



"The Lent that Never Ended" Christ Church Sanctuary, 2020.

Christ Church UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST

Rev. Dan Stark, Pastor
Organist and Pianist, Pam Kothrade
Nancy Charles, Song Leader

www.uccmke.org
www.facebook.com/groups/christchurchucc

March 21st, 2021

This weekend we observe the fifth Sunday of Lent and we approach Holy Week. This service is centered on Jesus' ministry in Jerusalem in the Gospel of John. During this season, we are reminded that, again and again, suffering and brokenness find us, and we need God's love and grace. The story of the cross plays itself out again and again in our world, but again and again, God breaks the cycle and offers us a new way forward.

In John's Gospel lesson today, Jesus tells the crowds about his death. For the seed to grow and bear fruit, it must first die. Change, even when welcomed, means death. Jesus invites us to be reformed from the inside out. Reformation is the journey of letting the old fall away for something new to emerge. In an age of pandemic, protest, and partisanship – we are invited to the journey of reformation. Again and again, we are reformed.

**Please recite the PURPLE words aloud.*

Prelude

What Wonderful Love Is This

arranged by John Carter

Words of Welcome

Opening Song

Beneath the Cross of Jesus

**Beneath the cross of Jesus I gladly take my stand
The shadow of a mighty rock within a weary land
A home within the wilderness a rest upon the way
From the burning of the noontide heat and the burden of the day**

**Upon that cross of Jesus my eye at times can see
The very dying form of one who suffered there for me
And from my smitten heart with tears two wonders I confess
The wonders of His glorious love and my unworthiness**

**I take, O cross, your shadow for my abiding place
I ask no other sunshine than the sunshine of His face,
Content to let the world go by, to know no gain nor loss,
My sinful self my only shame, my glory all the cross.**

Elizabeth Cecilia Clephane, © Praise Trust, CCLI License # 1905256

Call to Worship

One: O God, "We wish to see Jesus."

All: Help us to recognize your presence.

Jesus said, "Whoever serves me must follow me..."

Help us to follow in your ways.

Jesus said, "And where I am, there my servant will be also."

Help us to see you so we can serve you.

Jesus said, "I was hungry and you fed me, thirsty and you gave me something to drink, a stranger and you welcomed me. I was naked and you gave me clothes, sick and you cared for me, in prison and you visited me...
Whoever serves me, the Father will honor."

Help us to serve you.

Oh God, speak to us, show us, and touch us with your presence today.

Let our Lenten journey lead us to Jesus, so that we may show Jesus forth in our lives.

Opening Prayer

Holy God,

*Scripture tells us that your word is written on our hearts,
But we struggle to hear it.*

Is it possible that we have covered up your words with our own self-narratives?

Is it possible that we have erased your truth to write our own?

Is it possible that we have forgotten your words entirely?

Take us back to the beginning.

Remove the self-talk that distracts.

Clear away the cobwebs of doubt.

Show us how to look inside ourselves for your truth,

And then write on our hearts once more.

We are listening.

We are hopeful.

We are here.

Speak now. Amen.

Special Music

Purer In Heart

solo by Pam Kothrade

Old Testament

[Jeremiah 31:31-34](#)

The book of Jeremiah is concerned with the ministry of the prophet before and after the fall of Jerusalem to the Babylonians in 587 BCE. In this scripture from Jeremiah, the prophet speaks as God about broken promises between the people and God. Change is coming, says God. God will put God's teachings in their minds and hearts. God will be their God and they will be God's people and all will know God deeply and intimately.

³¹ The days are surely coming, says the LORD, when I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel and the house of Judah. ³² It will not be like the covenant that I made with their ancestors when I took them by the hand to bring them out of the land of Egypt – a covenant that they broke, though I was their husband, says the LORD. ³³ But this is the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel after those days, says the LORD: I will put my law within them, and I will write it on their hearts; and I will be their God, and they shall be my people.

³⁴ No longer shall they teach one another, or say to each other, “Know the LORD,” for they shall all know me, from the least of them to the greatest, says the LORD; for I will forgive their iniquity, and remember their sin no more.

New Testament

[John 12:20-33](#)

In this scripture, Jesus addresses his disciples and a crowd that wishes to see him about his life, death, and resurrection. He explains in detail the things that will happen to him.

²⁰ Now among those who went up to worship at the festival were some Greeks. ²¹ They came to Philip, who was from Bethsaida in Galilee, and said to him, “Sir, we wish to see Jesus.” ²² Philip went and told Andrew; then Andrew and Philip went and told Jesus. ²³ Jesus answered them, “The hour has come for the Son of Man to be glorified. ²⁴ Very truly, I tell you, unless a grain of wheat falls into the earth and dies, it remains just a single grain; but if it dies, it bears much fruit. ²⁵ Those who love their life lose it, and those who hate their life in this world will keep it for eternal life. ²⁶ Whoever serves me must follow me, and where I am, there will my servant be also. Whoever serves me, the Father will honor. ²⁷ “Now my soul is troubled. And what should I say — ‘Father, save me from this hour’? No, it is for this reason that I have come to this hour. ²⁸ Father, glorify your name.” Then a voice came from heaven, “I have glorified it, and I will glorify it again.” ²⁹ The crowd standing there heard it and said that it was thunder. Others said, “An angel has spoken to him.” ³⁰ Jesus answered, “This voice has come for your sake, not for mine. ³¹ Now is the judgment of this world; now the ruler of this world will be driven out. ³² And I, when I am lifted up from the earth, will draw all people to myself.” ³³ He said this to indicate the kind of death he was to die.

Sermon

Again and Again, We Are Reformed

Rev. Dan Stark

Song of Response

The Old Rugged Cross

On a hill far away stood an old rugged cross

The emblem of suff'ring and shame

And I love that old cross where the dearest and best

For a world of lost sinners was slain

So I'll cherish the old rugged cross

Till my trophies at last I lay down

I will cling to the old rugged cross

And exchange it some day for a crown

To the old rugged cross I will ever be true

Its shame and reproach gladly bear

Then He'll call me some day to my home far away

Where His glory forever I'll share

**So I'll cherish the old rugged cross
Till my trophies at last I lay down
I will cling to the old rugged cross
And exchange it some day for a crown**

Call to Confession

One: In the gospel of John, a group of Greek people approach the disciples and say,
“We would like to see Jesus.”

It's a brief, beautiful moment that the text doesn't spend a lot of time on,
And yet, it always catches my eye.

It catches my eye, because the phrase, “I want to see Jesus,”
Feels like it should be my constant prayer.

Help me see Jesus.

I'd like to see Jesus.

Bring me closer to Jesus.

In the prayer of confession,

We take a moment to recognize how much space exists between us and those words,
Trusting that even when we forget to seek out God,

God is seeking us out.

So join me in the prayer of confession today as we take one step closer to the Divine . . .

Prayer of Confession

Gracious God,

We want to see you.

We want to be known as the people who looked for Jesus;

But not only that, we want to be people who have your covenant written on our hearts.

Why do we feel so far away from that at times?

What went wrong?

Where did we lose our way?

Could you, would you, once again, write on our fragile hearts?

We would be so grateful. Amen.

Words of Forgiveness

One: Friends, despite our wonderings,

Despite our distractions,

Despite wrong turns time and time again,

We are known and loved by God.

Like a lighthouse keeper by the sea,

God will never stop waving us home.

So hear and believe the good news of the gospel:

All: Our fragile bones are held by the Great Creator.

Our fragile hearts are loved by the Great Creator.

Our tender spirits are forgiven by the Great Creator.

One: Today is a new day.

All: Again and again, we are forgiven;

Again and again, we are reformed.

Thanks be to God.

Amen.

Prayers of the People

Hear Our Prayers, O God...

For health & healing: *God heals the brokenhearted and binds up their wounds. Ps. 147:3*

We pray for:

~Betty Budzien who took a spill this week and will be at Froedtert hospital for some time for rehab and to heal. She is currently in the ICU and can't take calls but can receive mail. We pray that God comforts her during this time. Her room # is SICU11.

~Ken and Susie K. as he navigates prostate cancer.

~Prayers for strength, understanding and healing for Jack and his family as the bone marrow transplant has been postponed. He will go through another round of induction chemo. Dick and Joan Gaeth

~ Kim O as she receives chemotherapy treatments.

~Ian, husband of Molly as he receives treatments of chemotherapy every 2 weeks for 2 months for stage 2 Hodgkins lymphoma. Prayers also for Molly and their daughters during this difficult process. They are encouraged as this type of cancer has a 90% + success rate and that overall Ian's side effects are mild.

~Tom, brother-in-law of Doris and Paul who has ALS and pneumonia and has been placed in hospice care.

~Emily, friend of Andy O. sees a specialist on March 19th. Hopefully, that visit we help her plot out next steps. Thanks for the prayers as she seems to be doing better.

~Continued prayers Bob, cousin of Barb W, who has COVID. He is no longer sedated and finally is off the ventilator. He has a tremendous amount of healing and therapy ahead.

~Melissa F as she suffered a miscarriage at the end of last year and is greatly struggling with the loss. She is asking for prayers of peace and comfort, as she is dealing with feelings of depression.

~Judy, niece of Ken K as she is on chemo for breast cancer.

~Ken's sister who was moved to a nursing home and has a serious chronic infection and dementia.

~Susie K's Aunt Evelyn who is in hospice and Aunt Eleanore who had a stroke and is in home hospice, also for her daughters and granddaughters who are taking care of her.

~Dan, friend of Molly as he and his young family navigate his illness.

~Johnny, friend of the Ken and Sue who has COVID and other health problems.

~Bob K as he receives chemo drug treatments.

~Joe and Laurie, son in law and daughter of Jackie S as they navigate Joe's medical issues.

~Nick, nephew of Nancy & Brad who has started using heroin again.

Prayers for the whole family.

~Dawn & Brad D, daughter in-law and son of Laurel as she manages diabetes and dialysis 4 times per week.

~Tracy, daughter of Nancy K, who is at home with Nancy awaiting liver. She no longer is in need of a Kidney transplant or dialysis. She looks good. Praise God!

~Continued prayers for Julene F's nephew, who is struggling with mental health issues.

~Kelley, friend of Nancy Cas she receives radiation treatment for breast cancer.

~Bernee, friend of Nancy K who has end-stage lung cancer and is in a nursing home in hospice.

Community Prayers

~We pray for anyone who has been hurt by the church this week.

~We pray for the victims of the recent shootings in Atlanta.

Prayer Song

O Lord, Hear My Prayer

1. O Lord, hear my prayer, O Lord, hear my prayer: when I call answer me.

O Lord, hear my prayer, O Lord, hear my prayer, come and listen to me.

2. The Lord is my song, the Lord is my praise: all my hope comes from God.

The Lord is my song, the Lord is my praise: God, the well-spring of life.

Call to Offering

UCC Worship Ways (adapted)

One: Jesus compels us to join him in service to others. Our church accepts the invitation and challenge to show Jesus' Way using the resources we share. Let us give as we are able to the ministries of our church.

Please give as you are able. www.uccmke.org/donate

Prayer of Dedication

UCC Worship Ways (adapted)

One: God, there are many who "wish to see Jesus." In joy and celebration of the many gifts that we share, we ask you to bless all of our offerings. May Jesus shine in all the world. Amen.

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

We Walk By Faith and Not By Sight

We walk by faith and not by sight; with gracious words draw near,
O Christ, who spoke as none e'er spoke: "My peace be with you here."
We may not touch your hands and side, nor follow where you trod;
but in your promise we rejoice, and cry, "My Lord and God!"
Help then, O Lord, our unbelief; and may our faith abound
to call on you when you are near and seek where you are found.
And when our life of faith is done, in realms of clearer light
may we behold you as you are, with full and endless sight.

Affirmation of Faith

One: Would you please join me in this Lenten affirmation of faith...

All: We believe that flowers need the rain.

We believe that humans need community.

We believe that bodies need rest.

We believe that hearts need connection.

We believe that mornings need sunrise.

We believe that seasons need change.

We believe that grief needs space.

We believe that change needs time.

We believe that love needs security.

We believe that pain needs art.

We believe that joy needs company.

We believe that our spirits need God.

Again and again, our spirits need God.

Fortunately for us, we trust that

God is here.

God is at work in our lives.

God is a lighthouse keeper that never gives up.

Thanks be to God.

Amen.

Lenten Charge

*As you leave this space,
May your mouth speak of God's goodness.
May your arms hold those in need.
May your feet walk toward justice.*

*May your heart trust its worth.
May your soul dance in God's grace.
And may this be your rhythm –
Again and again and again,
Until God's promised day.
In the name of the Lover, the Beloved, and Love itself,
Go with courage, go with heart, go in peace.
Amen.*

Postlude

Shout To the North

arranged by Phillip Kern

Music used with permission under ONE LICENSE #A-737161

Some Prayers and Liturgies by UCC Worship Ways

Some prayers and liturgies by Sarah Are | A Sanctified Art LLC | sanctifiedart.org.

--

Happy Birthday to these wonderful people!

Nathan Scheske March 21

Nicholas Wegner March 23

Maria Porn March 24

Isabelle Berger March 25

Announcements

Position Opportunity

The Pastor/Parrish/Personnel Committee would like to thank Debbie Behling for her many years of service to Christ Church as Office Administrator and as church president, council member, committee member and friend. Debbie will be retiring in June. This leaves an enormous void to fill.

The Pastor/Parrish/Personnel Committee is actively seeking someone to fill the position of Church Secretary. If you know anyone who may be interested in this position; or if you have an interest, you may check out the job description and learn how to apply at the following link:

<https://www.jobsthathelp.com/job/christ-church-office-secretary/>

If you have questions regarding the position, you may submit them to the committee via email at: pprc@uccmke.org or contact a committee member. The committee members are Dean Kothrade, Randene Wick and Dick Gaeth. Submitted by Dick Gaeth

DI SOS donations needed

Please help by donating the following for our Friday night meal distribution:

*Prewrapped plastic knife, fork and napkin (please tie or tape shut)

*Fruit Breakfast/granola Bars (any flavors)

Volunteers Needed

Friday night volunteers for SOS DI meal distribution at Christ Church.

It would be helpful if we could get 2 more sets of Building Reps so that volunteers will repeat about every 6-8 weeks. Just 1.5 hours on a Friday evening starting at 4:45pm. Please contact Jim Wick for information and/or to sign up. Thanks.

BVCC Food Pantry Donation Requests

This weeks most urgent needs are:

***Pastas & Sauces, Canned Vegetables, Individually packaged chips, cookies, fruit, granola bars etc., Toilet paper, Dish soap, laundry detergent and/or monetary donations.**

As usual donations can be dropped off at the BVCC at 1320 E. Oklahoma Ave. Tuesdays-Saturdays 9:30am-12:30pm.

--

If you should need to contact Pastor Stark, please email pastor@uccmke.org.
Christ Church UCC, 915 East Oklahoma Ave, Milwaukee, WI, 53207.

We are currently worshipping online-only.

You can make your offering to Christ Church at www.uccmke.org/donate or by mailing a check to Christ Church, 915 East Oklahoma Ave, Milwaukee, WI, 53207

