

**United Church of Christ, First Congregational  
Norwich, New York  
May 30, 2021**

**PRELUDE** *Herr Jesu Christ dich zu uns wend'*  
Bob Oehme, organ

J. S. Bach

**WELCOME** (Pastor John)

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

Holy God, source of all goodness, you gave your Son for the life of the world  
And sent your Spirit that your 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.

**ANNOUNCEMENTS** (Linda Oehme)

**CALL TO WORSHIP** (Bob Oehme)

Blessed be God, Eternal Majesty, 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, be made whole,  
And dwell more deeply in love divine. Amen.

**HYMN** *Holy, Holy, Holy* (#277)

Reginald Hebe, 1826

Tune: NICAEA by John B. Dykes, 1861

Descant by David McKinley Williams, 1948

**PRAYER OF CONFESSION**

Holy God, we know that you are always there to lead us,  
yet we somehow lose our way and fall back into fear.  
We confess that we have stumbled,  
and we recognize our need for you to lift us up  
and help us start again.  
Forgive us our failings, restore us to strength,  
and reconcile us with you, ourselves, and each other,  
through the power of Christ and the gift of your Spirit. Amen.

**DECLARATION OF FORGIVENESS**

Sisters and brothers, hear the good news:  
We did not receive the spirit of slavery, but rather  
the spirit of adoption.  
Your guilt has departed; your sin is blotted out,  
for you are God's beloved children—forgiven, loved, and free.  
May God's peace be with you.

**And also with you.**

**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 (Rita Giangarra)

Isaiah 6:1-8

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. <sup>2</sup> 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. <sup>3</sup> And one called to another and said:

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

<sup>4</sup> The pivots on the thresholds shook at the voices of those who called, and the house filled with smoke. <sup>5</sup> 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!”

<sup>6</sup> Then one of the seraphs flew to me, holding a live coal that had been taken from the altar with a pair of tongs. <sup>7</sup> 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.” <sup>8</sup> 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*

Words and music by Dan Schutte (1981)  
adapted 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 (Bob Oehme)

John 3:1-17

Now there was a Pharisee named Nicodemus, a leader of the Jews. <sup>2</sup> 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." <sup>3</sup> Jesus answered him, "Very truly, I tell you, no one can see the kingdom of God without being born from above." <sup>4</sup> 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?" <sup>5</sup> Jesus answered, "Very truly, I tell you, no one can enter the kingdom of God without being born of water and Spirit. <sup>6</sup> What is born of the flesh is flesh, and what is born of the Spirit is spirit. <sup>7</sup> Do not be astonished that I said to you, 'You must be born from above.' <sup>8</sup> 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." <sup>9</sup> Nicodemus said to him, "How can these things be?" <sup>10</sup> Jesus answered him, "Are you a teacher of Israel, and yet you do not understand these things?"

<sup>11</sup> "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. <sup>12</sup> If I have told you about earthly things and you do not believe, how can you believe if I tell you about heavenly things? <sup>13</sup> No one has ascended into heaven except the one who descended from heaven, the Son of Man. <sup>14</sup> And just as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, so must the Son of Man be lifted up, <sup>15</sup> that whoever believes in him may have eternal life.

<sup>16</sup> "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.

<sup>17</sup> "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 (Pastor John)

**INTERLUDE** *Jesus Lover of My Soul*  
Bob Oehme, organ

by Simeon B. Marsh  
Tune: MARTYN

## PRAYERS OF INTERCESSION (Pastor John)

Let us offer our prayers, crying, Abba! Father!  
Knowing that it is God's Spirit bearing witness with our spirit,  
that we are children and heirs of God.

Eternal God, we pray for the world,  
that through the reconciling love of Christ  
our destructive and violent ways may cease,  
as you bless your human family with peace.

We pray for the mission of your church,  
that empowered by your Spirit  
we may proclaim the good news of the age  
in the world you so dearly love.

We pray for all who suffer,  
that together with Christ in his suffering  
we may find healing as he did,  
as he was raised and exalted in you.

We pray for your creation,  
that as it groans for its redemption  
we may care for its well-being  
through the power of your life-giving Spirit.

We remember before you those who have died  
and pray for those who will die today,  
that through your glorious redemption that ends all suffering  
they may rest with you eternally.

Through Christ, with Christ,  
in the unity of the Holy Spirit,  
we praise you, O God,  
now and forever. Amen.

**BLESSING** (Pastor John)

May the Lord give strength to the people.

May the Lord bless the people with peace!

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

**POSTLUDE** *Immortal, Invisible*

Bob Oehme, organ

Edward Broughton

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