

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.*



Ephesians 6:10-18

*Fourteenth Sunday after Pentecost
Twenty-First Sunday in Ordinary Time*

*The Lord's Day
Fourteenth Sunday after Pentecost
Twenty-First 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 apostle Paul tells us to "put on the whole armor of God" and then proceeds to describe just what that militaristic, warring, metaphor means. It all sounds well and good if we ignore the obvious, but like the armor worn by David as he went out to meet Goliath, it can feel a bit heavy. The question continues to resound among those who would be faithful today, what does it mean to follow Christ in this generation? How can we translate the military, warrior, metaphor employed by Paul into ideas that translate for us in this day and time, in our contemporary, postmodern, setting as we seek to be peacemakers all about the business of making peace in a world where peace is sadly absent? It seems like this is the perpetual challenge we face as we travel these texts week by week. We rely on the spirit for the journey. Thank God we walk together, a beloved community of faith, seeking the way of truth, testing the spirits as we go, trusting in God to see us through.

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 Gathering

How lovely is your dwelling place, O Lord of hosts! As we gather in this sacred time and space, our souls long to be in the courts of the Holy!

Come before God in this sacred setting, our hearts singing with joy to the living God! Happy are those who forever sing the praise of God in the sanctuary!

We pray that the eyes of the Holy One would be open night and day toward this house as we proclaim the great name of God in all the earth!

May the glory of God fill this holy place, that all people might know that this is a house of God!

Let us worship God!

The Introit (insert)

Hide Me in Your Holiness

Steve Ragsdale

The Collect

Let us pray to the Lord,

Lord of hosts, we have gathered in this your lovely dwelling place, before your altar, the inner sanctuary of this your holy temple, in this most sacred space; we have come to this holy ground to sing with joy to the living God, to sing the praise of your great name in all the earth, for there is no God like you in heaven above or on earth beneath; hear our prayers this day, God of the heavenly places; listen to the voices of your people gathered here this day, all who would rather be doorkeepers in your house than to be anywhere else on earth; feed us this day with the bread of heaven that leads to eternal life; 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 (insert)

Christians, We Have Met to Worship

HOLY MANNA

*The Litany of Praise

How lovely is your dwelling place, O Lord of hosts! Before the altar of God, we bring our praise to this most holy setting, gathered together in this inner sanctuary!

Assembled before the Holy One as the faithful of God, our souls long to be in the courts of the Lord, our hearts singing with joy to the living God!

May the glory of the Lord fill this sacred temple! Happy are those who live in your house, ever singing your praise! Happy are those whose strength is in the Lord!

Rejoice in the One who hears the prayers of the faithful, giving ear to those whom God has anointed! O Lord of hosts, happy is everyone who trusts in you!

For a day in the courts of the Lord is better than a thousand anywhere else! For in God even the sparrows find a home, and the swallows a place to build their nest!

The Lord is our sun and shield, bestowing favor and honor on all who are faithful, withholding nothing good from those who walk uprightly! 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 Confession¹

God has called us, not to a set of beliefs but to a relationship of trust. We are drawn to the Spirit whose will for us is life at its fullest, attuned to all that is good and true. We are embraced by the gospel of peace. We come now to confess that we have often looked elsewhere for our salvation. In the sacred silence and stillness of these moments, let us confess before the Holy.

The Silent Confession

The Corporate Confession²

Let us pray to the Lord,

Together, we confess that we are often busy with so many things that we forget you. We tend to make little gods out of buildings, furnishings, and programs. Sometimes, our petty beliefs and interpretations have been all-consuming as we battle to correct others, presuming to defend you. We have forgotten that your love is stronger than any force on earth. Forgive our mistrust of the power of your love and draw us back into the company of disciples who are learning and growing in love.

The Assurance of Pardon³

Hear the good news! Happy are those who daily find their strength in the living God, seeking to walk uprightly. Happy are those who trust in God, who sincerely and truthfully seek to serve where God needs them most. God redeems us, whatever our circumstances, lifting our spirits, even when our bodies are in chains. May we serve boldly as ambassadors for Christ Jesus.

Thanks be to God!

The Time for the Children

Trista Langley-Tyler

The Witness from the Epistles

EPHESIANS 6:10-20

Finally, be strong in the Lord and in the strength of God's power! Put on the whole armor of God, so that you may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil, for our struggle is not against blood and flesh but against the rulers, against the authorities, against the cosmic powers of this present darkness, against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly places. Therefore, take up the whole armor of God, so that you may be able to withstand on the evil day and, having prevailed against everything, to stand firm. Stand, therefore, and belt your waist with truth and put on the breastplate of righteousness and lace up your sandals in preparation for the gospel of peace. With all of these, take the shield of faith, with which you will be able to quench all the flaming arrows of the evil one. Take the helmet of

salvation and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God. Pray in the Spirit at all times in every prayer and supplication. To that end, keep alert and always persevere in supplication for all the saints. Pray also for me, so that when I speak, a message may be given to me to make known with boldness the mystery of the gospel, for which I am an ambassador in chains. Pray that I may declare it boldly, as I must speak!

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

Thanks be to God!

The Response, PSALM 84

ST. ANNE

*How lovely is your dwelling place, O Lord of hosts, to all!
Within the grandeur of your courts our souls desire your call!*

*The sparrow finds a safe retreat, secure she takes her rest!
And in your shelter, for her young the swallow builds her nest!*

*How blest are they who in your house live out their faithful days!
Their hearts with springs of joy are filled, their lips with songs of praise!*

*To make our home with you, O Lord, our hopeful hearts aspire!
For there one day outshines the years spent for our own desires!*

*O Lord, you are both sun and shield, our strong defense assure!
How great the happiness they find, their trust in you is pure!*

The Witness from the Gospels

JOHN 6:56-69

“Those who eat my flesh and drink my blood abide in me and I in them. Just as the living Father sent me and I live because of the Father, so whoever eats me will live because of me. This is the bread that came down from heaven, not like that which the ancestors ate, and they died. But the one who eats this bread will live forever.” He said these things while he was teaching in a synagogue at Capernaum. When many of his disciples heard it, they said, “This teaching is difficult! Who can accept it?” But Jesus, being aware that his disciples were complaining about it, said to them, “Does this offend you? Then what if you were to see the Son of Man ascending to where he was before? It is the spirit that gives life! The flesh is useless! The words that I have spoken to you are spirit and life. But among you there are some who do not believe!” For Jesus knew from the beginning who were the ones who did not believe and who was the one who would betray him. And he said, “For this reason I have told you that no one can come to me unless it is granted by the Father!” Because of this many of his disciples turned back and no longer went about with him. So, Jesus asked the twelve, “Do you also wish to go away?” Simon Peter answered him, “Lord, to whom can we go? You have the words of eternal life! We have come to believe and know that you are the Holy One of God!”

The Gospel for today!

Thanks be to God!

The Sermon

A Metaphor Gone Awry!

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 (insert) *Go, My Children, with My Blessing*

AR HYD Y NOS

*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: Luke Aschbrenner

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.

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First Congregational UCC - Eagle River, WI

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