

**United Church of Christ, First Congregational
Norwich, New York
June 7, 2020**

A TIME OF GATHERING AS WE PREPARE TO WORSHIP GOD

PRELUDE *Prelude & Fugue in g minor*
Bob Oehme, organ

by J. S. Bach

WELCOME (Pastor John)

ANNOUNCEMENTS (Linda Oehme)

PRAYER OF THE DAY (Gary Gray)

Holy God, source of all goodness, you gave your Son for the life of the world and sent your Spirit that love might abide within us. Teach us how to love each other this day, that we may have life, and have it abundantly, with you, in Christ, and through the Holy Spirit. Amen.

CALL TO WORSHIP (Gary Gray)

Blessed be God, Eternal Love, Living Word, Abiding Spirit. Glory to God forever. Amen.
Jesus said, the way to see God's dream for the world is to be born from above by the Spirit. The way to take part in that dream, says Jesus, is to be born of water and Spirit. That gift is available this day. May you receive God's Spirit, be made whole and dwell more deeply in love divine. Amen.

HYMN *Immortal, Invisible, God Only Wise*
Meena Conant, Jason Handy, Mary Williams, voice
Bob Oehme, organ

Tune: ST. DENIO

CHILDREN'S TIME (Linda Oehme)
The Lord's Prayer

COMMUNION HYMN

Jesus, the Joy of Loving Hearts
Meena Conant, Jason Handy, Mary Williams, voice
Bob Oehme, organ

Tune: HESPERUS

COMMUNION

(Jamie Mahlchic, Rev. John Steitz, Jason Handy, Brad Morrison, Miranda Hunter, Mary Williams, Judy Smith)

INVITATION:

In Luke's Gospel we read that Jesus, at the table with two of the disciples, took bread and blessed and broke it, and gave it to them, and their eyes were opened, and they recognized the risen Christ in the breaking of the bread.

In the Acts of the Apostles we read that as the church was gathered, often in the homes of the believers, Christians devoted themselves to the apostles' teaching and community, to the breaking of bread, and to prayers.

ALL: Jesus Christ, the Bread of Life, we gather at your table to know you in the breaking of the bread.

COMMUNION PRAYER:

Holy God, we praise and bless you for creation and the gift of life and for your abiding love which brings us close to you, the source of all blessing. We thank you for revealing your will for us in the giving of the law and in the preaching of the prophets.

We thank you especially that in the fullness of time you sent Jesu, born of Mary, to live in our midst, to share in our suffering, and to accept the pain of death at the hands of those whom Jesus loved.

We rejoice that in a perfect victory over the grave you raised Christ with power to become sovereign in your realm.

We celebrate the coming of the Holy Spirit to gather your church by which your work may be done in the world and through which we share the gift of eternal life.

ALL: With the faithful in every place and time, we praise with joy your holy name: Holy, holy, holy, God of love and majesty, the whole universe speaks of your glory, O God Most High.

We remember that on the night of betrayal and desertion, Jesus took bread, gave you thanks, broke the bread, and gave it to the disciples, saying, "This is my body which is broken for you. Do this in remembrance of me."

In the same way, Jesus also took the cup, after supper, saying: "This is the cup of the new covenant in my blood. Do this, as often as you drink it, in remembrance of me."

Consecrate, therefore, by your Holy Spirit, these gifts of bread and wine, and bless us that as we receive them at this table, we may offer you our faith and praise, we may be united with Christ and with one another, and we may continue faithful in all things.

In the strength Christ gives us, we offer ourselves to you, eternal God, and give thanks that you have called us to serve you. Amen.

BREAKING BREAD AND POURING WINE:

Through the broken bread we participate in the body of Christ.
Through the cup of blessing we participate in the new life Christ gives.

SHARING THE ELEMENTS:

Eat this, for it is the body of Christ, broken for you.
Drink this, for it is the blood of Christ, shed for you.

MUSIC *Bread and Wine*
Jason Handy, piano

by Richard Blake

UNISON PRAYER OF THANKSGIVING:

We thank you, God, for inviting us to this table where we have known the presence of Christ and have received all Christ's gifts. Strengthen our faith, increase our love for one another, and let us show forth your praise in our lives; through Jesus Christ our Savior. Amen.

COMMUNION HYMN

Jesus, the Joy of Loving Hearts

Tune: HESPERUS

Meena Conant, Jason Handy, Mary Williams, voice
Bob Oehme, organ

WE LISTEN FOR GOD'S WORD

SCRIPTURE Isaiah 6:1-8 (Mary Williams)

In the year that King Uzziah died, I saw the Lord sitting on a throne, high and lofty; and the hem of his robe filled the temple. ² Seraphs were in attendance above him; each had six wings: with two they covered their faces, and with two they covered their feet, and with two they flew. ³ And one called to another and said:

"Holy, holy, holy is the LORD of hosts;
the whole earth is full of his glory."

⁴ The pivots on the thresholds shook at the voices of those who called, and the house filled with smoke. ⁵ And I said: "Woe is me! I am lost, for I am a man of unclean lips, and I live among a people of unclean lips; yet my eyes have seen the King, the LORD of hosts!"

⁶ Then one of the seraphs flew to me, holding a live coal that had been taken from the altar with a pair of tongs. ⁷ The seraph touched my mouth with it and said: "Now that this has touched your lips, your guilt has departed and your sin is blotted out." ⁸ Then I heard the voice of the Lord saying, "Whom shall I send, and who will go for us?" And I said, "Here am I; send me!"

ANTHEM *Here I Am, Lord*
UCC Choir (recorded 5/27/18)

Dan Schutte, 1981
adapt. By Carlton R. Young, 1988

I, the Lord of sea and sky,
I have heard my people cry.
All who dwell in dark and sin
my hand will save.

I, who made the stars of night, I will make their darkness bright
Who will bear my light to them? Whom shall I send?

Refrain

*Here I am, Lord, Is it I, Lord?
I have heard you calling in the night.
I will go, Lord, if you lead me.
I will hold your people in my heart.*

I, the Lord of snow and rain, I have born my people's pain,
I have wept for love of them. They turn away.
I will break their hearts of stone, give them hearts for love alone.
I will speak my word to them. Whom shall I send?

Refrain

I, the Lord of wind and flame, I will tend the poor and lame,
I will set a feast for them. My hand will save

Finest bread I will provide till their hearts be satisfied.

I will give my life to them. Whom shall I send.

Refrain

SCRIPTURE - John 3:1-17 (Mary Williams)

Now there was a Pharisee named Nicodemus, a leader of the Jews. ² He came to Jesus by night and said to him, "Rabbi, we know that you are a teacher who has come from God; for no one can do these signs that you do apart from the presence of God." ³ Jesus answered him, "Very truly, I tell you, no one can see the kingdom of God without being born from above." ⁴ Nicodemus said to him, "How can anyone be born after having grown old? Can one enter a second time into the mother's womb and be born?" ⁵ Jesus answered, "Very truly, I tell you, no one can enter the kingdom of God without being born of water and Spirit. ⁶ What is born of the flesh is flesh, and what is born of the Spirit is spirit. ⁷ Do not be astonished that I said to you, 'You must be born from above.' ⁸ The wind blows where it chooses, and you hear the sound of it, but you do not know where it comes from or where it goes. So it is with everyone who is born of the Spirit." ⁹ Nicodemus said to him, "How can these things be?" ¹⁰ Jesus answered him, "Are you a teacher of Israel, and yet you do not understand these things?

¹¹ "Very truly, I tell you, we speak of what we know and testify to what we have seen; yet you do not receive our testimony. ¹² If I have told you about earthly things and you do not believe, how can you believe if I tell you about heavenly things? ¹³ No one has ascended into heaven except the one who descended from heaven, the Son of Man. ¹⁴ And just as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, so must the Son of Man be lifted up, ¹⁵ that whoever believes in him may have eternal life.

¹⁶ "For God so loved the world that he gave his only Son, so that everyone who believes in him may not perish but may have eternal life.

¹⁷ "Indeed, God did not send the Son into the world to condemn the world, but in order that the world might be saved through him.

SERMON

ORGAN INTERLUDE *Erschienen is der herrliche Tag*

arr. by J. G. Walter

Bob Oehme, organ

PASTORAL PRAYER (Pastor John)

CLOSING HYMN

Standing at the Future's Threshold

Tune: LUX EOI

Meena Conant, Jason Handy, Mary Williams, voice

Bob Oehme, organ

BLESSING (Pastor John)

God said, "Whom shall I send, and who will go for us?"

And Isaiah said, "Here I am; send me!"

Life-giving God, free us from our fear, fill us with your love, and send us forth in peace.

May the blessing of God, who creates, redeems, and restores be with you now and always.

POSTLUDE *Nicaea*

Arranged by John Purifoy

Cheri Oakley, flute
Jason Handy, piano

Tune by John B. Dykes