

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.*



Fifth Sunday in Lent

*The Lord's Day
Fifth Sunday in Lent
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 Hebrew Bible, the prophet Jeremiah declares that in the days to come God will create a new covenant, a covenant radically different from the original first drafted and enforced back in the days of the first wilderness exile of the Israelites, the time they spent wandering seemingly aimlessly following their liberation from Egypt. Unlike its predecessor, this law would be relational, written on their hearts, heart religion, enabling them to know God in a way never before experienced. They would be fully forgiven in the process. For those of us who follow Jesus, we see the embodiment of the covenant, the very law of God, at work, on display in the mission and ministry, in the preaching and teaching inherent in the very person of Jesus. With the Greeks of old who approached Jesus' disciples, we, too, wish to see Jesus, knowing that we get a glimpse of him whenever we see any random act of kindness performed in his name. It is proof positive that we are producing fruit, a sign of the sincerity of the religion of our hearts.

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 *O Christ the Same* Timothy Dudley-Smith; LONDONDERRY AIR Ensemble

The Lighting of the Altar Candles

The Gathering

Gather before the One who is our God! With joy and gladness, come and worship God, glorifying the Holy One in this sacred time and space!

God of glorious wisdom, draw us together in this sacred setting, renewing your covenant with all the faithful gathered for worship today!

We long to know the Holy One, the law of God written fresh on our hearts, the One whose abundant mercy and steadfast love is accorded to everyone!

**Create in us a clean heart, faithful God, and put a new and right spirit within us!
Restore to us the joy of our salvation!**

Let us worship God!

The Introit, No. 134 (*Chalice Praise*); verse one, verse two, verse one

Marty Haugen

*Light of life beyond conceiving, mighty spirit of our Lord,
Give new strength to our believing, give us faith to live your word!
Give us faith to live your word!*

*God of all our fear and sorrow, God who lives beyond our death,
Hold us close through each tomorrow, love as near as every breath!
Love as near as every breath!*

The Collect

Let us pray to the Lord,

Forgiving and merciful God, we pray to the One whose mercy is abundant and whose steadfast love never fails, but endures forever; we offer these petitions from the depths of our very being, the yearnings of our souls to the One who blots out our transgressions, washing us like fresh fallen snow, the One who cleanses our hearts and puts a new and right spirit within us; we make our supplications this day to the One who restores the joy of our salvation, continually sustaining us; we gather as one in this sacred setting to worship you, to give glory to the One who brings us joy and gladness; we long to know you this day, God of the sacred covenant, to renew the spirit of your covenantal relationship in the laws and decrees you have written on our hearts as the people of God; 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. 518 *This Is a Day of New Beginnings*

BEGINNINGS

*The Litany of Praise

The mercy of God is abundant, empowering a steadfast love that never fails! God blots out our transgressions, washing away our iniquity, cleansing us from all wrong!

How well we know the wrongs we have committed because our sin is ever before us! Against God alone have we sinned, doing evil in the sight of God!

The Holy One purges us, making us whole by washing us clean like fresh fallen snow, filling us with the sounds of joy and gladness!

Deep in our bones we are filled with rejoicing, forgiven by the One who creates within us clean hearts and puts a new and right spirit within us!

Teach us your wisdom in the secret places of our hearts, the joy and gladness of God filling us to the depths of our being!

The Holy One restores the joy of our salvation, sustaining within us a willing and right spirit! 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

The doubts and inattention that mark our response to the Holy One tempt us to not confess the ways in which we have failed God and one another. Yet, the promises of God, despite our best efforts to avoid or ignore them, draw us back to consider the covenantal relationship we are freely offered. The humble obedience granted to us as followers of Jesus, can inspire in us a reverent submission to seek the will of God. In the silence and stillness of our moments together, let us confess before the Holy.

The Silent Confession

The Corporate Confession²

Let us pray to the Lord,

God of the sacred covenant, have mercy on us according to your steadfast love. Wash us thoroughly from all that diminishes our humanity and threatens all our relationships as we seek forgiveness and the reconciliation that comes through you. We know more of our own transgressions than we have been willing to admit, even to ourselves. We cannot escape from the wrongs that cling ever so closely, always shadowing us. By our actions and our neglect, we have done what is often displeasing in your sight. May your gentle judgment and your gracious justice help us to face the truth about ourselves. Wash away the stains that tarnish our best selves. Create in us clean hearts and renew our spirits. We are ready for a new life.

The Assurance of Pardon³

Beloved faith community, hear the good news of Lent. We are welcomed into the redeeming presence of God as the children of our creator who loves us very much. We are brothers and sisters of Jesus, siblings all of the One who was obedient to God and faithful to the law of love, even in the face

of the cross. In suffering, Jesus showed us how to learn and live and love, embracing our full humanity. In the passion of Jesus our brother, friend and mentor, the Spirit of Christ was and is revealed, becoming the source of eternal salvation for us. We become our best selves when we choose to follow the path Jesus set before us. The burden of our brokenness is lifted from us. New life is ours to enjoy.

Thanks be to God!

The Time for the Children

Nancy Diepenbrock

The Witness from the Hebrew Bible

JEREMIAH 31:31-34

The days are surely coming, says the LORD, when I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel and the house of Judah. It will not be like the covenant that I made with their ancestors when I took them by the hand to bring them out of the land of Egypt—a covenant that they broke, though I was their husband, says the LORD. But this is the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel after those days, says the LORD: I will put my law within them, and I will write it on their hearts, and I will be their God, and they shall be my people. No longer shall they teach one another or say to each other, “Know the LORD,” for they shall all know me, from the least of them to the greatest, says the LORD, for I will forgive their iniquity and remember their sin no more.

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

Thanks be to God!

The Response, PSALM 51:1-12

AZMON

*Have mercy, Lord, according to the measure of your love!
Blot out our sin, and from our hearts all wickedness remove!*

*The failing of our deeds and thoughts are ever in our sight!
Release us from the path of death, and set our course aright!*

*Into our secret hearts send truth, let wisdom in us grow!
O wash the evil from our hands, and make us pure as snow!*

*A clean and upright heart, O Lord, exchange for ours of stone!
The Holy Spirit molds and shapes and leaves us not alone!*

*A contrite heart is your desire, our offerings, the same!
Our lips unlatch, our mouths engage your praises to proclaim!*

The Witness from the Gospels

JOHN 12:20-33

Now among those who went up to worship at the festival were some Greeks. They came to Philip, who was from Bethsaida in Galilee, and said to him, “Sir, we wish to see Jesus!” Philip went and told Andrew, then Andrew and Philip went and told Jesus. Jesus answered them, “The hour has come for the Son of Man to be glorified. Very truly, I tell you, unless a grain of wheat falls into the earth and dies, it remains just a single grain, but if it dies it bears much fruit. Those who love their life lose it, and those who hate their life in this world will keep it for eternal life. Whoever serves me must follow me, and where I am, there will my servant be also. Whoever serves me, the Father will honor. Now my soul

is troubled! And what should I say: ‘Father, save me from this hour? No, it is for this reason that I have come to this hour! Father, glorify your name!’” Then a voice came from heaven, “I have glorified it, and I will glorify it again!” The crowd standing there heard it and said that it was thunder. Others said, “An angel has spoken to him!” Jesus answered, “This voice has come for your sake, not for mine. Now is the judgment of this world! Now the ruler of this world will be driven out! And I, when I am lifted up from the earth, will draw all people to myself!” He said this to indicate the kind of death he was to die!

The Gospel for today!
Thanks be to God!

The Sermon *The Voice!* Timothy W. Shirley
The Music for Meditation *There in God’s Garden, SHADES MOUNTAIN* arr. Anne Krentz Organ
Lori Hunter, piano; Connie Pellman, flute

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 (insert) *At the Name of Jesus* KING’S WESTON
*The Benediction and Blessing
*The Benediction Response, *An Irish Blessing* Ruth Elaine Schram
May the Road Rise to Meet You
Lori Hunter, soprano; Timothy W. Shirley, baritone

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: Kay Scharpf

Ushers: Mary Lou Congdon and Susan Krivichi

*The color for the Sundays in Lent is Purple, symbolizing
the penitential nature of this holy season.*

***The flowers adorning the Chancel for worship today are given by
Barb Flaherty wishing everyone a happy St. Patrick's Day.***

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First Congregational UCC - Eagle River, WI

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