

**United Church of Christ, First Congregational
Norwich, New York
May 9, 2021 – Communion**

PRELUDE *The Good Shepherd*
Bob Oehme, organ

by Dale Wood

WELCOME (Pastor John)

PRAYER OF THE DAY (Ericka Tyler)

Loving God, help us to love others
as Christ has loved us.
Bring us into the spiritual joy
of living our lives as your friend,
and teach us to abide in your love,
that we may show that love to the world. **Amen.**

ANNOUNCEMENTS (Linda Oehme)

CALL TO WORSHIP (Katie Izzo)

(based on Psalm 98)

ONE: Sing to our God a new song!

ALL: God has done marvelous things!

ONE: God has remembered his steadfast love and faithfulness to the house of Israel.

ALL: All the ends of the earth have seen the victory of our God.

ONE: Make a joyful noise to the LORD, all the earth;
break forth into joyous song and sing praises.

Sing praises to the LORD with the lyre,
with the lyre and the sound of melody.

ALL: With trumpets and the sound of the horn

Make a joyful noise to the Lord!

Break forth into joyous song and sing praises.

Let the sea roar and all that fills it.

Let the world and its people sing together for joy!

ONE: Let the floods clap their hands;
let the hills sing together for joy at the presence of the LORD,
for he is coming to judge the earth.

**ALL: He will judge the world with righteousness,
and the peoples with equity.**

HYMN *To God Compose a Song of Joy* (#36 to tune of 42)

Ruth Duck, 1986

Tune: AZMON by Carl G. Gläser 1828

To God compose a song of joy; to God make melody,
Whose arm of strength does wondrous things, whose hand brings victory!

Before the nations God reveals a just and righteous will,
Remembering in faithful love the house of Israel.

In every corner of the earth, God comes to save and free;
Break forth with shouts of holy joy; all lands, make melody.

Let seas in all their fullness roar; sing, people of all lands;
Let mountains join and sing for joy; let rivers clap their hands.

The God of justice comes to save; let earth make melody;
For God will judge with righteousness and rule with equity.

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.**

SCRIPTURE (Katie Izzo)

Acts 10:44-48

⁴⁴ While Peter was still speaking, the Holy Spirit fell upon all who heard the word. ⁴⁵ The circumcised believers who had come with Peter were astounded that the gift of the Holy Spirit had been poured out even on the Gentiles, ⁴⁶ for they heard them speaking in tongues and extolling God. Then Peter said, ⁴⁷ "Can anyone withhold the water for baptizing these people who have received the Holy Spirit just as we have?" ⁴⁸ So he ordered them to be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ. Then they invited him to stay for several days.

ANTHEM *Mallet Melody (Percussive Praise)*
Hand Bell Choir

Kevin McChesney

SCRIPTURE (Ericka Tyler)

John 15:9-17

As the Father has loved me, so I have loved you; abide in my love. ¹⁰ If you keep my commandments, you will abide in my love, just as I have kept my Father's commandments and abide in his love. ¹¹ I have said these things to you so that my joy may be in you, and that your joy may be complete.

¹² "This is my commandment, that you love one another as I have loved you. ¹³ No one has greater love than this, to lay down one's life for one's friends. ¹⁴ You are my friends if you do what I command you. ¹⁵ I do not call you servants^[a] any longer, because the servant^[b] does not know what the master is doing; but I have called you friends, because I have made known to you everything that I have heard from my Father. ¹⁶ You did not choose me but I chose you. And I appointed you to go and bear fruit, fruit that will last, so that the Father will give you whatever you ask him in my name. ¹⁷ I am giving you these commands so that you may love one another.

SERMON (Pastor John)

INTERLUDE *Blessed Assurance*
Bob Oehme, organ

Tune: ASSURANCE by Phoebe P. Knapp, 1873

BLESSING (Pastor John)

POSTLUDE *O Store Gut (How Great Thou Art)*
Cheri Oakley, flute; Jason Handy, piano

A Swedish Folk Melody
Arranged by John Purifoy

SACRAMENT OF THE LORD'S SUPPER (at the end of the worship video)

INVITATION

ONE: 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:

ONE: 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 Jesus, 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.

ONE: 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.

PRAYER OF THANKSGIVING:

ALL: 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.

POST COMMUNION PRAYER

ONE: Gracious and loving God, you have made us one in the body of Christ, and nourished us at your table with holy food and drink. Now send us forth to be your people in the world. Grant us strength to persevere in resisting evil, and to proclaim in all we say and do your Good News in Christ Jesus our Savior.