



Trinity United Church of Christ

60 East High Street Gettysburg, Pennsylvania 17325 717-334-7266
tuccgburg@gmail.com www.gettysburgtrinityucc.org



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January 28, 2024

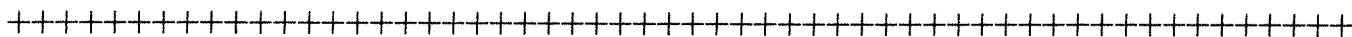
8AM and 10:30AM Worship

4th Sunday following Epiphany

Awakening joyful service guided by our still speaking God!

*Congregational responses in **bold print**.*

** Denotes standing as you are able.*



ANNOUNCEMENTS AND GREETING

No matter who you are or where you are on life's journey,
You are welcome here!

PRELUDE – “Be Thou My Vision: - *H. Sorenson*

***CALL TO WORSHIP**

People of faith come and worship!

We rejoice in this opportunity to worship together.

People of faith, come and praise!

We rejoice in this opportunity to sing with heart and voice.

People of faith, come and pray!

We rejoice in this opportunity to open ourselves to God's leading.

People of faith, come and listen!

**Rejoice in this opportunity to hear the scriptures
and to respond in faithful voice.**

***HYMN #9 “We Sing to You, O God”**

***PRAYER**

Blessed God, we are nothing except that we are loved by you.

**Be present in this place and enfold us in your love
that we may go from here humbled to serve. Amen.**

***RESPONSE TO PRAYER #9 “We Sing to You, O God” (v1)**

We sing to you, O God, the Rock who gave us birth.

Let our rejoicing sing your name in all the earth.

To you, O God, let songs be raised, in joyful hymns, our feast of praise.

PRAYER OF CONFESSION

Gracious God, it is our privilege to be in your midst praising you, but it is just such a privilege that often breeds arrogance rather than humility. We confess that too often we wear our church attendance like a badge of honor and our faith like a cloak of righteousness, standing in judgement of others who barely darken a church door or who find meaning in life elsewhere.

Forgive us. Teach us the lessons of love and remind us that, for all our knowledge about the ways of faith, the most important thing is that we are loved by you. Amen.

(Moment for Silent Prayer)

#750 KYRIE

Lord, have mercy upon us.

Lord, have mercy upon us.

Christ, have mercy upon us.

Christ, have mercy upon us.

Lord, have mercy upon us.

Lord, have mercy upon us.

ASSURANCE OF PARDON

God does indeed love us passionately and completely, forgiving our arrogance and pretense.

God assured that you are love and are thus empowered to love passionately, completely, humbly.

Thanks be to God! Amen.

SPECIAL MUSIC

“10,000 Reasons (Bless the Lord)”

Text: Grindal. Music: Proulx

Sara Shank

SCRIPTURES

Deuteronomy 18:15-20

The Lord your God will raise up for you a prophet like me from among your own people; you shall heed such a prophet. ¹⁶This is what you requested of the Lord your God at Horeb on the day of the assembly when you said: “If I hear the voice of the Lord my God any more, or ever again see this great fire, I will die.” ¹⁷Then the Lord replied to me: “They are right in what they have said. ¹⁸I will raise up for them a prophet like you from among their own people; I will put my words in the mouth of the prophet, who shall speak to them everything that I command. ¹⁹Anyone who does not heed the words that the prophet shall speak in my name, I myself will hold accountable. ²⁰But any prophet who speaks in the name of other gods, or who presumes to speak in my name a word that I have not commanded the prophet to speak—that prophet shall die.”

Mark 1:21-28

They went to Capernaum; and when the sabbath came, he entered the synagogue and taught. ²²They were astounded at his teaching, for he taught them as one having authority, and not as the scribes. ²³Just then there was in their synagogue a man with an unclean spirit, ²⁴and he cried out, “What have you to do with us, Jesus of Nazareth? Have you come to destroy us? I know who you are, the Holy One of God.” ²⁵But Jesus rebuked him, saying, “Be silent, and come out of him!” ²⁶And the unclean spirit, convulsing him and crying with a loud voice, came out of him. ²⁷They were all amazed, and they kept on asking one another, “What is this? A new teaching—with authority! He commands even the unclean spirits, and they obey him.” ²⁸At once his fame began to spread throughout the surrounding region of Galilee.

SERMON

“Uniquely Unclean!”

(Video Sermon – 10:30am)

HYMN #531 “God Speak to Me That I May Speak”

(Remain Seated)

PRAYER/LORD’S PRAYER

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.

Lead us not into temptation but deliver us from evil.

For Thine is the Kingdom, and the Power and the Glory, forever. Amen.

***AFFIRMATION OF FAITH**

**We believe in God,
the creator of all things,
the giver of life and breath.
We believe in Jesus Christ,
born Emmanuel, God with us,
baptized and revealed the most beloved Son of God;
he sought to heal humanity by taking our brokenness upon himself,
suffering for us, dying for us and being raised from the dead
for our sake and for the sake of all the world.**

We believe that he will come again.

**We believe in the Holy Spirit,
continually poured out refreshing our lives,
leading us into a new day,
ever-birthing the church,
the body of Christ in the world.**

**This Spirit is our soul companion and counselor of truth
reminding us of the gift of faith,
the ever presence of God
and the promise of eternal life.**

Thanks be to God! Amen.

***CELEBRATION OF OUR GIFTS**

**We are poor, unless God blesses us.
We are rich, when we offer up what we have to God.
Let us offer our gifts with open hearts and minds.**

***OFFERTORY RESPONSE**

**#164 "Arise, Your Light Is Come" (v1)
*Arise, your light is come! The Spirit's call obey;
Show forth the glory of your God which shines on you today!***

***PRAYER OF DEDICATION**

**May these gifts enable your faith community to sharpen its senses, God.
You bless us and you bless our gifts, as our awareness grows.
We are grace filled people. Amen.**

***HYMN #451 "Be Now My Vision"**

***FINAL BLESSING**

Leave this church in the confidence of Jesus Christ!

The faith community will be renewed.

The sick will know hope.

The despised will get the respect they deserve.

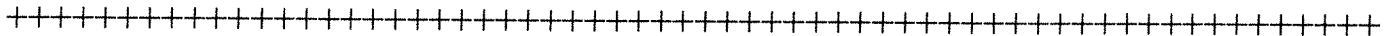
The guilty will know pardon.

The proud will be humbled.

And each one of us will feel the loving acceptance of God.

Go in the peace Christ gives! Amen.

***POSTLUDE**



Elements from today's worship have been adapted from the following resources:

Prayers to Share, Year B. David Sparks. Wood Lake Books. Kelowna, BC. 2002.

Before the Amen Maren. Tirabassi and Maria Tirabassi. The Pilgrim Press. Cleveland. 2007.

Affirmation of Faith. The Rev. Dr. Amanda Burr is a United Methodist elder appointed to
United Methodist Church of Palm Springs, California.

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Music Publishing

Hymns - *We Sing to You, O God.* Text by Grindall: Music by Proulx: copyright 1980: GIA Publications

God Speak to Me That I May Speak. Public Domain

Be Now My Vision. Tune by Burne/Hall/Evans, Text by Word Alterations: copyright 1992, The Pilgrim Press

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Today's Worship Participants

Rev. Dr. Frederick A. Young		Pastor
Jane Malone		Leading Elder (10:30am)
Cindy Blevins	8:00am	Lay Liturgists
Lenore O'Rourke	10:30am	
Sara Shank		Organist
John McKay		Senior Choir Director
Mark Luckenbaugh	8:00am	Percussion
	8:00am	Ushers
Mary Jane & Harry Hilbert	10:30am	
Janet & Steve Sheely	10:30am	Greeters
Janet Sheely	10:30am	Acolyte
Georgia Hollabaugh, Kara Young, Luke Milhimes, Sue Churchill,		Tech Team
Russell Bailey, Carl Barrick, Stacey Rushwald, George Steckert, Garrison Redding, Terry Krietz		

We Sing to You, O God

Gracia Grindal, 1985, 1989

1. We sing to you, O God, the Rock who gave us birth,
let our re-joic-ing sing your name in all the earth.
To you, O God, let songs be raised,
in joy-ful hymns, our feast of praise.

2. We wan-dered far from home out in a des-ert land,
you shield-ed with your love our fear-ful pil-grim band.
You kept us safe with-in your arms
and shel-tered us a-gainst the storm.

3. You bear us through the world, an ea-gle to her young,
who ris-es on her wings and bears us toward the sun.
We ride the vaults of light and air
and trust in your un-fail-ing care.

4. O God, e-ter-nal God, we hide with-in your wings,
the ev-er-last-ing arms to whom our prais-es ring.
Your word is true, your way is just,
you are the God in whom we trust.

531 God, Speak to Me, That I May Speak

Frances Ridley Havergal, 1872; alt.

1. God, speak to me, that I may speak
in liv-ing ech-oes of your tone;
as you have sought, so let me seek
your err-ing chil-dren lost and lone.

2. O lead me, God, that I may lead
some wan-der-ers a-long life's way;
O feed me so that I may feed
your hun-gry ones with-out de-lay.

3. O fill me with your full-ness, God,
your ov-er-flow-ing love to know;
In glow-ing word and kin-dling thought,
your love to tell, your praise to show.

4. O use me, God, use ev-en me
just as you will, and when, and where,
un-til your bless-ed face I see,
your rest, your joy, your glo-ry share.

Ancient Irish text, c. 8th century; transl. Mary E. Byrne, 1905
Versified by Eleanor H. Hull, 1912; adapt.

1. Be now my vi-sion, O God of my heart;
noth-ing sur-pass-es the love you im-part—
You my best thought, by day or by night,
wak-ing or sleep-ing, your pres-ence my light.

2. Be now my wis-dom, and be my true word;
ev-er with-in me, my soul is as-sured;
Moth-er and Fa-ther, you are both to me,
now and for-ev-er your child I will be.

3. Rich-es I need not, nor life's emp-ty praise,
you, my in-her-i-tance, now and al-ways;
You and you on-ly are first in my heart,
great God, my trea-sure, may we nev-er part.

4. Sov-ereign of heav-en, my vic-to-ry won,
may I reach heaven's joys, O bright heav-en's Sun!
Heart of my own heart, what-ev-er be-fall,
still be my vi-sion, O Rul-er of all.

Trinity United Church of Christ

Gettysburg, PA

Epiphany 4, January 28, 2024

Mark 1:21-28

Sermon: Uniquely Unclean

Rev. Dr. Frederick Young, Pastor

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When I was the Behavioral Health Chaplain at York Hospital, I met several people who were convinced they were either God or Satan. Each conversation shed more light on the devastation and sorrow that brought them to such an identity crisis. One young woman was sure Satan was working through her, instructing her to cause destruction by setting fires in her home and neighborhood. She looked tired, tortured and alone, she mostly sat in silence. When I mentioned God, she would growl. Once, during a prayer, she started screaming about death. At the tender age of 13, her life seemed hopeless. However, on occasion we would have conversations when she acted like an average teenage girl, excited and full of life. I never knew who I would find when I was called to the adolescent Psych unit.

I spent a year working on this unit and she was re-admitted over and over. Each visit our conversation would start all over again, as if for the first time. When the exorcism at Capernaum appears within the lectionary, I think about this woman. Today she would be in her mid to late thirties. I wonder if the demons she fought at such a young age continue to control her life.

Jesus' ministry was in its infancy stage when he took his freshly called disciples to Capernaum to begin his teaching. Out of nowhere came a man shouting about Christ's desire to uproot and change everything about the synagogue in which they sat. Jesus approached the seemingly delirious man, touched him, and called out the unclean spirits. Instantly those who witnessed this healing were amazed. Mark, more than any other Gospel writer, emphasizes Jesus' miraculous power to heal and to exorcise. Instead of parables there are eighteen miracles shared in Mark. Thirteen highlight healings and four of them are

exorcisms. Mark's Gospel hints at the difficult relation between religion and health, blessing and blasphemy.

Moses' words recorded in Deuteronomy strike a familiar chord. We have been talking about prophets like Samuel and Jonah and now hear Moses tell his people that the Lord will send another one like him from within their community. He tells the Israelites to heed what they say and be led by them. Reading the text reminded of a story I once heard about a young pastor in their first church.

One Sunday morning, a pastor preached an eloquent sermon, both brilliant and entertaining. The people were deeply moved, and many claimed it was the best sermon they had ever heard. The next week that pastor preached the same sermon, and again the people were excited to hear it. But when offered for the third week in a row, people began to wonder. Finally, one of them, while shaking the pastor's hand at the door with a small crowd gathered around him, asked, "Pastor, that was a great sermon, but why do you keep preaching the same message again and again?" The pastor smiled and replied, "Because I haven't seen anyone do anything about what I said."

Today, I wish I could have another opportunity to meet with the struggling soul I encountered all those years ago, so I might reach out and through a simple touch, offer her a blessing. Maybe giving her purpose, value and hope. Perhaps such words of compassion would be an extension of Christ's comfort and peace. Too often our culture labels those with behavioral issues as crazy, disruptive, and worthless. Mark does not distinguish between Jesus the teacher and the healer. For this Gospel writer they are expressions of the same power, the same love. Jesus brings liberation to those that are bound and broken, restoring wholeness. The possessed man would have suffered not only psychologically, but physically. Mark's community would have him living in the margins, excluded from society. So, when Christ heals him, reparations are not only mental and physical but social, and ultimately, spiritual. Jesus reminds us that we are ALL capable of love and worthy of receiving God's unconditional grace.

We hear about the possessed man causing a disturbance in the synagogue once again, as a reminder that the teachings of Jesus were never meant to be only spiritual, but about the whole individual and how the whole community thrives. Each of us could reflect on where in our own lives, in our relationships, and in our worship communities we are possessed by fear, greed, and ambition. Within this story, Jesus sets the example by walking with conviction, courage and love.

Do you wish you could visit your past and have an opportunity to change your response to someone? Maybe you would choose a new plan of action or hold compassionate space for someone struggling. How might you listen to our Still Speaking God? Come Lord, Jesus, and loose us from all binds, that we may follow you. **Amen.**