



# THE FIRST CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH CANTON CENTER, CT

February 12, 2023 ~ 10:00 a.m.

Sixth Sunday after Epiphany



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~ ORDER OF WORSHIP ~

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*\*Please stand if able.*

***Bold** denotes unison response.*

**CHIMES**

Karen Needham

**WELCOME & ANNOUNCEMENTS**

*Brief announcements from the congregation are welcome. **Those wishing to make an announcement** are asked to be in the front pews at the start of the announcement period. **Prayer request cards** may be found on the tables at the back of the church. **Offerings** may be placed in the marked boxes on the tables at the back or front of the church.*

**PRELUDE**    *Only Thou Art Holy*

Mary McDonald

**CALL TO WORSHIP**

Friends, let us be gathered in heart,

**as we remember again the goodness of God.**

Let us be gathered in faith,

**as we awaken again to the wisdom of Christ.**

Let us be gathered in hope,

**as we are touched again by the power of the Spirit.**

Let us be gathered in peace,

**for God is in the midst of us and we are in the midst of God.**

**\*HYMN**    *Bless Now, O God, the Journey*    Chalice (blue), 489

*Bless now, O God, the journey that all your people make,  
The path through noise and silence, the way of give and take.  
The trail is found in desert and winds the mountain round,  
Then leads beside still waters, the road where faith is found.*

*Bless sojourners and pilgrims who share this winding way,  
Whose hope burns through the terrors, whose love sustains the day.  
We yearn for holy freedom while often we are bound,  
Together we are seeking the road where faith is found.*

*Divine Eternal Lover, you meet us on the road.  
We wait for lands of promise, where milk and honey flow.  
But waiting not for places, you meet us all around;  
Our covenant is written on roads, as faith is found.*

## \*GATHERING PRAYER AND THE LORD'S PRAYER

Loving God, as we live the gift of this day,  
may we be mindful of your presence,  
in us, with us, and through us.

In every choice and decision we make,  
in every thought, word and deed,  
may we strive to follow the way of love,  
the way of peace,  
the way of Christ.

In his name and spirit we pray, as we also say together:

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.

## \*SUNG RESPONSE

*Bless God, O My Soul*



Bless God, O my soul! All with - in me bless God's name!  
Bless God, who was, and is, and shall ev - er be the same!

**ANTHEM**      *The Prayer, with Lead Us Lord*  
The Senior Choir

Sager/Foster, arr. Tom Fettke

*Following this, children may go to church school.*

**READING FROM SCRIPTURE**      Deuteronomy 30:15-20      Pew Bible, p. 163

**SERMON**      *Choices*

## DEDICATION OF OFFERINGS

We are grateful for our gifts,  
**and for the ability to give them.**

We are mindful of our place in the web of creation,  
**and of the ways our generosity are needed.**

Because we are the people of God and the community of Christ,  
**we open our hearts to the world around us.**

## **\*Doxology**

*Praise God from whom all blessings flow,  
Praise God, all creatures here below,  
Praise God for all that love has done,  
Creator, Christ and Spirit, One. Amen.*

## **\*Prayer of Dedication**

### **PRAYERS OF THE CHURCH**

#### **Joys and Concerns, Pastoral Prayer**

**\*HYMN**      *O Jesus, I Have Promised*      Pilgrim (red), 218

*O Jesus, I have promised to serve thee to the end;  
Be thou forever near me, my master and my friend;  
I shall not fear the battle if thou art by my side,  
Nor wander from the pathway if thou wilt be my guide.*

*O let me hear thee speaking in accents clear and still,  
Above the storms of passion, the murmurs of self will;  
O speak to reassure me, to hasten or control;  
O speak, and make me listen, thou guardian of my soul.*

*O Jesus, thou has promised to all who follow thee  
That where thou art in glory there shall thy servant be;  
And Jesus, I have promised to serve thee to the end;  
O give me grace to follow, my master and my friend.*

## **\*BENEDICTION**

**\*BENEDICTION RESPONSE**      *Sevenfold Amen*  
The Senior Choir

**\*POSTLUDE**      *Sing a Joyful Song to God*      George F. Handel

**Next Sunday, Feb. 19, our guest pastor will be the Rev. Terry Schmitt,**  
who was formerly the Executive Director of the CT Council for Interreligious  
Understanding and who has served as pastor and interim pastor for several CT churches.  
Rev. Schmitt has been with us several times before.