

The First Congregational Church in Worcester

Sunday, January 19, 2025

10:00A.M.

Second Sunday after Epiphany

The service of worship begins with the music of the prelude. Through its power and brilliance, may you feel the majesty and glory of God; in its quietness, God's peace.

Prelude

Finale ~ Mendelssohn

Ringing of the Chimes

*Call to Worship

With steadfast love, God calls our names.

Come to find refuge in the shelter of God's ways.

We long to be recognized and affirmed.

We are eager for a place of shelter and security.

Feast on the abundance of God's house.

Come to drink deeply from the fountain of life.

We are ready to hear the Word of God.

We want to be guided by eternal truth.

Reach out to claim the gifts God pours out on us.

The Spirit is eager to inspire and empower each one.

When God calls us, we cannot remain silent.

When Christ is real to us, we accept our discipleship.

*Opening Hymn ~ #247

Holy God, We Praise Thy Name

Holy God, we praise thy name! Lord of all, we bow before thee!

All on Earth thy sceptre claim, all in Heav'n above adore thee;

Infinite thy vast domain, everlasting is thy reign.

Hark! the loud celestial hymn, angel choirs above are raising!

Cherubim and seraphim, in unceasing chorus praising,

Fill the heav'ns with sweet accord; holy, holy, holy, Lord!

Lo! the apostolic train join thy sacred name to hallow!

Prophets swell the loud refrain, and the white-robed martyrs follow,

And from morn to set of sun, through the Church the song goes on.

4. Holy Father, holy Son, Holy Spirit, Three we name thee,

Though in essence only one, undivided God we claim thee;

And adoring bend the knee, while we own the mystery.

*Invocation

How awesome it is that you care for us, God of all life! Your delight in us brings out our best. When you rejoice in us, we come to believe in our capacity for goodness. When your light and salvation dawn in our lives, we want to share the joy. Remind us now of the gifts you so freely bestow. Help

us to recognize them in ourselves and in one another, that we may use them to serve people in need and give glory to your name. Amen.

Call to Transformation

Despite our best intentions, there is much in life that separates us from God. We find ourselves living for things and being ruled by our appetites. Our possessions become for us dumb idols that keep us from taking risks and making sacrifices of faithfulness. Join me in confessing our sin.

Prayer of Transformation

God of the heathen and the righteous, we confess that we have moved away from our commitment to Christ. We have denied your gifts, ignored your inspiration, and wandered from your healing presence. Yet we cannot escape your claim on us, for wherever we go, you are there. How precious is your steadfast love that saves us from our selfish desires to live for higher values! Strengthen us to do as you tell us, as Christ demonstrated among us. Amen.

Prayer of Grace

God does not treat us as heathens, forsaken and desolate. We are welcomed with rejoicing, enfolded by love, celebrated as persons of beauty in whose salvation God delights. Let your hearts be lifted up. We are not bound to our old ways but are freed for a new identity. God's benevolent gifts are apportioned to each of us in abundance.

Sharing of Announcements, Celebrations and Concerns

Prayer of the Day

The Lord's Prayer

Our Father, who art in heaven, hallowed be thy Name. Thy Kingdom come. Thy will be done on earth, as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread. And forgive us our trespasses, as we forgive those who trespass against us. And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil. For thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, forever. Amen.

Prayer Response

Sursum Corda

Come, pray in me the prayer I need this day;
help me to see your purpose and your will
where I have failed, what I have done amiss;
held in forgiving love, let me be still

New Testament Reading

Revelation 21:1-6

Gospel Reading

Matthew 25:31-45

Meditation

"I'm So Glad that You are Here"

*Hymn ~ Insert

They'll Know We Are Christians

We are one in the Spirit, we are one in the Lord;
we are one in the Spirit, we are one in the Lord;
And we pray that all unity will one day be restored.
And they'll know we are Christians by our love, by our love,
yes, they'll know we are Christians by our love.

We will walk with each other, we will walk hand in hand;
We will walk with each other, we will walk hand in hand;
And together we'll spread the news that God is in our land.
And they'll know we are Christians by our love, by our love,
yes, they'll know we are Christians by our love.

We Will work with each other, we will work side by side;
We will work with each other, we will work side by side;
And we'll guard each man's dignity and save each man's pride.
And they'll know we are Christians by our love, by our love,
yes, they'll know we are Christians by our love.

All praise to the Father, from whom all things come;
And all praise to Christ Jesus, His only Son.
And all praise to the Spirit who makes us one.
And they'll know we are Christians by our love, by our love,
yes, they'll know we are Christians by our love.

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Invitation to Generosity

What will we give in gratitude for God's forgiveness and healing grace? Who can repay the many gifts we have received with the miracle of life? Let us rejoice in the mission God entrusts to us.

Offertory

How Firm a Foundation ~ arr. Dixon

***Doxology**

Old 100th

Praise God, from whom all blessings flow; Praise Him, all creatures here below;
Praise Him above, ye heavenly host; Praise Father, Son, and Holy Ghost. Amen

***Prayer of Dedication**

God of our baptism, whose Holy Spirit fires our imagination and fills our lives with purpose, we rejoice to commit ourselves anew with our gifts. May what we share strengthen your children spiritually, inspiring each person to invest fully in the work you set before us. The varieties of gifts you entrust to us can be realized only if they are used. Thank you for granting us this joy. Amen.

***Sending Hymn ~ Insert**

Great is Thy Faithfulness

Great is thy faithfulness, O God, Creator; there is no shadow of turning with thee.
Thou changest not, thy compassions, they fail not; as thou hast been, thou forever wilt be.
Great is thy faithfulness, great is thy faithfulness, morning by morning new mercies I see.
All I have needed thy hand hast provided; great is thy faithfulness, Lord unto me.

Summer and winter and springtime 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 hand hast provided; great is thy faithfulness, Lord unto me.

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 and ten thousand beside.
Great is thy faithfulness, great is thy faithfulness, morning by morning new mercies I see.
All I have needed thy hand hast provided; great is thy faithfulness, Lord unto me.

***Commission & Blessing**

Depart to serve, strengthened by the Holy Spirit. Use the wisdom, faith, and knowledge you received.

We cannot rest in God's care or keep silent. The love of God must be lived and shared.

Go forth with praise on your lips.

The steadfast love of God will light your paths.

We want to offer light and hope to others.

Daily, we will seek inspiration for this joyous task.

Reach out as listening, caring, healing people.

Your love will become a miracle for someone in need.

We pray that God will keep us open to further learning. May our humble witness attract others to Christ.

Amen. **Amen.**

***Benediction Response**

Sicilian Mariners

Lord, dismiss us with your blessing; fill our hearts with joy and peace;

let us each your love possessing, triumph in redeeming grace.

O direct us and protect us, traveling through this wilderness.

Ringling of the Chimes

***Postlude**

God of Grace ~ Manz

* - Please stand in body or spirit

Please join us at Coffee Hour hosted by Marianne Bourgault, in the parlor immediately following the service.

We extend a warm welcome Rev. Dr. Robert (Bobby) Girard as our worship leader this morning.