



\*SPOKEN RESPONSE by Caela Wood, pastor at the First Congregational United  
Church of Christ, Manhattan, Kansas Liza Catino

One: The heavens open. The Spirit descends.

**All: Jesus emerges from the water.**

One: And a voice echoes through the blue expanse.

**All: "This is my child, the Beloved, with whom I am well-pleased."**

One: Jesus is named. Claimed.

**All: We come to the water. We remember we are named. Claimed.**

One: Can it be so? What a thing to be named. Claimed.

**All: We come here and we are met by the one who names and claims us still.**

SERMON *Before and After* Pastor Brent

\*HYMN *Shall We Gather at the River* vss. 1 & 3 See page 8

\*RESPONDING AT THE RIVER written by Bruce Prewer Elizabeth Young

One: I believe in God who speaks through the prophets and lifts our gaze up to  
high and beautiful paths and peaks.

**All: I believe in Christ Jesus, free of corruption yet willingly numbered  
among the sinners, baptised in the waters of the Jordan.**

One: I believe in the Spirit who rested on Jesus like a dove, and who inspired  
him with such love as the world has not seen before or since.

**All: I believe that those who are baptised into Christ shall share his Spirit,  
his mission and his ultimate victory over sin and death.**

One: I believe that there is no human ability that cannot be enlarged, and no  
weakness that cannot be used by Christ to the praise of God.

**All: I believe that this believing is a gift from God, not to be used for self-  
gratification but for the building up of the church and for humble  
service the world**

One: I believe in myself as a baptised child of God, the recipient of a healing  
grace which precedes and supersedes all my efforts to be true.

**All: With the help of God, I will attempt to live my belief all the days of my  
life, and by his grace, dwell in the house of the Lord forever. Amen!**

\*SUNG RESPONSE

*We Were Baptized in Christ Jesus*

See page 9

## OFFERING OURSELVES AND OUR GIFTS

CALL TO THE OFFERING

OFFERTORY ANTHEM *Huron Carol*, arr. William Ringham

Bells

\*DOXOLOGY

Tune: Old 100th

**Praise God for gifts of hope and peace  
Praise God for gifts of joy and love  
Praise God for sending Christ to dwell  
On earth for us – Emmanuel. Amen.**

\*BLESSING OF THE GIFTS

BRINGING OUR PRAYERS

David Anderegg

The Lord's Prayer

**Our God, 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 who trespass  
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.**

PRAYER RESPONSE

*Danish Amen*

TIME WITH CHILDREN

\*SHARING OF THE PEACE

## GOING FORTH INTO THE WORLD

INVITATIONS

\*HYMN

*Mark How the Lamb of God's Self Offering* vss. 1 & 3

See page 10

\*BENEDICTION

Pastor Brent

POSTLUDE

*Shall We Gather at the River*

Bells

Verses  
1 & 2

70

# God Is Here! As We Your People Meet

Fred Pratt Green, 1978; alt.

1 God is here! As we your peo-ple meet to of - fer praise and prayer,  
2 Here are sym-bols to re - mind us of our life - long need of grace;  
3 Here our chil-dren find a wel-come in the Shep - herd's flock and fold;  
4 Sov - ereign God, of earth and heav-en, in an age of change and doubt

May we find in full - er mea-sure what it is in Christ we share.  
Here are ta - ble, font, and pul - pit, here the cross has cen - tral place.  
Here as bread and wine are tak - en, Christ sus - tains us as of old.  
Keep us faith - ful to the gos - pel, help us work your pur - pose out.

Here, as in the world a - round us, all our var - ied skills and arts  
Here in hon - es - ty of preach - ing, here in si - lence, as in speech,  
Here the ser - vants of the Ser - vant seek in wor - ship to ex - plore  
Here, in this day's ded - i - ca - tion, all we have to give, re - ceive;

wait the com - ing of the Spir - it in - to o - pen minds and hearts.  
here, in new - ness and re - new - al, God the Spir - it comes to each.  
what it means in dai - ly liv - ing to be - lieve and to a - dore.  
we, who can - not live with - out you, we a - dore you! We be - lieve!

*Though he retired in 1969, this distinguished British poet has continued to write hymns. In addition to administering several circuits and local congregations, Fred Pratt Green published plays, translations, and poems. Emory University in Atlanta awarded him an honorary doctorate.*

Tune: ABBOT'S LEIGH 8.7.8.7.D.  
Cyril V. Taylor, 1941

Verses  
1 & 2

533

Children of God

Eph. 4:31-5:2

John Greenleaf Whittier, 1848; alt.

1 Chil - dren of God, lift hearts to one an - oth - er;  
 2 For God whom Je - sus loved has tru - ly spo - ken:  
 3 Fol - low with rev - erent steps the great ex - am - ple  
 4 Then shall all shack - les fall; the storm-y clan - gor

where pit - y dwells, the peace of God is there;  
 the ho - lier wor - ship which Christ deigns to bless  
 of Christ whose ho - ly work was do - ing good;  
 of wild war mu - sic o'er the earth shall cease;

To wor - ship right - ly is to love each oth - er,  
 Re - stores the lost, and binds the spir - it bro - ken,  
 So shall the wide earth seem a ho - ly tem - ple,  
 Love shall tread out the bale - ful fire of an - ger,

each smile a hymn, each kind - ly deed a prayer.  
 and feeds the wid - ow and the par - ent - less.  
 each lov - ing life a psalm of grat - i - tude.  
 and in its ash - es plant the tree of peace.

*Of Puritan ancestry and Quaker parentage, the American poet and journalist John Greenleaf Whittier was a strong supporter of the abolition of slavery. This hymn is comprised of the final stanzas of "Worship," a poem expressing his views on the life of faith.*

Tune: WELWYN 11.10.11.10.  
 Alfred Scott-Gatty, 1900

Verses  
1 & 3

120

There's a Voice in the Wilderness

*Isa. 40:3-11; Ps. 103:15-17*

*J. Lewis Milligan, 1925; alt.*

1 There's a voice in the wil-der-ness cry-ing, a  
 2 O Zi-on, who of-fers good tid-ings, to the  
 3 But the word of our God is for-ev-er, our De-

call from the ways un-trod: Pre- pare in the des-ert a  
 height of the moun-tains dare! Lift your voice to the cit-ies of  
 fend-er's will is strong; God stands in the midst of

high-way, a high-way for our God! The  
 Ju-dah: "Be-hold your God!" de-clare. Like the  
 na-tions, to ren-der right the wrong. Then

*Before moving to Canada, J. Lewis Milligan was a successful British journalist and poet. This text was written in 1925 to celebrate the union of three churches into The United Church of Canada, a body he served as public relations director.*

Tune: ASCENSION Irr.  
*H. Hugh Bancroft, 1938*

val - leys shall be ex - alt - ed, the loft - y hills brought  
 flowers of the field we per - ish, our hu - man works de -  
 God shall be as a shep-herd, the lambs gath-ered to God's

low: make straight all the crook - ed pla - ces  
 cay, the power and pomp of sa - tions  
 breast; and pas - tures of peace shall greet them,

where Em - man - u - el may go!  
 shall pass like a dream a - way.  
 to give to the wea - ry rest.

Verses  
1 & 3

# Shall We Gather at the River

597

Robert Lowry, 1864; alt.

Rev. 22:1-5

1 Shall we gath - er at the riv - er, where bright an - gel feet have trod,  
 2 On the mar - gin of the riv - er, wash - ing up its sil - ver spray,  
 3 As we reach the shin - ing riv - er, lay we ev - ery bur - den down;  
 4 Soon we'll reach the shin - ing riv - er, soon our pil - grim - age will cease;

with its crys - tal tide for - ev - er flow - ing by the throne of God?  
 we will walk and wor - ship ev - er, all the hap - py gold - en day.  
 grace our spir - its will de - liv - er, and pro - vide a robe and crown.  
 soon our hap - py hearts will quiv - er with the mel - o - dy of peace.

*Refrain*

Yes, we'll gath - er at the riv - er, the beau - ti - ful, the beau - ti - ful riv - er,

Gath - er with the saints at the riv - er that flows by the throne of God.

Written during a time when an epidemic was claiming many lives in New York, Robert Lowry's hymn raised the question "Shall we meet again?" Lowry was pastor at Hanson Place Baptist Church in Brooklyn from 1861 to 1869, and collaborated on numerous hymn collections with William H. Doane.

Tune: HANSON PLACE 8.7.8.7. with refrain  
 Robert Lowry, 1864

*The New Century Hymnal* (1995)



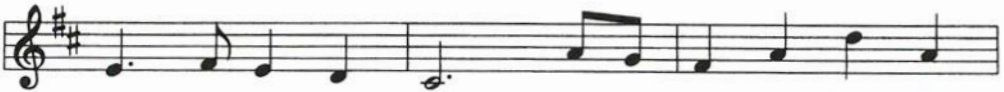
# We Were Baptized in Christ Jesus 2251



1. We were bap-tized in Christ Je - sus, we were bap-tized in his  
 2. In the wa - ter and the wit-ness, in the break-ing of the  
 3. Glo - ry be to God the Fa-ther, glo - ry be to Christ the



death; that as Christ was raised vic - to - rious, we might  
 bread, in the wait - ing arms of Je - sus who is  
 Son, glo - ry to the Ho - ly Spir - it, ev - er



live a brand new life. And if we have been u -  
 ris - en from the dead, God has made a new be -  
 three and ev - er one; as it was in the be -



nit - ed in a dread - ful death like his, we will  
 gin - ning from the ash - es of our past; in the  
 gin - ning, glo - ry now re-sounds a - gain in a



all be re - u - nit - ed, for he lives. \_\_\_\_\_  
 los - ing and the win - ning we hold fast. \_\_\_\_\_  
 song that has no end - ing. A - men. \_\_\_\_\_

WORDS: John Ylvisaker (Rom. 6:3-5)

MUSIC: John Ylvisaker

OUIMETTE

87.87.87.11

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*The Faith We Sing (2000)*

Verses

1 & 3

# 167 Mark How the Lamb of God's Self-Offering

Matt. 3:13-17; 4:1-2; Mark 1:9-13; Luke 3:21-22;  
Acts 10:34-38; 2:38-42

Carl P. Daw, Jr., 1990

1 Mark how the Lamb of God's self - of - fering our hu - man  
2 From this as - sur - ance of God's fa - vor Je - sus goes  
3 Grant us, O God, the strength and cour - age to live the

sin - ful - ness takes on In the birth - wa - ters of the Jor - dan  
to the wil - der - ness, There to en - dure a time of test - ing  
faith our lips de - clare; Bless us in our bap - tis - mal call - ing;

as Je - sus is bap - tized by John. Hear how the voice from heav - en  
that read - ied him to teach and bless. So we, by wa - ter and the  
Christ's roy - al priest - hood help us share. Turn us from ev - ery false al -

thun - ders, "Lo, this is my be - lov - ed Son." See how in  
Spir - it bap - tized in - to Christ's min - is - try, Are of - ten  
le - giance, that we may trust in Christ a - lone: Raise up in

Regarding this hymn for the first Sunday after the Epiphany, hymnwriter Carl P. Daw, Jr., writes that "the Baptism of Christ is one of the regular occasions for baptisms and for the making and renewing of baptismal vows."

Tune: RENDEZ À DIEU 9.8.9.8.D.  
Louis Bourgeois (c. 1510-c. 1561)  
Trente quatre Pseumes, Geneva, 1551

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dove-like form the Spir - it de - scends on God's A-noint-ed One.  
 led to paths of ser - vice through maz - es of ad-ver - si - ty.  
 us a cho - sen peo - ple trans - formed by love to be your own.

### Music Notes

We welcome the beautiful music making of our bell choir who will help us tell the story of Jesus' baptism and remind us of our time in the Epiphany season. Thank you, Mary Jo, and our wonderful ringers!

~ Tracy Wilson, Minister of Music pro tem



**Thank you** to all who helped with today's service, including Deacons David Anderegg, Gary Cilley, and Elizabeth Young; readers Liza Catino and Susan Moor; ushers Carl Bradford and Don Rodgers; fellowship Tom Ruffing; greeter Jon Geldert; storytellers Elisabeth Bellows and Kirsten Fredsall. Will Curtiss is running the Livestream, and Scarlett Ritcher and Rae Geddes are in the nursery.



**The Annual Budget Meeting of The First Congregational Church, UCC, Stockbridge, will be after the worship service on February 2, 2025.**

To prepare for the meeting, there will be a Question & Answer session after worship on **January 19**.

## News and Upcoming Events

### All-Church Birthday Party

Sunday, January 26 - Does your birthday fall somewhere within the calendar year 2025? We're having a (potluck) party for you! Please sign up in the JE Room, or check your weekly email for an online form. Please remember we cannot serve any food containing nuts. Would you like to bake a cake for our edible Parade of Cakes? Contact Diane Piraino or call the church office.

Come join the **Supper Book Club!** We are kicking off this new venture with former local pastor Mark Longhurst's wonderful new book, *The Holy Ordinary*.

Copies of the book are available in the church office. We will gather for a potluck meal on Wednesday January 22 at 6:00pm to cover the first two sections of the book. Give Pastor Brent a call to learn more.

**Applause** is a wonderful reaction to events that bring us joy, and is often given in recognition of being entertained. In church, where we are worshipping God, however, applause can be a distraction from the celebration of the Holy Spirit. To express appreciation for music that is part of worship, we ask that applause be saved until after the postlude (when worship is over).

We do encourage applause as an expression of joyful approval following some activities that occur during church service, such as welcoming new members, recognizing significant milestones (birthdays, anniversaries), or appreciating a special gift to the congregation. At these moments, the pastor will encourage applause, or ask "Do I hear an Amen?"

We are pleased that you are with us today and are grateful for your presence during this worship service.

*Welcome! We are Open and Affirming, which means that we invite persons of every sexual orientation, gender identification and expression, racial and cultural identity, age, physical ability, economic circumstance, faith background and family structure to share fully in the ministry, leadership and fellowship of this congregation's life in Christ.*

*As followers of Christ and committed to Isaiah's charge to "maintain justice and do what is right," we acknowledge with gratitude and humility that we are learning, speaking, gathering, and worshipping on the ancestral homelands of the Mohican people, who are the indigenous peoples of this land. Despite tremendous hardship in being forced from here, today their community resides in Wisconsin and is known as the Stockbridge-Munsee Community. We pay honor and respect to their ancestors past and present as we commit to building a more inclusive and equitable space for all.*

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