

**United Church of Christ, First Congregational  
Norwich, New York  
August 15, 2021**

**PRELUDE**    *O Master Let Me Walk With Thee*  
Handbell Choir

Barbara B. Kinyon

**WELCOME** (Pastor John)

**PRAYER OF THE DAY** (Elizabeth Barber-Breese)

Almighty God, unto whom all hearts are open, all desires known, and from whom no secrets are hid: cleanse the thoughts of our hearts by the inspiration of your Holy Spirit, that we may perfectly love you and worthily magnify your holy name; through Christ our Sovereign. Amen.

**ANNOUNCEMENTS** (Linda Oehme)

**CALL TO WORSHIP** (Judy Smith)

ONE: This is the day that God has made;

**ALL: let us rejoice and be glad in it.**

ONE: O Come, let us worship with glad and open hearts;

**ALL: let us give thanks and praise to God, our Maker.**

**HYMN**    *Dear God Embracing Humankind* (#502)

Words by John Greenleaf Whittier, 1872  
Tune: REST by Frederick C. Maker, 1887

Dear God, embracing humankind,  
forgive our foolish ways;  
re clothe us in our rightful mind,  
in purer lives your service find,  
in deeper reverence, praise.

In simple trust like theirs who heard,  
beside the Syrian sea,  
The gracious calling of your word,  
let us, like them, by spirit stirred,  
rise up and followers be.

O sabbath rest by Galilee!  
O calm of hills above!  
There Jesus met you prayerfully:  
The silence of eternity,  
interpreted by love.

Drop your still dews of quietness,  
Till all our strivings cease;  
Take from our souls the strain and stress,  
And let our ordered lives confess  
the beauty of your peace.

Breathe through the pulses of desire  
your coolness and your balm;  
Let sense be numb, let flesh retire;  
Speak through the earthquake, wind and fire,  
O still, small voice of calm.

**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.**

**AFFIRMING OUR FAITH** (Jason Handy and Brad Morrison)  
***United Church of Christ Statement of Faith in the form of a doxology***

ONE: We believe in you, O God, Eternal Spirit,

**ALL: God of our Savior Jesus Christ and our God, and to your deeds we testify:**

ONE: You call the worlds into being,

**ALL: create persons in your own image, and set before each one the ways of life and death.**

ONE: You seek in holy love to save all people from aimlessness and sin.

**ALL: You judge people and nations by your righteous will declared through prophets and apostles.**

ONE: In Jesus Christ, the man of Nazareth, our crucified and risen Savior, you have come to us and shared our common lot,

**ALL: conquering sin and death and reconciling the world to yourself.**

ONE: You bestow upon us your Holy Spirit,

**ALL: creating and renewing the church of Jesus Christ, binding in covenant faithful people of all ages, tongues, and races.**

ONE: You call us into your church to accept the cost and joy of discipleship, to be your servants in the service of others,

**ALL: to proclaim the gospel to all the world and resist the powers of evil, to share in Christ's baptism and eat at his table, to join him in his passion and victory.**

ONE: You promise to all who trust you forgiveness of sins and fullness of grace,

**ALL: courage in the struggle for justice and peace, your presence in trial and rejoicing, and eternal life in your realm which has no end.**

ONE: Blessing and honor, glory and power be unto you.

**ALL: Amen.**

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

**SCRIPTURE** (Elizabeth Barber-Breese)

1 Kings 2:10-12; 3:3 -14

<sup>10</sup> Then David slept with his ancestors, and was buried in the city of David. <sup>11</sup> The time that David reigned over Israel was forty years; he reigned seven years in Hebron, and thirty-three years in Jerusalem. <sup>12</sup> So Solomon sat on the throne of his father David; and his kingdom was firmly established.

<sup>3</sup> Solomon loved the LORD, walking in the statutes of his father David; only, he sacrificed and offered incense at the high places. <sup>4</sup> The king went to Gibeon to sacrifice there, for that was the principal high place; Solomon used to offer a thousand burnt offerings on that altar. <sup>5</sup> At Gibeon the LORD appeared to Solomon in a dream by night; and God said, "Ask what I should give you." <sup>6</sup> And Solomon said, "You have shown great and steadfast love to your servant my father David, because he walked before you in faithfulness, in righteousness, and in uprightness of heart toward you; and you have kept for him this great and steadfast love, and have given him a son to sit on his throne today. <sup>7</sup> And now, O LORD my God, you have made your servant king in place of my father David, although I am only a little child; I do not know how to go out or come in. <sup>8</sup> And your servant is in the midst of the people whom you have chosen, a great people, so numerous they cannot be numbered or counted. <sup>9</sup> Give your servant therefore an understanding mind to govern your people, able to discern between good and evil; for who can govern this your great people?"

<sup>10</sup> It pleased the Lord that Solomon had asked this. <sup>11</sup> God said to him, "Because you have asked this, and have not asked for yourself long life or riches, or for the life of your enemies, but have asked for yourself understanding to discern what is right, <sup>12</sup> I now do according to your word. Indeed I give you a wise and discerning mind; no one like you has been before you and no one like you shall arise after you. <sup>13</sup> I give you also what you have not asked, both riches and honor all your life; no other king shall compare with you. <sup>14</sup> If you will walk in my ways, keeping my statutes and my commandments, as your father David walked, then I will lengthen your life."

**ANTHEM** *Faithfulness*

Words by Thomas O. Chisholm  
Music by Joel Raney

Great is thy faithfulness, O God my Father,  
there is no shadow of turning with thee,  
thou changest not, thy compassions they fail not;  
as thou has been thou forever will be.

Summer and winter and spring time and  
harvest, sun, moon and stars in their courses above

join with all nature, in manifold witness  
to Thy great faithfulness, mercy and love.

Great is thy faithfulness! Great is thy faithfulness!  
Morning by morning new mercies I see.  
All I have needed thy had hath provided;  
great is thy faithfulness, Lord unto me!

Great is thy faithfulness! Great is thy faithfulness!  
Pardon for sin and a peace that endureth,  
thine own dear presence to cheer and to guide;  
strength for today and bright hope for tomorrow,  
blessings all mine, with ten thousand beside!

Great is thy faithfulness!  
Great is thy faithfulness!  
Morning by morning new mercies I see;  
all I have needed thy hand hath provided;  
Great is thy faithfulness, great is thy faithfulness,  
great is thy faithfulness, Lord, unto me!

**SCRIPTURE** (Judy Smith)  
John 6: 51 – 58

<sup>51</sup> I am the living bread that came down from heaven. Whoever eats of this bread will live forever; and the bread that I will give for the life of the world is my flesh.”

<sup>52</sup> The Jews then disputed among themselves, saying, “How can this man give us his flesh to eat?” <sup>53</sup> So Jesus said to them, “Very truly, I tell you, unless you eat the flesh of the Son of Man and drink his blood, you have no life in you. <sup>54</sup> Those who eat my flesh and drink my blood have eternal life, and I will raise them up on the last day; <sup>55</sup> for my flesh is true food and my blood is true drink. <sup>56</sup> Those who eat my flesh and drink my blood abide in me, and I in them. <sup>57</sup> Just as the living Father sent me, and I live because of the Father, so whoever eats me will live because of me. <sup>58</sup> This is the bread that came down from heaven, not like that which your ancestors ate, and they died. But the one who eats this bread will live forever.”

**SERMON** (Pastor John)

**INTERLUDE** *O God Our Help in Ages Past* (#25 NCH)  
Jason Handy, organ

Tune: ST. ANNE  
by William Croft, 1708

**A LITANY OF INTERCESSION** (NCH #878) (Pastor John)

ONE: Gracious God, who loves all and forgets none, we bring to you our prayers for all your children. For all whom we love, watch over, and care for;

**ALL: Hear us, O God.**

ONE: For all prisoners and captives, and all who suffer from oppression, that you will manifest your mercy toward them, and make all hearts as merciful as your own.

**ALL: Hear us, O God.**

ONE: For all who bear the cross of suffering, the sick in body or mind;

**ALL: Hear us, O God.**

ONE: For all those who are troubled by the sin or suffering of those they love;

**ALL: Hear us, O God.**

ONE: For all who are absorbed in their own grief, that they may be raised to share the sorrows of others, and know the saving grace of the cross;

**ALL: Hear us, O God.**

ONE: For all perplexed by the deeper questions of life and overshadowed with doubt, that your light may guide them;

**ALL: Hear us, O God.**

ONE: For all who are tried by temptations or weakness, that your mercy maybe their strength.

**ALL: Hear us, O God.**

ONE: For all who are lonely and sad in the mist of others' joy, that they may know you as their friend and comforter;

**ALL: Hear us, O God.**

ONE: For the infirm and aged and for all who are dying, that they may find their strength in you and light at the evening time;

**ALL: Hear us, O God.**

ONE: For all forgotten by us, but dear to you;

**ALL: Hear us, O God.**

ONE: O compassionate God, hear our prayers, answer them according to your will, and make us channels of your infinite grace, through Jesus Christ we pray.

**ALL: Amen.**

**BLESSING** (Pastor John)

May the steadfast love of God give you hope,  
the redeeming power of Christ give you courage,  
the abiding presence of Spirit give you strength,  
as you serve the will of God  
this day and every day.

**POSTLUDE** *Great God of Might and Glory*  
Jason Handy, piano

by David Paxton

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