

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.*



*A Celebration of Epiphany
First Sunday after the Epiphany
First Sunday in Ordinary Time
Baptism of the Lord*

*The Lord's Day
A Celebration of Epiphany
First Sunday after the Epiphany
First Sunday in Ordinary Time
Baptism of the Lord
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

At the very beginning of the book of beginnings, the priestly writer of Genesis tells the reader that at the conception and creation of the heavens and the earth that this planet “was without shape or form.” Other translations choose to employ the image of “chaos”! This description offers imagery for consideration during our worship service today. As we read this lection from the Hebrew Bible selected for *Baptism of the Lord* we celebrate the movement of all creation from chaos to cosmos, from dark to light, from good to very good, we celebrate this amazing and wonderful biosphere in which we live and move and have our being. This morning we will also hear some contemporary words from Carl Sagan as he offers his perspective on all things cosmic!

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

Arise, shine, for your light has come!

The glory of the Lord has risen upon us!

Lift up your eyes! Look around you at all the bright faces gathered together as you join as one with all the faithful of the earth, rendering praise unto God!

Bearing gifts of worship, we come proclaiming the praise of the Holy in this sacred space!

Let us worship God!

The Choral Introit

You Are the Light

David Steele and Tom Fettke

Chancel Choir

The Collect

Let us pray to the Lord,

God of all nations, we have come bearing our gifts of worship before the One whose light has shined upon all the earth, whose light shines in the thickest darkness; you have made us radiant through the gift of your Son, thrilling our hearts as we rejoice in your glorious goodness graciously given unto us; on this great high and holy festival day we proclaim the praise of the Lord; may your glory rise upon us, overshadowing us with your holy presence; as we celebrate Jesus' baptism, as well as our own this day, may the light of all our baptisms glow brightly in this sacred setting, a reminder of the goodness and gracious love that flows abundantly from you, informing and impacting the faith you have instilled within us; 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. 173

As with Gladness

DIX

*The Litany of Praise

The justice and righteousness of the Holy One is given through a royal Son!

God is quick to defend the cause of the poor, delivering those who are in need while crushing the wicked ways of those who seek to oppress!

The Holy One is like rain that falls on the mown grass, like showers that water the earth!

The righteousness and peace of God goes before us, mighty rulers bowing in humility, rendering homage before the Holy, paying tribute to their creator!

The Holy One delivers the needy when they call, hearing the cries of the poor, listening to those who have no helper!

God pities the lowly, saving their lives, redeeming all humanity from oppression and violence! To you, glorious God, we offer our praise! 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!*

A Contemporary Reading

Pale Blue Dot

Carl Sagan

The Call to Confession¹

John the Baptist appeared in the wilderness, proclaiming a baptism of repentance for the forgiveness of sins. We, who have received the gift of baptism, recognize the need to confess our sins and to remind ourselves of God's amazing grace. 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,

Creator, God, you have created us, but we have chosen to go our own way. You have reclaimed us, but sometimes we have, by our arrogant attitudes and actions, rejected the claim. You have sent your Holy Spirit to break into our controlled and unimaginative routines. There are times we have not appreciated that burst of creative energy. We are ready now, ready to admit that our ways are often full of dangerous byways. Our mistakes and failures tend to occur because, in our false pride, we have not listened to you. Save us again by your forgiving love.

The Assurance of Pardon³

Hear the good news of Epiphany and Baptism of the Lord. A voice from heaven said to Jesus; "You are my own child, the beloved! With you I am well-pleased!" Christ Jesus passed on that gift to those who dared to follow. We, too, are beloved children of God, loved, forgiven, and sent on a mission. All who are truly sorry for their sin are relieved of its burden and are recreated in the image of God. Celebrate the strength and glory of the Holy One!

Thanks be to God!

The Time for the Children

Deb Stolze

A Contemporary Reading

The Demon-Haunted World

Carl Sagan

The Witness from the Hebrew Bible

GENESIS 1:1-5

In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth. Now the earth was formless and empty, darkness was over the surface of the deep, and the Spirit of God was hovering over the waters. And God said, "Let there be light," and there was light! God saw that the light was good, and God separated the light from the darkness God called the light "day," and the darkness God called "night." And there was evening, and there was morning—the first day!

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

Thanks be to God!

The Response: PSALM 29

HYMN TO JOY

*All on earth and all in heaven, raise to God a song on high!
Strength unmeasured, love unbounded, God alone we glorify!
At God's voice the clouds assemble, thunder roars and torrents fall!
Earth shall quake before God's presence, mountains tremble at God's call!*

*Trees shall bow in awe and wonder, bend their branches to the ground!
From God's lips one word in anger wreaks destruction all around!
But the word which sets in motion such travails can make them cease!
That same voice which tumult beckons in a gentler breath speaks peace!*

A Contemporary Reading

Cosmos

Carl Sagan

The Witness from the Gospels

MATTHEW 2:1-12

After Jesus was born in Bethlehem in Judea, during the time of King Herod, Magi from the east came to Jerusalem and asked, "Where is the one who has been born king of the Jews? We saw his star when it rose and have come to worship him." When King Herod heard this, he was disturbed, and all Jerusalem with him. When he had called together all the people's chief priests and teachers of the law, he asked them where the Messiah was to be born. "In Bethlehem in Judea," they replied, "for this is what the prophet has written: 'But you, Bethlehem, in the land of Judah, are by no means least among the rulers of Judah. For out of you will come a ruler who will shepherd my people Israel.'" Then Herod called the Magi secretly and found out from them the exact time the star had appeared. He sent them to Bethlehem and said, "Go and search carefully for the child. As soon as you find him, report to me, so that I too may go and worship him." After they had heard the king, they went on their way, and the star they had seen when it rose went ahead of them until it stopped over the place where the child was. When they saw the star, they were overjoyed! On coming to the house, they saw the child with his mother Mary, and they bowed down and worshipped him. Then they opened their treasures and presented him with gifts of gold, frankincense, and myrrh. And having been warned in a dream not to go back to Herod, they returned to their country by another route.

The Gospel for today!

Thanks be to God!

A Contemporary Reading

Cosmos

Carl Sagan

The Sermon

From Chaos to Cosmos:

Timothy W. Shirley

Considering the Constancy of a Continuing Creation

The Hymn, No. 172

We Three Kings

KINGS OF ORIENT

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. 357 *We Call Ourselves Disciples*

LANCASHIRE

*The Extinguishing of the Altar Candles

*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, 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: Susan Krivichi and Mary Lou Congdon

The First Sunday after the Epiphany, Baptism of the Lord, is White, a symbol of purity and victory.

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First Congregational UCC - Eagle River, WI

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