



"Adam and Eve" by John August Swanson.

# Christ Church **UNITED CHURCH** OF CHRIST

Rev. Dan Stark, Pastor  
Matthew Lawrenz, Musician

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

*In this thirteenth week after the Pentecost event, we continue our sermon series, Emerge, with an exploration of two scriptures that deal with being unable to return and delayed returns. In Genesis, we hear the story of Adam and Eve's expulsion from the Garden of Eden and their inability to return to it. They could never go back to the way things were in the Garden. In 2 Peter, an early Christian teacher turns his attention to an alarming trend in the church: skepticism over the return of Christ. The early Christian church believed Jesus' return or second coming was imminent – and many believers struggled with this delay. As many people are unable to return to the spaces and places they love or to gather in the way we desire at this time, we might identify with the frustrations and desolations of the first humans in Genesis and the community in 2 Peter. This week, we can be reminded that even though we might not be able to return to certain spaces and places in the way we desire, or we may begin to lose faith about whether we will ever be “back to normal,” that the story doesn't end with a locked garden or frustrated hope.*

**Prelude**

**Blessing for the Still-Empty Pews**

*The front row used to get teased by the other rows: “No one sits there!” But no more. Never have they all felt so neglected, so lonely. Now there is only the occasional spider. But, spiders don't linger, listen, and lounge. Spiders don't have children who kick and fidget. Spider's don't make seats creak with delight. Their hearts aren't quickened by meeting the Great Carpenter.*

**Prelude on MELITA**

*Blessed are the church pews, chairs, and benches – welcoming butts, backs, thighs of every shape and size without judgement, without complaint, without any preferences. Yet, still beaming to be claimed as someone's regular favorite spot! Blessed are those mercy seats that wait for us, but not alone.*

**Barr**

**Matt Laney**

**Words of Welcome**

**Opening Hymn**

**Great God, You Have Called Us Here**

**Hymn #55**

**Opening Litany**

**One:** Adam and Eve were cast out of the Garden.  
**All:** **But their story did not end there.**  
**One:** The early Christians waited tirelessly for Jesus' return.  
**All:** **But their story did not end there.**  
**One:** God abides with us whether or not we can return to spaces and places near to us.  
**All:** **Our story does not end here.**

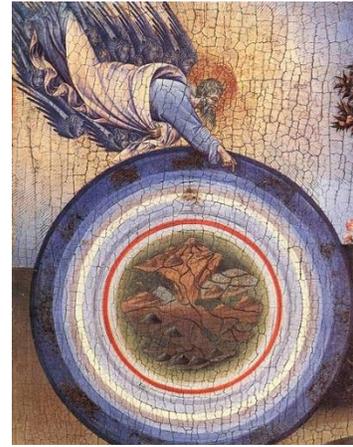
**Opening Prayer**

**The Gloria**

**Old Testament**

[Genesis 3:21-24](#)

Genesis is a book of beginnings. It begins with the morning of the world and moves into the ordering of families and nations to the birthing of the fathers and mothers of Israel. God creates a good and imaginative world, but does not leave it to cope on its own. God remains present and active, even in the wake of human sin. In this scripture, Adam and Eve, the first humans, are cast out of the Garden for disobeying God’s directive not to eat of the fruit from the tree of knowledge. They are unable to return. This scripture might provide insight to the feeling we have about not being able to return to certain spaces and places during COVID.



“Expulsion from the Garden” by Paolo di Giovanni.

**Blessing for Returning to Joyous Spaces**

**Marchae Grair**

*Bless the dance floors and the...coffee shops, patios, karaoke stages, arenas, bowling alleys, barbershops and salons, gyms, bars and wineries, arcades, theatres, malls and markets, art galleries, amusement parks, and, and, and...*

*Bless our grieving hearts as we mourn the places we’ve loved that won’t reopen.*

*Bless our restless hearts as we resist the temptation to gather before it’s safe.*

*Bless our restless hearts as we resist the temptation to gather before it’s safe.*

*Bless our fearful hearts as service workers among us provide joy at the risk of exposure.*

*Bless our grateful hearts as we cling to the sounds and smells, the colors and textures, and the sacred memories of the places we love – as we gather again.*

**New Testament**

**[2 Peter 3:1-13](#)**



“Peter” by Peter Paul Rubens.

A teacher of the early Christian church turns his attention to what he sees as problem areas in his community: skepticism over the second coming of Christ, divisiveness, claims of unique spiritual insight, and denial of the final judgement of God. 2 Peter was likely not written by the Apostle Peter, but instead someone using his name as a penname. Whatever the case, the author of this scripture was deeply concerned with the wellbeing and authenticity of the Church and its witness in the world. As the early church seeks to regroup in the aftermath of the death of the last of the apostles, this passage expresses worry about the early believers who no longer believed that Jesus would return to judge the living and the dead. As many of us wonder whether we will ever return to some semblance to pre-pandemic normality, this scripture speaks to our skepticism and concern.

**Sermon**

**Emerge: When You Can’t or Haven’t**

**Rev. Dan Stark**

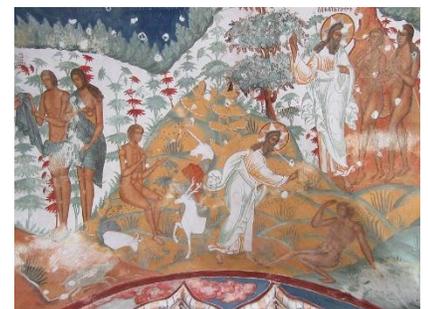
**Song of Response  
Prayers of the People  
Prayer Song  
The Lord’s Prayer**

**O God, Our Help In Ages Past**

**Hymn #84**

**Spirit of the Living God**

**Hymn #492**



**Invitation to the Offering  
Prayer of Dedication  
Doxology**

**Closing Song  
Sending Blessing**

*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,*

**This Day God Gives Me  
Blessing for the Future**

*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.*

**Bunessan  
Mary Luti**

**Postlude**

**Trumpet Tune in C**

**Gabrieli/Wolff**

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

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.

