

July 9, 2023

"ORDINARY" TIME

Greeting

Welcome Statement

(Printed on the bulletin insert)

Silence

...a time to breathe...

Prelude and Bringing in the Light

*** Call to Worship**

Adapted from Psalm 77

Leader: I cry aloud to God,
aloud to God, that he may hear me.

In the day of my trouble I seek the Lord;
in the night my hand is stretched out without wearying;

People: I will call to mind the deeds of the Lord;
I will remember your wonders of old.
I will meditate on all your works
and muse on your mighty deeds.

All: Your way, O God, is holy.
You are the God who works wonders;
you have displayed your might among the peoples.
With your strong arm you redeemed your people.

*** 1st Hymn** *Precious Lord, Take My Hand* (NCH #472)

• Morning Prayer (Unison)

Holy One, we confess our broken promises. We have failed to love our neighbor as ourselves. Sometimes we fail to even *see* our neighbors, near or far. By your healing Spirit refresh our hearts and minds this morning. Forgive us and make us whole. Heal us, our families, our neighborhoods, our country. Awaken us to the presence of the Prince of Peace and bring us into harmony with your dream for the renewing of our shattered world. We pray in hope because we pray in the name of our Redeemer, Jesus Christ. Amen

*** Assurance:**

The One who made you—who knows your face and remembers your name, has redeemed you and forgiven you and will *always* love you beyond all you can hope or imagine. This is the good news today for which we say:

Thanks be to God!

*** Sung Response**

*Breathe on me breath of God; fill me with life anew
That I may love the way you love, and do what you would do.*

Announcements

Offering Invitation

Offertory

- **Sung Response** *Praise God from whom all blessings flow...*
- **Gratitude Prayer (Unison)**

Generosity and grace, abundance and blessing, love without borders, beauty beyond description, kindness under everything. For all that is and was and ever will be we give you thanks. Amen.

Kid's Time

1st Scripture Reading

Matthew 25:31-40

2nd Scripture Reading

Ephesians 1:1-2; 15-23

Sermon

Invitation to the Table *This Is a Day of New Beginnings*

If you're hungry, or even just curious, please come and eat.

Prayers of the people and the Lord's Prayer

*** Closing Hymn** *This Is a Day of New Beginnings* (NCH #417)

*** Benediction**

Joshua 1:9

Be strong and courageous. Do not be afraid; do not be discouraged, for the Lord you God will be with you wherever you go.

Postlude

ANNOUNCEMENTS

Liturgists: Jamie Wittwer

Radio Sponsor: Jamie & Karen Wittwer in memory of Jamie's mother Margaret's birthday on July 11

If you would like to sponsor a radio broadcast call the church office at 608-643-8387 to check on available dates. Cost is now at \$90.00/week. Your support of this important ministry is much appreciated.

Address Changes—If your phone number, mailing or email address changes please send the new address to the church office so we can keep our records up to date.

The Communion table at this church is open to everybody—whether you believe, want to believe or can't believe as we do you are welcome to your share of Jesus' gift of bread and wine. Whoever you are, whatever brought you here, however you identify, whoever you love, whatever your circumstances, whether you are hungry or just curious, Jesus himself invites you to this table.

Questions? Concerns? Perplexed? Thirsty for some good coffee? Give a call and we'll find a table at a coffee shop where we can talk for a while.

Pastor Brad

Our Pride Coffee Sale continues. First Church and John Joseph Coffee are collaborating on a fund raising effort on behalf of community organizations creating safe spaces for LGBTQ+ youth. Check out the table in the foyer and buy a bag (or two).

Drink Good, Do Good.

From our Stock the Schools campaign—suggested donations for July: *Food items:* Individual packages of applesauce. *Personal items:* STURDY backpacks with working zippers. Please drop your donations off in the red tote outside the educational doors during office hours (Monday—Friday, 8am—Noon) or inside during Sunday worship. Thanks for your help.

Our Christian Fellowship group will be hosting a coffee and abbreviated pie social on Sunday July 23rd. We would be very grateful for any pies/slices or whipped toppings you would care to donate. If you have any questions please contact any Member of our Christian Fellowship group. Thank you!

First UCC Welcome Statement:

"...This is my commandment—that you love one another as I have loved you..."

John 15:12

First United Church of Christ in Sauk City is an Open and Affirming Congregation. Whoever you are, whatever brought you here, however you identify, whoever you love, whatever your circumstances, you are welcome here. We believe that everyone is precious in God's eyes and so, when we gather for worship and fellowship we share the Bread and Cup at Jesus' table with anyone who is hungry. We believe in second chances. We believe we all need each other. And we believe, with all our hearts, that God is with us and God is Love and Love always wins. And so we welcome friends, neighbors and strangers, the settled, the seeking and the curious—we welcome *you*, to worship and serve with us.

In the progress toward religious understanding, one does not go from answer to answer but from question to question. One's questions are answered, not by clear, definitive answers, but by more pertinent and more crucial questions."

Thomas Merton, Opening the Bible

First Scripture Reading:

Matthew 25:31-40

‘When the Son of Man comes in his glory, and all the angels with him, then he will sit on the throne of his glory. All the nations will be gathered before him, and he will separate people one from another as a shepherd separates the sheep from the goats, and he will put the sheep at his right hand and the goats at the left. Then the king will say to those at his right hand, “Come, you that are blessed by my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world; for I was hungry and you gave me food, I was thirsty and you gave me something to drink, I was a stranger and you welcomed me, I was naked and you gave me clothing, I was sick and you took care of me, I was in prison and you visited me.” Then the righteous will answer him, “Lord, when was it that we saw you hungry and gave you food, or thirsty and gave you something to drink? And when was it that we saw you a stranger and welcomed you, or naked and gave you clothing? And when was it that we saw you sick or in prison and visited you?” And the king will answer them, “Truly I tell you, just as you did it to one of the least of these who are members of my family, you did it to me.”

Second Scripture Reading:

Ephesians 1:1-2; 15-23

Paul, an apostle of Christ Jesus by the will of God, to the saints who are in Ephesus and are faithful in Christ Jesus: Grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.

I have heard of your faith in the Lord Jesus and your love towards all the saints, and for this reason I do not cease to give thanks for you as I remember you in my prayers. I pray that the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory, may give you a spirit of wisdom and revelation as you come to know him, so that, with the eyes of your heart enlightened, you may know what is the hope to which he has called you, what are the riches of his glorious inheritance among the saints, and what is the immeasurable greatness of his power for us who believe, according to the working of his great power. God put this power to work in Christ when he raised him from the dead and seated him at his right hand in the heavenly places, far above all rule and authority and power and dominion, and above every name that is

named, not only in this age but also in the age to come. And he has put all things under his feet and has made him the head over all things for the church, which is his body, the fullness of him who fills all in all.

Please pick up a “For the Love of Creation” card in the foyer this morning to send your personal message to the Environmental Protection Agency. We are participating in a United Church of Christ effort calling on the EPA to set *“the strongest science-based pollution standards as soon as possible.”* Fill out a card and leave it on the table. We will take it from there. Thanks.

