

**United Church of Christ, First Congregational  
Norwich, New York  
November 15, 2020**

***A TIME OF GATHERING AS WE PREPARE TO WORSHIP GOD***

**PRELUDE** *Intermezzo on Meirionydd*

Gilbert M. Martin  
based on the tune by William Lloyd

**WELCOME** (Pastor John)

**ANNOUNCEMENTS** (Linda Oehme)

**PRAYER OF THE DAY** (Rita Giangarra)

God of righteousness, you overcome those who abuse their power  
and lift up those who suffer.

Even now, when evil seems to hold sway,  
we know that you will have the last word.

Keep us faithful as we wait and watch for your coming realm,  
when you will welcome all your children  
into your kingdom of justice, peace, and love. **Amen.**

**CALL TO WORSHIP** (Gary Gray)

Clothe yourselves with faith and love;  
be confident in your salvation in Christ Jesus.  
The Lord is with us!  
Let us worship God.

**HYMN** *O God, Our Help in Ages Past*

Isaac Watts, 1719  
Tune: ST. ANNE, William Croft, 1708

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

**CHILDREN'S TIME** (Linda Oehme & Jen Mallozzi)

The Lord's Prayer

**CONGREGATIONAL GREETING OF PEACE**

ONE: May the peace of Christ be with you.

ALL: **And also with you.**

***WE LISTEN FOR GOD'S WORD***

**SCRIPTURE** (Rita Giangarra)

1 Thessalonians 5:1-11

Now concerning the times and the seasons, brothers and sisters, you do not need to have anything written to you. <sup>2</sup>For you yourselves know very well that the day of the Lord will come like a thief in the night. <sup>3</sup>When they say, "There is peace and security," then sudden destruction will come upon them, as labor pains come upon a pregnant woman, and there will be no escape! <sup>4</sup>But you, beloved, are not in darkness, for that day to surprise you like a thief; <sup>5</sup>for you are all children of light and children of the day; we are not of the night or of darkness. <sup>6</sup>So then let us not fall asleep as others do, but let us keep awake and be sober; <sup>7</sup>for those who sleep sleep at night, and those who are drunk get drunk at night. <sup>8</sup>But since we belong to the day, let us be sober, and put on the breastplate of faith and love, and for a helmet the hope of salvation. <sup>9</sup>For God has destined us not for wrath but for obtaining salvation through our Lord Jesus Christ, <sup>10</sup>who died for us, so that whether we are awake or asleep we may live with him. <sup>11</sup>Therefore encourage one another and build up each other, as indeed you are doing.

**ANTHEM** *We Are the Hands of Christ*

words by John Parker  
Music by Joel Raney

No voice to speak of kindness,  
no eyes to see the pain;  
no heartbeat of compassion,  
no empathy remains.

How will they hear the message  
that Jesus is alive?  
How can they know the truth  
unless it's through our lives?

Christ has no hands except your own  
to reach the world and make God known.  
God's love can change humanity by a touch alone.  
Christ has no hands except your own.

No truth to scatter darkness,  
no candle in the night;  
no warm illumination,  
no justice, no right.

When will we recognize?  
Open our blinded eyes.  
We are the lighthouse  
to shine God's light!

Christ has no hands except your own  
to reach the world and make God known.  
God's love can change humanity by your touch alone.  
Christ has no hands except your own.

Touching the desperate, feeling their pain;  
reaching the hopeless in Jesus' name.

Christ has no hands except our own  
to reach the world and make God known.  
God's love can change humanity by our touch alone.  
Christ has no hands except our own.

No voice, no eyes, no hands except our own.  
We are the hands of Christ,  
the hands of Christ.

**SCRIPTURE** (Gary Gray)  
Matthew 25:14-30

<sup>14</sup> "For it is as if a man, going on a journey, summoned his slaves and entrusted his property to them; <sup>15</sup> to one he gave five talents,<sup>[a]</sup> to another two, to another one, to each according to his ability. Then he went away. <sup>16</sup> The one who had received the five talents went off at once and traded with them, and made five more talents. <sup>17</sup> In the same way, the one who had the two talents made two more talents. <sup>18</sup> But the one who had received the one talent went off and dug a hole in the ground and hid his master's money. <sup>19</sup> After a long time the master of those slaves came and settled accounts with them. <sup>20</sup> Then the one who had received the five talents came forward, bringing five more talents, saying, 'Master, you handed over to me five talents; see, I have made five more talents.' <sup>21</sup> His master said to him, 'Well done, good and trustworthy slave; you have been trustworthy in a few things, I will put you in charge of many things; enter into the joy of your master.' <sup>22</sup> And the one with the two talents also came forward, saying, 'Master, you handed over to me two talents; see, I have made two more talents.' <sup>23</sup> His master said to him, 'Well done, good and trustworthy slave; you have been trustworthy in a few things, I will put you in charge of many things; enter into the joy of your master.' <sup>24</sup> Then the one who had received the one talent also came forward, saying, 'Master, I knew that you were a harsh man, reaping where you did not sow, and gathering where you did not scatter seed; <sup>25</sup> so I was afraid, and I went and hid your talent in the ground. Here you have what is yours.' <sup>26</sup> But his master replied, 'You wicked and lazy slave! You knew, did you, that I reap where I did not sow, and gather where I did not scatter? <sup>27</sup> Then you ought to have invested my money with the bankers, and on my return I would have received what was my own with interest. <sup>28</sup> So take the talent from him, and give it to the one with the ten talents. <sup>29</sup> For to all those who have, more will be given, and they will have an abundance; but from those who have nothing, even what they have will be taken away. <sup>30</sup> As for this worthless slave, throw him into the outer darkness, where there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth.'

**SERMON** (Pastor John)

**INTERLUDE** *Minuet #2*  
Meena Conant, organ

J.S.Bach

**PASTORAL PRAYER** (Pastor John)

**CLOSING HYMN** *Part in Peace*  
Mary Williams, Mike Moren, Bob Oehme, organ

Sarah Flower Adams (1805-1848)  
Tune: CHARLESTOWN Harm. Carlton R. Young, 1964

**BLESSING**

May the God of creation work wonders in you  
by the power of the Holy Spirit,  
until we enter together the joy of our Master.

**POSTLUDE** *Praise Everlasting*  
Bob Oehme, organ

David Paxton