

First Church
Middletown



UNITED CHURCH
OF CHRIST



Gathering for worship on February 19, 2023 at 10:00
a.m.

WE ARE A MASK POSITIVE COMMUNITY
ANNOUNCEMENTS WILL BE SHARED FROM THE LECTERN
ONLY.

God grant me the serenity to accept the things I cannot change,
the courage to change the things I can, and the wisdom to know
the difference. --**Reinhold Niebuhr**

WORDS OF WELCOME AND ANNOUNCEMENTS

PRELUDE:

Gloria
Katie Fletcher, harp

Frank Voltz

GATHERING SENTENCES:

The day has dawned,
the morning star rises in our hearts.

We witness the glory of Christ!

God speaks to us in cloud and flame,
in mysterious words and dazzling visions.

We witness the glory of Christ!

The Lord loves justice and equity,
and is exalted over all the people.

We witness the glory of Christ!

Praise the Lord!

*HYMN NCH 85: *I Woke Up This Morning*

WOKE UP THIS MORNING

*GATHERING PRAYER

Magnificent God, we cannot stand before the glory of your presence. You shine with divine light, and we are overwhelmed by your goodness. Lift us in your mercy, release us from our fear, and fill us with your Spirit, that we might reflect your light and share your love, for the sake of Jesus, our Savior.

SCRIPTURE:

Matthew 17:1-9

Six days later, [six days after Jesus had prophesied his death and resurrection] Jesus took with him Peter and James and his brother John and led them up a high mountain, by themselves. And he was transfigured before them, and his face shone like the sun, and his clothes became dazzling white. Suddenly there appeared to them Moses and Elijah, talking with him. Then Peter said to Jesus, "Lord, it is good for us to be here; if you wish, I will make three dwellings here, one for you, one for Moses, and one for Elijah." While he was still speaking,

suddenly a bright cloud overshadowed them, and from the cloud a voice said, "This is my Son, the Beloved; with him I am well pleased; listen to him!" When the disciples heard this, they fell to the ground and were overcome by fear. But Jesus came and touched them, saying, "Get up and do not be afraid." And when they looked up, they saw no one except Jesus himself alone. As they were coming down the mountain, Jesus ordered them, "Tell no one about the vision until after the Son of Man has been raised from the dead."

SERMON: *...the wisdom to know the difference*

The Rev. Dr. Virginia H. Child

*HYMN NCH 487: *Surely No One Can Be Safer*

TRYGGARE KAN INGEN VARA

THE OFFERING OF GIFTS

OFFERTORY: *Day By Day* arr. Greg Howlett

***THE DOXOLOGY Praise God from whom all blessings flow,
Praise God, all creatures here below,
Praise God for all that love has done;
Creator, Christ, and Spirit, One. Amen.**

PRAYER OF DEDICATION:

**God of glory,
as people brought gifts to the infant
Jesus,
we bring our gifts to you.
May these gifts be used
to lift up those who are oppressed,
to bring deliverance to those who are
need,
to support those who are poor,
and to help those who are in trouble. Amen.**



in

PRAYERS OF THE PEOPLE & PASTORAL PRAYER

OUR PRAYER CONCERNS

THE PASTORAL PRAYER

THE LORD'S PRAYER

**Our Father/Mother/God/Creator,
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.**

**Lead us not into temptation
but deliver us from evil.**

**For thine is the kingdom, the power, and the glory, forever.
Amen**

THE PASSING OF THE PEACE

*HYMN NCH 191: *Before Your Cross, O Jesus* ST. CHRISTOPHER

*BLESSING

*RESPONSE

Go out into the world in peace

Have courage

Hold on to what is good

Return no one evil for evil

Strengthen the faint-hearted

Support the weak

Help the suffering

Honor all persons

Love and serve the Lord

Rejoicing in the power of the Holy Spirit. Amen!

POSTLUDE

Trumpet Tune in C

Michael McCabe

Today's Worship Leaders

The Rev. Dr. Virginia H. Child, Interim Pastor; Shari Lucas,
Minister of Music

Parts of the service were developed from materials from
Call to Worship, Lectionary Aids for 2022-2023, Year A, Volume
56.1, PCUSA, Louisville KY

JESUS DIDN'T TURN PEOPLE AWAY. .

Skeptic. Certain. Confident. Fearful. Gay.
Straight. Bi. Married. Divorced. Single.
Looking. Partnered. Female. Male.
Trans. Queer. Cis. Non-binary. Saint.
sinner. A little of both. Immigrant.
Native. Citizen. Alien. Strong. Weak.
Got-it-together. Lifelong screw-up.
Addicted. Recovering. Convicted.
Conflicted. Pacifist. Militarist. Idealist.
Realist. Long-time member. Just walked
in the door. Parent. Child. Housed.
Homeless. Believer. Questioner.
Questioning believer. Doubter. Sports
junkie. Tree hugger. Geek. Cool kid.
Loner. Rich. Poor. Just barely making it. .

NEITHER DO WE.

h/t to the Old South Church in Boston