

# 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.*

*An Open and Affirming Congregation*



*Last Sunday after Pentecost  
Last Sunday in Ordinary Time  
Feast of the Reign of Christ  
A Festival of Thanksgiving*

*The Lord's Day*  
*Last Sunday after Pentecost*  
*Last Sunday in Ordinary Time*  
*Feast of the Reign of Christ*  
*A Festival of Thanksgiving*  
*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 Witness from the Gospels in Matthew we read a beautiful narrative attributed to Jesus that really and truly offers us a much-needed word for the living of these days. Jesus gives us the reminder, even as he encouraged his original audience, that being overwhelmed with worry is never a helpful thing, will never enable us to solve whatever dilemmas, whatever crises, whatever angst creates the source of the worries that challenge and diminish us. Worrying has never solved a problem! As we celebrate the mixed liturgical messages inherent in a *Feast of the Reign of Christ* and *A Festival of Thanksgiving* today, we gladly receive some joyful words of comfort, a message meant to assuage our fear and anxiety, the worries that haunt us and seek to damage our psyches. Today, we are so very thankful indeed for the reign of Christ in our lives, pun intended!

## 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

On this high and holy festival day, enter this sanctuary with gladness, gathering in this holy dwelling place of God to worship the One who reigns over all creation!

**We have assembled in this sacred setting before the One who is Alpha and Omega, the One who was, who is, the One who comes to us through the Holy Spirit!**

Let the faithful shout for joy, the servants of God praising the Holy One of Israel and all nations!

**We come together to worship the One who rules with justice, fulfilling an everlasting covenant of grace and peace!**

Let us worship God!

The Introit, No. 276, stanza 1

*We Gather Together*

KREMSER

## The Collect

Let us pray to the Lord,

God of the Alpha and Omega, we have gathered in this dwelling place to glorify the One who was, who is, the One who continually comes to us; on this high and holy festival day, we have gathered to offer thanks to you, the One whose grace and peace sustains us forever and ever, the One by whose love we are freed from all guilt, gladly empowered to be servants in the realm of God; speak through us, Holy One, and put your words on our tongues, granting to us your presence this day; we long to worship the One who clothes us with righteousness, filling us with greatest joy; 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. 699 *Rejoice, the Lord Is King!*

DARWALL'S 148TH

\*The Litany of Praise

On this day of feasting, give praise to God from this holy dwelling place, raising joyful songs to the One whose Spirit speaks through the faithful, a word forever gladly proclaimed!

**The Holy One rules over all people with justice, making an everlasting covenant of grace and peace with all people everywhere!**

Magnify the Lord, the One who clothes the faithful with righteousness, whose power and might bring forth shouts of joy and praise from the servants of the Holy!

**Grace and peace from the One who loves us and frees us from all that seeks us harm, the One whose glory and dominion reigns forever and ever!**

All praise to the One called strong and mighty, our rock, the One whose rule is like the light of the sun rising on a cloudless morning, whose love and freedom is forever upon us!

**Praise be forever the Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the end, the One who was, who is, who continually comes to all humanity! 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 Confession<sup>1</sup>

Do our lives reflect the love of God revealed in Jesus? Is the rule of Christ among us our central concern? Do we daily join in ministry, following in the footsteps of Christ Jesus? This is our call and our duty for which we are held accountable. 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,

**Reigning God, we confess that so many times we have been more like thorn bushes than oaks of righteousness. We sometimes repel rather than attract others to the gospel. Pride and deceit can fill our days more than grace and peace. Open our eyes, heal our open wounds, and embrace us with your forgiving love that we might experience your grace.**

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

Beloved faith community, hear the good news of Reign of Christ! God is Alpha and Omega, the source and the ending of all that is and yet will be. You are known. You are loved. You are forgiven. Enter the realm, which is not of this world, the community that acknowledges the reign and rule of God in all things. Know that you belong to God.

**Thanks be to God!**

### The Time for the Children

Nancy Diepenbrock

### The Witness from the Epistles

REVELATION 21:1-6a

Then I saw a new heaven and a new earth, for the first heaven and the first earth had passed away, and the sea was no more. And I saw the holy city, the new Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband. And I heard a loud voice from the throne saying, "See, the home of God is among mortals! God will dwell with them! They will be God's peoples, and God will be with them and be their God. God will wipe every tear from their eyes! Death will be no more! Mourning and crying and pain will be no more, for the first things have passed away." And the One who was seated on the throne said, "See, I am making all things new!" Also, God said, "Write this, for these words are trustworthy and true!" Then God said to me, "It is done! I am the Alpha and the Omega, the Beginning and the End. To the thirsty I will give water as a gift from the spring of the water of life."

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

**Thanks be to God!**

### The Response, PSALM 126

When the Lord restored the fortunes of Zion, we were like those who dream!

**Then our mouth was filled with laughter and our tongue with shouts of joy!**

Then it was said among the nations, "The Lord has done great things for them!"

**The Lord has done great things for us, and we rejoiced!**

Restore our fortunes, O Lord, like the watercourses in the Negeb!  
**May those who sow in tears reap with shouts of joy!**  
 Those who go out weeping, bearing the seed for sowing!  
**Shall come home with shouts of joy, carrying their sheaves!**

The Witness from the Gospels

MATTHEW 6:25-33

“Therefore, I tell you, do not worry about your life, what you will eat or what you will drink, or about your body, what you will wear. Is not life more than food and the body more than clothing? Look at the birds of the air: they neither sow nor reap nor gather into barns, and yet your heavenly Father feeds them. Are you not of more value than they? And which of you, by worrying, can add a single hour to your span of life? And why do you worry about clothing? Consider the lilies of the field, how they grow! They neither toil nor spin, yet I tell you, even Solomon in all his glory was not clothed like one of these. But if God so clothes the grass of the field, which is alive today and tomorrow is thrown into the oven, will God not much more clothe you—you of little faith? Therefore, do not worry, saying, ‘What will we eat?’ or ‘What will we drink?’ or ‘What will we wear?’ For it is the Gentiles who seek all these things, and indeed your heavenly Father knows that you need all these things. But seek first the realm of God and God’s righteousness, and all these things will be given to you as well!”

The Gospel for today!  
**Thanks be to God!**

The Sermon

*Worry, Worry, Everywhere!*

Timothy W. Shirley

The Hymn for Thanksgiving, No. 717 *Let All Things Now Living*

ASH GROVE

The Concerns of the Church

A Stewardship Moment

Carol Marshall

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. 715

*Now Thank We All Our God*

NUN DANKET

\*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: Cathy Palmer

Ushers: Mary Lou Congdon and Susan Krivichi

Piano: Donna DePape

*The color for A Festival of Thanksgiving is green, calling to mind the greening of the earth in anticipation of a rich and bountiful harvest. The color for the Feast of the Reign of Christ is white, symbolizing purity and victory.*

***The flowers adorning the Chancel for worship today are given by Tobi and Mark Johannsen in honor of all the wonderful volunteers that make this church so great.***

#### Worship Notes:

<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.

<sup>4-5</sup> Adapted from Wikipedia.

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#### **CHURCH STAFF**

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*Debbie Brown, Church Administrator*

*Sharon Breit, Director of Christian Education*

*Lori Lee Hunter, Director of Music*

*Norma Yaeger, Pianist*

*Christine Clough, Cleaning Service*

### **Some background for the liturgy today:**

The Solemnity of Our Lord Jesus Christ, King of the Universe, commonly referred to as the Feast of Christ the King, what we now inclusively call the *Feast of the Reign of Christ*, is a relatively recent addition to the Western liturgical calendar, having been instituted in 1925 by Pope Pius XI for the Roman Catholic Church. In 1970 its Roman Catholic observance was moved to the final Sunday of Ordinary Time. Therefore, the earliest date on which it can occur is 20 November and the latest is 26 November. Traditional Catholics observe it on its original date, the last Sunday of October. The Anglican, Lutheran, and many other Protestant churches adopted it along with the Revised Common Lectionary, occasionally referring to it as Christ the King Sunday. It is also observed on the same computed date as the final Sunday of the ecclesiastical year, the Sunday before the First Sunday of Advent, by Western rite parishes of the Russian Orthodox Church outside Russia. Roman Catholics adhering to the Extraordinary Form of the Roman Rite as permitted under the motu proprio Summorum *Pontificum* use the General Roman Calendar of 1960, and as such continue to observe the Solemnity on its original date of the final Sunday of October. The *Feast of the Reign of Christ* is the latest addition to the liturgical calendar, providing a nice bookend to the Church Year.<sup>4</sup>

Thanksgiving Day is a national holiday celebrated in Canada and the United States as a day of giving thanks for the blessing of the harvest and of the preceding year. It is celebrated on the second Monday of October in Canada and on the fourth Thursday of November in the United States. Several other places around the world observe similar celebrations. Thanksgiving has its historical roots in religious and cultural traditions and has long been celebrated in a secular manner as well. Prayers of thanks and special ceremonies are common among almost all religions after harvest and at other times. The Thanksgiving holiday has its history in North America rooted in English traditions (particularly those related to the Congregationalists who were the direct descendants of the Pilgrims), dating from the Protestant Reformation. It also has aspects of a harvest festival, even though the harvest in New England occurs well before the late November date on which the modern Thanksgiving holiday is celebrated.<sup>5</sup>



# First Congregational United Church of Christ

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First Congregational UCC - Eagle River, WI

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