

"Hallelujah" by Mike Moyers.

Christ Church **UNITED CHURCH** **OF CHRIST**

Rev. Dan Stark, Pastor
Matthew Lawrenz, Musician
Song Leader, Nancy Charles

www.uccmke.org

What is the way of Christ? The way of Christ means to take up our cross. To take up one's cross means to die to the ways of the world. To follow the ways of the world means to lose one's soul in the process. On this twenty-first Sunday after the Pentecost event and penultimate Sunday before the General Election of our country, we focus on what it means to follow Jesus. We must wrestle with our convictions. Our scripture lesson tells us what Jesus stood for and what we, as Christians, are called to do in this life. We also celebrate a baptism, which serves as a powerful reminder of our calling to live out of the example of Christ in our homes and in the world. For today's message, our Gospel lesson from Matthew 16 ultimately asks us: "What good does it profit one to gain the whole world and forfeit their soul in the process?" As we conclude our sermon series, we are called to think about whether we follow the way of Christ or not. If the latter is true, we are called to return to the bosom of Christ, because Christians cannot compartmentalize the way we live in the world from our faith.

Prelude

Meditation on Ubi Caritas

Visser

Creed for the Marginalized

Marchae Grair

I am powerful. I deserve to live. Joy is my birthright.
I am beautiful. I deserve to thrive. Community is my anchor.
I am worthy. I deserve to be free. Liberation is my legacy.
You can't take what my ancestors taught me.
You can't destroy what my ancestors created.
You can't heal in me what was never broken.
You don't have to honor me for my life to matter.
You don't have to save me because I'm saving myself.
You don't have to notice me for this miracle to keep unfolding.
I am the miracle. Because I live. And believe I deserve to.

Words of Welcome

Opening Hymn

For the Beauty of the Earth

Hymn 40

Opening Litany (Matthew 16)

Leader: Lord, what does it mean to follow you?

All: I was hungry and you gave me food, thirsty and you gave me something to drink.

Leader: When did I feed you and give you a drink, Lord?

All: I was a stranger and you welcomed me, naked and you clothed me.

Leader: When did I welcome and clothe you, Lord?

All: I was sick and you took care of me, imprisoned and you visited me.

Leader: When did I care for you and visit you, Lord?

All: Jesus says, when you care for the least of these, you care for Jesus himself.

Leader: Let us worship the One who calls us to take up our cross by loving our neighbors as we would love ourselves.

Opening Prayer

Gracious God, during this highly contentious time in our nation's history, set us on the right path for your name's sake – a path that is more in line with your ways and how you have called us to live in this world you love so deeply. Remind us that being a disciple of Jesus is something we cannot fake. It is not something we can turn on or off when it is convenient for us...So, be with us as we hear about what it means for us to take up our crosses...And help us to walk the way of Jesus Christ, your Son, who teaches us how to live in this life and invites us into the glory of the next. Amen.

The Gloria

Glory to God, whose goodness shines on me, and to the Son, whose grace has pardoned me, and to the Spirit, whose love has set me free, as it was in the beginning, is now and ever shall be. Amen. World without end, without end. Amen. World with-out end, without- end Amen. World with-out end, with-out end. Amen. As it was in the beginning, is now and ever shall be. Amen.

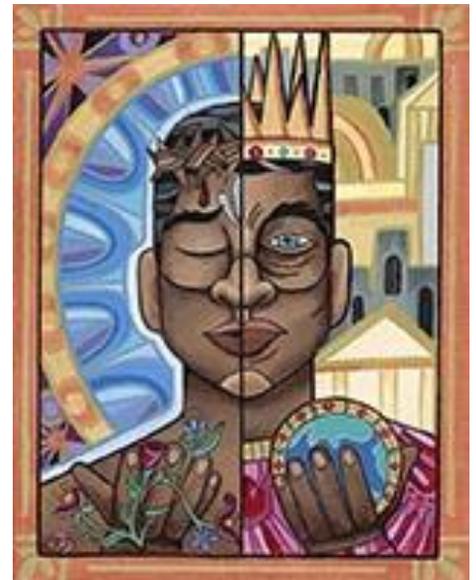
Music and Words: Paul Vasile, ©2008, Paul Vasile. Permission granted by the composer for use in worship.

Baptism of Liliana Basulto

Blessing the Water Sacrament of Baptism

“A Choice” by Lauren Wright Pittman

“Jesus offers the crowd (us) a layered and complicated choice, one that is as complex as his own dualistic nature. The first option is self-denial, a heavy burden, and a lost – but saved – life. The second is gaining the whole world, but forfeiting life. It’s easy for a seasoned Christian to take seem like a no brainer, but in this moment, Jesus teaches of the terrors that will befall him and invites the crowd to knowingly face that path alongside him. If we’re honest, it is extremely difficult to reject the tempting power and wealth this world has to offer and allow our life to take the shape of good news for all. The choice isn’t an obvious one. One side looks like an opulent pile of riches, a crown, and endless power, while the other looks like tattered and worn hands with new life blooming out of wounds, work, burdens and relationships. This choice may seem like a distant decision made long ago, but it’s a decision to be made every single day, one moment at a time. In working for and with the downtrodden, poor, orphaned, widowed, ostracized, and oppressed, we will find ourselves.”



The Way of Christ

- The way of Christ is to protect and welcome children and to believe women.*
- The way of Christ is the care for the stranger, the foreigner, the refugee.*
- The way of Christ is the care for the sick, the wounded, the broken.*
- The way of Christ is to redefine the human family.*
- The way of Christ is to listen to those who are voiceless and nameless.*
- The way of Christ is to care for the poor, the rejected, the irrelevant.*
- The way of Christ is to empower the powerless, and to topple the powerful.*
- The way of Christ is to turn kingdoms on their head, to become servant to all.*
- The way of Christ is to die unto one’s self, and to live life anew for others.*

The Gospel

[Matthew 16:13-28](#)



"Get Thee Behind Me, Satan!" by James Tissot.

As a Gospel writer, Matthew was particularly interested in Jesus' authority as teacher and preacher. Matthew is also concerned with Jesus' messianic identity. Throughout this Gospel, Jesus instructs people to keep his identity a secret – known to scholars as "the Messianic Secret." Curiously, his followers are bad at keeping secrets and reveal who Jesus is again and again. In this passage from Matthew, Simon Peter reveals Jesus' identity as the Son of God, Jesus foretells his death and resurrection, and Jesus shares the hefty cost of following him.

When Jesus came to the neighborhood of Caesarea Philippi, he asked the disciples this question, "What do people say about who the Chosen one is?" They (the disciples) responded, "Some say John the Baptizer, others say Elijah, still others say Jeremiah or one of the prophets." "And you," he said, "who do you say that I am?" "You are the Messiah," Simon Peter answered, "the Firstborn of the Living God!" Jesus replied, "Blessed are you, Simon ben-Jonah! No mere mortal

has revealed this to you, but my Abba God in heaven. I also tell you this: Your name now is 'Rock' and with bedrock like this I will build my community, and the jaws of death will not prevail against it. "Here – I'll give you the keys to the reign of heaven: whatever you declare bound on earth, will be bound in heaven, and whatever you declare loosed on earth, will be loosed in heaven." Then Jesus strictly ordered the disciples not to tell anyone that he was the Messiah.

From that time on Jesus began to explain to the disciples that he must go to Jerusalem, to suffer many things at the hands of the elders, chief priests, and religious scholars, and that he must be killed, and on the third day raised to life. Peter took him aside and began to rebuke him: "Never, Rabbi!" he said. "This will never happen to you!" Jesus turned to Peter and said, "Get yourself behind me, you Satan! You are trying to make me stumble and fall. You're setting your mind not on the things of God, but of mortals." Then Jesus said to the disciples, "If you wish to come after me, you must deny your very selves, take up the instrument of your own death and begin to follow in my footsteps. If you would save your life, you will lose it; but if you would lose your life for my sake, you will find it. What profit would you show if you gained the whole world but lost your soul? What can you offer in exchange for your very self?"



"Carrying the Cross of Christ" by Gabriel Loire.

Sermon

Emerge: Take Up Your Cross

Rev. Dan Stark

Song of Response

They'll Know We Are Christians

Hymn 595

Prayers of the People

Prayer Song

Lord, Listen to Your Children Praying

#489

*Lord, listen to your children praying,
Lord, send your Spirit in this place;
Lord, listen to your children praying,
Send us love, send us pow'r, send us grace.*

The Lord's Prayer

**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 debts, as we forgive our debtors.
And lead us not into temptation but deliver us from evil.
For thine is the kingdom, the power and the glory forever. Amen.**

Invitation to the Offering

There is a big difference between being a church-attender and Christ-follower. If the pandemic has taught us one major lesson as a church, it is that Jesus does *not* live at Christ Church in Bayview. If the life of Jesus stops at the threshold of our doorway and does not venture outside this building or beyond Sunday morning – then we have fallen short of his call to each of us. But that is why we come to church and worship – to give thanks to God, to be reminded of God's grace, and to be inspired and learn how to get back on the path Jesus has called us to follow. At this time, we are invited to support this church, that we might be able to sustain this place, its teachers, and the ministries we have here that remind us of the way of Jesus – and help to set us back on the path when we stray from it. After worship, please give if you can help us sustain this part of our mission.

Prayer of Dedication

Doxology

*Praise God from whom all blessings flow, Praise God all creatures here below
Praise God above ye heavenly host, Praise Father, Son and Holy Ghost.
A-men.*

Blessing the Quilts

The Peace and Plenty Quilters

Closing Song

Go Forth for God

Hymn 708

Litany of Sending

Matthew 25:31-40 (TIB)

At the appointed time, the Promised One will come in glory, escorted by all the angels of heaven, and will sit upon the royal throne, with all the nations assembled below. Then he Promised One will separate them from one another, as a shepherd divides the sheep from the goats. The sheep will be placed on the right hand, and the goats on the left.

The ruler will say to those on the right, *"Come, you blessed of my Abba God! Inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the creation of the world! For I was hungry and you fed me; I was thirsty and you gave me drink. I*

was stranger and you welcomed me; naked and you clothed me. I was ill and you comforted me; in prison and you came to visit me."

Then these just will ask, *"When did we see you hungry and feed you, or see you thirsty and give you drink? When did we see you as a stranger and invite you in, or clothe you in your nakedness? When did we see you ill or in prison and come to visit you?"*

The ruler will answer them, *"The truth is, every time you did this for the least of my sisters or brothers, you did it for me."*

Postlude

Trumpet Tune

Gabrieli/Wolff

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If you should need to contact Pastor Stark, please email pastor@uccmke.org.
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We are currently gathering in person for worship with safety and sanitation protocols in place.
Learn more here. <https://www.uccmke.org/covid-19>

You can make your offering to Christ Church through [PayPal](#) or by mailing a check to Christ Church, 915 East Oklahoma Ave, Milwaukee, WI, 53207.

