

FIFTH AVE. UNITED METHODIST CHURCH
323 South 5th Avenue, West Bend WI 53095



Twelfth Sunday After Pentecost

August 20, 2023

Tom Blumenberg, Liturgist

Dave Bertelsen, Singer

Deanna Gibeau, Organist

Rev. Clarissa Martinelli, Senior Pastor

Rev. Jean B. Schmidt, Retired Elder

JOIN US IN PERSON OR ONLINE

Sundays, 9:30 A.M.

WELCOME TO FIFTH AVE. UMC

Whether you're just beginning to explore your faith or have been following Christ for years, you and your whole family can belong at Fifth Ave. UMC

***Note: L: denotes worship "Leader" ~**

P: denotes "People"

~GATHERING GOD'S PEOPLE~

Prelude: "Psalm XXIII: Green Pastures"

Gordon Young

~WELCOME & CENTERING~

GREETING:

Pastor: I will extol you, my God and King, and bless your name for ever and ever.

P: Great is the Lord, and greatly to be praised, and God's greatness is unsearchable!

***CALL TO WORSHIP:**

L: Beloved disciples, welcome! We gather as people reconciled to one another and God through grace, a gift freely and lovingly given that we do not earn or deserve. We receive the marvelous work of grace in our lives, and we wonder, "Is it fair?"

P: No! God's grace is not fair, but a gift of God's mercy.

L: We gather as neighbors who have experienced difficulties of every kind. We feel uncertain, fearful, and overwhelmed, and we wonder, “Is it fair?”

P: No! Our difficulties are not fair, and God’s grace meets our uncertainty with mercy and love.

L: We gather as a community that knows the suffering of our neighbors. We look at the effects of poverty, food insecurity, and trauma in our neighborhoods, and we wonder, “Is it fair?”

P: No! The suffering of our neighbors is not fair, and God’s grace calls us to respond to suffering with mercy and justice.

L: We gather as people who question how to live into God’s abundance and flourishing in a world built on scarcity and greed, and we wonder, “Is it fair?”

Yes! God’s life of abundance and flourishing is fair, because it is merciful. May God’s grace form us into people of mercy, justice, compassion, and truth-telling as we gather today. **Amen.**

***INVOCATION:**

Pastor: Grant, O Lord, that your love may so fill our lives that we may count nothing too small to do for you, nothing too much to give, and nothing too hard to bear, for Jesus Christ’s sake. **Amen.**

***OPENING HYMN:**

“Lord, I Want to Be a Christian”

UMH #402

~WE PROCLAIM~

Psalm 133~ NRSV

In Unison

How very good and pleasant it is when kindred live together in unity!
It is like the precious oil on the head, running down upon the beard,
on the beard of Aaron, running down over the collar of his robes.
It is like the dew of Hermon, which falls on the mountains of Zion.
For there the Lord ordained his blessing, life forevermore.

Gospel: Matthew 15:10-28~ NRSV

Pastor Jean

10Then he called the crowd to him and said to them, “Listen and understand: 11it is not what goes into the mouth that defiles a person, but it is what comes out of the mouth that defiles.”
12Then the disciples approached and said to him, “Do you know that the Pharisees took offense when they heard what you said?” 13He answered, “Every plant that my heavenly Father has not

planted will be uprooted. 14Let them alone; they are blind guides of the blind. And if one blind person guides another, both will fall into a pit.” 15But Peter said to him, “Explain this parable to us.” 16Then he said, “Are you also still without understanding? 17Do you not see that whatever goes into the mouth enters the stomach, and goes out into the sewer? 18But what comes out of the mouth proceeds from the heart, and this is what defiles. 19For out of the heart come evil intentions, murder, adultery, fornication, theft, false witness, slander. 20These are what defile a person, but to eat with unwashed hands does not defile.” 21Jesus left that place and went away to the district of Tyre and Sidon. 22Just then a Canaanite woman from that region came out and started shouting, “Have mercy on me, Lord, Son of David; my daughter is tormented by a demon.” 23But he did not answer her at all. And his disciples came and urged him, saying, “Send her away, for she keeps shouting after us.” 24He answered, “I was sent only to the lost sheep of the house of Israel.” 25But she came and knelt before him, saying, “Lord, help me.” 26He answered, “It is not fair to take the children’s food and throw it to the dogs.” 27She said, “Yes, Lord, yet even the dogs eat the crumbs that fall from their masters’ table.” 28Then Jesus answered her, “Woman, great is your faith! Let it be done for you as you wish.” And her daughter was healed instantly.

L: The Word of God for the People of God.

P: Thanks be to God.

SERMON:

“Beyond Fair”

Pastor Jean

~PRAYERS & CONCERNS OF THE PEOPLE~

***PRAYER OF CONFESSION:**

Precious Lord, strip away the mask I wear during the week to “get by.” Lay my soul bare before you today. Let me see genuine love. Show me the love that hates evil and holds onto what is good. Strip away the mask that holds my emotions in check when I should share your love with someone. Let me see the joy of giving to others. Show me the power of blessing those who persecute me. Strip away the mask that grins and lies and lets the world think otherwise about a child of God. Amen.

***WORDS OF FORGIVENESS:**

May Almighty God in mercy receive our confessions of sorrow and faith, strengthen us in all goodness, and by the power of the Holy Spirit keep us in eternal life. **Amen.**

PASTORAL PRAYERS:

L: Merciful God, in love You created us, and in love, You sustain us, day after day. So it is with confidence that we bring our prayers to You, knowing that You will hear and respond.

L: We pray for those who are estranged from their spouse or family,

Friends, or neighbors; who find it difficult to forgive past wrongs done to them;
Lord, in Your mercy, **hear our prayer.**

L: We pray for those who for years have carried feelings of guilt or regret for something they did or something they neglected to do; who find it difficult to ask for forgiveness or forgive themselves; Lord, in Your mercy, **hear our prayer.**

L: For those who find themselves far away from You, struggling to overcome their doubts or disillusionment, and who wonder how to find their way back; Lord, in Your mercy, **hear our prayer.**

L: For those watching someone they love try to cope with serious illness or injury,
and who long for Your miraculous intervention; Lord, in Your mercy, **hear our prayer.**

L: For the many others in our world who are suffering this day—from grief, or loneliness, hunger, poverty, violence, or illness; Lord, in Your mercy, **hear our prayer.**

L: Sustain all those who look to You in hope. And strengthen us—Your people—
so that we may be love for all those who find themselves alone. In the name of Jesus Christ,
Amen.

~INVITATION TO SHARING OUR GIFTS, TITHES, & OFFERINGS~

***DOXOLOGY:** **"Praise God, from Whom All Blessings Flow"** **UMH 94**

Praise God, from whom all blessings flow; Praise God, all creatures here below: Alleluia! Alleluia! Praise God, the source of all our gifts! Praise Jesus Christ, whose power uplifts! Praise the Spirit, Holy Spirit! Alleluia! Alleluia! Alleluia!

OFFERTORY PRAYER:

Creator and architect of the universe, we want to believe that your love for us means you will go before us on life's path and clear the way, making it easy to travel, but our experience doesn't always bear that out. We know you see a bigger picture than we do. As we bring you our offerings this day, we affirm your presence with us in the pits of despair as well as in the palaces of plenty. We give with gratitude, in Christ's holy name. Amen.

~THE GREAT THANKSGIVING~

The Lord be with you.

And also with you.

Lift up your hearts.

We lift them up to the Lord.

Let us give thanks to the Lord our God.

It is right to give our thanks and praise.

It is right, a good and joyful thing,
always and everywhere to give thanks to you,
Father Almighty, creator of heaven and earth.

And so, with your people on earth
and all the company of heaven
we praise your name and join their unending hymn:

**Holy, holy, holy Lord, God of power and might,
heaven and earth are full of your glory.**

Hosanna in the highest.

**Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord,
Hosanna in the highest.**

Holy are you, and blessed is your son Jesus Christ.
By the baptism of his suffering, death, and resurrection
you gave birth to your church,
delivered us from slavery to sin and death,
and made with us a new covenant
by water and the Spirit.

On the night in which he gave himself up for us
he took bread, gave thanks to you, broke the bread,
gave it to his disciples, and said:
“Take, eat; this is my body which is given for you.

Do this in remembrance of me.”

When the supper was over he took the cup,
gave thanks to you, gave it to his disciples, and said:

“Drink from this, all of you;
this is my blood of the new covenant,
poured out for you and for many
for the forgiveness of sins.
Do this, as often as you drink it,
in remembrance of me.”

And so,
in remembrance of these your mighty acts in Jesus Christ,
we offer ourselves in praise and thanksgiving
as a holy and living sacrifice,
in union with Christ’s suffering for us,
as we proclaim the mystery of faith.

Christ has died; Christ is risen, Christ will come again.

Pour out your Holy Spirit on us gathered here,
and on these gifts of bread and wine.
Make them to be for us the body and blood of Christ,
that we may be for the world the body of Christ,
redeemed by his blood.

By your spirit make us one with Christ,
one with each other,
and one in ministry to all the world,
until Christ comes in final victory,
and we feast at his heavenly banquet.

Through your Son Jesus Christ,
with the Holy Spirit in your holy church,
all honor and glory is yours, almighty Father,
now and for ever.

Amen.

LORD’S PRAYER:

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 trespasses, as we forgive those that trespass against us. And lead us not into temptation but deliver us from evil. For Thine is the kingdom, the power, and the glory, for ever and ever. Amen.

COMMUNION HYMN:

“I Come with Joy”

UMH #617

PRAYER AFTER COMMUNION:

Eternal God, heavenly Father, you have graciously accepted us as living members of your Son our Savior Jesus Christ, and you have fed us with spiritual food in the Sacrament of his Body and Blood. Send us now into the world in peace, and grant us strength and courage to love and serve you with gladness and singleness of heart; through Christ our Lord. Amen.

~SENDING FORTH/BENEDICTION~

***CLOSING HYMN:**

“Standing on the Promises”

UMH #374

Pastor: Beloved, is it fair? As you go today asking this question, remember: whether your answer is yes or no, there is always room for more mercy. May we be blessed to be people of God's grace and mercy in a world preoccupied with fairness. **Amen.**

***POSTLUDE:**

“ Baroque Trumpet”

Gordon Young