

ST. JOHN'S UCC

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SUNDAY, FEBRUARY 21, 2021

First Sunday in Lent
(Bulletin for online worship service)

GATHERING SONG

“Welcome Holy Spirit”

CALL TO WORSHIP

Leader: We gather as God's people in a world divided and distressed.

People: Yet we gather as one people, united by God.

Leader: We gather as God's people, journeying to Jerusalem.

People: Yet we gather as one people, steadfastly traveling forward together.

Leader: We gather as God's people, frightened by whirlpools of worry which spin us out of control.

All: Yet we gather as one people following in the unfailing steps of Jesus the Christ, whose name we praise.

OPENING SONG

“Come Now, Almighty King”

OPENING PRAYER

Suffering God, you told us to deny ourselves, take up our cross and follow Jesus. We're still not sure we want to go that far. We had hoped that becoming followers in this day and age would be a more rational business; we had hoped to fit our religion in the spare corners of our lives. It wasn't supposed to be an inconvenience. Yet you continue to call us, and we squirm uncomfortably. Teach us to respond gratefully to your invitation. Teach us to sacrifice — not only for others, but for you. And take what we can give right now, transforming it into an offering of our deepest selves. In your Son's name we pray. Amen.

CHILDREN'S TIME

AFFIRMATION OF FAITH

Together, as the body of Christ, we affirm and declare Jesus Christ to be the Son of God, the Word of God in flesh, the love of God personified, the mercy of God in action, the power of God at work. In his extraordinary incarnation, life, death and resurrection, Jesus lived in perfect obedience, showing us who God is and what God is like in every attitude, word and deed. Therefore, we seek to imitate Christ by yielding to his love, that we might be transformed and renewed in his likeness. Amen.

PRAYER HYMN

“Cares Chorus”

*I cast all my cares upon you,
I lay all my burdens down at your feet.
And anytime that I don't know what to do,
I will cast all my cares upon you.*

PRAYERS OF PEOPLE AND THE LORD'S PRAYER

ALL: Our Father who art in heaven, hallowed be thy name. Thy Kingdom come. Thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread. And forgive us our sins, as we forgive those who sin against us. And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil. For thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory forever. Amen.

SCRIPTURE

Isaiah 52:13-53:12

The Suffering and Glory of the Servant

¹³ See, my servant will act wisely; he will be raised and lifted up and highly exalted.

¹⁴ Just as there were many who were appalled at him— his appearance was so disfigured beyond that of any human being and his form marred beyond human likeness— ¹⁵so he will sprinkle many nations, and kings will shut their mouths because of him. For what they were not told, they will see, and what they have not heard, they will understand.

53 Who has believed our message and to whom has the arm of the LORD been revealed? ²He grew up before him like a tender shoot, and like a root out of dry

ground. He had no beauty or majesty to attract us to him, nothing in his appearance that we should desire him. ³ He was despised and rejected by mankind, a man of suffering, and familiar with pain. Like one from whom people hide their faces he was despised, and we held him in low esteem. ⁴ Surely he took up our pain and bore our suffering, yet we considered him punished by God, stricken by him, and afflicted.

⁵ But he was pierced for our transgressions, he was crushed for our iniquities; the punishment that brought us peace was on him, and by his wounds we are healed.

⁶ We all, like sheep, have gone astray, each of us has turned to our own way; and the LORD has laid on him the iniquity of us all. ⁷ He was oppressed and afflicted, yet he did not open his mouth; he was led like a lamb to the slaughter, and as a sheep before its shearers is silent, so he did not open his mouth.

⁸ By oppression and judgment he was taken away. Yet who of his generation protested? For he was cut off from the land of the living; for the transgression of my people he was punished. ⁹ He was assigned a grave with the wicked, and with the rich in his death, though he had done no violence, nor was any deceit in his mouth. ¹⁰ Yet it was the LORD's will to crush him and cause him to suffer, and though the LORD makes his life an offering for sin, he will see his offspring and prolong his days, and the will of the LORD will prosper in his hand. ¹¹ After he has suffered, he will see the light of life and be satisfied; by his knowledge my righteous servant will justify many, and he will bear their iniquities.

¹² Therefore I will give him a portion among the great, and he will divide the spoils with the strong, because he poured out his life unto death, and was numbered with the transgressors. For he bore the sin of many, and made intercession for the transgressors.

Philippians 1:27-2:18

Life Worthy of the Gospel

²⁷ Whatever happens, conduct yourselves in a manner worthy of the gospel of Christ. Then, whether I come and see you or only hear about you in my absence, I

will know that you stand firm in the one Spirit, striving together as one for the faith of the gospel ²⁸without being frightened in any way by those who oppose you. This is a sign to them that they will be destroyed, but that you will be saved—and that by God. ²⁹For it has been granted to you on behalf of Christ not only to believe in him, but also to suffer for him, ³⁰since you are going through the same struggle you saw I had, and now hear that I still have.

Imitating Christ's Humility

2 Therefore if you have any encouragement from being united with Christ, if any comfort from his love, if any common sharing in the Spirit, if any tenderness and compassion, ²then make my joy complete by being like-minded, having the same love, being one in spirit and of one mind. ³Do nothing out of selfish ambition or vain conceit. Rather, in humility value others above yourselves, ⁴not looking to your own interests but each of you to the interests of the others.

⁵In your relationships with one another, have the same mindset as Christ Jesus: ⁶Who, being in very nature God, did not consider equality with God something to be used to his own advantage; ⁷rather, he made himself nothing by taking the very nature of a servant, being made in human likeness. ⁸And being found in appearance as a man, he humbled himself by becoming obedient to death—even death on a cross!

⁹Therefore God exalted him to the highest place and gave him the name that is above every name, ¹⁰that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, in heaven and on earth and under the earth, ¹¹and every tongue acknowledge that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.

Do Everything Without Grumbling

¹²Therefore, my dear friends, as you have always obeyed—not only in my presence, but now much more in my absence—continue to work out your salvation with fear and trembling, ¹³for it is God who works in you to will and to act in order to fulfill his good purpose.

¹⁴Do everything without grumbling or arguing, ¹⁵so that you may become blameless and pure, “children of God without fault in a warped and crooked

generation.” Then you will shine among them like stars in the sky¹⁶ as you hold firmly to the word of life. And then I will be able to boast on the day of Christ that I did not run or labor in vain.¹⁷ But even if I am being poured out like a drink offering on the sacrifice and service coming from your faith, I am glad and rejoice with all of you.¹⁸ So you too should be glad and rejoice with me.

SERMON

“The Suffering Servant and The Exalted Messiah”

DOXOLOGY

ALL: Praise God, from whom all blessings flow; Praise Him, all creatures here below; Praise Him above, ye heav'nly host; Praise Father, Son and Holy Ghost. Amen.

OFFERING PRAYER

CLOSING SONG

“As the Deer”

BENEDICTION

The days of Lent have begun. May we be a witness to these days when Jesus Christ calls us again to ministry and discipleship. May our Lenten travels be for us and for the world a sign of Christ’s love for all humankind. Amen.

PARTICIPANTS: Worship Leader: Michael Pope; Liturgist: Jean Hoskins

Joys and Concerns Prayer List

Please have the person’s permission before adding him or her to our prayer list.

TODAY AND THROUGH THE WEEK, PLEASE PRAY FOR:

Our church family: Vera Villa (comfort; loss of mother), Hank Kroeger (healing/strength), Kent Baker and family (comfort), Barb Yocks (healing), Audrey Behr (strength/healing), Rev. Don Hartman (healing), Zoey Poyser (healing), Danny Kolkmeier

(healing), Jack Fredrick (healing/strength), John Long (healing/strength), Vince Morris (comfort/healing), Larry Nadler (comfort/strength), George Schlie (surgery recovery), Judy DeClue (healing), Kendra Howell (healing/recovery), Mary Verdone (sight), Dave & Dorothy Kapeller (comfort/healing), Pat Fisher (healing/strength).

Others for whom we have concern: Gwen Pope (wife of Rev. Michael Pope; healing), June Bonn (Chris Savage's Sister; healing/comfort), Joy Bello (comfort/healing), Robert (brother of Loire Kroeger; healing), Larry Smith (friend of the Weavers; cancer treatment), Marla Fix (strength/healing), Wally Kolkmeier, Timothy Smith (Vicie Smith's grandson, strength and healing), Tristan Howell (Jinnielynn's daughter; depression), Pastor Jeff Willey (healing and strength), Raquel Malana Slade (diagnosed with stage-4 cancer; friend of Jinnielynn Howell), Sandy (daughter of Mary Lafser; comfort and healing), Shirley Gibson (Debbie Lilley's mother; illness), Family of Virgil Gravemann (uncle/godfather of Diane Falkner), Gary Rose (Barb Rose's stepson; cancer), Angela Farwell (Barb Rose's niece; cancer), Tina Raeber (Barb Rose's daughter; surgery), Michelle Hargraves (surgery/shoulder), Carol Becker (Chris Volz' friend; cancer), Zack Paulus (Shirley Paulus' great grandson, Charissa Guyre's great nephew; deploying to Iraq), Rachel McCollum (Chris Savage's granddaughter; surgery recovery), Lynn Schaefer (friend of Connie Wildt; cancer), David Raming (Barb Horstmeier's brother-in-law; heart problems), Dot Peich (cancer), Daniel Nadler (family strength & direction).

Please contact the church office with prayer request updates.

News & Announcements

FOR FEBRUARY 21, 2021

Office hours this week: Monday, Tuesday, Thursday, 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. daily; closed Wednesday; Friday, noon to 5 p.m.

Reminder that the church building is currently closed due to COVID-19 and Office & Communications Manager Cassandra Langley is working from home. Please feel free to call the office during the hours listed above.

INTERIM PASTOR SEARCH UPDATE

As reported in last week's bulletin, we were drafting a call agreement for a new interim pastor. We're happy to report that this individual has agreed to join our church as the intentional interim pastor! He is working with his current congregation to establish a transfer date, and once his current congregation has all been notified we can send you all the information about him and we'll be very excited to do so! Stay tuned and hope to see you in a parking lot service soon.

MEETINGS THIS WEEK:

Cabinet – Monday, February 22, 7 p.m.

Council – Tuesday, February 23, 7 p.m.

Mission – Wednesday, February 23, 6:30 p.m.

EASTER BAGS FOR KIDS! CANDY DONATIONS REQUESTED

St. John's congregants will make Easter Bags for the children of F.I.S.H. (Friends in Serving Him) food pantry again this year! We are in need of individually wrapped Easter candy, as well as plastic Easter eggs. There will be an Easter collection container on the cart as you enter the parking lot on Sunday mornings. The final date to bring the candy is Sunday, March 7. Candy donations are very much appreciated, as some of these children may not receive any Easter candy if we do not do this for them. FISH very much appreciates receiving these bags!

ONGOING COLLECTIONS – SODA TABS AND EYE GLASSES

An ongoing project of the St. John's Mission & Caring Ministry is the collection of soda tabs to benefit Ronald McDonald House Charities and eyeglasses for the Festival of Sharing. You can bring these items to donate with you to a Sunday morning drive-in service and give them to an usher. Thank you to all those who have donated!

MEN'S BIBLE STUDY

Men's Bible Study meets on Zoom every Tuesday at 8 a.m. If you would like to join the group, please look for the information you need in the weekly "Ways to Connect" email that is sent on Mondays, or on the website calendar. If you do not receive the email and would like to, please contact the church office.

WOMEN'S BIBLE STUDY

Women's Bible Study meets on Zoom every Wednesday at 1 p.m. Look for the information you need to join the virtual Bible study in the weekly "Ways to Connect" email that is sent on Mondays. If you do not receive the email and would like to, please contact the church office.

FISH FOOD PANTRY COLLECTION – NEEDS FOR FEBRUARY

The Mission committee has decided to start collecting food again for the F.I.S.H. food pantry. There will be a cart down by the driveway where the bulletins are given out at the drive-in service each week. The food pantry's list is smaller than usual mainly because of the generosity of others during the holidays. However, here are the items they are especially in need of this month:

- Tuna and Hamburger Helper
- Green beans
- Corn
- Mixed vegetables
- Any kind of soup
- Canned chicken
- Applesauce
- Quick oatmeal—small and large containers
- Dish soap
- Body lotion

DON'T MISS WEATHER-RELATED ANNOUNCEMENTS

"One Call Now" is the phone alert system we use to get the word out to our friends and members about important events, weather-related cancellations, meeting reminders, bereavement notices and more. If you miss the voice call, the system will leave a message on your voicemail. If the message gets cut off, simply dial 1-877-698-3261 to retrieve the message in its entirety. If you are not receiving the One Call Now notices and would like to, please contact the church office at 636-926-8995.

St. John's United Church of Christ

Our **purpose** is to change the world
one person at a time by sharing
the love and power of Jesus Christ
with family members, friends and neighbors.

Our **mission** is to lead our members
to become faithful and beloved friends
and disciples of Jesus Christ;
and to equip and support them
to minister to others in Jesus' name.