



Welcome and Announcements

Prelude/Candle Lighting “Bist du bei mir (Are you with Me)” Oxana Khramova
(G.H. Stölzel, arr. M. Archer)

Ringing of the Bell

***Call To Worship** (*Stand as you are able)

One: God, you have rescued us from the pit of our despairing.

All: You have put a new song in our mouths.

One: You have given us Jesus, who delights to do your will.

All: We are glad to tell the good news of your salvation.

One: You do not desire burnt offerings and sacrifices; instead, you give us open ears.

All: May we hear, and in our hearing praise you. Alleluia!

***Opening Prayer** (in unison)

Wellspring of Truth, may your wild edges unravel what we thought we knew. Where beauty and terror breathe as one, you invite us to stay and not turn away, to witness your mystery in all that is both glorious and undone. We reject the lies we are sold about ourselves and the world. We reclaim the truth that has been buried beneath their weight.

Opening Hymn “When Israel Was in Egypt’s Land” Hymnal #334

Readings Kim Blomquist
Isaiah 49:1-7; John 1:29-42; Contemporary Reading, *A story about an emperor.*

Anthem “Praise To the Lord, The Almighty” Chancel Choir
(H. Distler)

Sermon “Resisting Empire: Rejecting Lies, Embracing Reality” Pastor René Mehlberg

Transitional Hymn “For the Faithful Who Have Answered” attached

Prayers of the People

Lord's Prayer

Our Creator, 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.

Offertory

**"There Is a Balm in Gilead"
(arr. M. Hayes)**

Oxana Khramova

*Doxology

**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.**

*Prayer of Dedication (in unison)

Holy One, You gather us in, wash us in grace, and remind us we are your Beloveds. Bless these gifts and the lives from which they come. May they ripple out in acts of compassion, in courage where it is needed, in justice that is gentle and strong, in resistance to evil and empire. We offer what we have with joy and trust, for the sake of your dream of flourishing. Amen.

Closing Hymn

"Every Time I Feel the Spirit"

Hymnal #315

*Benediction

*Sung Benediction (unison)

**God be with you till we meet again;
Loving counsels guide, uphold you,
With a Shepherd's care enfold you:
God be with you till we meet again.**

Postlude

**"How Can I Keep from Singing?"
(R. Lowry, arr. M. Hayes)**

Oxana Khramova

The flowers today are from Naomi Cummings in memory of her mother Dorothy, remembering her birthday, today, January 18th.

Credits

- Armas, Kat. Liturgies for resisting empire: Seeking community, belonging, and peace in a dehumanizing world. Grand Rapids, MI: Brazos Press, a division of Baker Publishing Group, 2025. Chapter 2: Rejecting Lies, Embracing Reality, pgs 21-22.
- Garnaas-Holmes., Steve. "2nd Sunday after Epiphany." 2nd Sunday after Epiphany – Unfolding Light, September 12, 2022. <https://unfoldinglight.net/2022/09/12/epiphany-2/>.
- Prayer of Dedication from Howard, Rev. Michael Anthony. "Baptism of Christ a - January 11." United Church of Christ: Worship Ways, December 24, 2025. <https://www.ucc.org/worship-way/baptism-of-christ-a-january-11/>.
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This Week

Monday, January 19: 11:30am Church Council, R1; **6pm** Menomonie Singers Aud., FH

Tuesday, January 20, 4pm: Early Service planning; R1; **6pm** Menomonie Singers Aud., San.

Wednesday, January 21: 9am Thursday's Table annual meeting, R1; **11am** Women's Fellowship meeting, R1

Wednesday, January 21: 4pm Kid's Club; **5:30pm;** Chancel Choir; **6:30pm** Bell Choir, **7pm** Dance practice

Thursday, January 22, 3pm: Tech Committee meeting, R1

Sunday, January 25, 11:30am: Progressive Christians Discussion Group, R1

Link to the full church calendar: <https://www.menomonieucc.org/monthlycalendar>

Mission Statement of First Congregational United Church of Christ in Menomonie, WI

We are called together:

To celebrate God's presence.

To help each person to grow in his or her relationship with God;

To create a welcoming and supportive community of all God's people, affirming the diversity of race, gender, age, sexual orientation, gender expression, and identity, social and economic status, and the differently abled;

To observe and share life's passages and our faith traditions;

To reach out in love seeking justice and peace;

And to tell the old story of Jesus and His love.

Land Acknowledgement

Here we congregate on Ojibwe, Dakota, Menominee, Potawatomi, and Ho Chunk land. Generations of Indigenous people occupied and provided careful stewardship of this land long before Europeans arrived on these shores. The traumatic dispossession of this land by European immigrants and the displacement of countless individuals produced collective suffering that has repercussions for our Indigenous neighbors today. The original inhabitants of this land—known to some Indigenous peoples as Turtle Island—took seriously the Creator's call to be stewards of air, land, water, and creatures. With gratitude, we acknowledge the lessons we continue to learn from our Indigenous neighbors as we seek to be good stewards and pray for guidance in learning how to make reparations.

ONA Covenant

We covenant as a congregation to welcome, celebrate, and include lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer, and questioning people and their families into the full life of our church. We take this stance publicly and proudly, knowing that silence is inadequate to confront the violent theology that is widespread throughout the Christian church. We covenant to support lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer, and questioning people and their families with our prayers, words, and actions

When Israel Was in Egypt's Land

334

GO DOWN MOSES 8.5.8.5 with refrain

African-American spiritual
Arr. Melva W. Costen, 1989

African-American spiritual

1. When Is - rael was in E - gypt's land, Let my peo-ple go!
2. "Thus saith the Lord," bold Mo - ses said: Let my peo-ple go!
3. "No more shall they in bond-age toil," Let my peo-ple go!

Op - pressed so hard they could not stand, Let my peo-ple go!
"If not, I'll smite your first-born dead," Let my peo-ple go!
"Let them come out with E - gypt's spoil," Let my peo-ple go!

Refrain

Go down, Mo - ses, Mo - ses, Way down in E - gypt's land,
Go down, go down, Mo - ses,

Tell old Phar - aoh, Let my peo-ple go!

*Heb. 11:4-12:2**Sylvia G. Dunstan, 1986; alt.*

1 For the faith - ful who have an - swered when they heard your call to serve,
 2 Man - y minds have glimpsed the prom - ise; man - y hearts have yearned to see;
 3 For this cloud of faith - ful wit - ness, for the com - mon life we share,

for the man - y ways you led them, test - ing will and stretch - ing nerve,
 man - y souls have heard you call - ing us to great - er lib - er - ty.
 for the work of peace and jus - tice, for the gos - pel that we bear,

For their work and for their wit - ness as they strove a - gainst the odds,
 Some have fall - en in the strug - gle; oth - ers still are press - ing on.
 For the vi - sion that our home - land is your love— deep, high, and broad—

for their cour - age and o - be - dience, we give thanks and praise, O God.
 You are not a - shamed to own us; we give thanks and praise, O God.
 for the dif - ferent roads we trav - el, we give thanks and praise, O God.

Every Time I Feel the Spirit

PENTECOST Irregular

African-American spiritual
Arr. Joseph T. Jones (1902-1983)
Adapt. Melva W. Costen, 1989African-American spiritual
Refrain

Ev - ery time I feel the Spir - it mov - ing in my

heart I will pray. Yes, ev - ery time I feel the

Spir - it mov - ing in my heart I will pray.

1. Up - on the moun - tain, when my Lord spoke, Out of God's
2. Jor - dan riv - er, chil - ly and cold, It chills the

mouth came fire and smoke. Looked all a - round me,
bod - y but not the soul. There is but one train

The first system of the musical score features a vocal line on a single treble clef staff and a piano accompaniment on two staves (treble and bass clefs). The key signature is two sharps (F# and C#). The vocal line consists of a series of eighth and quarter notes, with a fermata over the word 'soul'. The piano accompaniment provides a harmonic foundation with chords and moving lines in both hands.

it looked so fine, Till I asked my Lord if all was mine.
up-on this track; It runs to heav-en and then right back. *D.C.*

The second system continues the musical score. The vocal line and piano accompaniment follow the same format as the first system. The lyrics describe the narrator's experience on the train. The system concludes with the instruction 'D.C.' (Da Capo), indicating that the music should be repeated from the beginning of the system.