

First Congregational Church of Rowley, United Church of Christ
The Order of Morning Worship
Communion Sunday – Semi Annual Meeting
Drive in Service - 90.3 FM – November 1, 2020 @ 10am

Welcome and Announcements

Rev. Tom Bentley

Call to Worship

Jen Loring

Leader: Brothers and sisters, the love of God is poured over you.

All: We feel our thirsting souls quenched by God's mercy.

Leader: We are called to share God's love by our words.

All: We are invited to share God's love by our compassionate acts.

Leader: Come, let us worship the Lord!

All: Let's rejoice in all the opportunities God gives us to serve. AMEN.

Opening Song "In the Midst of New Dimensions" *(see lyrics from the New Century Hymnal attached)*

Old Testament Reading

Jen Loring

Psalms 107: 1-7, 33-37

O give thanks to the Lord, for he is good; for his steadfast love endures forever. Let the redeemed of the Lord say so, those he redeemed from trouble and gathered in from the lands, from the east and from the west, from the north and from the south.

Some wandered in desert wastes, finding no way to an inhabited town; hungry and thirsty, their soul fainted within them.

Then they cried to the Lord in their trouble, and he delivered them from their distress; he led them by a straight way, until they reached an inhabited town.

He turns rivers into a desert, springs of water into thirsty ground, a fruitful land into a salty waste, because of the wickedness of its inhabitants.

He turns a desert into pools of water, a parched land into springs of water. And there he lets the hungry live, and they establish a town to live in; they sow fields, and plant vineyards, and get a fruitful yield.

Moment of Music “A Mighty Fortress is Our God- Promise Keepers” *(please see attached from the Pilgrim Hymnal English lyrics of this hymn of the Reformation)*

Joys and Concerns *(prayer requests can be texted to 978-973-2362)*

Pastoral Prayer

The Lord’s Prayer *(in 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. And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil. For thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, forever, Amen.

Gospel Reading

Jen Loring

Matthew 23 :1-12 *The Message*

Now Jesus turned to address his disciples, along with the crowd that had gathered with them. “The religion scholars and Pharisees are competent teachers in God’s Law. You won’t go wrong in following their teachings on Moses. But be careful about following *them*. They talk a good line, but they don’t live it. They don’t take it into their hearts and live it out in their behavior. It’s all spit-and-polish veneer.

“Instead of giving you God’s Law as food and drink by which you can banquet on God, they package it in bundles of rules, loading you down like pack animals. They seem to take pleasure in watching you stagger under these loads, and wouldn’t think of lifting a finger to help. Their lives are perpetual fashion shows, embroidered prayer shawls one day and flowery prayers the next. They love to sit at the head table at church dinners, basking in the most prominent positions, preening in the radiance of public flattery, receiving honorary degrees, and getting called ‘Doctor’ and ‘Reverend.’

“Don’t let people do that to *you*, put you on a pedestal like that. You all have a single Teacher, and you are all classmates. Don’t set people up as experts over your life, letting them tell you what to do. Save that authority for God; let *him* tell you what to do. No one else should carry the title of ‘Father’; you have only one Father, and he’s in heaven. And don’t let people maneuver you into taking charge of them. There is only one Life-Leader for you and them—Christ.

“Do you want to stand out? Then step down. Be a servant. If you puff yourself up, you’ll get the wind knocked out of you. But if you’re content to simply be yourself, your life will count for plenty.

Message: “Reforming Never Ends”

Sacrament of Holy Communion

Benediction:

Rev. Tom Bentley

Postlude: “Lord Dismiss Us With Thy Blessing” *(traditional song from the Psalter)*

LYRICS - In the Midst of New Dimensions

In the midst of new dimensions, in the face of changing ways.
Who will lead the pilgrim peoples wandering in their separate ways?

**God of rainbow, fiery pillar, leading where the eagles soar, We
your people, ours the journey now and ever, now and ever,
now and ever more.**

As we stand a world divided by our own self seeking schemes,
Grant that we, your global village might envision wider dreams.

**God of rainbow, fiery pillar, leading where the eagles soar, We
your people, ours the journey now and ever, now and ever,
now and ever more.**

We are man and we are woman, all persuasions, old and young,
Each a gift in your creation, each a love song to be sung.

Should the threats of dire predictions cause us to withdraw in
pain, May your blazing phoenix spirit, resurrect the church
again.

**God of rainbow, fiery pillar, leading where the eagles soar, We
your people, ours the journey now and ever, now and ever,
now and ever more.**

A Mighty Fortress Is Our God

1 A mighty fortress is our God, a bulwark never failing; our helper he, amid the flood of mortal ills prevailing.

For still our ancient foe does seek to work us woe; his craft and power are great, and armed with cruel hate, on earth is not his equal.

2 Did we in our own strength confide, our striving would be losing, were not the right Man on our side, the Man of God's own choosing.

Dost ask who that may be? Christ Jesus, it is he; Lord Sabaoth his name, from age to age the same; and he must win the battle.

3 And though this world, with devils filled, should threaten to undo us, we will not fear, for God has willed his truth to triumph through us.

The prince of darkness grim, we tremble not for him; his rage we can endure, for lo! his doom is sure; one little word shall fell him.

**A mighty fortress, a mighty fortress is our God
A mighty fortress, a mighty fortress is our God**

4 That Word above all earthly powers, no thanks to them abideth; the Spirit and the gifts are ours, through him who with us sideth.
Let goods and kindred go, this mortal life also; the body they may kill: God's truth abideth still; his kingdom is forever!

**A mighty fortress, a mighty fortress is our God
A mighty fortress, a mighty fortress is our God
A mighty fortress, a mighty fortress is our God**