

United Church of Christ, First Congregational
Norwich, New York
May 2, 2021

PRELUDE *In Humility, Our Savior*
Bob Oehme, organ

Tune: HYFRYDOL
Arranged by James C. Kasen

WELCOME (Pastor John)

PRAYER OF THE DAY (Brad Morrison)

Wondrous Vinegrower, you make all things new
in water and Word,
feeding your people with love, joy, and peace.
Lead us today and every day to the font of new beginnings.
Teach us to love what you have commanded
and to prune what does not nourish your creation,
in the name of the Creator, Redeemer, and Sustainer,
one God, now and forever. **Amen.**

ANNOUNCEMENTS (Linda Oehme)

CALL TO WORSHIP (John Kolb)

In the wilderness, water brings life.

Seek us out, O God, and take us to the water.

In the Word of God, the good news gives light.

Seek us out, O God, and fill us with understanding.

In the bread and the wine, the body of our Savior nourishes everyone.

Seek us out, O God, and give us yourself.

Here is the water of life, the word that feeds, the food of eternity.

Come and praise the vine that gives all goodness.

HYMN *Thank our God for Sisters, Brothers* (#397)

Roger Powell (1914-2003)
Tune: PLEADING SAVIOR, 1831

Thank our God for sisters, brothers,
one by grace, in harmony,
Joining heart to heart with others,
making strong community.
With the cross of Christ our standard,
let us sing as with one voice,
Glory, glory, yours the promise:
we who are the church rejoice.

Praise to God for congregations,
keeping faith with Christ as guide;
Many tongues of many nations,
song and service unified.
Sweet the psalm and sweet the carol,
when our song is raised as one.
Glory, glory, yours the power,
as in heaven your will be done.

Holy is your name forever!
Heal divisions that remain;
Bless the church's new endeavors;
make our witness one again.
One in Christ and in Christ's gospel,

make us one we now implore,
Glory, glory, yours the glory,
then and now and ever more.

CHILDREN'S TIME (Linda Oehme)
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 (Brad Morrison)

1 John 4:7-21

Beloved, let us love one another, because love is from God; everyone who loves is born of God and knows God. ⁸Whoever does not love does not know God, for God is love. ⁹God's love was revealed among us in this way: God sent his only Son into the world so that we might live through him. ¹⁰In this is love, not that we loved God but that he loved us and sent his Son to be the atoning sacrifice for our sins. ¹¹Beloved, since God loved us so much, we also ought to love one another. ¹²No one has ever seen God; if we love one another, God lives in us, and his love is perfected in us.

¹³By this we know that we abide in him and he in us, because he has given us of his Spirit. ¹⁴And we have seen and do testify that the Father has sent his Son as the Savior of the world. ¹⁵God abides in those who confess that Jesus is the Son of God, and they abide in God. ¹⁶So we have known and believe the love that God has for us.

God is love, and those who abide in love abide in God, and God abides in them. ¹⁷Love has been perfected among us in this: that we may have boldness on the day of judgment, because as he is, so are we in this world. ¹⁸There is no fear in love, but perfect love casts out fear; for fear has to do with punishment, and whoever fears has not reached perfection in love. ¹⁹We love because he first loved us. ²⁰Those who say, "I love God," and hate their brothers or sisters, are liars; for those who do not love a brother or sister whom they have seen, cannot love God whom they have not seen. ²¹The commandment we have from him is this: those who love God must love their brothers and sisters also.

ANTHEM *Let Us Love One Another*

Arnold B. Sherman

Beloved, let us love one another,
for love comes from God,
and all who know and call upon God's name
are children of our Lord.

Beloved, this is what love is;
not that we love God,
but that he loves us
and sent the Chosen One
to free us from our sin.

How can we not know our God?
How can we not love our God?
He sent the Christ to us,
who lives among us now.
Is there greater love than this?
Is there greater love than this?

Beloved, if this is how God loves,
then we should also love,
and live in perfect harmony with all,
and God will live in us.

Let us love one another,
Let us love one another,
Let us love one another.

SCRIPTURE ((John Kolb)

John 15:1-8

"I am the true vine, and my Father is the vinegrower. ² He removes every branch in me that bears no fruit. Every branch that bears fruit he prunes to make it bear more fruit. ³ You have already been cleansed by the word that I have spoken to you. ⁴ Abide in me as I abide in you. Just as the branch cannot bear fruit by itself unless it abides in the vine, neither can you unless you abide in me. ⁵ I am the vine, you are the branches. Those who abide in me and I in them bear much fruit, because apart from me you can do nothing. ⁶ Whoever does not abide in me is thrown away like a branch and withers; such branches are gathered, thrown into the fire, and burned. ⁷ If you abide in me, and my words abide in you, ask for whatever you wish, and it will be done for you. ⁸ My Father is glorified by this, that you bear much fruit and become my disciples.

SERMON (Pastor John)

INTERLUDE Interlude on "Canonbury"
Bob Oehme, organ

by Gilbert Martin
based on the tune by Robert Schumann

PRAYERS OF INTERCESSION (Pastor John)

Let us join with all creation in praying for
the good of the earth, saying,
God, who makes us one, hear our prayer.

O God, we give you thanks for your Holy Spirit
whose work at creation continues in us.
Through Christ Jesus you have shown your love
for this earth you made.
We pray that all the world may know your
power and goodness;
God, who makes us one, **hear our prayer.**

Word of life, reveal the wonder of your world
to all people.
Show us anew what lives around us, over us,
beneath us, within us.
Enliven the church with your Spirit,
that we may honor your earth with responsible care.
God, who makes us one, **hear our prayer.**

Almighty God, uphold our sisters and brothers
who endure disasters
caused by weather, war, famine, sickness, or greed.
Strengthen all who are in peril,
especially the people of *[name places of concern]*.
You are our refuge and strength, a very present help
in time of trouble.
God, who makes us one, **hear our prayer.**

Giver of all good things, bring trust and sympathy
to the nations of the world.
Let peacemakers reign wherever there is conflict.
Give wisdom to leaders and hope to the poor.
God, who makes us one, **hear our prayer.**

Good healer, we pray for all who are in need of comfort.
Comfort those who mourn;
uphold those who are sick, or holding vigil,
or awaiting words of hope,
especially those we name now silently or aloud [*silence*].
God, who makes us one, **hear our prayer.**

Trusting in your mercy, we commend to you all those
we have named
and those whose needs are known only to you,
in the name of your Son, Christ our Lord,
who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit,
one God, now and forever. **Amen.**

BLESSING (Pastor John)

As Jesus entered into human life,
his life is still alive in you.

The blessing of Almighty God be upon you
today and always.

POSTLUDE *Fanfare for a Festive Occasion*
Bob Oehme, organ

Lani Smith

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