

First Congregational United Church of Christ
“Where No One Is A Stranger”
Fifth Sunday in Lent
March 17, 2024

PRELUDE

RINGING OF THE BELL

GREETINGS, GOOD NEWS, ANNOUNCEMENTS, JESUS ENCOUNTERS

*CALL TO WORSHIP (read responsively)

One: Come to this time of worship glorifying God, singing God’s praises!

Many: **We gather for the cleansing of our hearts, the awakening of our spirits.**

One: May God write the law of love on our hearts and restore in us the joy of salvation.

Many: **We come seeking deliverance from temptation and guilt, for forgiveness for all that separates us from God.**

One: Let’s enter into covenant obedience, even if it leads to a cross.

Many: **We are here to lift up our voices and renew our vows to be God’s people.**

*Opening Song: “We Have Come to Join in Worship” #647 (sung to tune “Ode to Joy” #59)

*OPENING PRAYER (prayed together)

God of grains and grace, we gather this morning seeking to follow in the way of Jesus. The path he chose for his disciples was one of service and it requires of us that we lay down our desires, our ambitions, and serve you with our whole heart. May our worship this day inspire our dying and rising with you as we seek to love and serve like him. Amen.

TIME FOR CHILDREN AND THE YOUNG AT HEART

CALL TO CONFESSION

PRAYER OF CONFESSION

Heart which seeks our own: we yearn for your presence in our lives, yet turn away from you time and again. We want to serve others, but become obsessed with our own desires. We need your Word to fill our emptiness, yet let it be silenced by the noise of our world. Our hearts are clogged with the foolishness of our lives, and often struggle to beat in rhythm with your own.

In this silence, and in the depths of our hidden souls, come to us and make us whole. Write *grace* upon our hearts, so we might be more forgiving people; write *mercy* on our hearts, so we might become more welcoming people; write *hospitality* upon our

hearts that we might become more like Jesus, our Savior, who came for all people, even us. Amen.

A TIME FOR SILENT REFLECTION

WORDS OF ASSURANCE

One: A new heart, a generous spirit, a fresh start: these are the gifts our God gives to us.

Many: **Through Christ, we are cleansed; through Christ, we are healed; through Christ, we become new people. Thanks be to God. Amen.**

SHARING THE FIRST SCRIPTURE READING: Jeremiah 31:31-34

AN AFFIRMATION OF FAITH:

We believe in God, the maker of all things, source of all life and Mother of all children.

Our life is in God, and in God we are one with all beings.

We follow Jesus, the Christ, the Revealer of God, who taught us to love, who gave us courage to trust God’s grace, and who bid us to take up our cross and follow him. In his life and ministry and his death and resurrection, he has shown us that in losing our lives we find them. He who was crucified is the Lord of the Universe.

We rely upon the power and presence of the Holy Spirit, the communion of saints, the unity of the church, the forgiveness of sin, the resurrection of the body, and the reality of eternal life.

Therefore, we devote ourselves to disciplined practice of the Way of Jesus in our daily lives, so that we may grow in faithfulness, and serve God in humble, confident love for the sake of the healing of the world. Amen.

* **GLORIA PATRI:** “Glory Be to the Father” #734
Glory be to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Ghost: as it was in the beginning, is now, and ever shall be, world with-out end. A-men, A-men.

FOCUS SCRIPTURE: John 12:20-33 read from the *Good News Bible*

MESSAGE: “Dying to Live” Pastor Chris

PRAYERS OF THE PEOPLE/THE LORD’S PRAYER (with debts/debtors)

PRESENTING OUR GIFTS

* **DOXOLOGY:** “Praise God from Whom All Blessings Flow” #34
Praise God from whom all blessings flow; praise God, all creatures here below; Praise God above, you heavenly host; praise Father, Son and Holy Ghost. Amen.

*** PRAYER OF DEDICATION**

May the offerings we share this morning reflect your law of love that you have written on our hearts, God. May they bear the fruit of your Spirit and bless those who need it most. Amen.

*** CLOSING SONG:** “This Is a Day of New Beginnings” #355

***Going Forth with the Peace of Christ**

POSTLUDE

***Indicates all who are able please stand**

Other Lectionary Scripture Readings: Psalm 51:1-12 or Psalm 119:9-16, Hebrews 5:5-10

The Call to Worship (adapted), is from Whispers of God-Liturgical Resources for Year B by Lavon Bayler. The Opening Prayer is by The Rev. Dr. Chad Abbott, Conference Minister in the Indiana-Kentucky Conference. The Call to Confession, Prayer of Confession (adapted), and Words of Assurance are by Thom M. Shuman from Lectionary Liturgies. The Offering Prayer of Dedication (adapted) is by B.J.Beau from The Abingdon Worship Annual 2024 edited by Mary Scifres and B.J. Beau. The Affirmation of Faith is by Steve Gamaas-Holmes

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Organist: Antoina Rupert

Worship Leader: David Burrow

Pastor: Rev. Chris Burtnett

March Radio Sponsor: Ginny Buchanan

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Birthdays: March: 20-Sandy Person, Max Person; 23 Helen Scuffham

Sunday, March 17: 10:30am - Worship– One Great Hour of Sharing Offering
Sunday School
Coffee

Tuesday, March 19: 9:30am- Pastor Feed Mill
3 pm.- International Delight Meeting

Wednesday, March 20: 8:30am.-Multi-Disciplanry Team Meeting

Thursday, March 21: 10am.-Pastor at Clergy Cluster Meeting at Humboldt

Friday, March 22: 6pm.- Overnight Pilgrim Heights Board Meeting

Sunday, March 24: 10:30am – Worship – Palm Sunday
Sunday School
Coffee
Potluck Brunch

It is Easter Lily Time: If you would like to order an Easter Lily, they are \$12 each. Please let the Church Office know how many you would like who they are in honor or in memory of.

The Hope of Easter 10 Reflections from Our Daily Bread and the March, April, May issue of “Our Daily Bread” may be picked up in the Fellowship Hall entry.



A Grain of wheat remains no more than a single grain unless it is dropped in to the ground and dies.

John 12:24b

*First Congregational
United Church of Christ
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