

"The Prodigal Son" by John August Swanson.

Christ Church **UNITED CHURCH** OF CHRIST

Rev. Dan Stark, Pastor
Matthew Lawrenz, Musician
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www.uccmke.org

In this twelfth week after the Pentecost event, we continue our sermon series, Emerge, with an exploration of two scriptures about “eventual return.” Although these scriptures deal with forgiveness and acceptance, they might be helpful for us to hear during these pandemic days. Psalm 32 contains the psalmist’s praise to God for forgiveness of sins. God accepts the psalmist no matter how badly the psalmist goes astray in life. God waits for them to return with open arms. In Luke’s gospel we hear the parable of the Forgiving Father (Prodigal Parent) or Prodigal Son. Although the younger son had squandered everything, the father forgave him and welcomed him home. If we do not feel ready to emerge or return to places and spaces where we had previously been before the pandemic – including worship – we can rest assured that God recognizes all God’s children, and waits for us with open arms. God understands we aren’t all ready to return – even to sacred spaces – so we are called to recognize this in others and emulate this understanding with others as well.

Prelude
Prayer

Celtic Hymn
If the Virus Lasts Longer than I Think I Can

Stamm
Donna Schaper

Opening Litany

inspired by Romans 8:38-39

One: For I am convinced that neither death nor life
All: **Nor angels, nor rulers, nor things present, nor things to come**
One: Nor powers nor height, nor depth, nor anything else in all creation
All: **Nothing will be able to separate us from the love of God,**
One: There is nothing we can do, no place we can hide, where God will forget us
All: **God loves us, God forgives us, God calls us by name.**
Let us worship our God who seeks us, finds us, and loves us! Amen.

Gathering Song

Come, Thou Font of Every Blessing

#68

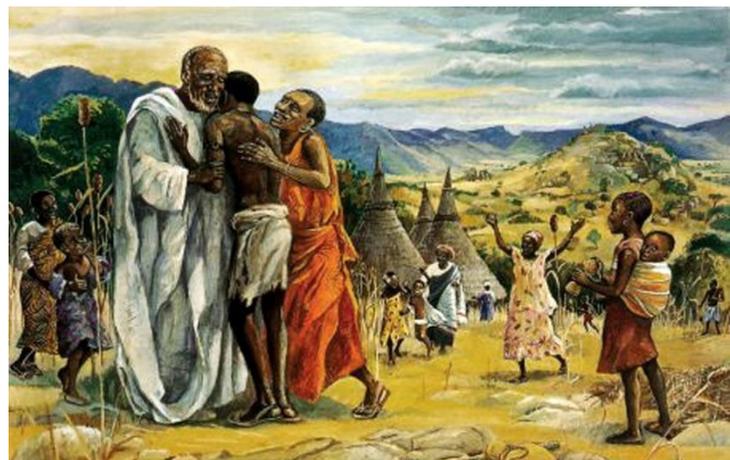
Sacrament of Baptism: Alexander Jeffrey Nyklewicz

Blessing of the Water
Baptism
Prayer of Thanksgiving

Old Testament

[Psalm 32](#)

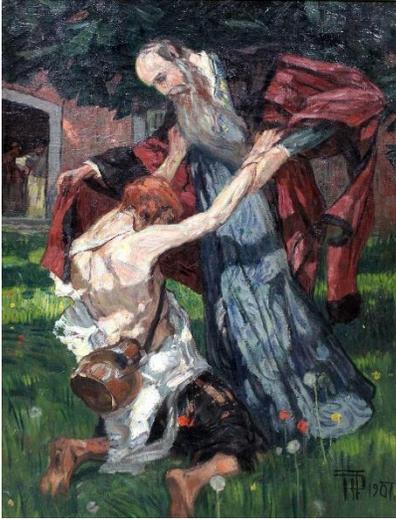
Psalm 32 is often attributed to King David. It is song of praise to God for forgiveness of sins. In this psalm, the psalmist recalls how they went astray, but God welcomed them back. The psalmist acknowledges their wrongdoing before God and asks for deliverance. The psalmist has returned to God and God has delivered them from evil. Therefore, the psalmist has made it their mission to counsel those listening to seek God’s wisdom and ways for their life. The psalmist warns against stubbornness and encourages the listeners to place their trust in God.



“The Prodigal” by Jesus Mafa.

Prayer for Missing the Quarantine

Mary Luti



"Return of the Prodigal Son" by Hans Peter Feddersen.

The parable of the "Prodigal Son" (or the Prodigal Parent) is a story that can be read many ways. On its face, the parable seems to be about a father with two sons – one son who is obedient and remains and one who is rebellious and leaves. The younger of the two sons asks his father for his inheritance and leaves home. He loses everything and returns to his family. He is prepared to be disowned by his family and rejected, but his father welcomes him back with open arms. His older brother, dismayed by his father's acceptance of his brother after he squandered his inheritance and disowned his family, refuses to celebrate his brother's return. The father rejoices when the son that left and spent all he had returns, but the father also celebrates the ones that never left. The parable tells us about God's extravagant, prodigal, reckless love and welcome for each of us.

Confession

Gracious God, the space between us is too great—
The rift we have created by demanding our share.
The distance we have put between us as we flee to a far country.
The resentment we hold when things don't seem fair.
Our refusal to join your gracious party.
For each step away
each bitter thought
each joyless rejection.
Forgive us...
and run toward us with open arms.

Words of Assurance

Sermon

Emerge: The Prodigal One Returns

Rev. Dan Stark



Prodigal Son in Modern Life: The Departure by James Jacques Joseph Tissot.

Song of Response Softly and Tenderly #348
Prayers of the People
The Lord's Prayer

Virtual Choir Great is the Lord arr. Jay Althouse

Invitation to the Offering
Prayer of Dedication
Doxology

Closing Song Amazing Grace #422
Sending Blessing
Postlude Epilogue Gilbert



"The Return of the Prodigal Son" by Rembrandt Harmenszoon van Rijn.

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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.

