



"Carrying the Cross of Christ" by Gabriel Loire, 1904-1996.

Christ Church **UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST**

Rev. Dan Stark, pastor
and Pam Kothrade, musician

www.uccmke.org

In this third week after the Pentecost, we continue our sermon series, UNOrdinary Times. We find ourselves living in a time of two pandemics: COVID-19 and racism. Today we continue with our exploration of Genesis and the story of Abraham and Sarah and Matthew's Gospel. Our lesson from Genesis focuses on Sarah's banishment of her slave Hagar and her son Ishmael. The Gospel story homes in on the hardships of being a follower of Jesus. Both scriptures tell us that during our hardships and persecution, God is still with us. Being faithful is not as simple as standing up for what we believe. Being faithful is sometimes in the living of our lives. Jesus knew people who followed him might not just lose their friends or their jobs, but their lives as well. Amid a time in American history where racism and prejudice seem to be coming to a head, choosing the way of Jesus means standing in solidarity with those who live on the margins. Choosing the way of Jesus might mean we offend the people we love and respect.

Words of Welcome
A Song for Today

You Are My All In All

arr. Mark Hayes
Musician, Pamela Kothrade

Opening Litany

UCC Worship Ways

One: The sun shines more brightly.
Its warmth stays with us for so many more hours.

All: So we shake free of our routines.

One: In this new moment,
We wander about the wilderness:
Hoping God will open our eyes
Praying God will make us worthy
Wanting to grow with God.

All: Let us grow together in the wild ways of our God.

Prayer for Today

inspired by Psalm 86:1-10, 16-17
Wild God, you do great and wonderful things.
It's what makes you our God.
There is nothing else in this world like you.
There's nothing else like your love.
Wild God, come and worship with us.
Help us to grow in your love.



"Hagar and the Angel" by Carl Ferdinand Fabritius, 1664-1667.

Old Testament

[Genesis 21:8-21](#)

The book of Genesis is a book of new beginnings. It details the beginnings of the universe, human families, mothers and fathers of Israel, and the rise of the tribes and nations. This selection follows the family of Abraham and Sarah, our ancestors in faith. After Isaac was born to Sarah, Abraham's first son, Ishmael, became intolerable to Sarah. After she witnessed her child playing with him, she had Abraham send the mother and son away. Once in the wilderness, Hagar gave in to despair. She left her son under a bush and asked God to take her life. God listened to the cries of Ishmael and spoke to



"Life Line" by Homer Winslow.

Hagar. God promised to make a great nation of him, and when Hagar opened her eyes, she saw a wellspring filled with water. God was with Ishmael and Hagar.

Confession

inspired by Genesis 21:8-21, Rev. Elsa A Cook

**You are invited to take 4-5 strips of fabric, large enough to write on and weave together, and a pen which can be used on the fabric. Write your name on one strip of fabric.*

Abraham was very distressed.

Because his son, Ishmael, was cut out of the community.

Because Sarah could no longer tolerate Hagar.

So Sarah threw her out into the wilderness.

And this is distressing. We are distressed whenever relationships are broken.

Still, we confess to God that there are family and friends we have cast out.

Knowing this, you are invited to offer your silent confession to God by taking one of the small strips of cloth, writing the name of someone you have left behind in the wilderness and begin to weave or braid it together with the strip bearing your name.

Silence. Write and braid.

We also know that in times of crisis, such as Covid-19,
some communities are cut off from resources they need for survival,
---Work, food, healthcare--

They suffer disproportionately because of race, or poverty, or lack of health insurance.

We confess that all too often

we fail to look beyond the boundaries of our own communities.

Knowing this, you are invited to offer your silent confession to God
by taking another of the small strips of cloth,

writing the name of a person or a community that is suffering
because they are cut off from what they need.

Weave or braid that piece of cloth onto the original strips.

Silence, write and braid.

Words of Assurance

The God of Hagar and Sarah, the God of Isaac and Ishmael continues to call us into community across boundaries, providing water in the desert and the promise of a future. Let us believe that grace is working in our lives, opening hearts, restoring justice, making all things new in Christ Jesus. Amen.

Sung Response

Blessed Be the Tie That Binds

arr. Fawcett

Blessed be the tie that binds, our hearts in Christian love; the fellowship of kindred minds, is like that to that above.

New Testament

[Matthew 10:24-39](#)

The Gospel of Matthew tells the story of Jesus the Messiah whose lineage and miraculous birth are the sign that “God is with us.” In this reading, Jesus begins with a warning that he has been called “the Devil” by those who are against him, and that the disciples will also be called named and hated by others. Jesus encourages them not to be afraid. Jesus tells them they are loved by God and God will not allow them to fail. He tells them that he has not come to bring peace, but a sword. His words will bring division. His disciples must decide whether they are willing to lose everything, including their lives, to follow him. Those who hold onto the ways of the world will lose everything, but those who follow him and lose their life will find new life.



“Sherry, Sir” by Thomas Waterman Wood.

Homily

UNordinary Times: Rev. Dan Stark

A Song for Today

Peace in the Valley

arr. Elvis Presley
Musician, Erin Schoemann

Prayers of the People

The Lord’s Prayer

Passing the Peace

One: Although we cannot be physically close to one another at this time, we can be relationally close. This Sunday morning, you are invited to pass the peace with your church family and loved ones by taking a moment to text, write, call, or message the people in your church family to let them know you are thinking of them. May the peace of Christ be with you.

Closing Song

Faith of Our Fathers

arr. Lorie Line
Musician, Pam Kothrade

Sending

Rev. Elsa A. Cook

Beloved in Christ, into your hands God gives strength and worth.
Take another strip of cloth to weave into and to mend
the broken relationships in the body of Christ.
Trust that this wild world is full of God’s steadfast love.
For you, dear servant, were made for this love.
Go in this deep peace.

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If you should need to contact Pastor Stark, please email pastor@uccmke.org.
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