



**FIFTH AVE. UNITED
METHODIST CHURCH**

323 South 5th Avenue
West Bend WI 53095

Twenty-Fourth Sunday After Pentecost

November 12, 2023

Dorothy Dahlen, Liturgist
Deanna Gibeau, Organist
Rev. Clarissa Martinelli, Senior Pastor

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:

~WELCOME & CENTERING~

GREETING:

Pastor. Three weeks before the end of the liturgical year, we turn to gratitude as the guiding theme for these worship experiences. What does a life of gratitude look like? Or perhaps more importantly, what does it feel like? We are being led by the Spirit to do something a little different for these last three weeks. You are invited to come as we explore what a life of gratitude might look like! It is this boundedness of our lives in God that brings forth the gratitude we are invited to express with joy. The Lord is good; God's steadfast love endures forever, and God's faithfulness to all generations. Amen and amen.

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CENTERING MUSIC:

***INVOCATION:**

Leader: With our world in crisis, we thirst for calm. Soothing God, reassure us today with your abiding peace. Amen.

***CALL TO WORSHIP: (Responsively)**

L: Are you awake? Are you alert?

P: Christ is coming into our lives in a new way.

L: Are you watching the signs?

L: Are you interpreting what is happening today?

P: Christ is coming into our lives in a new way.

L: Do you see opportunities for ministry?

L: Do you see the poor, the homeless, the hungry, the needy?

P: Christ is coming into our lives in a new way.

L: Come, let us worship and let us work in the reign of God.

All: Christ has extended the invitation: let us work together in the reign of God on earth.

***CALL TO RECONCILIATION:**

L: How quickly we forget – our faith, our calling, our hope. All because we try to do everything our way, rather than God's. But God is quicker to forgive, and to restore us to new life. Let us confess to our God, as we pray, saying,

***PRAYER FOR FORGIVENESS: (Unison)**

It is never easy to admit how foolish we are, Approaching God. You have chosen us for yourself, and we continue to shelter false gods in our hearts. You promise to be with us in every moment, but we can find little time for you. You send your Word to us, but we are too busy listening to the noise of our culture to pay attention. Have mercy, Eternal One, and forgive us. Speak to us, so we might listen, and in hearing be transformed into your people. Fill us with holiness, so we might give ourselves wholly to others. Enable us to serve you faithfully and completely, even as did our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ.

(Silence is observed)

ASSURANCE OF PARDON: (Responsively)

L: This is our assurance: God forgives us. This is our hope: God's love is everlasting. This is our truth: God is with us always.

All: We will speak the truth; we will live the hope; we will share God's mercy. Thanks be to God. Amen.

***OPENING HYMN:**

"Sanctuary" x3

TFWS 2164

~WE PROCLAIM~

***PRAYER FOR ILLUMINATION - MATTHEW 25:1-13 (NRSV)**

L: Lord of the ages, our hope in times of trouble, and our consolation in grief; bring us a spirit of renewal, so that Your people may honor those who have served, are serving and those who have given their lives in service to their country. May their service kindle in us the desire for peace and unity, which is Your hope for all people. This we pray through Jesus Christ our Lord, amen.

All: The LORD said to Moses, "Go down at once! Your people, whom you brought up out of the land of Egypt, have acted perversely; they have been quick to turn aside from the way that I commanded them; they have cast for themselves an image of a calf, and have worshiped it and sacrificed to it, and said, 'These are your gods, O Israel, who brought you up out of the land of Egypt!' The LORD said to Moses, "I have seen this people, how stiff-necked they are. Now let me alone, so that my wrath may burn hot against them, and I may consume them; and of you I will make a great nation."

L: The Word of God for the People of God. P: Thanks be to God.

CHANCEL CHOIR: **"Take It to the Lord in Prayer"**
Dave Bertelsen, Director

SERMON: **"Ready For Anything"** **Pastor Clarissa**

~PRAYERS & CONCERNS OF THE PEOPLE~

Pastor: God of all goodness: **People: hear our prayer.**

Pastor: God, we are gathered to worship and pray even if we are in separate places. We are with you, united in Christ, and part of the communion of all the saints, past, present and future. In recognition of the vastness of creation and your never-ending creative power, we humbly and confidently speak our heartfelt hurts and share our deepest hopes.

We choose to serve you this day, knowing that serving you requires our all. Do not let us falter when discipleship gets hard and we are tempted to serve lesser, easier gods. Encourage us with the gift of community and the power of the Holy Spirit. Help us to not grow weary in doing good.

When we survey the state of our world, the suffering and the evil, the conflict and the hardship, we cannot help but cry out to you for help. While we know nothing can separate us from the love of Christ Jesus our Lord, we often rip the fabric of our life together apart, sowing division instead of seeking to be ministers of reconciliation. We know that you are with all those who hurt and we ask for the courage to stand on the side of the oppressed, to seek out those left half-dead in the ditch and to feed your sheep. Increase our compassion for people and indeed for all creation.

As we continue to try to navigate the many storms of this season, we are mindful that we do not do so alone. We are grateful for the ways you provide for us, granting us glimpses of peace that passes

understanding, giving us rest that restores and pursuing us when we are lost and afraid. We thank you for the gift of one another, those with whom we agree and those whose views we cannot comprehend, each of us your child, made in your image.

When we are unsure what to do, where to go or how we will serve you well, remind us to refill the oil for our lamps, the oil of gladness and healing, the oil that consecrates and anoints, the oil that allows us to see Christ when he comes to meet us. May our desire to serve you provide the wisdom we need for the living of these days. We make our prayer in the name of our Savior, Jesus Christ, the one who taught us to say when we pray,

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.

~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: (unison)

Holy Shepherd of all generations, we bring our gifts this morning with thanksgiving and praise! We present these tithes and offerings not from hearts of obligation or debt, but with the confidence and joy that through your love made incarnate in your son Jesus, you’ve forever removed our debt. Our joy and gratitude are hard to contain. Use our gifts and our lives to do your work of compassion, mercy, and redemption. In Christ’s name, we pray. Amen.

***CLOSING HYMN:** **“Battle Hymn of the Republic”** **UMH 717**

~SENDING FORTH/BENEDICTION~

L: God has called and chosen you to be witnesses to hope and peace in God’s world. Go in peace and this same healing, reconciling love and peace will be with you. Go and serve the Lord your God in all that you do. Amen.

Pastor: In the presence of the Lord, we have reflected on God’s words about the wisdom of watchfulness. What are we, foolish or wise? Probably a bit of the two: foolish when we sin, wise when we are watchful and try to live a bit more like Jesus each day and to put his words into practice. May Almighty God keep you alert and wise and bless you: in the name of the Father, and the Son, and the Holy Spirit.

***POSTLUDE:**

Please join us for continued Fellowship during our Coffee Hour in the Lounge