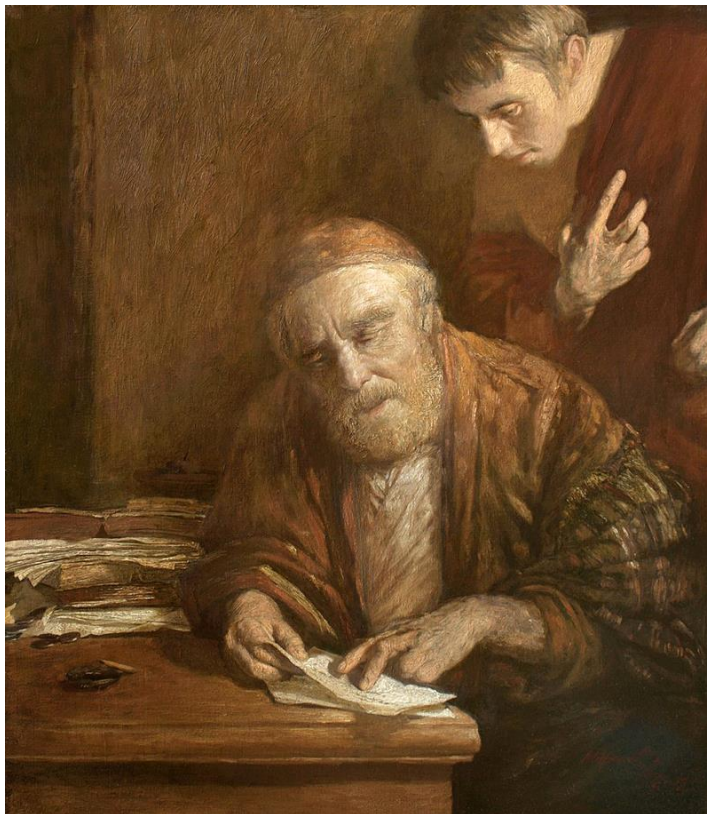


FIRST CONGREGATIONAL UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST OF GRAND LEDGE



“Wait...What?: Understanding the Parable of The Shrewd Manager”
September 4, 2022
10:30 a.m. Service

*Believing that every person is a child of God invested with worth and dignity,
and believing that every person is a recipient of God’s grace,
we at First Congregational United Church of Christ, Grand Ledge,
aspire to mirror God’s unconditional love by declaring that we are
an Open and Affirming congregation.*

Taken from Our Church’s Open and Affirming Statement

Rev. Dr. Laura Miller-Purrenhage, Pastor	Carol Orsborn, Bell Choir Director
Larry Patterson, Office Administrator	Chuck Byam, Organist & Accompanist
Sue Sackett & Ben Sackett, Custodian	Brandon Frost, Choir Director
Rev Demphna Krikorian, Christian Educator	David Wee, Video Operator
Rev. John Baumgartner, Pastor Emeritus	

210 W. Saginaw Hwy • Grand Ledge, MI 48837 • grandledgeucc.org

• 517-627-2336 • office@grandledgeucc.org

Welcome to First Congregational United Church of Christ!

*As you look over the bulletin, please notice that you are invited to read aloud **bold** text, and an asterisk (*) indicates to please stand, as you are able. As you enter the sanctuary, please share your offering in the offering plate by the door. We ask that you social distance from others not in your family or pod.*

Our hymns are not announced, but are printed in the bulletin, so feel free to locate them ahead of time. Helpful worship notes and information on the church can be found in the brochure by the hymnals.

Guests and visitors – a special welcome! Please fill out a “Welcome” card (in the pew pocket) and put it in the offering plate so we may send you a small gift.

MOMENT FOR CENTERING

GREETING

One: The grace of Jesus Christ and the love of God and the communion of the Holy Spirit be with you all.

Many: And also with you.

INTRODUCTIONS and ANNOUNCEMENTS

BELLS/CHIMES

Grand Ringers

CALL TO WORSHIP

Blessed Are the Laborers
(Based on Matthew 5:1-9, Luke 5:1-11)

One: Blessed are those who labor outdoors, in sun, snow, rain, and wind,

Many: for they shall be exalted in God’s beautiful creation.

One: Blessed are those who labor indoors,

Many: for the light of the Holy Spirit will shine upon them, guide them, and support them.

One: Blessed are those who work underground, in mines, tunnels and pipes,

Many: for they are the salt of the earth.

One: Blessed are the service workers,

Many: for they shall be fed by the Spirit of God.

One: Blessed are those who work second and third shift,

Many: for they shall be granted rest.

One: Blessed are the underpaid, the unpaid, the enslaved, the coerced,

Many: for justice will come down like a rolling stream.

One: Blessed are those workers who are discriminated against due to their color or creed, gender or sexuality, nationality or immigration status, or the abilities of their minds and bodies,

Many: for they will find a joyful welcome in Christ.

One: Blessed are the unseen laborers, those our eyes pass right through,

Many: for they shall be heard, seen and known by God.

One: Blessed are the laborers who came before us and put into place fair wages, work hours, and safety standards,

Many: for they shall inherit the Kin-dom of God.

One: Bless are you, if others revile and hate you for the work you do to protect, care for and support those who labor.

Many: Rejoice and be glad, for your reward is great in heaven, for in the same way they persecuted the prophets who were before you.

All: Thanks be to God. Amen.

*OPENING HYMN v. 1-4

“Gather Us In”

GATHERING PRAYER

One: Please join me in prayer:

Many: Loving God, Master Builder and Worker for everything good, gather us all into our worship spaces this morning so that we can meditate on your teachings. Let your wisdom guide us, fill us, and nurture us this day and always. Amen.

*PASSING OF THE PEACE

FRESH PERSPECTIVES

Virginia Shiefelbein

OLD TESTAMENT LESSON

Proverbs 2:1-15 NRSV (574)

My child, if you accept my words
and treasure up my commandments within you,
making your ear attentive to wisdom
and inclining your heart to understanding,
if you indeed cry out for insight
and raise your voice for understanding,
if you seek it like silver
and search for it as for hidden treasures—
then you will understand the fear of the Lord
and find the knowledge of God.

For the Lord gives wisdom;
from God's mouth come knowledge and understanding;
God stores up sound wisdom for the upright
and is a shield to those who walk blamelessly,

guarding the paths of justice
and preserving the way of his faithful ones.
Then you will understand righteousness and justice
and equity, every good path,
for wisdom will come into your heart,
and knowledge will be pleasant to your soul;
prudence will watch over you,
and understanding will guard you.
It will save you from the way of evil,
from those who speak perversely,
who forsake the paths of uprightness
to walk in the ways of darkness,
who rejoice in doing evil
and delight in the perverseness of evil,
those whose paths are crooked
and who are devious in their ways.

NEW TESTAMENT LESSON

Luke 16:1-13 The Message (953-954)

Jesus said to his disciples, “There was once a rich man who had a manager. He got reports that the manager had been taking advantage of his position by running up huge personal expenses. So he called him in and said, ‘What’s this I hear about you? You’re fired. And I want a complete audit of your books.’

“The manager said to himself, ‘What am I going to do? I’ve lost my job as manager. I’m not strong enough for a laboring job, and I’m too proud to beg. . . . Ah, I’ve got a plan. Here’s what I’ll do . . . then when I’m turned out into the street, people will take me into their houses.’

“Then he went at it. One after another, he called in the people who were in debt to his master. He said to the first, ‘How much do you owe my master?’

“He replied, ‘A hundred jugs of olive oil.’

“The manager said, ‘Here, take your bill, sit down here—quick now—write fifty.’

“To the next he said, ‘And you, what do you owe?’

“He answered, ‘A hundred sacks of wheat.’

“He said, ‘Take your bill, write in eighty.’

“Now here’s a surprise: The master praised the crooked manager! And why? Because he knew how to look after himself. Streetwise people are smarter in this regard than law-abiding citizens. They are on constant alert, looking for angles, surviving by their wits. I want you to be smart in the same way—but for what is *right*—using every adversity to stimulate you to creative survival, to concentrate your attention on the bare essentials, so you’ll live, really live, and not complacently just get by on good behavior.”

Jesus went on to make these comments:

If you're honest in small things,
you'll be honest in big things;
If you're a crook in small things,
you'll be a crook in big things.
If you're not honest in small jobs,
who will put you in charge of the store?
No worker can serve two bosses:
He'll either hate the first and love the second
Or adore the first and despise the second.
You can't serve both God and the Bank.

CHORAL RESPONSE

"Breathe On Me Breath of God"

**Breathe on me, Breath of God,
so shall I never die,
But live with you the perfect life
of your eternity.**

HOMILY "Wait...What?: Understanding the Parable of The Shrewd Manager"
(Rev. Dr. Laura Miller-Purrenhage)

MUSICAL REFLECTION "Lord, Let Me Serve"
(Chuck Byam)

PRAYERS OF THE PEOPLE

(After every prayer request, you are invited to say, "God, hear our prayers.")

Since our services are posted publicly on Facebook, we ask that you either leave people unnamed in your prayer requests [ex: prayers for a friend who is in his last stages of life] or that you obtain permission from anyone you wish to name in prayer.)

OFFERING MOMENT

(For those of us meeting in person, you are invited to place your offering in the offering plate in the back of the sanctuary. For those of you worshipping at home, please give what you can by mail or through prayers. If you have any questions, please reach out to Lynn Hart hartacre3@aol.com)

*DOXOLOGY

**Praise God from whom all blessings flow
Praise God all creatures here below
Praise God above ye heavenly hosts
Creator, Christ, and Holy Ghost. Amen.**

DEDICATION PRAYER

One: Please join me in the prayer of dedication.

Many: Beloved God, accept the gifts we offer, and bless them to the fulfillment of our calling. Following Jesus, our mission is to serve God by building an inclusive community where uplifting worship and relevant messages deepen spirituality and inspire acts of justice, service and compassion. May it be so. Amen

INVITATION TO HOLY COMMUNION

COMMUNION PRAYER

One: God be with you.

Many: And also with you.

One: Lift up your hearts.

Many: We lift them to God.

One: Let us give thanks to God Most High.

Many: It is good to give God thanks and praise.

CALL TO CONFESSION:

One: As a church, we believe that sin damages our relationship with God, with one another and with our own sense of self. Confession allows us to take stock of our lives and honestly see where we have made mistakes. Seeing our sins, admitting them, and asking God to help us to make amends and change helps us to repair our relationship with one another, within ourselves, and with God. Understanding this, you are invited to silently offer your confession to God.

MINUTES OF SILENCE

WORDS OF ASSURANCE

One: Beloved Ones, having made your confession to God, seek now Jesus' teachings about what your next steps are. And do not be afraid or daunted. Christ's message to us is that we are forgiven by God's unending grace, always loved for who we are.

Many: Thanks be to God. Amen.

SANCTUS

**Holy, holy, holy, Lord God Almighty.
Heav'n and earth are full of your glory.
Glory be to you, O Lord.
Blessed is the one who comes,
Who comes in the name of the Lord.
Hosanna, Hosanna, Hosanna in the highest!**

WORDS OF INSTITUTION

COMMUNION BLESSING AND LORD'S PRAYER

**Our 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 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 forever. Amen.**

SHARING OF THE BREAD AND CUP

THANKSGIVING PRAYER

One: Let us pray.

**Many: We thank you, God, for inviting us to, and nurturing us at, this table.
Let this meal fill us with the wisdom of the Holy Spirit, the courage of
Christ, and the love of God, so that we may leave this service better able
to serve you, through Jesus Christ our Savior. Amen.**

*CLOSING HYMN (insert)

"Humble Heart"

*BENEDICTION

Rev. Dr. Laura Miller-Purrenhage

*CHORAL RESPONSE

"In the Lord I'll be Ever Thankful" (sung once)

**In the Lord I'll be ever thankful
In the Lord, I will rejoice!
Look to God, do not be afraid.
Lift up your voices, the Lord is near.
Lift up your voices, the Lord is near.**

POSTLUDE

"Communion Song"
(Chuck Byam)

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SUNDAY ROSTER

Liturgist –

Fresh Perspective – Rev. Dr. Virginia Schiefelbein

Homily – Rev. Dr. Laura Miller-Purrenhage

Virtual Coordinator – David Wee

Sound Board - Charlynn Walker

Choir Director - Brandon Frost

Pianist/Organist – Chuck Byam

Usher – Fay Schroeder

Greeter –

Crucifier – Karen Walker

GATHER US IN
Mary Haugen

- Vs 1. Here in this place new light is streaming
Now is the darkness vanished away
See in this space our fears and our dreamings
Brought here to you in the light of this day
Gather us in, the lost and forsaken
Gather us in, the blind and the lame
Call to us now and we shall awaken
We shall arise at the sound of our name
- Vs 2. We are the young, our lives are a mystery
We are the old who yearn for your face
We have been sung throughout all of history
Called to be light to the whole human race
Gather us in, the rich and the haughty
Gather us in, the proud and the strong
Give us a heart so meek and so lowly
Give us the courage to enter the song
- Vs. 3 Here we will take the wine and the water
Here we will take the bread of new birth
Here you shall call your sons and your daughters
Call us anew to be salt for the earth
Give us to drink the wine of compassion
Give us to eat the bread that is you
Nourish us well and teach us to fashion
Lives that are holy and hearts that are true
- Vs. 4 Not in the dark of buildings confining
Not in some heaven light years away
But here in this place the new light is shining
Now is the kingdom, now is the day
Gather us in and hold us forever
Gather us in and make us your own
Gather us in, all peoples together
Fire of love in our flesh and our bones.
Fire of love in our flesh and our bones.

Humble Heart
Matt McChlery

(Verse 1)

I bow my heart before before a living God
I bow my knee before Your throne
I lay my hopes and dreams before a holy God
Come and make my will Your own

(Chorus)

Give me a humble heart
Make me pure and true
Give me a humble heart
Make me more like You

(Verse 2)

You search my deepest parts
To find a contrite heart
Your blessing falls upon the meek
May I decrease Lord so You may
Increase Lord
In my weakness You are strong

(Chorus) *Sung Twice*

(Bridge) *Sung Thirteen Times*
Melt my pride away

(Chorus) *Sung Twice*