

# 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 after Pentecost  
Ninth Sunday in Ordinary Time*

*The Lord's Day  
Third Sunday after Pentecost  
Ninth 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**

The Witness from the Epistles from II Corinthians, a letter written by Paul to an obstreperous early Church, reminds us of the cost and the joy of discipleship. Grace abounds, says the apostle Paul, but grace abounds in the midst of affliction when things seem to be deteriorating in so many ways. Faith in Christ calls us to look beyond our current afflictions to what is enduring, to the realm of God that is already here, if we have the vision to see it, and is yet to come, if we wait with patience and endurance.

### **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

Gather together in this, the holy temple of our God, listening for the voice of the Holy One in the midst of the people!

**With thanksgiving in our hearts and songs of praise on our lips, we long for the eternal One in this sacred time and space!**

Call on the One who listens to the faithful! Seek the one who hears our cries and increases our strength!

**We bring our best before the God this day, rejoicing greatly in the One whose steadfast love endures forever!**

Let us worship God!

The Introit, No. 15 (*Chalice Praise*) *Great Is the Lord* Debra D. Smith and Michael W. Smith

## The Collect

Let us pray to the Lord,

Eternal and glorious God, we have gathered together as your people to offer our prayers, our songs of praise and rejoicing before the Holy; we seek to bring our finest offerings before you this day, God of eternal blessings, the best from our fields and vineyards, our places of labor; with thanksgiving, we come before you with our whole heart, trusting in your faithfulness and exalting your name and your word that is above everything; hear us this day; stretch out your hand to us that we might catch a glimpse of your steadfast and enduring love; all this we pray through Jesus Christ our Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the holy and still speaking Spirit, one God, now and forever.

**Amen.**

\*The Opening Hymn, No. 6 *Sing Praise to God Who Reigns Above* MIT FREUDEN ZART

## \*The Litany of Praise

As the faithful people of a faithful God gathered here, we are filled with thanksgiving in our hearts, offering our gifts of worship in songs of praise and rejoicing!

**How thankful we are to the One whose steadfast love gives us strength and a sense of well-being even amidst the troubles that challenge our lives!**

Our mouths resound with songs of praise, for great is the glory of our God and wonderful are all the ways of God!

**We will sing of the ways of the Lord, the One who hears us, the One who preserves our lives now and forever, the One who regards the lowly, forsaking none!**

Each one of us is uniquely crafted in the image of our creator, the purposes of God fulfilled in all creation!

**God delivers the faithful, the steadfast love of God enduring forever! Praise be to the eternal One who reigns in the highest heavens! Praise the Lord!**

*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>

God does not forsake us, but we often choose other rulers for our lives. Sometimes, we abdicate responsibility, failing to honor the guideposts of our creator, turning instead to entertainers, politicians, and financial wizards as our hope. In worship, we are recalled to our primary accountability to God. In the sacred silence and stillness of our moments together, let us confess before the Holy.

The Silent Confession

The Corporate Confession<sup>2</sup>

Let us pray to the Lord,

**God of all truth, who can stand before you? We sometimes often judge by outward appearances, but you examine our hearts. Frequently, we see what is on the surface, but you discern beauty deep within. We often measure importance by paychecks, but you find value among those we tend to deem lowly and insignificant. You offer us the deep and profound joy of living in your realm. We sometimes forget your promises and turn to pursuits that separate us from you and destroy community. We seek forgiveness and a new direction for our lives.**

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

Hear the good news! All of us must stand before the judgment seat of Christ, today and every day. When we come with true repentance, we can win a victory over sin. Christ died for us, that we might no longer live only for ourselves. In Christ, we no longer regard others from a human point of view. We are a new creation. The old has passed away; the new has come. We can live confidently, urged on by the love of Christ, to joyous, daring service.

**Thanks be to God!**

The Time for the Children

The Witness from the Epistles

II CORINTHIANS 4:13-5:1

But just as we have the same spirit of faith that is in accordance with scripture—"I believed, and so I spoke"—we also believe, and therefore we also speak, because we know that the One who raised Jesus will also raise us with Jesus and will present us with you in his presence. Indeed, everything is for your sake, so that grace, when it has extended to more and more people, may increase thanksgiving, to the glory of God. So, we do not lose heart. Even though our outer nature is wasting away, our inner nature is being renewed day by day. For our slight, momentary affliction is producing for us an eternal weight of glory beyond all measure, because we look not at what can be seen but at what cannot be

seen, for what can be seen is temporary, but what cannot be seen is eternal. For we know that, if the earthly tent we live in is destroyed, we have a building from God, a house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens.

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

**Thanks be to God!**

The Response, PSALM 138

DARWALL'S 148TH

*O Lord, our hearts will sing, we give you thanks and praise,*

*And in your holy temple bow throughout our days!*

*Your steadfast love in faithfulness, our God, let shower from above!*

*God answered when we called, responding to our need!*

*The rulers of the earth shall name you Lord indeed!*

*The proud will fall, their boasts are vain, the meek of earth shall o'er them reign!*

*Though dangers gather round, dear Lord, preserve our lives!*

*And by your strong and forceful arm we conquer strife!*

*God will give heed, our hopes fulfill, and keep the vow to love us still!*

The Witness from the Gospels

MARK 3:20-35

Jesus went home, and the crowd came together again, so that they could not even eat. When his family heard it, they went out to restrain him, for people were saying, "He has gone out of his mind!" And the scribes who came down from Jerusalem said, "He has Beelzebul, and by the ruler of the demons he casts out demons!" And he called them to him and spoke to them in parables, "How can Satan cast out Satan? If a kingdom is divided against itself, that kingdom cannot stand. And if a house is divided against itself, that house will not be able to stand. And if Satan has risen up against himself and is divided, he cannot stand, but his end has come. But no one can enter a strong man's house and plunder his property without first tying up the strong man. Then indeed the house can be plundered! "Truly I tell you, people will be forgiven for their sins and whatever blasphemies they utter, but whoever blasphemes against the Holy Spirit can never have forgiveness but is guilty of an eternal sin"— for they had said, "He has an unclean spirit!" Then his mother and his brothers came, and standing outside they sent to him and called him. A crowd was sitting around him, and they said to him, "Your mother and your brothers are outside asking for you." And he replied, "Who are my mother and my brothers?" And looking at those who sat around him, he said, "Here are my mother and my brothers! Whoever does the will of God is my brother and sister and mother!"

The Gospel for today!

**Thanks be to God!**

The Sermon

*Seeing the Unseen*

Dale Bishop

The Hymn, No. 595

*Be Thou My Vision*

SLANE

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. 717 *Let All Things Now Living*

ASH GROVE

### \*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: Donna DePape

Ushers: Susan Krivichi and Carlton Schroeder

*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.*

*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 counted backwards from the Reign of Christ and emphasizes personal faith development and nurture, and the growth and enhancement of the Church and the churches.*

***The flowers adorning the Chancel for worship today are given by  
Chuck and Lori Hunter in memory of their niece, Cassandra Bellin Nemecek.***

<sup>1-3</sup> Reprinted by permission United Church Press from *Led by Love: Worship Resources for Year B*, by Lavon Bayler. Copyright 1996 by United Church Press.

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# First Congregational United Church of Christ

105 North First Street ~ PO Box 1385 ~ Eagle River, Wisconsin 54521

Website: [eagleriverucc.org](http://eagleriverucc.org) Church Office: 715-802-8501 Email: [office@eagleriverucc.org](mailto:office@eagleriverucc.org)

Timothy W. Shirley: [timwshirley@gmail.com](mailto:timwshirley@gmail.com)



First Congregational UCC - Eagle River, WI

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