

First Congregational Church of Groton, United Church of  
Christ  
The Order of Morning Worship  
Baptism of Christ Sunday  
January 10, 2021

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Prelude Micaela Schkeper & Ishu Manne  
Welcome Joan Jordan

Call to Worship

One: Sisters and brothers, today we recall:  
Jesus came to the waters of baptism

**All: In baptism, our Creator claims us  
and frees us from the power of  
hatred and death.**

One: In baptism we are joined to Christ and  
we are joined together in unity,  
recalling

**All: “There is no longer Jew or Greek  
there is no longer slave or free there  
is no longer male or female for all of  
you are one in Christ Jesus.”**

One: In baptism, the Spirit of God anoints  
us for ministry and makes us signs of  
divine love. It is the mark of  
acceptance into the church and the  
beginning of our growth into full  
Christian faith and discipleship.

**All: Therefore, on this day, the whole  
church, the Body of Christ,  
remembers and celebrates. Let us  
worship God!**

\*HYMN “This is a Day of New Beginnings” CH #518

UNISON PRAYER OF CONFESSION (based on Isaiah 43: 1-2)

Gracious God, we confess that too often we live as though we are  
fearful, not faithful. When we encounter the waters of chaos and  
confusion, we don’t easily pass through them, but we obsess about  
the height of the water instead of the sight of the other side. You  
promised to walk through the rivers with us. Help us believe.  
And help our unbelief.

Assurance of Grace

Rev Lee Ireland

One: Thus says the God who created you and formed us in God’s  
image “Do not fear, for I have redeemed you; I have called you by  
name, you are mine.” This is the good news!

**All: I belong to God. Let us pass through the waters and stand  
firmly on the other side.**

Let us give thanks this day as we remember whose we are. Amen.

**Baptism and Renewal of Baptismal Vow**

(Please have a small bowl of water to use in blessing yourself)

Introduction

Our God created new life forms and brought them up from the waters  
of chaos, embraced them, and called them good. Jesus, baptized in the  
river Jordan by John the Baptist, became living water for us and  
embraces all of us. Jesus embraces those who are poor, oppressed,  
marginalized and all others who come seeking. We follow Jesus with  
our Baptism, marking a starting place for new life and new ways of  
being. We join Jesus in love and service. Let us prepare our hearts and  
minds to see, feel, and hear again the vows of Baptism.

Renewal of Baptismal Promises

(adapted from the UCC Book of Worship)

Do you renew and affirm the promises made at your Baptism?

**People: I do.**

Do you recognize the call of God to be God’s people as best you can?

**People: I do.**

Do you embrace the invitation to walk in the Way of Jesus in faith and  
ministry?

**People: I do**

Do you accept the nurture of the Holy Spirit who renews your spirit each day?

**People: I do.**

Do you accept and embrace others who seek a liberating faith in God?

**People: I do.**

In renewing your baptismal vows, remember your Baptism as a mark of welcome into the care of Christ's church where you may begin again your Christian faith and life and help spread the Good News. I invite you now to bless yourself.

**A Unison Prayer:**

**O God, we rejoice in your grace, given and received. We thank you that you claim us, that you wash us, strengthen us, and guide us, that you empower us to live a life of compassionate love in response to your calling. In the way of Jesus, make us as water in a dry and thirsty world. Renew our congregation to be a place of refreshment. Root us and nurture us in love, that with all your people, we may rightly and justly serve you. Fill us with your fullness that our lives may overflow in service and love. Amen.**

Offering of Tithes and Gifts

Offertory Anthem

**\*Prayer of Dedication (unison)**

**Faithful God, bless us in our baptismal calling to be in ministry of showing hospitality to others. We offer the gifts that we have been given to be used not for conquest and dominance, but for use in liberating the poor and hurting people who pray for our liberation as well as their own. Receive and multiply our gifts for life-giving ministry. Amen.**

\*HYMN "Spirit" CH #249

Joys & Concerns of the Church in Prayer  
Prayer Time in Silence & Pastoral Prayer & Lord's Prayer

Bible Reading: Genesis 1: 1-5 Joan Jordan  
Gospel Reading: Mark 1: 4-11 Rev. Lee Ireland  
Sermon "What IS the Holy Spirit?" Rev. Lee Ireland

\*HYMN "In the Bulb There is a Flower" CH #638

\*Benediction Rev. Lee Ireland

\*Benediction Response "Go Now in Peace"  
Go now in peace. Never be afraid.  
God will go with you each hour of every day.  
Go now in faith, steadfast, strong and true.  
Know He will guide you in all you do.  
Go now in love, and show you believe.  
Reach out to others so all the world can see.  
God will be there, watching from above. Go now in peace, in faith and in love.

Postlude Sue Stottlemeyer, Organist

## PARTICIPANTS

Minister: Rev. Lee A. Ireland  
Musicians: Sue Stottlemeyer, Micaela Schkeeper, & Ishu Manne  
Liturgist: Joan Jordan