

**United Church of Christ, First Congregational
Norwich, New York
May 23, 2021**

PRELUDE *Morning Song*
Bob Oehme, organ

Henry Kihlken

WELCOME (Pastor John)

PRAYER OF THE DAY (Cheri Oakley)
Gracious God, you come among your people
as One who fashioned all things,
who, face-to-face, revealed your knowledge of our lives,
and whose presence brings assurance and hope.
Pour out upon us the Spirit of your love
so that in hearing and seeing the gifts of this life,
we may know the way to live in thanksgiving;
through Jesus Christ, our Lord. **Amen.**

ANNOUNCEMENTS (Linda Oehme)

MOMENT FOR MISSIONS (Joan Griffith)
Strengthen the Church Offering

CALL TO WORSHIP (Gary Gray)
ONE: God declares: "I will pour out my Spirit upon all flesh.
Your sons and your daughters shall prophesy.

**ALL: The young shall see visions.
The elders shall dream dreams.**

ONE: Both men and women shall prophesy.

ALL: And everyone who calls on the name of the Lord shall be saved."

HYMN *This is the Day* (#84)

Les Garrett, 1967

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 (Gary Gray)
Ezekiel 37: 1-14

37 The hand of the LORD came upon me, and he brought me out by the spirit of the LORD and set me down in the middle of a valley; it was full of bones. ² He led me all around them; there were very many lying in the valley, and they were very dry. ³ He said to me, "Mortal, can these bones live?" I answered, "O Lord GOD, you know." ⁴ Then he said to me, "Prophesy to these bones, and say to them: O dry bones, hear the word of the LORD. ⁵ Thus says the Lord GOD to these bones: I will cause

breath to enter you, and you shall live. ⁶ I will lay sinews on you, and will cause flesh to come upon you, and cover you with skin, and put breath in you, and you shall live; and you shall know that I am the LORD.”

⁷ So I prophesied as I had been commanded; and as I prophesied, suddenly there was a noise, a rattling, and the bones came together, bone to its bone. ⁸ I looked, and there were sinews on them, and flesh had come upon them, and skin had covered them; but there was no breath in them. ⁹ Then he said to me, “Prophecy to the breath, prophesy, mortal, and say to the breath: Thus says the Lord GOD: Come from the four winds, O breath, and breathe upon these slain, that they may live.” ¹⁰ I prophesied as he commanded me, and the breath came into them, and they lived, and stood on their feet, a vast multitude.

¹¹ Then he said to me, “Mortal, these bones are the whole house of Israel. They say, ‘Our bones are dried up, and our hope is lost; we are cut off completely.’ ¹² Therefore prophesy, and say to them, Thus says the Lord GOD: I am going to open your graves, and bring you up from your graves, O my people; and I will bring you back to the land of Israel. ¹³ And you shall know that I am the LORD, when I open your graves, and bring you up from your graves, O my people. ¹⁴ I will put my spirit within you, and you shall live, and I will place you on your own soil; then you shall know that I, the LORD, have spoken and will act, says the LORD.”

SCRIPTURE (Cheri Oakley)

Romans 8:22-27

²² We know that the whole creation has been groaning in labor pains until now; ²³ and not only the creation, but we ourselves, who have the first fruits of the Spirit, groan inwardly while we wait for adoption, the redemption of our bodies. ²⁴ For in hope we were saved. Now hope that is seen is not hope. For who hopes for what is seen? ²⁵ But if we hope for what we do not see, we wait for it with patience.

²⁶ Likewise the Spirit helps us in our weakness; for we do not know how to pray as we ought, but that very Spirit intercedes with sighs too deep for words. ²⁷ And God, who searches the heart, knows what is the mind of the Spirit, because the Spirit intercedes for the saints according to the will of God.

ANTHEM *Spirit of Comfort, Spirit of Hope*

Words by Douglas Nolan

Music by David Angerman and Douglas Nolan

Lord, You are God, in the tempest and the gale.
Lord, You alone are God and Your mercies never fail.
For Your love is everlasting And Your peace can calm our fears,
Lord, Your grace is like an ark sailing through a sea of tears.

Spirit Holy, come and fill this house with grace.
Spirit, Worthy, we are one in Your embrace.
Spirit, come inhabit all our praise.
As we worship and we pray, help us Lord, to find our way.
Spirit, come renew our hearts to day.

Spirit, Holy, You are faithful, You are true.
Jesus, Worthy, all our joy begins with You.
Spirit, come empower all we do.
Make this church a welcome place
filled with mercy, love and grace.
Spirit, come refresh our faith today.

Come, Spirit, shower us with promise and with love.
Restore our lives, refresh our faith.
Stretch out Your rainbow of assurance before us.

Descend with power. Descend with power.
Descend with power on this place.

Spirit, Holy, come and fill this house with grace.
Spirit, Worthy, we are one in Your embrace.
Spirit, come inhabit all our praise.
Breathe in us a mighty wind;
help this church to live again.

Spirit, come restore our hope today.
Spirit come restore our hope.
Spirit, come refresh our faith.
Spirit come renew our hearts today.

SCRIPTURE (Cheri Oakley)

John 15:26-27, 16:4b-15

²⁶ “When the Advocate comes, whom I will send to you from the Father, the Spirit of truth who comes from the Father, he will testify on my behalf. ²⁷ You also are to testify because you have been with me from the beginning.

^{4b} “I did not say these things to you from the beginning, because I was with you. ⁵ But now I am going to him who sent me; yet none of you asks me, ‘Where are you going?’ ⁶ But because I have said these things to you, sorrow has filled your hearts. ⁷ Nevertheless I tell you the truth: it is to your advantage that I go away, for if I do not go away, the Advocate will not come to you; but if I go, I will send him to you. ⁸ And when he comes, he will prove the world wrong about sin and righteousness and judgment: ⁹ about sin, because they do not believe in me; ¹⁰ about righteousness, because I am going to the Father and you will see me no longer; ¹¹ about judgment, because the ruler of this world has been condemned.

¹² “I still have many things to say to you, but you cannot bear them now. ¹³ When the Spirit of truth comes, he will guide you into all the truth; for he will not speak on his own, but will speak whatever he hears, and he will declare to you the things that are to come. ¹⁴ He will glorify me, because he will take what is mine and declare it to you. ¹⁵ All that the Father has is mine. For this reason I said that he will take what is mine and declare it to you.

SERMON (Pastor John)

INTERLUDE *Allein Gott in der Höh sei Her*
Bob Oehme, organ

Friedrich Wilhelm Zachau

BLESSING (Pastor John)

The Holy Spirit has come to inhabit this world
with freedom, truth, and understanding.
You are not alone.
May God keep you and make your prayers bear fruit.

POSTLUDE *Fantasia on Duke Street*
Bob Oehme, organ

David Paxton

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