

Season of Creation



*Celebrating
165 years
of*

**“God’s
Presence”**

Welcome to Worship

**First Congregational
United Church of Christ**
Menomonie, Wisconsin

Seventeenth Sunday after Pentecost
September 20, 2026

Welcome and Announcements

Prelude/Candle Lighting “Spirit of God, Descent upon My Heart”
(M. Hayes)

Oxana Khramova

Ring of the Bell

***Call to Worship** (*rise in body, mind, or spirit)

One: “Those who want to save their life will lose it.”

All: I confess my attachment to power, privilege, security and esteem. I confess I seek my own well-being separate from others. I confess I would rather be safe than loving.

One: “But those who lose their life for love’s sake will find it.”

All: Give me faith to risk for the sake of love. Give me courage to choose justice over my security. I give you my life, God, that you may give life back to me, new, and free and infinite.

One: “Take up your cross and follow me.”

All: God, give me grace to follow Jesus, by the power of your Holy Spirit. Amen.

***Opening Prayer** (in unison)

Gracious God, we are aware this morning of those suffering in our world. They are with us as we come into your presence. Bless our worship that we may be transformed to be of service to them, and to all who seek peace, hope, or healing. As the scriptures are read and your good news proclaimed, help us to hear with glad hearts what you are saying to us today. Amen.

Opening Hymn

“To Bless the Earth”

Hymnal #200

Readings

Dawn Ascher

Psalm 65:12-13; Matthew 20:1-16

Contemporary Reading “Three Ancient Voices on Creation and God’s Presence”

Anthem

“Parable”
(Andy Beck)

Chancel Choir

Sermon

“Season of Creation: God’s Presence”

Pastor René Mehlberg

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 Balm in Gilead"**

Oxana Khramova

(arr. M. Hayes)

***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)**

God, whose Spirit moved over the deep: Accept the first fruits we offer here. Bless and multiply these gifts to our nurture and the care of your creation; for the sake of your Son, Jesus Christ. Amen.

Closing Hymn*"Faith, Hope, LOVE"**

Back of the Hymnal

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**"Blessed Assurance"**

Oxana Khramova

(arr. M. Hayes)

The flowers today are in celebration of Ron Fry's 87th birthday today, September 20th, from his wife Judy.

Credits

- Liturgy pieces including Contemporary Reading from ELCA. "Awakening God's Call to Earthkeeping." ELCA Resources, August 14, 2024. <https://resources.elca.org/stewardship/awakening-gods-call-to-earthkeeping/>.
- Prayer of Gratitude from "Living Water: Season of Creation." Season of Creation. Accessed August 30, 2026. <https://seasonofcreation.org/>.
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This Week

Wednesday, September 23: 9am Tour of Homes crafts, R1; **10am** Tour of Homes informational meeting, R3; **5:30pm** Chancel Choir; **6:30pm** Bell Choir

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 their 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 disability;

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.

PSALM 65
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 first system of musical notation is in G major (one sharp) and 4/4 time. It consists of a treble and a bass staff. The treble staff has a melody line with eighth and quarter notes. The bass staff provides a harmonic accompaniment with chords and moving lines.

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.

The second system of musical notation continues the piece in the same key and time signature. It also features a treble and a bass staff. The lyrics are aligned with the notes in the treble staff.

God of the Sparrow

ROEDER 5.4.6.7.7

Jaroslav J. Vajda, 1983

Carl F. Schalk, 1983

1. God of the spar - row God of the whale
 3. God of the rain - bow God of the cross
 5. God of the neigh - bor God of the foe

God of the swirl - ing stars
 God of the emp - ty grave
 God of the prun - ing hook

How does the crea-ture say
 How does the crea-ture say
 How does the crea-ture say

Awe
 Grace
 Love

How does the crea-ture say
 How does the crea-ture say
 How does the crea-ture say

Praise
 Thanks
 Peace

Descant on stanzas 2, 4, 6

2. God of the earth-quake God of the storm God of the trum - pet
 4. God of the hun - gry God of the sick God of the prod - i -
 6. God of the a - ges God near at hand God of the lov - ing

blast
gal
heart

How does the crea-ture cry Woe
 How does the crea-ture say Care
 How do your chil-dren say Joy

How does the crea-ture cry Save
 How does the crea-ture say Life

How do your chil-dren say Home

Faith, Hope, LOVE

150th Anniversary September 25, 2011
First Congregational United Church of Christ
Menomonie, Wisconsin

Thom Flug
Music and lyrics

1. Day by day, year by year, we stand firm - ly ga - thered here
2. One by one, two by two, hum - bly we come un - to you
3. Age to age, stone by stone, life is built on Christ a - lone.

roo - ted in faith, rea - ching in love, en - du - ring in hope with God a - bove.
sha - ring our faith, tea - ching our creed, pass - ing it on to those who need
Giv - ing our hearts, ours to re - ceive ev - er - last - ing life so we be - lieve

Refrain—unison

Light of the World I fol - low you, e - ver faith - ful, e - ver true.

Lov - ing each o - ther as you've loved me know - ing that truth will set me free!

(-----repeat last time-----)