



**WELCOME
to WORSHIP**

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

**Fourth Sunday of Lent
March 15, 2026**

Many people contribute to the worship service and you may wish to show your appreciation for them. To allow for reflection throughout the service, we ask that you hold applause to the end of the service unless the Spirit moves you otherwise. During the service, please use the Encourage One Another card found in holders on the back of the pew in front of you to show your appreciation for someone's contribution to the service and drop the card in the offering plate. Thank you!

Welcome and Announcements

Prelude/Candle Lighting “My Faith Looks Up To Thee” Oxana Khramova
(L. Mason, arr. F. Bock)

Ringling of the Bell

***Call & Prayer of Confession** (*Stand as you are able)

One: Siblings in Christ, let us confess our sins to God, for God knows how we struggle to discern good leadership, sometimes choosing to follow people because of their charisma or power, rather than their integrity and wisdom.

All: **God, our Good Shepherd, we confess we often look to unwise leaders to guide us, whether in work, play, government, faith, or daily living. We overlook poor choices and bad boundaries. We find ourselves enamored by personalities and power. Forgive us for pursuing folly over wisdom; for choosing flashy leaders over leaders you have gifted with experience and discernment; for not holding our leaders accountable. Help us keep firm boundaries with leaders, encouraging them to make hard choices. And when you call us into leadership roles, help us rise to the occasion with integrity and faithfulness. Amen.**

***Assurance of Pardon**

***Opening Prayer** (in unison)

God of love, you demonstrate your care for us by coming among us as Jesus, our Good Shepherd. Tend to us with mercy, gather us when we wander, protect us from the perils of this world, and bring all people together into one fold. Help us to recognize Christ's voice and Christ's calling. Remind us we are known. We are loved. We are invited to follow. Amen.

Opening Hymn “God, You Spin the Whirling Planets” Hymnal #285

Readings Heather Jerrie
Numbers 27:1–11, Matthew 15:21-28, Contemporary Reading, “Affirmation of Faith:
Holy Confrontation *from Illustrated Ministry’s “The Work of Imagination” Lent series*

Anthem “Quiet Faith” Chancel Choir
(Heather Sorenson)

Sermon “The Work of the Imagination: Accountable Leadership” Pastor René Mehlberg

Transitional Hymn “Fairest Lord Jesus” Hymnal #306

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 “O Sacred Head, Now Wounded” Oxana Khramova
(H.L Hassler, 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)

Generous God, we share our gifts like tiny seeds from a dandelion. Send out these gifts on the mighty wind of your Spirit, bringing growth, bearing fruit, and nourishing our neighbors. May each gift bloom with your holy imagination. Amen.

***Closing Hymn** “Brighter Than the Sun” SoF #14

*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 “Joy in My Soul” Oxana Khramova
(M. Hayes)

*The flowers today are from Rick and Sara Nagler
in celebration of their 30th wedding anniversary on March 16th. Congratulations, Rick and Sara!*

Credits

- Liturgy pieces from “The Work of Imagination” Lent Series © 2026, an Illustrated Ministry, LLC. product, purchased and used with permission.
- Licenses purchased to reprint, podcast, and/or stream the music in this service obtained: ONELICENSE #A-715543. CCLI Copyright License B 20989858.

This Week

Sunday, March 15: 11:30am Progressive Christians Book Discussion, R1

Tuesday, March 17: 9am-3pm Blood Drive, FH; **11:30** Church Council, R1

Wednesday, March 18: 9am Thursday's Table meeting, R1; **NO** Kid's Club; **5:30pm**; Chancel Choir; **6:30pm** Bell Choir, **7pm** Dance practice

Link to the full church calendar: <https://www.menomoneieucc.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

285 God, You Spin the Whirling Planets

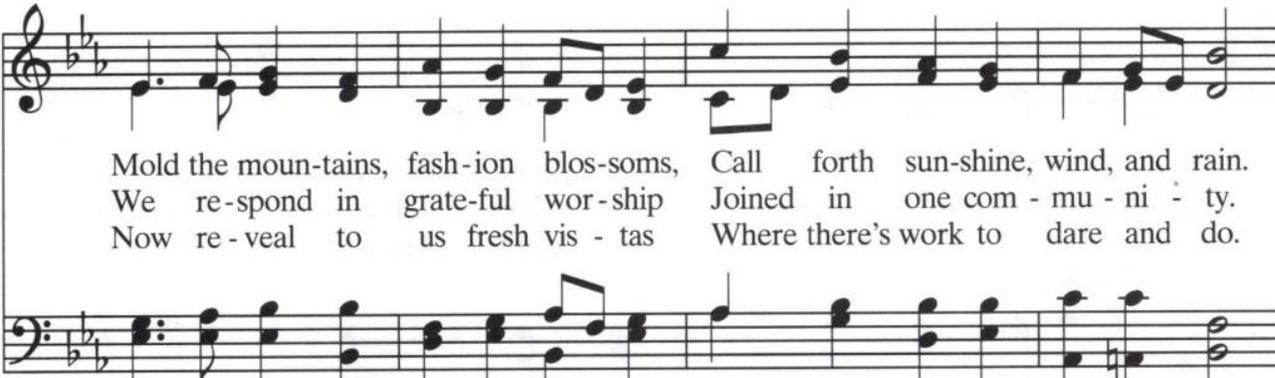
AUSTRIAN HYMN 8.7.8.7 D

Jane Parker Huber, 1978

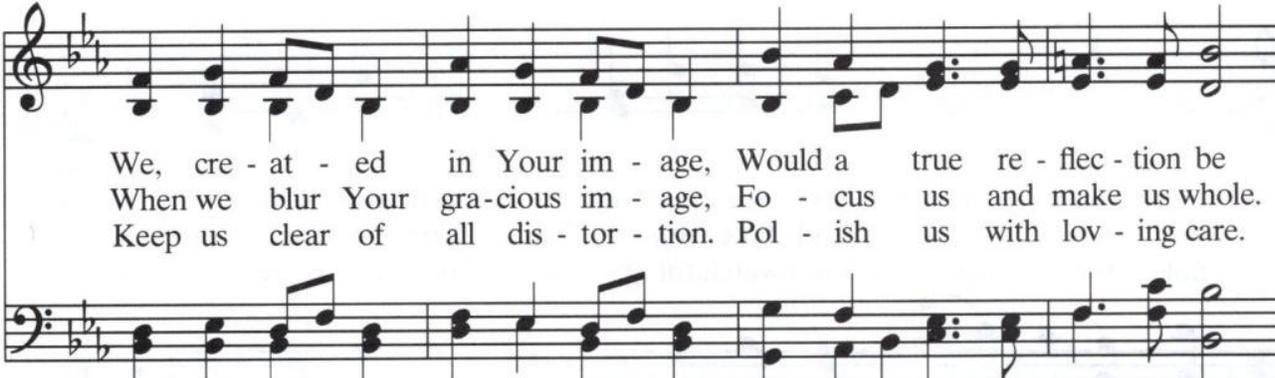
Franz Joseph Haydn, 1797



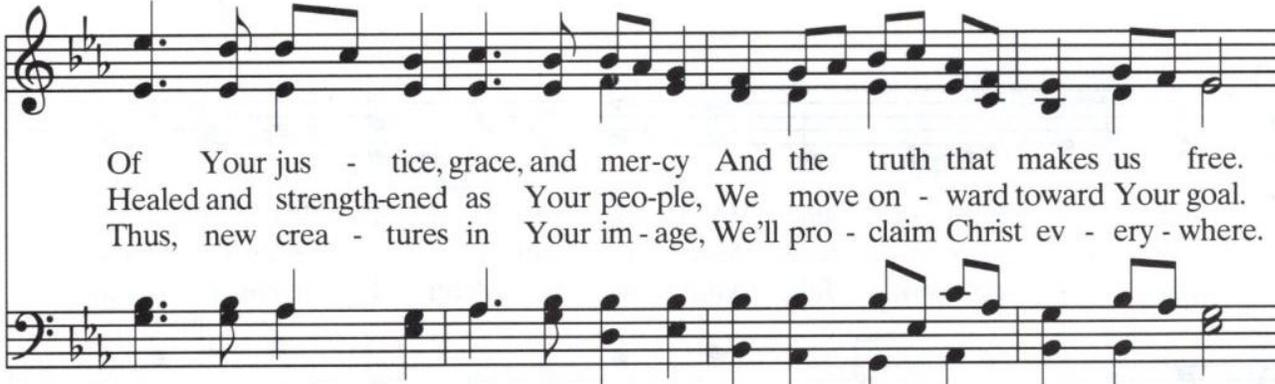
1. God, You spin the whirl-ing plan-ets, Fill the seas and spread the plain,
2. You have called us to be faith-ful In our life and min - is - try.
3. God, Your word is still cre - at - ing, Call - ing us to life made new.



Mold the moun-tains, fash-ion blos-soms, Call forth sun-shine, wind, and rain.
We re-pond in grate-ful wor-ship Joined in one com - mu - ni - ty.
Now re - veal to us fresh vis - tas Where there's work to dare and do.



We, cre - at - ed in Your im - age, Would a true re - flec - tion be
When we blur Your gra-cious im - age, Fo - cus us and make us whole.
Keep us clear of all dis - tor - tion. Pol - ish us with lov - ing care.



Of Your jus - tice, grace, and mer-cy And the truth that makes us free.
Healed and strength-ened as Your peo-ple, We move on - ward toward Your goal.
Thus, new crea - tures in Your im - age, We'll pro - claim Christ ev - ery - where.

Fairest Lord Jesus

306

CRUSADERS' HYMN 5.6.8.5.5.8

Münster Gesangbuch, 1677

Trans. Church Chorals and Choir Studies, 1850; alt.

Silesian folk melody

In Schlesische Volkslieder, 1842

1. Fair - est Lord Je - sus, Rul - er of all na - ture,
2. Fair are the mead - ows, Fair - er still the wood - lands,
3. Fair is the sun - shine, Fair - er still the moon - light,

O Thou of God to earth come down, Thee will I cher - ish,
Robed in the bloom - ing garb of spring: Je - sus is fair - er,
And all the twin - kling, star - ry host: Je - sus shines bright - er,

Thee will I hon - or, Thou, my soul's glo - ry, joy, and crown.
Je - sus is pur - er, Who makes the woe - ful heart to sing.
Je - sus shines pur - er, Than all the an - gels heaven can boast.

BRIGHTER THAN THE SUN

Refrain



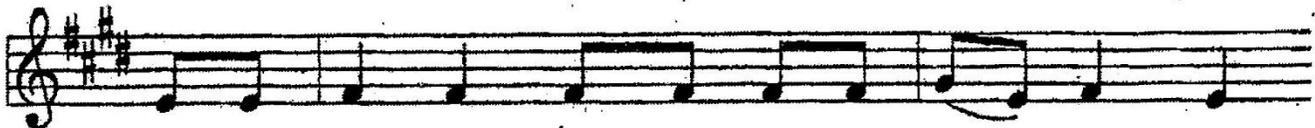
Bright - er, bright-er than the sun is the can - dle of the



Ho - ly One. Big - ger, big-ger than the sea are the



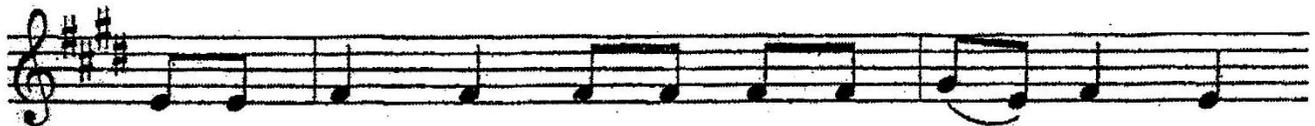
waves of God wash - ing o - ver me.



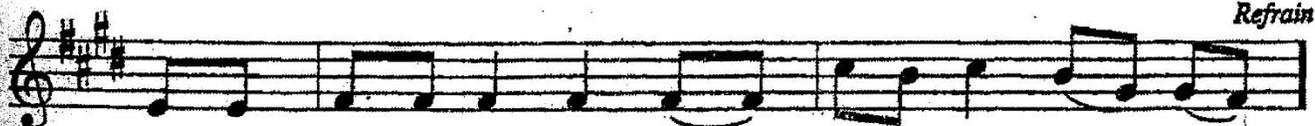
- 1 Gon - na light my can - dle from the ho - ly flame
- 2 Gon - na meet God's chil - dren at the foun - tain of life,
- 3 Gon - na gath - er 'round and gon - na wel - come in



of the one that's bright-er than ... my ... own name.
where the word and the wa - ter and the Lord ... Je - sus Christ
ev - 'ry child to be and ev - 'ry one who's ev - er been.



Gon - na wash my bod - y in the ho - ly sea,
make a new cre - a - tion out of ev - 'ry one:
Gon - na breathe to - geth - er with this spark of life:



in the wat - er of life that's ... big-ger than me. Oh,—
Ho - ly Spir - it of love, let the wa - ters run. Oh,—
Ho - ly Spir - it of God, make our flame burn bright. Oh,—

Refrain