

United Church of Christ, First Congregational
Norwich, New York
November 21, 2021 – In Person and Live Stream, 10:00a.m.
Rev. John Steitz

PREPARING TO WORSHIP GOD

CHIMING OF THE HOUR

PRELUDE *Simple Gifts,*

Shaker Hymn
arr. James C. Kasen

[PAUSE]

WELCOME (Pastor John)

ANNOUNCEMENTS (Liturgist)

MISSION MOMENT (Lorri Race, Helping Hands)

GATHERING

CALL TO WORSHIP (Liturgist)

LITURGIST: Please join me in the Call to Worship.

ONE: Grace to you and peace from the one who is
and who was and who is to come,

**ALL: and from Jesus Christ, the faithful witness, the
firstborn of the dead, and the ruler of the kings of
the earth.**

ONE: Holy, holy, holy is the Lord of hosts.

ALL: The whole earth is full of God's glory.

[PAUSE]

INVOCATION (Pastor John)

Sovereign God,
come to us now in silent, holy power.
Still our distracted minds, our bruised hearts,
our longing bodies. Then speak the power of
Jesus' name in such a way that we might hear
it, in such a way that we might bear it into the
world— as a people who seek not to preserve
what we know but to make palpable who you
are— for we move and pray by the gift of your
breath within us. **Amen.**

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

Reginald Herber, 1826; alt
Tune: NICAEA 11.12.12.10
John B. Dykes, 1861
Descant, David McK. Williams, 1948

TIME OF SHARING

CHILDREN'S MOMENT (Linda Oehme)

The Lord's Prayer

[PAUSE]

BLESSING OF PEACE (Pastor John)

ONE: May the Peace of Jesus Christ be with you.

ALL: And also with you.

OFFERTORY PLEDGE (Pastor John)

ONE: We love God with all our heart, soul, mind, and strength.

ALL: We pledge our whole selves to God.

ONE: We love our neighbors as ourselves.

ALL: We pledge to do justice as Christ's ambassadors of reconciliation.

ONE: We love one another as Jesus loves us.

ALL: We pledge to be and become Christ's Beloved Community in our life together.

ONE: We make disciples by teaching and modeling how to follow Jesus' Way of Love.

ALL: We pledge to be Jesus' disciples sharing Jesus' Way of Love in the way we live our lives and practice our faith.

*We will not be passing the offering plates.
Instead, they are located at both doors for your
convenience as you enter or exit the Nave.*

Installation of the Search Committee

Pastor: Let us remember the model of leadership provided by our Lord, who came not to be served, but to serve, and who said to his disciples, "Whoever would be great among you must be your servant, and whoever would be first among you must be slave of all."

Search Committee: In Christ's name and by his grace we accept our mission of witness and service to all people.

Pastor: Let us remember the unity that God has given us: one body, one spirit, one hope of our calling; one Lord, one faith, one baptism; one God and Creator of all, over all, through all, and in all.

SC: We rejoice in God, maker of heaven and earth, and in the covenant of love which binds us to God and to one another.

Pastor: Let us remember the church we are chosen to serve using the gifts with which we are equipped "for the work of ministry, for building up the body of Christ.

SC: We are joined together in discipleship and in obedience to Christ.

Pastor: Let us remember the commission the head of the church gave his followers to go into all the world witnessing, making disciples, baptizing, teaching,

and serving, and realize that charge is intended for those who would lead the church.

SC: In the bonds of Christian faith we yield ourselves to God that we may serve the One whose Holy Community has no end.

Pastor: Do you now gladly accept the responsibilities of the Search Committee to which you have been appointed, and do you promise to fulfill its duties?

SC: I do, with God's Help

Pastor: Let us pray for those who are being installed today and for our church as we seek the Lord's guidance during this special time.

Almighty God, you alone are the great Shepherd of the sheep, and we turn to you to lead and guide us in all things. Our trust and our hope is in you.

ALL: You are the way, the truth and the life.

Pastor: As you have raised up faithful servants of your holy word to tend your flock in each time and place, send us now, we pray, a faithful shepherd to lead our flock.

ALL: Send us a shepherd, O Lord.

Pastor: Send us a shepherd of goodness and grace, of strength and faith, of righteousness, and collaboration in ministry

ALL Send us a shepherd, O Lord.

Pastor: Send us a shepherd to comfort and care for us, to preach your word, to teach and model discipleship , to pray with us, to commune, to visit the sick and lay to rest, to guide us in being and becoming an inclusive church of Christ's love, and to help us enact our core values as a United Church of Christ.

ALL: Send us a shepherd, O Lord.

Pastor: Give us a holy patience in this time of our seeking, a patience that trusts in you for our present care, knowing that you will bring our good work to fulfillment in your time.

ALL: O Lord, hear our prayer.

Pastor: Keep us faithful in mission, regular in worship, responsible in stewardship, mindful of the needy, and diligent in prayer.

ALL: O Lord, hear our prayer.

Pastor: Fill us all with your Holy Spirit and magnify our gifts of discernment, that we might follow your will and leading into a future yet unknown.

ALL: O Lord, hear our prayer.

Pastor: Bless those who are especially called to serve on the Search Committee. Give them the gifts they need to see and find the pastor of your own nurturing, the shepherd of your own choosing, that we might be fed by your word and sacraments and grow in faith and love and ministry.

ALL: O Lord, hear our prayer.

P. All these things we ask, O God, with whatever else we need, in the name of the Good Shepherd, Jesus Christ our Lord.

ALL: Amen

Pastor: Let us pray. We thank you, God, for these who have accepted special servant roles to discern in God's call for the next settled pastor at The United Church of Christ, Norwich. We see gifts in them that can be put to good use in building up the body of Christ and in the ministry of reconciliation. Preserve the

resolve each of these servants has at this moment. We pray in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, the head of the body of which we are members. Amen.

I declare that you now are installed as members of the Search Committee at the United Church of Christ, Norwich. May the Lord provide grace for the service you have resolved to perform.

[PAUSE]

WE LISTEN FOR GOD'S WORD

SCRIPTURE READING Psalm 146

LITURGIST: Hear now this reading from Psalm 146

Praise for God's Help

1 Praise the Lord! Praise the Lord, O my soul!

2 I will praise the Lord as long as I live;

I will sing praises to my God all my life long.

3 Do not put your trust in princes,

in mortals, in whom there is no help.

4 When their breath departs, they return to the earth;

on that very day their plans perish.

5 Happy are those whose help is the God of Jacob,

whose hope is in the Lord their God,

6 who made heaven and earth,

the sea, and all that is in them;

who keeps faith forever;

7 who executes justice for the oppressed;

who gives food to the hungry.

The Lord sets the prisoners free;

8 the Lord opens the eyes of the blind.

The Lord lifts up those who are bowed down;

the Lord loves the righteous.

9 The Lord watches over the strangers;

he upholds the orphan and the widow,

but the way of the wicked he brings to ruin.

10 The Lord will reign forever,

your God, O Zion, for all generations.
Praise the Lord!

SCRIPTURE READING John 18:33-37

LITURGIST: This reading is from the Gospel according to John, Chapter 18, verses 33 through 37.

33 Then Pilate entered the headquarters[a] again, summoned Jesus, and asked him, “Are you the King of the Jews?” 34 Jesus answered, “Do you ask this on your own, or did others tell you about me?” 35 Pilate replied, “I am not a Jew, am I? Your own nation and the chief priests have handed you over to me. What have you done?” 36 Jesus answered, “My kingdom is not from this world. If my kingdom were from this world, my followers would be fighting to keep me from being handed over to the Jews. But as it is, my kingdom is not from here.” 37 Pilate asked him, “So you are a king?” Jesus answered, “You say that I am a king. For this I was born, and for this I came into the world, to testify to the truth. Everyone who belongs to the truth listens to my voice.”

SPECIAL MUSIC: (LIVE Bells) *“Come, Ye Thankful People, Come”*
by George J. Elvey
arranged by Barbara Baltzer Kinyon

[PAUSE]

SERMON (Pastor John)

RESPONDING TO GOD’S WORD

INTERLUDE

[PAUSE]

AFFIRMING OUR FAITH

United Church of Christ Statement of Faith in the form of a doxology

LITURGIST: Please join me in the United Church of Christ Statement of Faith as a doxology found in the bulletin.

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.

[PAUSE]

SHARING OF JOYS/CONCERNS (Pastor John)

(Joys and prayers requests should be written on the prayer slips as you enter the Nave prior to the start of worship.)

PASTORAL PRAYER (Pastor John)

COMMISSION AND BLESSING

CLOSING HYMN *Now Thank We All Our God (#419)*

Martin Rinkart, 1647; transl. Catherine Winkworth, 1858; alt

Tune: NUN DANKET 6.7.6.7.6.6.6.6

[PAUSE]

BLESSING (pastor John)

May the Lord God who is, and who was,
and who is to come, the Almighty, be
your strength, your hope, and your joy,
this day and forevermore. Amen

POSTLUDE

Please remain seated until the usher dismisses you.

Permission to reprint, podcast, and / or stream the music in this service obtained from ONE LICENSE with license #735996-A. All rights reserved.

Prayers reprinted by permission of Westminster John Knox Press from *Feasting on the Word Worship Companion* © 2015

Liturgist: Linda Oehme
Greeter: Ericka Tyler
Usher: Pete Williams
Flowers: Jane Prime

Questions for Reflection

Jesus said that his kingdom is not of this world and that belonging to his way of life means a constant attentiveness to his voice. How are you (individually and as a community) embodying the countercultural reign of God?

What is a further step that you are being called to take? How might you make more time to listen for his voice?

Household Prayer: Morning

Gracious God,
Help me to receive this day as a gift:
in the tasks for which I do not feel prepared,
in the needs I am not strong enough to meet.
In my caution and in my confidence
teach me to listen to your voice and to watch for your provision.
Grant me the gift of life in community,
that I might witness your desire flowing through others,
that I might be joined to greater service,
for I pray in the name of Jesus, whose every breath was praise. Amen.

Household Prayer: Evening

Lord of life,
as I recollect this day, help me to recognize your witness
in truth that challenged convenience, in decisions that stretched my heart,
in forgiveness freely offered. Teach me to trust the sound of your voice
and to follow where you lead,
for I would serve in the shelter of your reign. Amen