

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



*First Sunday after the Epiphany
Baptism of the Lord*

*The Lord's Day
First Sunday after the Epiphany
Baptism of the Lord
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

As we read the Bible through the long lens of our individual and collective rearview mirrors, it is easy to overlook so much of the textual nuance that is contained in numerous biblical texts. The line in the book of Acts that should grab our attention and capture our imagination includes the name of the territory called Samaria. As we know from our reading of the good book, Samaritans were a despised people, labeled as a people of mixed origins and a people who chose an inferior religious path. The Gospels make it a point to assure the reader that the Samaritans were hospitably welcomed and included at the table as part of the gospel of Christ, this maligned and marginalized group given an intentional invitation. The Gospels make sure that everyone understood that this was a clear expectation. Yes, one word says it all! Samaria and Samaritan! Oh well, make it two words!

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

As we lift our voices in praise, gather together to celebrate baptism in the holy splendor of this sanctuary, offering our gifts of worship on this high and holy festival day!

The One who created us and formed us has called us by name, claiming us as the very possession of God!

Beloved sons and daughters of God, come before the One who has baptized us with the Spirit of Christ, touching us from above, graced by the Holy Spirit!

Glory be the name of the One who removes our fears and redeems us as children of God, the glory of the Holy One wondrously manifest in our midst!

Let us worship God!

The Introit, No. 94 (*Chalice Praise*)

Breathe on Me

Stephen M. Austin

The Collect

Let us pray to the Lord,

Creator God, you have formed and made each one of us, redeeming us as your children, sons and daughters made for your glory, calling us by name and claiming us as your own; God of glory and strength, to you we offer our worship in holy splendor, praying that we might be strengthened by your presence in this sacred space; God of blessing and peace, we long to be empowered to live out our baptismal vows, blessed forever with the peace that only comes from you; 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. 357 (stanzas 1-4) *We Call Ourselves Disciples* LANCASHIRE

*The Litany of Praise

Ascribe to the Holy One glory and honor, joining with all the hosts of heaven, declaring the splendor of the holy name of God proclaimed in all the earth!

The voice of the Lord echoes over the waters, the God of glory thundering to the ends of the universe, a powerful word declaring the strength of the majesty of God!

The voice of God is powerful, the Holy One breaking the cedars, flashing forth with flames of fire, the presence of the Holy shaking the wilderness!

The voice of the Holy One causes the oaks to whirl, stripping the forest bare, proclaiming the glory of God enthroned over all creation!

For God declares a powerful word, breaking forth a wondrous witness to the creative power of the Holy, the One who rules with blessing and peace!

In this holy temple, we cry aloud our glorious praise to God, praising the One who reigns over all the earth, the glory of God enduring forever and ever! 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 Confession¹

At our baptism, we are set apart to be a ministering people, called to be agents of change, created to give glory to God in word and deed. The Holy Spirit has claimed us to be praying, caring, giving disciples of Christ Jesus. In this time of confession, we acknowledge how far we are from what we were created to be. 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,

Baptizing God, it is easy for us to retreat to safe places where we hope to avoid challenges, conflicts, and uncertainty. When we shrink from risks, we miss much that enriches life and we tend to fail to notice your amazing activity among everyone who respond to your call. Free us, we pray, for daring service.

The Assurance of Pardon³

Hear the good news of Baptism of the Lord, including every baptism represented in this sacred space! God has redeemed us, claimed us, called us by name. We are precious in the sight of God and surely, our God will strengthen us to face times of difficulty. There are no safe hiding places in life, only the assurance of a relationship with a God whom we can trust in life and in death. Our God forgives and empowers, God blessing us with a peace that is more powerful than any circumstance or situation we might face. The assurances of God are eternal.

Thanks be to God!

The Time for the Children

Timothy W. Shirley

The Witness from the Epistles

ACTS 8:14-17

Now when the apostles at Jerusalem heard that Samaria had accepted the word of God, they sent Peter and John to them. The two went down and prayed for them that they might receive the Holy Spirit (for as yet the Spirit had not come upon any of them; they had only been baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus). Then Peter and John laid their hands on them, and they received the Holy Spirit.

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

Thanks be to God!

The Response, PSALM 29

HYMN TO JOY

All on earth and all in heaven, raise to God a song on high!

Strength unmeasured, love unbounded, God alone we glorify!

At God's voice the clouds assemble, thunder roars and torrents fall!

Earth shall quake before God's presence, mountains tremble at God's call!

Trees shall bow in awe and wonder, bend their branches to the ground!

From God's lips one word in anger wreaks destruction all around!

But the word which sets in motion such travails can make them cease!

That same voice which tumult beckons in a gentler breath speaks peace!

The Witness from the Gospels

LUKE 3:15-17, 21-22

As the people were filled with expectation and all were questioning in their hearts concerning John, whether he might be the Messiah, John answered all of them by saying, "I baptize you with water, but one who is more powerful than I is coming! I am not worthy to untie the strap of his sandals! He will baptize you with the Holy Spirit and fire! His winnowing fork is in his hand to clear his threshing floor and to gather the wheat into his granary, but the chaff he will burn with unquenchable fire!" Now when all the people were baptized and when Jesus also had been baptized and was praying, the heaven was opened, and the Holy Spirit descended upon him in bodily form like a dove. And a voice came from heaven, "You are my Son, the Beloved! With you I am well pleased!"

The Gospel for today!

Thanks be to God!

The Sermon

One Word Says It All!

Timothy W. Shirley

The Hymn for Baptism of the Lord, No. 356 *We, Your People, God, Confessing* IN BABILONE

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. 177 *What Was Your Vow and Vision*

COMPLAINER

*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: Joy and Joe Turpin

*The color for the First Sunday after the Epiphany, Baptism of the Lord,
is white, symbolizing purity and victory.*

Worship Notes:

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First Congregational UCC - Eagle River, WI

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