



**Middlebury Congregational Church  
United Church of Christ**

**January 31, 2021  
Fourth Sunday after Epiphany**

**PRELUDE**

Peace (from "Water Music")

G.F. Handel

**WELCOME & ANNOUNCEMENTS**

Rev. Manzi

**INVOCATION**

**LORD'S PRAYER (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 trespasses, as we forgive those who trespass  
against us.**

**And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil.  
For thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory,  
For ever and ever. Amen.**

[We use "Father" and "trespasses," but please use whatever words bring you closest to God.]

**CALL TO CONFESSION (based on 1 John 1:8-9)**

Rev. Manzi

**UNISON PRAYER OF CONFESSION**

**Holy and merciful God, in your presence we confess our failure to be  
what you created us to be. You alone know how often we have sinned  
in wandering from your ways, in wasting your gifts, in forgetting  
your love. By your loving mercy, help us to live in your light and  
abide in your ways, for the sake of Jesus Christ our Savior. Amen.**

(Time for individual silent confession)

**ASSURANCE OF PARDON**

(based on Romans 5:8, Colossians 1:13-14, Romans 5:1)

Hear the good news! God demonstrates love for us in this way: while we were still sinners, Christ died for us. He has rescued us from the dominion of darkness and brought us into the kingdom of the beloved Son, in whom we have redemption and forgiveness of sins. Therefore, since we have been justified through faith, we have peace with God

through our Lord Jesus Christ. Friends, hear and believe the good news of the gospel: in Jesus Christ we are forgiven. Amen.

**PRAYER FOR ILLUMINATION**

**READINGS OF THE HOLY SCRIPTURE**

Rev. Manzi

**Psalms 111**

Praise the LORD!

I will give thanks to the LORD with my whole heart,  
in the company of the upright, in the congregation.

Great are the works of the LORD,  
studied by all who delight in them.

Full of honor and majesty is his work,  
and his righteousness endures forever.

He has gained renown by his wonderful deeds;  
the LORD is gracious and merciful.

He provides food for those who fear him;  
he is ever mindful of his covenant.

He has shown his people the power of his works,  
in giving them the heritage of the nations.

The works of his hands are faithful and just;  
all his precepts are trustworthy.

They are established forever and ever,  
to be performed with faithfulness and uprightness.

He sent redemption to his people;  
he has commanded his covenant forever.

Holy and awesome is his name.

The fear of the LORD is the beginning of wisdom;  
all those who practice it have a good understanding.

His praise endures forever.

**1 Corinthians 8:1-13**

Now concerning food sacrificed to idols: we know that "all of us possess knowledge." Knowledge puffs up, but love builds up. Anyone who claims to know something does not yet have the necessary knowledge; but anyone who loves God is known by him.

Hence, as to the eating of food offered to idols, we know that "no idol in the world really exists," and that "there is no God but one." Indeed, even though there may be so-called gods in heaven or on earth—as in fact there are many gods and many lords—yet for us there is one God, the Father, from whom are all things and for whom we exist, and one Lord, Jesus Christ, through whom are all things and through whom we exist.

It is not everyone, however, who has this knowledge. Since some have become so accustomed to idols until now, they still think of the food they eat as food offered to an idol; and their conscience, being weak, is defiled. "Food will not bring us close to God." We are no worse off if we do not eat, and no better off if we do. But take care that this liberty of yours does not somehow become a stumbling block to the weak. For if others see you, who possess knowledge, eating in the temple of an idol, might they not, since their conscience is weak, be encouraged to the point of eating food sacrificed to idols? So by your knowledge those weak believers for whom Christ died are destroyed. But when you thus sin against members of your family, and wound their conscience when it is weak, you sin against Christ. Therefore, if food is a cause of their falling, I will never eat meat, so that I may not cause one of them to fall.

### **SERMON**

Rev. Manzi

### **Freedom and Love**

### **MUSICAL OFFERING**

Be Thou My Vision

arr. Lee Burswold

Austin Zold, violin

### **Joys and Concerns and Pastoral Prayer**

*Katrina will share joys, concerns and witness to your brothers and sisters that she received prior to today's service.*

### **OFFERING AND DEDICATION OF OUR GIFTS AND OURSELVES**

### **\*BENEDICTION**

### **BENEDICTION RESPONSE**

Be Thou My Vision

### **POSTLUDE**

Be Thou My Vision

arr Bethany Smith

*Please join us for Zoom Coffee Hour at 11:15 today.  
The information to connect was emailed out to everyone by Katrina on  
Wednesday, January 27<sup>th</sup> under the heading  
"Midweek Update: Annual Meeting This Sunday".*