



First Congregational United Church of Christ January 14, 2024



Picture of
3,500-year-old
Olive Tree in
Palestine

2nd Sunday after Epiphany

Partners in Ministry: All who are a part of this church

Pastor: Rev. Enno K. Limvere

Musician: Chandler Litterst Choir Director: Ann Russ

Peace Poem: Carol Winter Liturgist: Gwen Mattice

Greeter: Ranna LeVoir Usher:

Coffee-Hour Host: Borealis Cookies

**grandmaraisucc.org ~ (218) 387-2113
300 West 2nd Street, Grand Marais, MN 55604**

Gathering Music
Words of Welcome
Prelude

Words to Enter Worship (Based on Psalm 126)

One: When the LORD brought us captives back to Zion, we thought we were dreaming!
Our mouths were filled with laughter then,

Many: Our tongues with songs of joy. And from the nations we heard, “Their God has done great things for them.” Yes – the LORD has done great things for us, and we are filled with joy.

One: Now set our captives hearts free, LORD! Make them like streams in the driest desert! Then those who now sow in tears will reap with shouts of joy;

Many: Those who go out weeping as they carry their seed for sowing will come back with shouts of joy as they carry their harvest home.

Opening Hymn #514 Over My Head ([click here](#))

Words of Lament

On this weekend commemorating Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr, we lament, O God, the shallowness of our country’s soul that places a premium on the whiteness of our skin over the content of our character. Wake up America! Wake us up to the harm still being done because we are too afraid of change, and cling to the wrong traditions. Help us hear the cries, see the injustice, and deepen our compassion for all minorities in our world. In Jesus’ name we pray. Amen.

Time of Silence

Words of Poetry & Lighting the Candle of Peace

It is a custom in our congregation to light our Peace Candle during worship, as a witness to the Prince of Peace and our communal intention to be peacemakers as a Just Peace Church.

I, Too
By Langston Hughes

I, too, sing America.

I am the darker brother.
They send me to eat in the kitchen
When company comes,
But I laugh,
And eat well,
And grow strong.
Tomorrow,
I’ll be at the table
When company comes.
Nobody’ll dare
Say to me,
“Eat in the kitchen,”
Then.
Besides,
They’ll see how beautiful I am
And be ashamed—
I, too, am America.

Passing of the Peace

Scripture Mark 4:1-34 (Common English Bible)

4 Jesus began to teach beside the lake again. Such a large crowd gathered that he climbed into a boat there on the lake. He sat in the boat while the whole crowd was nearby on the shore. **2** He said many things to them in parables. While teaching them, he said, **3** “Listen to this! A farmer went out to scatter seed. **4** As he was scattering seed, some fell on the path; and the birds came and ate it. **5** Other seed fell on rocky ground where the soil was shallow. They sprouted immediately because the soil wasn’t deep. **6** When the sun came up, it scorched the plants; and they dried up because they had no roots. **7** Other seed fell among thorny plants. The thorny plants grew and choked the seeds, and they produced nothing. **8** Other seed fell into good soil and bore fruit. Upon growing and increasing, the seed produced in one case a yield of thirty to one, in another case a yield of sixty to one, and in another case a yield of one hundred to one.” **9** He said, “Whoever has ears to listen should pay attention!”

10 When they were alone, the people around Jesus, along with the Twelve, asked him about the parables. **11** He said to them, “The secret of God’s kingdom has been given to you, but to those who are outside everything comes in parables. **12** This is so that they can look and see but have no insight, and they can hear but not understand. Otherwise, they might turn their lives around and be forgiven.

13 “Don’t you understand this parable? Then how will you understand all the parables? **14** The farmer scatters the word. **15** This is the meaning of the seed that fell on the path: When the word is scattered and people hear it, right away Satan comes and steals the word that was planted in them. **16** Here’s the meaning of the seed that fell on rocky ground: When people hear the word, they immediately receive it joyfully. **17** Because they have no roots, they last for only a little while. When they experience distress or abuse because of the word, they immediately fall away. **18** Others are like the seed scattered among the thorny plants. These are the ones who have heard the word; **19** but the worries of this life, the false appeal of wealth, and the desire for more things break in and choke the word, and it bears no fruit. **20** The seed scattered on good soil are those who hear the word and embrace it. They bear fruit, in one case a yield of thirty to one, in another case sixty to one, and in another case one hundred to one.” **21** Jesus said to them, “Does anyone bring in a lamp in order to put it under a basket or a bed? Shouldn’t it be placed on a lampstand? **22** Everything hidden will be revealed, and everything secret will come out into the open. **23** Whoever has ears to listen should pay attention!”

24 He said to them, “Listen carefully! God will evaluate you with the same standard you use to evaluate others. Indeed, you will receive even more. **25** Those who have will receive more, but as for those who don’t have, even what they don’t have will be taken away from them.”

26 Then Jesus said, “This is what God’s kingdom is like. It’s as though someone scatters seed on the ground, **27** then sleeps and wakes night and day. The seed sprouts and grows, but the farmer doesn’t know how. **28** The earth produces crops all by itself, first the stalk, then the head, then the full head of grain. **29** Whenever the crop is ready, the farmer goes out to cut the grain because it’s harvesttime.”

30 He continued, “What’s a good image for God’s kingdom? What parable can I use to explain it? **31** Consider a mustard seed. When scattered on the ground, it’s the smallest of all the seeds on the earth; **32** but when it’s planted, it grows and becomes the largest of all vegetable plants. It produces such large branches that the birds in the sky are able to nest in its shade.”

33 With many such parables he continued to give them the word, as much as they were able to hear. **34** He spoke to them only in parables, then explained everything to his disciples when he was alone with them.

Children’s Message Good Soil

Choir Anthem “From the Seed in the Ground” by Connie Kaldor

Message A Sower...

Musical Reflections

Communion Hymn #347 Let Us Talents and Tongues Employ ([click here](#))

Communion

Joys and Concerns, Pastoral Prayer and the Lord’s Prayer

Our Father, Mother God, you are in heaven, holy is your name. Your kingdom come, your will be done, on earth as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread and forgive us our trespasses as we forgive those who trespass against us. And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil. For yours is the kingdom and the power and the glory, forever. Amen

News of God at Work in our Congregation & Community

Our Time of Giving

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*

Closing Hymn #177 God of Change and Glory ([click here](#))

Benediction

Sending Music



Opening Hymn #514 Over My Head

1. Over my head I hear music in the air.
Over my head I hear music in the air.
Over my head I hear music in the air,
there must be a God somewhere.

2. Over my head I hear singing in the air
Over my head I hear singing in the air
Over my head I hear singing in the air
there must be a God somewhere.

3. Over my head I see trouble in the air
Over my head I see trouble in the air
Over my head I see trouble in the air
there must be a God somewhere.

4. Over my head I see Jesus in the air
Over my head I see Jesus in the air
Over my head I see Jesus in the air
there must be a God somewhere.

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*African-American traditional
Arr. J. Jefferson Cleveland & Verolga Nix, 1981
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Communion Hymn #347 **Let Us Talents and Tongues Employ**

1. Let us talents and tongues employ,
reaching out with a shout of joy:
bread is broken, the wine is poured,
Christ is spoken and seen and heard.

Refrain:

Jesus lives again,
earth can breathe again,
pass the Word around:
loaves abound!

2. Christ is able to make us one,
at his table he set the tone,
teaching people to live to bless,
love in word indeed express.

3. Jesus calls us in, sends us out
bearing fruit in a world of doubt,
gives us love to tell, bread to share:
God (Immanuel) everywhere!

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*Words, Fred Kaan, 1975; alt.
Tune, Jamaican folk song
Adapt. Doreen Potter, 1975
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Closing Hymn #177 **God of Change and Glory**

1. God of change and glory, God of time and space,
when we fear the future, give to us your grace.

In the midst of changing ways give us still the grace to praise.

Refrain: Many gifts, one Spirit, one love know in many ways
In our difference is blessing, from diversity we praise one Giver,
one Word, one Spirit, one God known many ways, hallowing our days.
For the Giver, for the gifts, praise, praise, praise!

2. God of many colors, God of many signs,
you have made us different, blessing many kinds.
As the old ways disappear, let your love ease out our fear.

3. Freshness of the morning, newness of each night,
you are still creating endless love and light.
This we see, as shadows part, many gifts from one great heart.

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*Al Carmines, 1973
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