



*"Euonymus alatus, Burning Bush." Photo by Joe Schumacher, 2011.*

# **Christ Church** UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST

Rev. Dan Stark, Pastor  
Matthew Lawrenz, Musician

[www.uccmke.org](http://www.uccmke.org)

*In this fifteenth Sunday after the Pentecost event, we continue our sermon series once more with an exploration of scriptures which have to deal with the theme of “return” amid an unknown future. In the story from Exodus, the Hebrew people grumbled after being liberated from Egypt by the Lord under Moses’ leadership. Fearing an unknown future under Moses, they desire to return to slavery under Pharaoh. They would rather deal with an oppressive leader than deal with the unknown. In the Gospel lesson from Luke 22, Peter fears what might happen if he reveals he knows Jesus, so he denies knowing him when he is questioned. He would rather betray his friend in his hour of need than deal with the unknown of admitting he knew him. In a time where there are so many “unknowns” due to COVID, political unrest and violence, and the most consequential election in US history on the horizon, the scriptures today give us perspective and a Christian response to fear of the unknown.*

**Prelude**

**Allegro I from Concerto in F Major**

**Walther**

**Prayer on the Edge of the Inside**

**Donna Schaper**

Richard Rohr says that we are often on the edge of the inside. What kind of place is that for someone who feels like an outsider but is really an insider? Who feels like an outsider in a time when so many feels way too scared to go outside? What happens to a world where everybody is afraid of everybody else but doesn’t want to stay inside? Is that a world where everything is an edge or on edge?

**Words of Welcome**

**Opening Hymn**

**Joyful, Joyful, We Adore Thee**

**#59**

**Opening Litany**

**Be Not Afraid**

**Fr. Bob Dufford**

**One:** You shall cross the barren desert, but you shall not die of thirst.

**All:** You shall wander far in safety though you do not know the way.

**One:** You shall speak your words in foreign lands and all will understand.

**All:** You shall see the face of God and live.

**One:** Be not afraid.

**All:** I go before you always. Come, follow me, and I will give you rest.

**Opening Prayer**

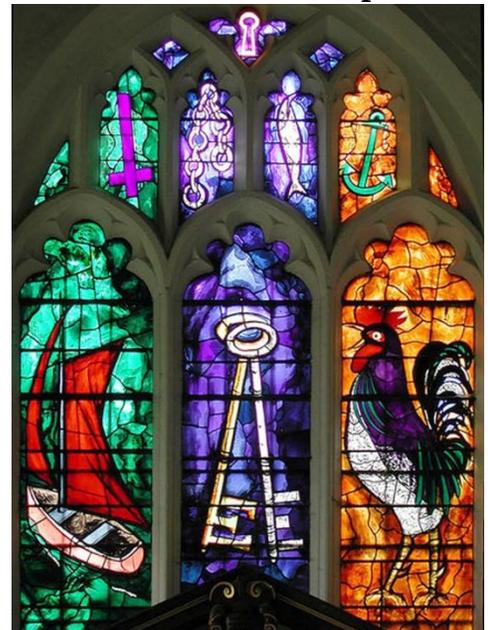
Compassionate-One, Lover-of-Goodness, Patience-with-Sinners, Draw near to us as we lean into an uncertain and unknown future. As a city. As a church. As families. As your people. Surround us with confidence in your good news: that you love us always; that your mercy is boundless, that you will wait forever as we find our way back to you – even if we turn our backs on you. Open our hearts to receive your compassion; and show us how to forgive, so that we may be vessels of resurrection hope in our troubled world.

In Jesus’ name. 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,*

**Rev. Susan A. Blair, adapted**

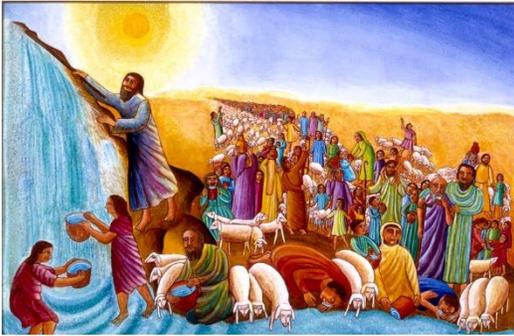


*“Symbols of Peter” by John Piper, 1966.*

*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.

**Old Testament**

[Exodus 16:1-9](#)



*“Moses” by John August Swanson.*

Exodus begins with an illustration of Israel’s servitude in Egypt under Pharaoh and God’s selection of Moses as God’s prophet to liberate Israel. Pharaoh contests God’s desire to free Israel from slavery, so God intervenes with a series of plagues that culminate with the death of the firstborn and deliverance of Israel at the sea. In today’s passage, the Israelites grumble in the wilderness about provisions and their uncertain future. As Israel begins its new life in the wilderness, God responds and provides without punishment.

**Ritual During My Anxiety Attack**

**Marchae Grair**

When my skin keeps crawling, wrap me in your loving embrace. When my breath keeps quickening, give me sweet release.

*Pause to bless something you hear, smell, see, touch, or taste.*

When my weeping consumes my being, lead me toward self-compassion. When the “what ifs” feel too scary, help me stay present in your presence.

*Pause to bless something you hear, smell, see, touch, or taste.*

Tend to the undercurrents of emotions that burst forward in ways beyond my control, and release me from any grief and shame I carry just for feeling my feelings.

*Pause to bless something you hear, smell, see, touch, or taste.*

Ground me in my divine resilience: I am still here; I am still worthy. Ground me in your divine companionship: you are still here; I am never alone.



*“Peter’s Denial” by Adam De Coster. 1607-1643.*

**New Testament**

[Matthew 26:31-34](#)

The Gospel of Matthew tells the story of Jesus the Messiah whose genealogy and miraculous birth are a sign that he is Emmanuel, “God with us.” Matthew is particularly concerned with Jesus’s authority. As God’s Messiah, Jesus’ teaching, healing, suffering, death, and resurrection commissions his followers to be a new community. In this passage, Jesus foretells Peter’s denial of him during his greatest hour of need. Peter was one of Jesus’ closest friends and disciples. Although Peter fears an unknown future and denies Jesus, Peter learns about the unlimited extravagance of God’s mercy and forgiveness.

**Sermon**

**Emerge: Retreat or Return**

**Rev. Dan Stark**

**Song of Response**

**Great Is Thy Faithfulness**

**#72**

**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**

**Rev. Susan A. Blain, adapted**

Like the Hebrews in the wilderness, who were showered with an abundance of mercy from God, we too have been blessed.

Like Peter, we are called to go forth  
and witness to the presence of Christ in our lives  
in so many diverse ways.

One of the ways in which we tell the story is through the giving of gifts to God.

In our gift-giving we participate with God  
in providing for the needs of God's people.

### **Prayer of Dedication**

May our gifts become symbols of our intention to minister with God to satisfy the needs of those whom God loves.

### **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.*

### **Closing Song**

**Sent Forth by God's Blessing**

**#712**

### **Litany of Sending and Blessing**

**Mary Luti**

Our worship has ended, but its gifts remain:  
Tuck its praise inside you.  
Take its goodness with you.  
Drink from its wells of lasting peace.  
Live by its light, its courage and grace  
And don't be afraid.  
Seek to serve.  
In plenty of in want,  
Find ways to share.  
Discern the truth and tell it,

Resist all wrong, and don't be afraid.  
Regard all people as your people.  
In hard times and good  
Take care of yourself,  
Take care of your people,  
And don't be afraid.  
And may the blessing of God, our life, the  
friendship of Christ, our healer, and the daring  
of the Spirit, our truth, be ours today, and every  
day to come. Amen.

### **Postlude**

**Allegro III from Concerto in F Major**

**Walther**

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If you should need to contact Pastor Stark, please email [pastor@uccmke.org](mailto: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.

