

Welcome to Sunday Worship

May 16, 2021

Good Morning to our members, those from United Congregational Church in Conway and all our friends at home. We have returned to in person Sunday morning worship and are no longer producing YouTube videos. For the moment, our safety procedures include limited seating and a reservation system. Please refer to the Safety Procedures sheet that was sent out last week.

Prayer Requests: We are accepting requests for prayer (healing, comfort, thanksgiving, and others). Please send your requests to the Pastor at pastor01089@gmail.com. Requests will then be sent out through our email list to the congregation for our common prayer life during the week. PLEASE remember that all prayer requests received become public knowledge. If you are uncertain if your request for another might be confidential, do not send it.

And now let us be in worship

Call to Worship (Responsive, L=Leader, P=People)

L Let the peace of Christ rule in your hearts.

P Indeed, we are called in one body.

L Be thankful.

P May the word of Christ richly dwell within us.

Unison Morning Prayer & the Lord's Prayer

God of overflowing grace, you have called us into this new week and so we come into your presence with thanksgiving and praise. We are grateful to be here, in your house that we have missed during this season of discontent. We return to pray in one voice for your Holy Spirit to be our guide, our comfort and our strength. We ask once again that in this week we may walk further with your Christ, sharing his love in all that we do and in every word we say. This we pray in the name of Jesus, who taught us to pray saying...*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 debts as we forgive our debtors. And lead us not into temptation but deliver us from evil. For thine is the kingdom and the power and the glory forever. Amen.*

Prayers of the People

Our prayers this morning are of thanksgiving and the joy we find in our faith and the love of God especially during this past year. Let us be together in prayer.

Gracious God, who in Jesus said, I have spoken to you that my joy may be in you and that your joy may be full, who said that when anyone hears your Word and receives it, it will be welcomed with joy. Hear these our prayers of humble gratitude that we have endured this time of separation from each other, from our friends, family members and from gathering in this holy space. Hear these our prayers of thanksgiving for each and every moment of joy we have

experienced during this season of necessary restriction, thanksgiving for every opportunity you have placed before us to rejoice and be glad, for the constitution of heart that allows us to accentuate the positive, to affirm and celebrate in another's accomplishment and good fortune, and to see the light of your goodness even when we have walked under this dark cloud, or when we have endured the criticism of an unrelenting critical eye. Certainly, O God, it is not your intent we should be down cast, despairing and embittered, even when our journey through this life becomes rocky, painful and difficult. Certainly, O God, you intend your children to carry the light of Christ even into the darkness, knowing that even in the darkness you are there with us, as the Psalmist wrote,

“Even if I take the wings of the morning and settle at the farthest limits of the sea, even there, O God, your hand shall lead me, and your right hand shall hold me fast.” In times of trial, in our moments of weakness, when our tempers flare and we find ourselves so very far from your will, your love reaches out to us, offering assurance, giving us strength, reproving our sinfulness and guiding us back to your way. Even to Jesus, our way, our truth and our life. As the good shepherd celebrates in finding the lost sheep, and as the parent rejoices in welcoming home the lost child, so too, do you find joy in finding us, and bringing us into the one household of your love. And now, loving God, once again may we enjoy these moments of peace together and may these our prayers rise before you as incense. (Personal Prayer and Meditation)

Gracious and Loving God, we give thanks that while we were away from each other, you were never away from us. Blessings and honor, glory and power be unto you. Amen.

Scripture Lesson: John 17:1-22

During Jesus' last night with his disciples, he spent considerable time in conversation with them. He spoke about the promise of the coming of the Holy Spirit, he calmed their fears, reminded them of who they were and the dangers they would face, and lastly, he offered a prayer on their behalf. This prayer speaks of who Jesus is, who his disciples are, and how it is they are united through their faith and ministry to each other, to Christ and to God.

“Father, the hour has come; glorify your Son so that the Son may glorify you, ²since you have given him authority over all people, to give eternal life to all whom you have given him. ³And this is eternal life, that they may know you, the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom you have sent. ⁴I glorified you on earth by finishing the work that you gave me to do. ⁵So now, Father, glorify me in your own presence with the glory that I had in your presence before the world existed. ⁶“I have made your name known to those whom you gave me from the world. They were yours, and you gave them to me, and they have kept your word. ⁷Now they know that everything you have given me is from you; ⁸for the words that you gave to me I have given to them, and they have received them and know in truth that I came from you; and they have believed that you sent me.

⁹I am asking on their behalf; I am not asking on behalf of the world, but on behalf of those whom you gave me, because they are yours. ¹⁰All mine are yours, and yours are mine; and I have been glorified in them. ¹¹And now I am no longer in the world, but they are in the

world, and I am coming to you. Holy Father, protect them in your name that you have given me, so that they may be one, as we are one.

¹²While I was with them, I protected them in your name that you have given me. I guarded them, and not one of them was lost except the one destined to be lost, so that the scripture might be fulfilled. ¹³But now I am coming to you, and I speak these things in the world so that they may have my joy made complete in themselves.

¹⁴I have given them your word, and the world has hated them because they do not belong to the world, just as I do not belong to the world. ¹⁵I am not asking you to take them out of the world, but I ask you to protect them from the evil one.

¹⁶They do not belong to the world, just as I do not belong to the world. ¹⁷Sanctify them in the truth; your word is truth. ¹⁸As you have sent me into the world, so I have sent them into the world. ¹⁹And for their sakes I sanctify myself, so that they also may be sanctified in truth. ²⁰“I ask not only on behalf of these, but also on behalf of those who will believe in me through their word, ²¹that they may all be one. As you, Father, are in me and I am in you, may they also be in us, so that the world may believe that you have sent me. ²²The glory that you have given me I have given them, so that they may be one, as we are one.

After the reading, you may reflect on this passage.

Sermon: Cross, Crown and Orb with Motto

Benediction: From the books of 1 & 2 Samuel

*May the LORD now show you kindness and faithfulness.
May God grant long life to you and good health to you and your household!
Go in peace and may the LORD be with you and bless you!*