

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-Fourth Sunday after Pentecost
Thirty-First Sunday in Ordinary Time
A Celebration of All Saints*

The Lord's Day
Twenty-Fourth Sunday after Pentecost
Thirty-First Sunday in Ordinary Time
A Celebration of All Saints
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 early church sought a time to honor the many Christian martyrs and devout disciples of Christ not consistently honored in some manner. Thus, by the fourth century, Christians in Antioch commemorated all such predecessors in the faith on the first Sunday after Pentecost, closely associating the deaths of these saints with Christ's victory over death as celebrated on Easter. An annual "All Saints" festival developed throughout most of Christendom. In the ninth century, the first of November became the day officially designated for this observance. This day was formerly known in Great Britain as All Hallows Day.¹

In the Witness from the Gospels in Mark a legal expert overhears a debate, "debate" being the literal translation, a dispute that Jesus had obviously resolved in a random conversation, the man from Nazareth employing his usual discernment and wisdom. A different discussion thus ensued, this legal expert asking what indeed amounted to a good question, "Which commandment is the most important of all?" The proof that this was a legitimate question and not an attempt to test and trap Jesus, as so many questions posed to the rabbi were, indicated by the fact that Jesus answered him with candor, sincerity, and honesty. The answer is as relevant now as it was when it was first asked and subsequently recorded in the Hebrew Bible as Israelite faith emerged and evolved. As with any theologically motivated inquiry, no matter the question, the answer is always love!

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 on this holy mountain to worship God, the Holy unveiled before all people everywhere, heavenly forces continuing to create a new heaven and a new earth!

The Holy One is making all things new among us, dwelling with us as a holy spouse, saving all humanity, wiping away every tear!

We come before the One for whom we wait, the One who prepares a rich feast for the faithful, choice wines, well-refined and mature, foods rich in flavor!

The One we worship will swallow up death forever, the Holy One making us glad as we rejoice in the God of our salvation!

Let us worship God!

The Introit, No. 123 (*Chalice Praise*) *Love the Lord Your God*

Jean and Jim Strathdee

The Collect

Let us pray to the Lord,

God of All Saints, we have come to this holy mountain to worship you this day, gathering before a holy table that you have graciously set before us, a rich feast with select foods and choicest wines, well-refined, aged to perfection, and mature, fermented by the touch of the Holy; as your saints gathered in this sacred time and space, and with all the saints who have gone before us, we long to worship the One who wipes away all our tears, swallowing up death forever; with clean hands and pure hearts we pray your blessings and righteousness upon this your people, our gates, our doors, our very hearts and minds open to you this day; enter into our presence as we enter into yours, shouting for joy with all our being, gladly rejoicing for all the world to hear, boldly proclaiming that you are our God, the One for whom we have waited; as those imbued with the beatification of sainthood from above, in you we find joy and gladness even as we rejoice in the salvation you continually pour out upon all your people; all this we pray through Jesus Christ our Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the holy and still speaking Spirit and with all the saints in heaven, one God now and forever.

Amen.

*The Opening Hymn, No. 637

For All the Saints

SINE NOMINE

*The Litany of Praise

Offer your unrelenting passionate praises, daring to dance with the Divine in this time of worship, giving thanks for creation, the magnificence of a vast universe!

For God established the world upon the seas, setting it firmly upon the waters, the earth belonging to God, and every precious gift created within it!

We are invited to ascend the holy mountain of God this day, to stand in the holy sanctuary of God, vulnerably laid bare before the Holy One!

With clean hands and pure hearts, honesty and integrity at the core of our being, we long for the blessings and righteousness from the God who saves us!

The Holy One lifts mighty gates, inviting us to enter this sacred space, assured and confident that we are affirmed, welcomed into the presence of the Holy!

In this sacred time and space, ancient doors are opened to all humanity, welcoming everyone who seeks the presence of the Holy in their lives! 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 Confession²

Many times, we have hidden our soiled hands and impure hearts from one another, but we cannot hide from God. We would be dead in our sin, yet Christ reaches through to offer us new life, not just a few little adjustments, but a transformed outlook and purpose. In the sacred silence and stillness of these moments, let us confess before the Holy.

The Silent Confession

The Corporate Confession³

Let us pray to the Lord,

We are often unprepared to meet you, gracious God, but we cannot put off this sacred encounter with you. You continue to summon us to the mountaintop, inviting us to experience your presence and respond to your word. We long to see your glory, but we often stubbornly refuse to acknowledge your work among us. We fear death! We shrink from life! Our greatest sin is cutting ourselves off from you and from our neighbors. God of grace, thank you for your forgiveness.

The Assurance of Pardon⁴

Beloved faith community, here the good news of All Saints! God is ready, willing and able to help us when we welcome the Holy Spirit into our lives. The home of God is among us and within us. We know this to be true when we take time to be aware. Every place we go is a holy place because God is there! Wherever we go God is! God is alpha and omega, beginning and end! God is here in our sacred time together, filling us with a sense of forgiveness and to free us from whatever sin diminishes our lives. In the gracious love of God, honoring the supreme commandment, we indeed are All Saints!

Thanks be to God!

The Time for the Children

Barbara Helmick

The Service of Remembrance

The Anthem *When My Lips Can Frame No Sound* John Amos Comenius and Jay Althouse
Chancel Choir

The Call to Awareness⁵

We gather this morning to celebrate the lives of persons we name as saints.

Some of them are living, others have completed their physical lives here on earth.

Some have touched us personally. Others have touched and called into question the institutions and structures of our society.

But all have shaken our being!

All have been examples of lives of wholeness, working for justice.

We celebrate these persons and their lives in all aspects of God's creation!

The Remembrance of Saints⁶

The saints who still live among us call our attention to God in unexpected ways and at unexpected times. They enable us to see faith and life in new ways. They help us find our way a little, not so much by pointing it out to us, as by the way they themselves walk in the world.

And the great cloud of witnesses around us, the saints triumphant in glory. Their witness calls forth in us belief and hope and strength, helps us lay aside every encumbrance and sin that entangles us, and lets us run with endurance the race that is set before us.

Sisters and brothers, saints of God, as we honor the saints who are now walking with us on this journey, inspiring us to press on in all our earthly travels; and as we bear witness to the great multitude that has gone before us, we remember them as those who taught us to hold fast to our faith.

Let us during this time of remembrance join our hearts in a prayer of thanksgiving for those we have called saints and whose lives have pointed us toward God. We remember this day:

The Saints

*Helena Radloff and Bernard Stanke
and all those who are in our hearts and on our minds,
those we miss today and every day.*

The Prayer of Remembrance⁷

Let us pray to the Lord.

Each day is an occasion for giving thanks for life. But on this day, we pause to thank you for particular lives. We thank you for the people whose deaths brought to our souls the dark night of sorrow and whose living memories now bring us the light of day. Each of them possessed something worth remembering, something loved, something sacred, something honorable, something good. For the lives of each of these persons, and for the lives of all those who have no one to remember their names, we give you thanks.

Lord, hear our prayer.

We thank you for holding in your care those you sent ahead of us. They prepared a road, marking its pitfalls, digging wells for our thirst, building shelters for our rest. Not always did they know who would follow them, but they pressed on. Sometimes they stumbled, many times they were injured, but they went on carrying a spark of the divine within them.

Lord, hear our prayer.

Now we travel that road, which is different, yet the same. Now that we are preparing the way for those who will come after us, we are awed by the responsibility. Help us by your Spirit to mark a clear path for our children and their children. May our faith give a small light to their way.

Lord, hear our prayer.

The Hymn for All Saints, No. 638 *In the Bulb There Is a Flower*

PROMISE

The Litany for All Saints⁸

God, our creator, we praise you for the saints: for saints who have gone before us, for saints who are alive today, for saints in our midst, and for the sainthood in us all.

God of love, we thank you for saints who have loved us, for families through whom we were created, for people who taught us of your love.

For matriarchs and patriarchs, prophets and priests, for disciples, apostles, leaders and servants.

For pastors and missionaries, educators and healers, clerks and cooks.

God, to whom we come in faith, we thank you for the faith of the saints who have gone before us, for your forgiveness that brings us hope.

God of justice and peace, we honor saints whose peaceful ways give vision of your realm.

We are renewed by the courage of the saints of history and are inspired by the saints who walk among us today.

May your Holy Spirit move each of us to be helpers and preachers, teachers and peacemakers, visionary sculptors and potters who continually create a new dream of your church on this earth.

May we sense the presence of the great cloud of witnesses that surrounds us as we live our lives.

As they heard your call and courageously proclaimed their faith, may we hear your call and faithfully respond in kind. Amen and Amen!

The Witness from the Epistles

ISAIAH 25:6-9

On this mountain, the LORD of hosts will make for all peoples a feast of rich food, a feast of well-aged wines, of rich food filled with marrow, of well-aged wines strained clear. And God will destroy on this mountain the shroud that is cast over all peoples, the covering that is spread over all nations. God will swallow up death forever! Then the Lord GOD will wipe away the tears from all faces, and the disgrace of God's people God will take away from all the earth, for the LORD has spoken. It will be said on that day, "See, this is our God! We have waited for God, so that God might save us! This is the LORD for whom we have waited! Let us be glad and rejoice in the salvation of God!"

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

Thanks be to God!

The Response, PSALM 24

Lift up Your Gates
Chancel Choir

Joseph M. Martin and Jon Paige

The Witness from the Gospels

MARK 12:28-34

One of the scribes came near and heard them disputing with one another, and seeing that he answered them well he asked him, "Which commandment is the first of all?" Jesus answered, "The first is, 'Hear, O Israel: the Lord our God, the Lord is one! You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind and with all your strength!' The second is this, 'You shall love your neighbor as yourself!' There is no other commandment greater than these." Then the scribe said to him, "You are right, Teacher! You have truly said that 'God is one, and besides God there is no other'! And 'to love God with all the heart and with all the understanding and with all the strength' and 'to love one's neighbor as oneself'—this is much more important than all whole burnt offerings and sacrifices." When Jesus saw that he answered wisely, he said to him, "You are not far from the realm of God!" After that no one dared to ask him any question!

The Gospel for today!

Thanks be to God!

The Sermon

One of One!

Timothy W. Shirley

The Music for Meditation
The Concerns of the Church
A Stewardship Moment
The Pastoral Prayer
The Lord's Prayer

Tom Helmick

**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) *I Sing a Song of the Saints of God*

GRAND ISLE

*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: Barbara Helmick

Ushers: Kamie Kolb and Joe Turpin

The color for a Celebration of All Saints is White, symbolizing purity, celebration and joy, and recalling that the death of the saints represents their “birthday” into eternal life with God.

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
Luke Aschbrenner in memory of his Grandma Gwen Aschbrenner on this
the 16th anniversary of her passing.***



Worship Notes:

^{1, 5-8}Adapted from *Worship Resources for Christian Congregations: A Symphony for the Senses*, by C. Welton Gaddy and Don W. Nixon, © 1995 by Smyth & Helwys Publishing, Inc. Used by permission.

²⁻⁴Reprinted 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 Church Office: 715-802-8501 E-mail: office@eagleriverucc.org

Timothy W. Shirley: timwshirley@gmail.com



First Congregational UCC - Eagle River, WI

November 3, 2024

ALL

SAINTS

KING
DAVID

KING
SOLOMON

