

# 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.*



*Twenty-Third Sunday after Pentecost  
Thirtieth Sunday in Ordinary Time  
A Celebration of Reformation Heritage*

*The Lord's Day*  
*Twenty-Third Sunday after Pentecost*  
*Thirtieth Sunday in Ordinary Time*  
*A Celebration of Reformation Heritage*  
*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**

*A Celebration of Reformation Heritage* is observed on the Sunday nearest October 31<sup>st</sup>, the anniversary of that infamous All Hallows Eve in 1517 when Martin Luther posted his ninety-five theses on the door of the Castle Church, Wittenberg, Germany. Luther, a monk ordained as a priest, intended to stimulate conversation in the local community, protesting myriad papal and other ecclesiastical abuses perpetrated by the Roman Catholic Church, but, almost by accident, ignited a movement, setting in motion and inspiring revolution that shook to the core the very foundations of Christendom. Much like our own times, the Reformation of the sixteenth century was a period of intense conflict and change. Out of this ferment arose numerous heroic reformers who called the Church back to its original purpose and center in Christ Jesus. We remember and honor these courageous individuals, giving thanks for the actions they boldly took to create the reforms we still enjoy today as Protestants. The themes of our celebration are those of the reformers themselves: *sola gratia* (grace alone), *sola fide* (faith alone), and *sola scriptura* (scripture alone). We dedicate ourselves to the unfinished task of reformation in our own contemporary, postmodern, context. Our goal is to echo the theme boldly proclaimed by the reformers, "The Church reformed, always reforming!" Paraphrasing the immortal words of Martin Luther, as he stood before his judge and jury at the Diet of Worms in 1521, "Here we stand, we can do no other!"

### **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 *For the Beauty of the Earth* arr. Tedd Smith and Don Hustad  
Lori Hunter, organ; Norma Yaeger, piano

### **The Lighting of the Altar Candles**

## The Gathering

With humility in our hearts, we gather to bless the Holy One in this sacred setting,  
praising God continually with our lips, boasting in the One who makes us glad!

**We have assembled to magnify the Lord, to exalt the name of God, worshipping  
the One who calms our fears and saves us from every trouble!**

O taste and see that the Lord is good! Revel in the goodness of God, every shining  
face radiating with joy, each one of us gloriously revealing the presence of God!

**We come to worship the One who rescues and redeems us, the One in whose  
refuge we abide, rejoicing with glad and joyful hearts!**

Let us worship God!

## The Choral Introit

*In Christ Alone*

Keith Getty and Stuart Townsend; arr. Mark Hayes

Chancel Choir

## The Collect

Let us pray to the Lord,

Reforming God, as we celebrate Reformation today, recalling the great reformers of the past who have  
inspired a rich heritage for this your holy Church, may we never cease to give thanks and praise  
to the One by whose creative power we continue the proud legacy of reforming this your one,  
holy, universal, catholic Church; holiest God, our desire is to bless you at all times, that your praise  
continually be in our mouths; yet even so, we have gathered in this time and place to magnify you,  
to exalt your name, to worship the One who gives us refuge, the One in whose goodness we are  
delivered, redeemed, and in some ways even rescued, the One who makes us radiant as a glad and  
humble people; 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. 65

*A Mighty Fortress Is Our God*

EIN' FESTE BURG

\*The Litany of Praise

Bless the Lord with your lips in every moment of every day, our mouths continually  
praising God, blessing the Lord at all times as we have voice!

**Our praise overflows, rejoicing in the One in whom our souls boast, the One who  
hears the cries of the humble, making us glad!**

Magnify the Lord always, exalting in the name of the Lord, rejoicing together as one  
people, looking to God, never ashamed of our faith in the Holy One!

**God hears those who call out to the Holy, delivering all humanity from every fear,  
bringing calm to those who are troubled!**

Look to God and be radiant! O taste and see that the Lord is good! How happy are  
those who take refuge in the Holy One!

**For God rescues the righteous, redeeming the lives of those who gladly serve  
the Lord, providing refuge for those who humbly seek the Holy! 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>

We who are called to be a servant people have often forgotten what it means to sacrifice ourselves for others. Success becomes more attractive than service, meaning that we often focus on getting ahead, which in the process means leaving others behind. Now is a time to confess selfish motives and hurtful actions. In the sacred silence and stillness of these moments, let us confess before the Holy.

The Silent Confession

The Corporate Confession<sup>2</sup>

Let us pray to the Lord,

**We confess, redeeming and reforming God, that our lives have sometimes caused us to perceive that you are distant. We are oft times dominated by our doubts instead of by our practice of prayer. We ask for mercy as we face up to sins we have not recognized and wrongdoing we have tried to ignore.**

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

Beloved faith community, hear the good news of Reformation! Our God, who has reached out to us in love, welcomes even our timid response. God is most generous in blessing us and lifting us beyond our losses and our fears. In Christ, we are linked with the saving grace of God for all time and eternity. Let us recognize that faith has the power to heal us and our world.

**Thanks be to God!**

The Time for the Children

Lori Hunter and Timothy W. Shirley

The Witness from the Epistles

HEBREWS 7:23-28

Furthermore, the former priests were many in number because they were prevented by death from continuing in office, but he holds his priesthood permanently because he continues forever. Consequently, he is able for all time to save those who approach God through him, since he always lives to make intercession for them. For it was fitting that we should have such a high priest, holy, blameless, undefiled, separated from sinners, and exalted above the heavens. Unlike the other high priests, he has no need to offer sacrifices day after day, first for his own sins and then for those of the people. This he did once for all when he offered himself! For the law appoints as high priests humans, who are subject to weakness, but the word of the oath, which came later than the law, appoints a Son who has been made perfect forever!

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

**Thanks be to God!**

The Response, PSALM 34:1-8

AZMON

*Unto the Lord our praise we sing, God's goodness ever bless!  
The proud convictions of our souls speak of God's righteousness!*

*Come, magnify the Lord with us, together bring God praise!  
Whose presence overcomes all fear, and glory lights our days!*

*O taste and see, the Lord is good! How blest are they who place  
reliance on God's steadfast love, and trust God's saving grace!*

*So great the trials of the just, yet greater is God's will,  
That from the threat'ning chill of death God's truth redeems us still!*

The Witness from the Gospels

MARK 10:46-52

They came to Jericho! As he and his disciples and a large crowd were leaving Jericho, Bartimaeus son of Timaeus, a blind beggar, was sitting by the roadside. When he heard that it was Jesus of Nazareth, he began to shout out and say, "Jesus, Son of David, have mercy on me!" Many sternly ordered him to be quiet, but he cried out even more loudly, "Son of David, have mercy on me!" Jesus stood still and said, "Call him here!" And they called the blind man, saying to him, "Take heart! Get up! He is calling you!" So, throwing off his cloak, he sprang up and came to Jesus. Then Jesus said to him, "What do you want me to do for you?" The blind man said to him, "My teacher, let me see again!" Jesus said to him, "Go! Your faith has made you well!" Immediately he regained his sight and followed him on the way!

The Gospel for today!

**Thanks be to God!**

The Sermon

*Seeing Is as Seeing Does!*

Timothy W. Shirley

The Hymn for Reformation (insert) *Lord, Keep Us Steadfast in Your Word*

ERHALT UNS, HERR

The Concerns of the Church

A Stewardship Moment

Steve Burrill

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. 322 *O Word of God Incarnate*

MUNICH

\*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: Marti Rosenthal

Ushers: Carlton Schroeder and Joe Turpin

*The color for a Celebration of Reformation Heritage is Red, representing the crusading march of the Protestant reformers and symbolizing the blood of those who were martyred in the cause, giving their lives for the freedom and liberty of Christ's Church.*

*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 Barb and Tom Helmick in honor of their 34<sup>th</sup> wedding anniversary.***

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