

**JANUARY 31, 2021
FOURTH SUNDAY AFTER THE EPIPHANY
HERITAGE SUNDAY**

PRELUDE *Just As I Am* arr. William Bradbury

WELCOME Mark Edwards

TOLLING THE BELL and LIGHTING THE CANDLES

CALL TO WORSHIP (Responsive – Leader; **People**) Mark Edwards
based on Psalm 111:1, 9

Praise the Holy ONE!

Let our entire company, this congregation, give thanks with whole hearts!

God has commanded a covenant forever.

Holy and awesome is the name of God.

RAISING THE COVENANT *Covenant of 1977*

We who are called of God into this Christian community covenant together: to seek to know the will of God, to experience the joy and struggle of discipleship, to proclaim in word and deed the love of Christ, and to work for peace and justice among all people. We trust God’s promise of grace and forgiveness and the presence of the Holy Spirit in our trials and rejoicing.

HYMN *Gather Your Children* Jaroslav Vajda

Gather your children, dear Savior, in peace
And draw us to you with your passionate pleas;
Still seek us and call us to come and be blessed,
To find in your arms, Lord, safety, comfort, and rest.

Knowing you, loving you, naming you Lord,
We cluster around you and grow by your Word,
One day to remember these moments so rare,
Of caring and closeness, just because you are there.

Love be our banner, forgiveness our theme,
Compassion our nature, your vision our dream;
Who knows what the Spirit of God yet can do,
What joy may be tested or what promise come true?

Host at our table in our home and yours,
Here bind us together with love that endures;
Like parents, like children, let this be our fame:
That, blessed, we be many, to the praise of your name.

PRAYER OF APPROACH (Unison) Merrimon Boyd, *Student Pastor*

Remind us here and now, O God of abundant grace, of the power of your word – to transform, to heal, to lift spirits. As we remember our past put us in mind of our future and just how much we may accomplish, together in your love. Infuse our spirits with your own, our love with your love, and make us the people you would have us be. Do not let us be daunted by the challenges of the present, but call us forward and send us – a community

**charged with the truth of your resurrection, a body raised never to fall again.
In Christ's name we pray. Amen.**

THE WORD SHARED

From the Gospels

Mark 1:21-28

Merrimon Boyd
NRSV, adapted

[Jesus and the four fishermen] went to Capernaum; and when the sabbath came, he entered the synagogue and taught. They were astounded at his teaching, for he taught them as one having authority, and not as the scribes.

Just then there was in their synagogue a man with an unclean spirit, and he cried out, "What have you to do with us, Jesus of Nazareth? Have you come to destroy us? I know who you are – the Holy One of God."

But Jesus rebuked the spirit, saying, "Be silent, and come out of him!"

And the unclean spirit, convulsing him and crying with a loud voice, came out of him.

They were all amazed, and they kept on asking one another, "What is this? A new teaching — with authority! He commands even the unclean spirits, and they obey him."

At once his fame began to spread throughout the surrounding region of Galilee.

Response.

Hear what the Spirit is saying to the people.

Thanks be to God.

NOT FOR CHILDREN ONLY

Halley Kim, *Pastoral Assistant*

INTERLUDE

Irish Melody

Traditional

Erin Warner Prange, flute

MESSAGE OF THE DAY

*"Is God Irresistible?
Part 3: Jesus Commands"*

Rev. David Denoon, *Pastor*

PRAYERS OF THE PEOPLE

Joys and Concerns

Elston McCowan, *Student Pastor*

- Our residents in assisted living and skilled care
- All people who are living with dementia, their families and their caregivers
- People we love who are living with cancer
- All those the world regards as disabled
- People with mental illness, as well as their family, friends, caregivers, and roommates
- People who are lonely or alone
- Those whose employment and businesses are at risk
- COVID-19 patients
- Front line workers and their loved ones; with a special prayer for medical personnel who are working with COVID patients
- For our governmental leaders, and for healing for our country and all its people
- Peace with justice

Prayer of the Day

Rev. Denoon

Prayer of Our Savior (Unison)

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 sins, as we forgive those who sin against us. Lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil; for thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory forever. Amen.

WE SHARE OUR BLESSINGS WITH OTHERS

Mark Edwards

Invitation

Prayer of Dedication (Unison)

For all these years your grace has abounded, O God, so that gifts might ever flow from and through us. Into this Christian community these gifts have come. Now take and bless them out and beyond, to new horizons of faithfulness. For the preservation and renewal of your world we give them and our very selves, in Jesus' name. Amen.

BENEDICTION

Rev. Denoon

POSTLUDE

Triumphal March

Theodore Dubois

WE SHARE OUR BLESSINGS WITH OTHERS

Mark

Invitation

This week we pray thankfully for the blessing of our faith community 155 years young. We look forward to many, many more years of life and vitality, witness and worship, service and love, by God's grace.

We invite you to serve and support the purposes of God through this faith community by contributing to our ministries of outreach and care. We have heard God's call, and we know we must respond and enable the responses of others. We do this by giving of our time, talent, and treasure, each according to our own abilities.

If you are able financially, and you would like to support First Church with a monetary donation, please either send a check to

First Congregational Church
10 West Lockwood Avenue
Webster Groves, Missouri 63119

or go to our website – FirstChurchWG.org – and to our “Donate” page. Thank you.

Prayer of Dedication (Unison)

For all these years your grace has abounded, O God, so that gifts might ever flow from and through us. Into this Christian community these gifts have come. Now take and bless them out and beyond, to new horizons of faithfulness. For the preservation and renewal of your world we give them and our very selves, in Jesus' name. Amen.

DISMISSAL

Mark

That's our worship for this Heritage Sunday at First Church. We're glad you could worship with us. Please, join us for our Virtual Coffee Fellowship, Sunday at 11am on Zoom. All of us here hope to see you there! The Virtual Coffee Fellowship link is on the homepage of our website.

As for this time together...

Our worship has ended. Let our service begin.