

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.*



Third Sunday in Lent

*The Lord's Day
Third 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 cleansing of the temple, we are given another window through which to see this one called Christ, the person of history in Jesus of Nazareth. We get to experience his anger, if only through words on the page. What we see is a passionate individual who is moved to action. The procedures at work in the daily activities of the temple are incongruent with what Jesus understands as the will of God, the one he called Father. His reactionary behavior is personal as Jesus draws a line in the sand. It is a line that would eventually be drawn with his blood. We are taught to choose our battles carefully. For Jesus, this is one confrontation that cannot be ignored. As with all the encounters we read about as we study the life of Jesus, there are lessons to be learned. It is vital that the Church learn them well, lest this institution become a marketplace in its own right.

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

Tell of the glory of God in this holy temple, proclaiming the handiwork of God in the sacred setting of this house of the Holy!

Gathered for worship today, we declare the knowledge of God in this sacred sanctuary, speaking to the wisdom of God in our blest time together!

Let this be for us a Sabbath day to worship the Lord our God, a day gifted and consecrated by the Holy One!

Let the words of our mouths and the meditations of our hearts be acceptable to you, O Lord, our rock and our redeemer!

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!*

*Living water of salvation, be the fountain of each soul,
Springing up in new creation, flow in us and make us whole!
Flow in us and make us whole!*

The Collect

Let us pray to the Lord,

Jealous and glorious God, we have gathered in this holy temple to tell of the glory of God, to proclaim your handiwork, to speak of the wisdom of God in this, the Father's house; make us blameless and righteous before you, God most holy; empower us to follow your precepts, obeying your commandments and honoring the decrees of your law; may the words of our mouths and the meditations of our hearts be acceptable to you, O Lord, our rock and our redeemer; 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. 108

Lift High the Cross

CRUCIFER

*The Litany of Praise

The heavens are telling the glory of God, the firmament proclaiming the handiwork of the Holy One! Day to day pours forth speech! Night to night declares knowledge!

There is no speech, never the right words! No voice is heard or needed, and yet a voice goes throughout the world, a word to the ends of the earth!

The law of God is perfect, reviving the soul! The decrees of the Lord are sure, making wise the simple! The precepts of the Lord are right, rejoicing the heart!

The statutes of the Lord are clear, enlightening the eyes! The fear of the Lord is pure, enduring forever!

The ordinances of God are true and righteous, the laws of the Holy One more desired than the finest gold, yes, even sweeter than honey from the comb!

Great is the reward for those who seek to live according to the commandments of God! All praise to the One who is our rock and our redeemer! 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 psalmist declared that our souls are revived by the perfect law of God. We are confronted by that law today. At its center is the love of God revealed in Christ Jesus. It is more desirable than all the gold in the world. Let us confess those things in our lives that keep us from realizing that love. 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,

We have come to this your temple, loving God, because this is your place and not ours. We confess that we sometimes forget whose house this is. We forget that all the world belongs to you as we scramble for all we can claim for ourselves. Our actions often deny your love, a perfect love which is at the heart of your perfect law. Our minds have justified the bending and breaking of your law to suit current trends and feelings. We cry out for forgiveness and the opportunity for a new, a fresh, start. Clear us of hidden thoughts and redeem us from those trespasses we recognize and confess.

The Assurance of Pardon³

Hear the good news of Lent! When our prayers become more than pious words, and when, in awe before God, we truly seek forgiveness, the Holy One becomes for us a guiding presence. We are healed, strengthened, and set free from our slavery to sin. In steadfast love God claims us, declaring that we are the people of God, daring to walk in the footsteps of Jesus.

Thanks be to God!

The Time for the Children

Carol Marshall

The Witness from the Hebrew Bible

EXODUS 20:1-17

And God spoke all these words: "I am the Lord your God, who brought you out of Egypt, out of the land of slavery! "You shall have no other gods before me! You shall not make for yourself an image in the form of anything in heaven above or on the earth beneath or in the waters below! You shall not bow down to them or worship them! For I, the Lord your God, am a jealous God, punishing the children for the sin of the parents to the third and fourth generation of those who hate me, but showing love to a thousand generations of those who love me and keep my commandments. You shall not misuse the name of the Lord your God, for the Lord will not hold anyone guiltless who misuses his name. Remember the Sabbath day by keeping it holy. Six days you shall labor and do all your work, but the seventh day is a sabbath to the Lord your God. On it you shall not do any work, neither you, nor your son or daughter, nor your male or female servant, nor your animals, nor any foreigner residing in your towns. For in six days the Lord made the heavens and the earth, the sea, and all that is in them, but God rested on the seventh day. Therefore, the Lord blessed the Sabbath day and made it holy. Honor your father and your mother, so that you may live long in the land the Lord your God is giving you. "You shall not murder. You shall not commit adultery! You shall not steal! You shall not give false testimony against your neighbor! You shall not covet your neighbor's house! You shall not covet your neighbor's wife, or his male or female servant, his ox or donkey, or anything that belongs to your neighbor!"

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

Thanks be to God!

The Response: PSALM 19

ELLACOMBE

*The heav'ns unfold your glory, Lord, in ev'ry realm of space,
The outmost bounds of all that is resound your wondrous grace!
Succeeding days to day confess, and nights to night record
in words, beyond our sense to hear, the greatness of the Lord!*

*The earth's imagined cornerstones acclaim with joy their source,
Who sets the gleaming stars ablaze, and gives the sun its course!
In ev'ry place within the sphere your craft is ever found!
Majestic mountains, seas, and skies with ordered might resound!*

*Your word is sure and perfect still a source of light and life!
Your law is right and reason-filled, your peace, the end of strife!
Your everlasting truth and love can scarce be fully told!
More sweet than honey from the comb, more precious yet than gold!*

*You know the secrets of our hearts, but deign to love us here!
Preserved from pride and self-conceit, we meet you without fear!
May all the words our tongues shall speak, and all our thoughts in store
find grace with you, redeemer, rock, now and for evermore!*

The Witness from the Gospels

JOHN 2:13-22

The Passover of the Jews was near, and Jesus went up to Jerusalem. In the temple he found people selling cattle, sheep, and doves and the money changers seated at their tables. Making a whip of cords, he drove all of them out of the temple, with the sheep and the cattle. He also poured out the coins of the money changers and overturned their tables. He told those who were selling the doves, "Take these things out of here! Stop making my Father's house a marketplace!" His disciples remembered that it was written, "Zeal for your house will consume me!" The Jews then said to him, "What sign can you show us for doing this?" Jesus answered them, "Destroy this temple, and in three days I will raise it up!" The Jews then said, "This temple has been under construction for forty-six years, and will you raise it up in three days?" But he was speaking of the temple of his body. After he was raised from the dead, his disciples remembered that he had said this, and they believed the scripture and the word that Jesus had spoken.

The Gospel for today!

Thanks be to God!

The Sermon *Going Postal! Going Rogue! Going Cross!*

Timothy W. Shirley

The Music for Meditation

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 HUNDRETH

*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. 275

WESTMINSTER ABBEY

Christ Is Made the Sure Foundation

*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 SongLet 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: Bill Marshall

Ushers: Mary Lou Congdon and Susan Krivichi

*The color for the Sundays in Lent is Purple, symbolizing
the penitential nature of this holy season.*¹⁻³ Reprinted by permission United Church Press from *Taught by Love*, by Lavon Bayler. Copyright 2002 by the Pilgrim Press.

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First Congregational UCC - Eagle River, WI

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