praise to God, to give thanks for all the bountiful blessings of the Holy One; all praise we would render to the One who reigns and rules in all creation, the One who hears our prayers, forgiving all our transgressions; continue to lead and guide us as your flock, that we might forever serve you and follow in your way; 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. 91 *All Hail the Power of Jesus' Name*

CORONATION

*The Litany of Praise

The shepherd diligently searches for every flock, every sheep a coveted possession of the Holy One, God seeking out each one no matter how scattered any one of them may be!

God rescues every sheep from all the dark places of life, saving those who are distressed in times of clouds and thick darkness!

The Holy One gathers the sheep, securing them from desolation to delight, leading them to fertile lands blessed by God!

As sheep grazing in good pasture, all humanity is safely gathered at home with God, lying down in the fold of the greenest fields!

God feeds the flocks that belong to the Holy, seeking the lost, bringing back the strays, binding their wounds, strengthening all those who are weak!

The sheep are tended with justice, proclaiming protection and salvation, declaring that the Holy One will be their God, a promise lasting from generation to generation! 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

God judges us with love. High standards are held before us, the Holy One expecting much of us. When we have grown fat and lazy, God calls us to a more disciplined life. When we are tempted to forget those less fortunate than ourselves, God alerts us to make radical changes. 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,

Good and gracious shepherd, you are aware of our weakness when we make comfort a priority over service. It is way too easy to ignore strangers in need as if they were no concern of ours. It is our prerogative to resist programs that might threaten our privileges. We tend to only do enough good to keep us from feeling guilty. When we are honest with ourselves, we admit that we tend to give grudgingly of our time and resources instead of overflowing with thanksgiving and joyous sharing. It is easy to treat the church as our possession rather than letting Christ rule as head of the body. We thank you, forgiving God, that you never allow us to wander beyond your reach.

The Assurance of Pardon³

Beloved faith community, hear the good news of Reign of Christ. The Holy One declares that there will be judgment between the sheep and the goats. The sheep are those who respond to the needs of others with compassion. The goats are those who pretend that everything is fine. The judgment of God is immersed in love, inviting us to share in loving acts that reflect and reveal the care and compassion of the Holy One. God is good, faithful in steadfast love to all generations.

Thanks be to God!

The Time for the Children

Pat Tucker

The Witness from the Hebrew Bible

EZEKIEL 34:11-16, 20-24

For thus says the Lord God: I myself will search for my sheep and will sort them out. As shepherds sort out their flocks when they are among scattered sheep, so I will sort out my sheep. I will rescue them from all the places to which they have been scattered on a day of clouds and thick darkness. I will bring them out from the peoples and gather them from the countries and bring them into their own land, and I will feed them on the mountains of Israel, by the watercourses, and in all the inhabited parts of the land. I will feed them with good pasture, and the mountain heights of Israel shall be their pasture. There they shall lie down in good grazing land, and they shall feed on rich pasture on the mountains of Israel. I myself will be the shepherd of my sheep, and I will make them lie down, says the Lord God. I will seek

the lost, and I will bring back the strays, and I will bind up the injured, and I will strengthen the weak, but the fat and the strong I will destroy. I will feed them with justice. Therefore, thus says the Lord God to them: I myself will judge between the fat sheep and the lean sheep. Because you pushed with flank and shoulder and butted at all the weak animals with your horns until you scattered them far and wide, I will save my flock, and they shall no longer be ravaged, and I will judge between sheep and sheep. I will set up over them one shepherd, my servant David, and he shall feed them. He shall feed them and be their shepherd. And I the Lord will be their God, and my servant David shall be prince among them. I the Lord have spoken!

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

Thanks be to God!

The Singing Response: PSALM 100

GIFT OF LOVE

*Let ev'ry voice on earth resound, and joyful heard hold God adored!
In gladness may God's courts about with songs of praise unto the Lord!*

*You are the Lord, by your design all we in nature claim our place!
Your flock, we bind our lives to you and rest secure beneath your grace!*

*Before the Lord bring thanks and praise, unfathomed mercies wait in store!
God's goodness blesses all our days, God's truth endures for evermore!*

The Witness from the Gospels

MATTHEW 25:31-46

“When the Son of Man comes in his glory and all the angels with him, then he will sit on the throne of his glory. All the nations will be gathered before him, and he will separate people one from another as a shepherd separates the sheep from the goats, and he will put the sheep at his right hand and the goats at the left. Then the one who reigns will say to those at his right hand, ‘Come, you who are blessed by my Father, inherit the realm prepared for you from the foundation of the world, for I was hungry and you gave me food, I was thirsty and you gave me something to drink, I was a stranger and you welcomed me, I was naked and you gave me clothing, I was sick and you took care of me, I was in prison and you visited me.’ Then the righteous will answer him, ‘Lord, when was it that we saw you hungry and gave you food or thirsty and gave you something to drink? And when was it that we saw you a stranger and welcomed you or naked and gave you clothing? And when was it that we saw you sick or in prison and visited you?’ And the one who reigns will answer them, ‘Truly I tell you, just as you did it to one of the least of these brothers and sisters of mine, you did it to me.’ Then he will say to those at his left hand, ‘You who are accursed, depart from me into the eternal fire prepared for the devil and his angels! For I was hungry and you gave me no food, I was thirsty and you gave me nothing to drink, I was a stranger and you did not welcome me, naked and you did not give me clothing, sick and in prison and you did not visit me.’ Then they also will answer, ‘Lord, when was it that we saw you hungry or thirsty or a stranger or naked or sick or in prison and did not take care of you?’ Then he will answer them, ‘Truly I tell you, just as you did not do it to one of the least of these, you did not do it to me!’ And these will go away into eternal punishment but the righteous into eternal life!”

The Gospel for today!

Thanks be to God!

The Sermon

Scaping the Goat!

Timothy W. Shirley

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. 233

Alleluia! Sing to Jesus

HYFRYDOL

*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: Sandra Mettler

Ushers: Mike Mettler and Joe Turpin

***The flowers adorning the Chancel for worship today are given by
Bruce and Sandy Kaitchuck in celebration of 38 years of marriage.***

*The color for Reign of Christ is White, symbolizing purity and victory.
On this day, we have chosen to use White as the color for the day.*

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

November 26, 2023