

# 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.*



*Fourth Sunday after the Epiphany  
Fourth Sunday in Ordinary Time*

*The Lord's Day  
Fourth Sunday after the Epiphany  
Fourth 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 the Witness from the Gospels for today Jesus shows off his teaching skills as a rabbi. Already, it is clear at this point in his preaching and teaching, his mission and ministry, that he has built quite a reputation with his rabbinical prowess. Twice in this short reading from the Markan narrative the writer affirms that Jesus taught as one with authority. In this story even the demons hear, acknowledge, and obey! It was not only a compliment describing Jesus' capabilities, but was a slight, perhaps even an insult, to all the religious leaders who masqueraded as authoritative, flaunting their piety for everyone to see, transparently coming off as a total charade, perhaps looking like the charlatans that many of them apparently were. Jesus' message was authentic, genuine in every way, totally real, and was as fresh as a spring rain, and yet as traditional as the faith heritage of his birth, as old, as timeless, as the ancient words he chose to spin.

### **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

Worship the Lord your God, giving thanks to the Holy One in the company of the upright, gratefully gathered in the midst of the congregation!

**We have come to render praise to the One who is gracious and merciful, full of honor and majesty, renowned for wonderful deeds among the nations!**

Gather before the One who allows us to name and know the God of our salvation, the One who reveals to us the Holy One of God!

**Holy and awesome is the name of the Lord, our praise of God enduring forever!**

Let us worship God!

The Introit (insert)

*Bind Us Together*

Bob Gillman

The Collect

Let us pray to the Lord,

Gracious and merciful God, we have gathered in the company of the upright to give thanks to the Holy One, to praise your name in the midst of the congregation, this beloved faith community known as the First Congregational United Church of Christ; great are your works, studied by all of us who delight in them; full of honor and majesty are your deeds among the nations; holy and awesome is the name of the One we long for this day; we desire your voice in this sacred setting, that your words may be put in our minds and stamped upon our longing hearts, empowering us to better live the example set before us in Jesus, the one who spoke with authority, fully revealing the presence of the Spirit of Christ, an incarnation manifestly embodied in the person of Jesus of Nazareth; 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

Praise the Lord in the company of the upright! With all your heart give thanks to God in the midst of the congregation!

**Great are the works of the Lord, a delight to those who study and know them!**

Full of honor and majesty are the works of the Holy One, the righteousness of God enduring throughout the ages!

**Renowned are the wonderful deeds of God, gracious and merciful, providing for the needs of the faithful!**

The works of the Holy One are just and trustworthy, an everlasting heritage to all the nations!

**God's redemptive covenant is established for always and evermore! Holy and awesome is the name of the Lord, the praise of God enduring forever! 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>

We are called to confess, because, knowingly or unknowingly, sometimes we unfortunately distort the word of God. We need forgiveness when our freedom in Christ has led others astray. We join in prayer together because the Church has not yet become the perfect body of Christ. Let us seek forgiveness. 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,

**Faithful God of grace and mercy, sometimes we claim to have more knowledge than we really possess. It is easy to presume to judge on the basis of our limited understanding. When we do so, our witness becomes weak, our actions self-serving, some of our sisters and brothers excluded or misled. We are our siblings' keepers! There is always an inherent risk that our behavior will lead to their apathy or indifference, perhaps confused by our behavior. If we have violated the conscience of another person, or have caused anyone to fall, we are deeply sorry. For failing to do all that Christ expects of us as a missional church, we seek forgiveness. We long to be real, genuine, and authentic in our faith, speaking with authority, the integrity of our being shining brightly like the sun for all to see. We realize that our reputations are always at stake.**

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

Beloved faith community, hear the good news. All who love God are known by God, the One whose intention is that we allow ourselves to be guided by eternal values, living in loving relationship with one another. God applauds our efforts to rid our lives of the pseudo-gods we create, habits that destroy, and prejudices that divide. We count on God not only to understand us, but to free us from our bondage to whatever diminishes our humanity. When we trust in God, accessing our faith, our lives are transformed in the process. Praise God forever and ever!

**Thanks be to God!**

The Time for the Children

Joy Turpin

## The Witness from the Hebrew Bible

DEUTERONOMY 18:15-20

The Lord your God will raise up for you a prophet like me from among you, from your fellow Israelites. You must listen to him. For this is what you asked of the Lord your God at Horeb on the day of the assembly when you said, “Let us not hear the voice of the Lord our God nor see this great fire anymore, or we will die!” The Lord said to me: “What they say is good! I will raise up for them a prophet like you from among their fellow Israelites, and I will put my words in his mouth. He will tell them everything I command him. I myself will call to account anyone who does not listen to my words that the prophet speaks in my name. But a prophet who presumes to speak in my name anything I have not commanded, or a prophet who speaks in the name of other gods, is to be put to death.”

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

**Thanks be to God!**

## The Response: PSALM 111

LAUDA ANIMA

*With our hearts we praise our maker ever in God's temple sing!  
Great and glorious are God's mercies, endless honor shall we bring  
to the Lord! Let all creation with great adoration ring!*

*God, all gracious and all caring, send your blessings from above!  
If in wrath, your arm works vengeance, can your heart with pity move?  
May our sins by grace inherit justice tempered with your love!*

*All your laws are sure established, wrought of love and equity!  
And the promise of your mercy shall endure all time to be!  
Those whose lips sing of your glory evermore your face shall see!*

## The Witness from the Gospels

MARK 1:21-28

They went to Capernaum, and when the Sabbath came, Jesus went into the synagogue and began to teach. The people were amazed at his teaching because he taught them as one who had authority, not as the teachers of the law. Just then a man in their synagogue who was possessed by an impure spirit cried out, “What do you want with us, Jesus of Nazareth? Have you come to destroy us? I know who you are—the Holy One of God!” “Be quiet!” said Jesus sternly. “Come out of him!” The impure spirit shook the man violently and came out of him with a shriek. The people were all so amazed that they asked each other, “What is this? A new teaching—and with authority! He even gives orders to impure spirits, and they obey him!” News about him spread quickly over the whole region of Galilee!

The Gospel for today!

**Thanks be to God!**

The Sermon

*Authoritative Authority!*

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. 392

*Draw Us in the Spirit's Tether*

UNION SEMINARY

\*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, 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: Donna De Pape

Ushers: Kamie Kolb and Joe Turpin

*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.*

***The flowers adorning the Chancel for worship today are given by Barb Flaherty.***

<sup>1-3</sup> Reprinted by permission United Church Press from *Taught by Love*, by Lavon Bayler. Copyright 2002 by the Pilgrim Press.

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**CHURCH STAFF**

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*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**

*President, Donna Adams*  
*Kristen Anchor*  
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*Trisha Moore*  
*Eric Olsen*  
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*Pastor Parish Relations, Tobi Johannsen*  
*Women's Fellowship, Sharon Breit*  
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*Facilities, Donna Adams*  
*Finance, Paula Hendrickson*  
*Gifts and Endowments, Bill Marshall*  
*Safety and Security, Carlton Schroeder*  
*Scholarship, Ursula Charaf*  
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