



Welcome
to Worship

First Congregational
United Church of Christ

Menomonie, Wisconsin

Thirteenth Sunday after Pentecost
September 7, 2025

A New Season ... for Life!

Welcome and Announcements

Prelude/Candle Lighting “Resting in God’s Arms” Oxana Khramova
(M. Hayes)

Ringling of the Bell

***Call to Worship** (*Stand if you are able)

Leader: Jesus, you wept at a tomb and gathered children in your arms.

All: We believe you are weeping now: with parents whose arms are empty, with siblings and friends who cannot comprehend absence, for all numb with shock.

Leader: Hold the dead in your mercy. Hold the wounded in your healing. Hold the terrified in your tenderness.

All: Forgive us, God, for our numbness, our quick forgetting, our resignation to violence as “just the way things are.”

Leader: Deliver us from our excuses, that we may choose the labor of peace:

All: to protect children, to confront powers profiting from weapons and fear, to build a more just society where all your children are safe and will flourish. God, have mercy. Christ, have mercy. Amen.

***Opening Prayer** (in unison)

God of all humanity, in times of violence we see how inhuman we can be. We pray for those who, today, are weighed down by grief. We pray for those who, yesterday, were weighed down by grief. And the day before, and all the days before the day before. We pray, too, for those who help us turn towards justice and peace. Turn us all towards justice and peace because we need it. Amen.

***Opening Hymn** “To Bless the Earth” Hymnal #200

Readings Susan Hall
Revelation 21:1-4, 22:1-5; Matthew 8:18-20; “Dear Future Survivor” by Natalie Barden

Special Music “Fairest Isle” Margea Schultz
(Henry Percell)

Sermon “A New Season.... for Life!” Pastor René Mehlberg

Transitional Music

“Away in a Manger”

Hymnal #25

Prayers of the People

Offertory

“Minuet”
(J.S. Bach)

Margea Schultz

***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.**

SACRAMENT OF HOLY COMMUNION

Invitation

Now we set aside the common for an uncommon purpose as we prepare for Holy Communion, the family meal of Christ’s people. In this meal, we remember the life, teaching, witness, and death of Jesus. We celebrate his continued life among us. We remind one another that we are called to participate in Jesus’ Way of extravagant welcome and service. Come prepared to be blessed. Come because God has food for you. Come because Jesus invites you...just as you are.

Great Thanksgiving

Leader: God be with you.

People: And also with you.

Leader: Lift up your hearts.

People: We lift them up to God.

Leader: Let us give thanks to God.

People: It is right to give God thanks and praise.

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.

Breaking Bread and Pouring Wine

Leader: Please join me in the words of institution over the bread:

People: When he was among friends, gathered around a table, Jesus took bread and having blessed it, he broke the bread and gave it to his disciples saying, “Take and eat. This is my body which is given for you.”

Servers will pass this gluten free bread among you. As you take a piece of bread, hold it until everyone is Served. We will eat the bread together, as a symbol of our unity, a world-wide Christian community.

Distribution Hymn

“Let Us Break Bread Together”

Hymnal #513

Leader: Please join me in the words of institution over the wine:

People: In the same way, Jesus took wine and having given thanks for it, he poured it out and gave the cup to his disciples, saying, “This cup is the new relationship with God, made possible because of my life and my death. Take this-all of you-to remember me.”

Servers will pass the juice and wine among you. The juice is dark red; the wine is white. Drink the cup as soon as you have been served in recognition of your individual relationship to God.

Distribution Hymn: “Let There Be Peace on Earth” SoF #82

Let there be peace on Earth and let it begin with me;
Let there be peace on Earth; the peace that was meant to be.
With God our Creator, children all are we;
Let us walk with each other in perfect harmony.
Let peace begin with me; Let this be the moment now;
With every step I take, let this be my solemn vow:
To take each moment, and live each moment in peace eternally...
Let there be peace on Earth and let it begin with me.

***Prayer of Gratitude** (in unison)

In deep gratitude for this moment, this meal, these people, we give ourselves to you. Take us out to live as changed people, because we have shared the Living Bread and cannot remain the same. Ask much of us, expect much from us, enable much by us, encourage many through us. So, gracious God, may we live to your glory, both as inhabitants of earth and citizens of your kin-dom. Amen.

***Closing Hymn** “God of Grace and God of Glory” Hymnal #420

***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 “Because He Lives, Amen” Oxana Khramova
(W.J. Gaither, arr. Ph. Keveren)

The flowers today are from Deb and John Wesolek celebrating their granddaughter, Saskia Watt’s, 9th birthday on Sept. 3rd. Saskia is the daughter of Pamela and John Watt.

Credits

- Opening Litany adapted from Ott, Teri McDowell. “Litany and Prayer after the Minneapolis Shooting.” The Presbyterian Outlook, August 28, 2025. <https://pres-outlook.org/2025/08/litany-and-prayer-after-minneapolis-shooting/>.
- Opening Prayer, “A Prayer in Times of Violence” by Tuama, Padraig O. Daily Prayer with the Corrymeela Community (p. 64). Kindle Edition.
- “Dear Future Survivor”: School shooting survivors pen letters to future survivors, June 20, 2024. <https://www.goodmorningamerica.com/news/story/dear-future-survivor-school-shooting-survivors-pen-letters-93887965>.

This Week

Monday, September 8, 9am: Church Directory meeting, R1

Monday, September 8, 2pm: Worship Committee, R1

Tuesday, September 9, 4pm: Executive Committee, R1

Tuesday, September 9, 4pm: Planned Giving Committee, R1

Wednesday, September 10, 5:30pm: Christian Education Committee, R1

Wednesday, September 10: 5:30pm Chancel Choir; 6:30pm Bell Choir

Thursday, September 11, 10am: Peace and Justice Committee, 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.

To Bless the Earth

200

CHRISTUS, DER IST MEIN LEBEN 7.6.7.6

The Psalter, 1912; alt.

Melchior Vulpus, 1609

1. To bless the earth God sends us From heaven's a - bun-dant store
2. The seed by God pro - vid - ed Is sown o'er hill and plain,
3. God crowns the year with good - ness, The earth God's mer - cy fills,
4. With grain the fields are cov - ered, The flocks in pas-tures graze;

The wa - ters of the spring - time, En - rich-ing it once more.
And then come gen - tle show - ers To bless the spring-ing grain.
The wil - der - ness is fruit - ful, And joy - ful are the hills.
All na - ture joins in sing - ing A joy - ful song of praise.

Away in a Manger

25

MUELLER 11.11.11.11

Stanzas 1-2, *Little Children's Book for Schools and Families*, c. 1885

Stanza 3, *Gabriel's Vineyard Songs*, 1892

Attr. James R. Murray, 1887
Harm. John Weaver, 1986

1. A - way in a man-ger, no crib for His bed, The lit - tle Lord
2. The cat - tle are low-ing, the poor Ba - by wakes, But lit - tle Lord
3. Be near me, Lord Je - sus; I ask Thee to stay Close by me for -

Je - sus laid down His sweet head. The stars in the sky looked
Je - sus, no cry - ing He makes. I love Thee, Lord Je - sus, look
ev - er and love me, I pray. Bless all the dear chil - dren in

down where He lay, The lit - tle Lord Je - sus, a - sleep on the hay.
down from the sky, And stay by my side un - til morn - ing is nigh.
Thy ten - der care, And fit us for heav - en to live with Thee there.

513

Let Us Break Bread Together

LET US BREAK BREAD 10.10 with refrain African-American spiritual

Arr. Melva Wilson Costen, 1988

African-American spiritual

1. Let us break bread to - geth - er on our knees; (on our knees;)
2. Let us drink wine to - geth - er on our knees; (on our knees;)

Let us break bread to - geth - er on our knees. (on our knees.)
Let us drink wine to - geth - er on our knees. (on our knees.)

Refrain

When I fall on my knees, With my face to the ris - ing sun,

O Lord, have mer - cy on me. (on me.)

Let There Be Peace on Earth



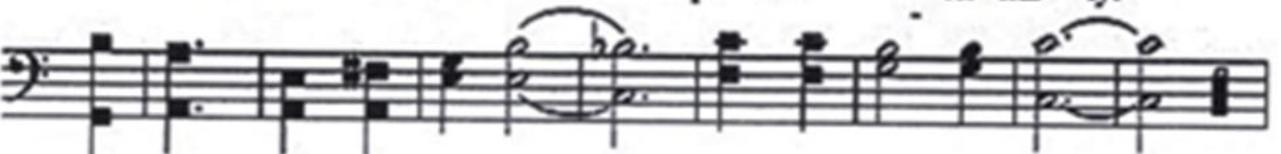
Let there be peace on earth, and let it be gin with me;
Let peace be gin with me; let this be the mo ment now.



let there be peace on earth, the peace that was meant to be.
With ev ery step I take, let this be My sol emn vow:



With God our cre - a - tor, chil dren all are we.
to take each mo ment and live each mo ment in peace e ter nal ly.



Let us walk with each oth er - in per -fect har -mo -ny.
Let there be peace on earth, and let it be gin with me.



God of Grace and God of Glory

436

Harry Emerson Fosdick, 1930; alt.

1 God of grace and God of glo - ry, on your peo - ple
 2 From the e - vils that sur - round us and as - sail the
 3 Cure your chil - dren's war - ring mad - ness; bend our pride to
 4 Set our feet on loft - y plac - es; gird our lives that
 5 Save us from weak res - ig - na - tion to the e - vils

pour your power; crown your an - cient church - 's sto - ry;
 Sav - ior's ways, from the fears that long have bound us—
 your con - trol. Shame our reck - less, self - ish glad - ness,
 they may be ar - mored with all Christ - like grac - es,
 we de - plore; let the search for your sal - va - tion

bring its bud to glo - rious flower. Grant us wis - dom, grant us cour - age,
 free our hearts for faith and praise. Grant us wis - dom, grant us cour - age,
 rich in things and poor in soul. Grant us wis - dom, grant us cour - age,
 in the fight to set us free. Grant us wis - dom, grant us cour - age,
 be our glo - ry ev - er - more. Grant us wis - dom, grant us cour - age,

for the fac - ing of this hour, for the fac - ing of this hour.
 for the liv - ing of these days, for the liv - ing of these days.
 make our bro - ken spir - its whole, make our bro - ken spir - its whole.
 in the quest for lib - er - ty, in the quest for lib - er - ty.
 serv - ing you whom we a - dore, serv - ing you whom we a - dore.

Harry Emerson Fosdick, a prophetic preacher and writer, taught at Union Theological Seminary from 1915 to 1946. This hymn was written for the opening service and dedication of Riverside Church, New York City, which he served for twenty years.

Tune: CWM RHONDDA 8.7.8.7.8.7.7.
 John Hughes, c. 1907