

UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST
Health and Service Sunday
The Fourth Sunday after Epiphany
January 30, 2022

Second Congregational Church in Wilton,
United Church of Christ

**Welcome to the worship of God at the
Second Congregational Church in Wilton,
United Church of Christ.**

We are glad you are here today!

***Bold print means congregational participation.
An asterisk (*) indicates to please stand, if you are able.***

GATHERING FOR THE WORD

WORDS OF WELCOME AND ANNOUNCEMENTS

GREETING

Today, we gather with the whole United Church of Christ in observing Health and Human Service Sunday. We bear witness to the faithful heritage the UCC has in co-creating spaces of wholeness with communities across the country and around the world. The UCC and its predecessor denominations courageously founded schools, hospitals, and orphanages during times of pandemic, war, and social upheaval. Now, there are more than 400 UCC affiliated health care centers, hospitals, affordable housing and retirement communities, transitional housing for those experiencing homelessness or domestic violence, and service centers for children, youth, families, and those with developmental disabilities. These ministries continue to show up in the most challenging circumstances—and do so with the fervor of healing and justice. It is thus a day to celebrate how the life of the church is vibrant beyond our church walls and outreach ministries.

So, let us give thanks for this collective work of the Spirit.
Let us uplift God's healers and equity weavers, visionaries of freedom, and frontline responders—that together, we may create a just, caring, and compassionate world. Amen.

PRELUDE

***CALL TO WORSHIP**

- One: O God of Change and Stillness, of Wounds and Repair,
All: **in you we find our sense of balance—a place to land and to breathe.**
- One: May we grow our attention towards that which gives life,
All: **and cultivate connections of community and care.**
- One: May grace touch all that changes us,
All: **and all that we hold unfold with peace.**
- One: May we gather in this space claiming healing as our birthright,
All: **and bring with us the medicines of service and compassion.**
- One: On this Health and Human Service Sunday,
let us come together to transform ourselves to transform the world,
All: **and move like living water—ever adapting, ever faithful,
ever full of all that can be. Amen.**

OPENING MEDITATION AND INVOCATION

All: O God of Flesh and Bone, Your Word echoes deep within us
and turns our heartbeat into a song.
May we linger for a moment in this embodied blessing.

Let us pray:

I invite you to rub your hands together
and create some heat between them.
Bring to life the movement of our Creator,
the Spark of All Life, into your hands.

Feel the heat you just created.

Now place your hands on your chest.
Feel the rhythm of your heartbeat,
notice the warmth you brought to your heart space.

Take a deep breath to simply feel yourself alive in this moment.

Perhaps, imagine your heart within the heart of Christ.
Perhaps, envision your ancestors at your back,
how you have generations behind you.

Now once again, rub your hands together, and then open them up.
Feel the coolness of air caress them, the wind of the Spirit hover over them.

May this blessing take shape in you and all that you hold.
May you enter this time with an embodied awareness of God’s sacredness within you.
Amen.

A LITANY FOR COLLECTIVE CARE

One: O Great Flow of Life, who feels our inhale and exhale all in the same breath,
All: anchor us in your assurance.

One: May our exhaustion collapse into your arms,
All: to be held, to be lifted, to be known in our wholeness.

One: May we rest in the alignment of this moment,
All: in the abundance of you and our right to belong.

One: O Liberator of Loneliness, who cuts down privilege and recenters the margins,
you have shown us how
All: to be free is to be beloved.

One: Because there is strength in vulnerability and wisdom in intimacy,
All: to be free is to be beloved.

One: As white blood cells rally to a cut and mushrooms cleanse the forest ground,
All: to be free is to be beloved.

One: Like the midwife catching a baby and a chaplain sitting vigil with the dying,
All: to be free is to be beloved.

One: Because we are found in the web that lifts us,
not the bootstraps that bind us down,
All: to be free is to be beloved.

One: Where the City of God is irresistible and its sweetness of justice satisfies,
All: **to be free is to be beloved.**

One: Because resurrections never go unwitnessed and they heal brokenhearted,
All: **to be free is to be beloved.**

One: As species with needs and offerings, who give and receive alike,
All: **we are not meant to live this life alone.**

One: So, let us hold fast to our God in between us,
All: **to the collective of care alongside us today. Amen.**

CALL TO CONFESSION

Let us Confess together...

PRAYER OF CONFESSION

One: O God of Becoming, we claim ourselves as your beloved,
and name the messy reality of being human.

All: **In your presence, we do not shy away from our struggles, failings, or regrets.**

One: By your invitation, we come to you not in shame,
but with courage, seeking right relationship,

All: **with you, with ourselves, each other, and all of creation.**

One: Guide us in your ways of accountability,

All: **with remedies of repair and reconciliation.**

One: May our sense of self be vast enough for our faults and deep enough to let go,

All: **to make space to learn from our wrongdoing, without spiraling into self-hate.**

One: Spirit of Creation, teach us the grace of generative conflict,

All: **that we may be open to the tension underneath authentic connection.**

One: Help us to believe change is possible, in ourselves and others,

All: **so our healing can ripple outwards and our shared power can break forth anew.**

ASSURANCE OF PARDON

May we find comfort in knowing that we all connected,
that when one of us hurts we all hurt.

That our God is ever present, loving.

Forgiving and accepting.

*GLORIA PATRI TUNE: GREATOREX

Glory be to the Father, and to the Son,
and to the Holy Ghost;
as it was in the beginning, is now, and ever shall be,
world without end. Amen, Amen.

ENGAGING THE WORD

ANTHEM

READING FROM SCRIPTURE

Luke 4:21-30

Then he began to say to them, "Today this scripture has been fulfilled in your hearing." All spoke well of him and were amazed at the gracious words that came from his mouth. They said, "Is not this Joseph's son?" He said to them, "Doubtless you will quote to me this proverb, 'Doctor, cure yourself!' And you will say, 'Do here also in your hometown the things that we have heard you did at Capernaum.'" And he said, "Truly I tell you, no prophet is accepted in the prophet's hometown. But the truth is, there were many widows in Israel in the time of Elijah, when the heaven was shut up three years and six months, and there was a severe famine over all the land; yet Elijah was sent to none of them except to a widow at Zarephath in Sidon. There were also many lepers in Israel in the time of the prophet Elisha, and none of them was cleansed except Naaman the Syrian." When they heard this, all in the synagogue were filled with rage. They got up, drove him out of the town, and led him to the brow of the hill on which their town was built, so that they might hurl him off the cliff. But he passed through the midst of them and went on his way.

SERMON

"What A Home Coming"

*HYMN NO. 447

"Because He Lives"

PRAYERS OF THE PEOPLE

PASTORAL PRAYER, SILENT PRAYER

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

CALL TO THE OFFERING

In 1858, one of our UCC forebears, Pastor Louis Edward Nollau, appealed to his congregation, now known as St. Peter's United Church of Christ in St. Louis, for money to build a home to support young children orphaned by a great cholera epidemic. Later, one member chastised Nollau, insisting the church did not have enough funds for such an ambitious project. To this, the pastor replied. "No, ... But we have the children."

Today, Pastor Nollau's vision, Evangelical Children's Home, is more than 150 years old and has always evolved and adapted to meet the changing needs of children. Now referred to as "Every Child's Hope," ECH has more than 200 employees across Missouri, dedicated to preventing child abuse,

treating emotional trauma and mental health issues, and providing critical services to 1,400 youth and children annually – in our name, as members of the United Church of Christ. Pastor Nollau’s dream – and the dream of the generous people of St. Peter’s Church – lives on.

Today, as you present your offering, I invite you to do so believing that great things are possible for those who see great human need as a call to advance the love and compassion of the church of Jesus Christ. Let us be that kind of church, as our forebears have taught us.

***OFFERTORY ANTHEM**

***DOXOLOGY Tune: OLD HUNDREDTH**

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

***OFFERTORY PRAYER**

One: O God of loaves and fishes, of bread and of wine,
we bring before you our diversity of gifts,
All: **knowing that they will be multiplied for the benefit of many.**

One: O God of resurrection, who makes all things new,
accept our offering to both give and receive,
All: **trusting that there is abundance in togetherness,
and generosity in you. Amen.**

***HYMN NO. 345**

“Jesus Call us O’er The Tumult”

GOING WITH THE WORD

***BENEDICTION**

Beloveds, we have claimed our place in the ecosystem of the Spirit—alive, connected, and emergent with grace. Let us go forth from this fertile ground, ripening the wisdom we have found through justice, care, and compassion. And so, may the blessing of our Communal Creator replenish you today and always. **Amen.**

***POSTLUDE**

Announcements

If you need or want a visit by the pastor
please contact the church office 603-654-9045 and leave a message
or the pastor directly at 603-620-0235
(Messages are usually returned by the next business day)

Today we will be taking our Mission Possible Offering during the first Anthem.

On The Calendar

Deacon's Meeting, January 31, 7:00 PM via Zoom
Spring Play Rehearsals Begin February 6th at 4:-00 PM

PARTICIPATING IN TODAY'S SERVICE

Pastor Kerry Richardson (Interim Pastor)
Patricia Cauchon, Director of Music
Lori Dick, Liturgist

All the Congregation, Ministers to the World

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