

Live  
Lent  
with Love



***Trinity United Church of Christ***

60 East High Street Gettysburg, Pennsylvania 17325 717-334-7266  
[tuccgburg@gmail.com](mailto:tuccgburg@gmail.com) [www.gettysburgtrinityucc.org](http://www.gettysburgtrinityucc.org)

Trinity United Church of Christ  
March 17, 2024  
8AM and 10:30AM Worship  
Fifth Sunday in Lent

*Awakening joyful service guided by our still speaking God!*

*If this is your first time with us, or if you have come to this sacred space your entire life, we are glad to be on this journey of faith with you. Trinity believes that **whoever you are, and wherever you are on life's journey, you are welcome here!** To enhance your worship experience, we have large print bulletins and hearing support devices available.*

*Please ask an usher or greeter for assistance.*

*Enter to worship today but stick around to see what God is doing in this place!*

*Congregational responses in **bold print**. \* Denotes standing as you are able.*

+++++

TIME OF SHARING AND GREETING

PRELUDE – “Jesus Paid it All” – R. Sterling

**\*CALL TO WORSHIP**

The days are surely coming, says our God;  
The day is here to affirm a new covenant.

**We call on God's steadfast love and mercy.**

God's law will be written on our hearts.  
Our Creator claims us and forgives our faithlessness.

**We are eager to know the God who loves us.**

God offers us the joy of salvation.  
Our brokenness can be healed and wholeness restored.  
**With new and revitalized spirits, we come to worship our God!**

**\*HYMN #224 “When I Survey the Wondrous Cross”**

**\*PRAYER**

**You, O God, have given us your Son, Jesus Christ to trust and to follow.  
Jesus says, "The hour has come," the cross stands menacingly at the end of the road.  
Give us all the courage not to look back but fill us with the hope to move forward.**

**Love Crucified reveals a wonderful new prospect.  
Death is not the end; the Way goes on beyond the cross; Love is eternal. Amen.**

**\*SUNG RESPONSE #224 "When I Survey the Wondrous Cross" (V1)**

*When I survey the wondrous cross,  
on which the Christ of glory died,  
My richest gain I count but loss,  
and pour contempt on all my pride.*

**PRAYER OF CONFESSION**

**Have mercy on us, O God, according to your steadfast love.  
Wash us thoroughly from our iniquity and cleanse us from our sin.  
We know more of our own transgression than we have been willing to admit, even to  
ourselves. May your presence in our lives help us face the truth about ourselves.  
Wash away the stain of our iniquity. Create in us clean hearts, and renew our spirits.  
We are ready for new life. Amen.**

*(Moment for Silent Prayer)*

**SUNG RESPONSE #188 "Give Me a Clean Heart"**

*Give me a clean heart so I may serve you.  
God, fix my heart so that I may be used by you.  
For I'm not worthy of all these blessings.  
Give me a clean heart and I'll follow you.*

**ASSURANCE OF GRACE**

**Because we are children of our Creator who loves us  
and through Christ's compassion for us on the cross,  
the burden of our sin is lifted. New life is ours to enjoy. Amen.**

**SPECIAL MUSIC (10:30am)**

**"Look to the Cross"**

**R. E. Schram**

**Senior Choir**

## A TIME FOR THE YOUNG AT HEART

### SCRIPTURES

Jeremiah 31:31-34

The days are surely coming, says the Lord, when I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel and the house of Judah. <sup>32</sup>It will not be like the covenant that I made with their ancestors when I took them by the hand to bring them out of the land of Egypt—a covenant that they broke, though I was their husband, says the Lord. <sup>33</sup>But this is the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel after those days, says the Lord: I will put my law within them, and I will write it on their hearts; and I will be their God, and they shall be my people.

<sup>34</sup>No longer shall they teach one another, or say to each other, “Know the Lord,” for they shall all know me, from the least of them to the greatest, says the Lord; for I will forgive their iniquity, and remember their sin no more.

John 12:20-36

Now among those who went up to worship at the festival were some Greeks. <sup>21</sup>They came to Philip, who was from Bethsaida in Galilee, and said to him, “Sir, we wish to see Jesus.” <sup>22</sup>Philip went and told Andrew; then Andrew and Philip went and told Jesus. <sup>23</sup>Jesus answered them, “The hour has come for the Son of Man to be glorified. <sup>24</sup>Very truly, I tell you, unless a grain of wheat falls into the earth and dies, it remains just a single grain; but if it dies, it bears much fruit. <sup>25</sup>Those who love their life lose it, and those who hate their life in this world will keep it for eternal life. <sup>26</sup>Whoever serves me must follow me, and where I am, there will my servant be also. Whoever serves me, the Father will honor. <sup>27</sup>“Now my soul is troubled. And what should I say—‘Father, save me from this hour’? No, it is for this reason that I have come to this hour. <sup>28</sup>Father, glorify your name.” Then a voice came from heaven, “I have glorified it, and I will glorify it again.” <sup>29</sup>The crowd standing there heard it and said that it was thunder. Others said, “An angel has spoken to him.” <sup>30</sup>Jesus answered, “This voice has come for your sake, not for mine. <sup>31</sup>Now is the judgment of this world; now the ruler of this world will be driven out. <sup>32</sup>And I, when I am lifted up from the earth, will draw all people to myself.” <sup>33</sup>He said this to indicate the kind of death he was to die. <sup>34</sup>The crowd answered him, “We have heard from the law that the Messiah remains forever. How can you say that the Son of Man must be lifted up? Who is this Son of Man?” <sup>35</sup>Jesus said to them, “The light is with you for a little longer. Walk while you have the light, so that the darkness may not overtake you. If you walk in the darkness, you do not know where you are going. <sup>36</sup>While you have the light, believe in the light, so that you may become children of light.” After Jesus had said this, he departed and hid from them.

### SERMON

*“Unconditional Grace”*

**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.**

**HYMN #207 "Just As I Am"**

**(Remain Seated)**

**\*AFFIRMATION OF FAITH #881 Apostle's Creed**

**I believe in God, the Father almighty,  
creator of heaven and earth.**

**I believe in Jesus Christ, God's only Son, our Lord,  
who was conceived by the Holy Spirit,**

**born of the Virgin Mary,**

**suffered under Pontius Pilate,**

**was crucified, died, and was buried;**

**he descended to the dead.**

**On the third day he rose again;**

**he ascended into heaven,**

**he is seated at the right hand of the Father,**

**and he will come again to judge the living and the dead.**

**I believe in the Holy Spirit, the holy catholic Church,**

**the communion of saints, the forgiveness of sins,**

**the resurrection of the body, and the life everlasting. Amen**

**\*CELEBRATION OF OUR GIFTS**

The coming sacrifice of Christ calls us to wonder about the effectiveness of our gifts.

Will our worship speak to the needs of our community? Will reconciliation arise  
out of conflict? Will we see the faith community as a priority for ourselves  
and for our neighborhood? May our giving provide the answers.

**\*OFFERTORY RESPONSE #778**

***Praise God from whom all blessings flow;***

***Praise God, all creatures here below;***

***Praise God for all that love has done;***

***Creator, Christ, and Spirit, One.***

**\*PRAYER OF DEDICATION**  
**Bless these gifts, O God, as you have**  
**blessed us with the gift of Jesus Christ. Amen.**

**\*HYMN #195 “On a Hill Far Away” (*The Old Rugged Cross*)**

**\*FINAL BLESSING**

**\*POSTLUDE**

+++++

**Today’s Worship Elements have been adapted from the following resource:**

**Call to Worship, Prayer of Confession and Assurance of Grace**

Lavon Bayler. *Led By Love*; Year B. Pilgrim Press. Cleveland. 1996.

**Prayer of Confession and Assurance of Grace**

*So Loved: Service Prayers for the Fourth Sunday of Lent*

Rev. Dr. Ginny Brown Daniel, Conference Minister for Missouri Mid-South Conference, UCC.

Copyright 2021 Justice and Local Church Ministries, Faith INFO Ministry Team, United Church of Christ,  
700 Prospect Avenue, Cleveland, OH 44115-1100. Permission granted to reproduce or adapt this  
material for use in services of worship or church education. All publishing rights reserved.

+++++

**Prelude:** *Jesus Paid it All*”– arranged by Robert Sterling. © 1985 GlorySound

**Hymns:** *When I Survey the Wondrous Cross*. Public Domain

*Just As I Am*. Public Domain

*On A Hill Far Away (The Old Rugged Cross)*. Public Domain

**Anthem:** *Look to the Cross*. Words and Music by Ruth Elaine Schram. Copyright 1998 Alfred Publishing

**Permission to reprint / podcast / stream the music in this service obtained from ONELICENSE with License # A-712060. All rights reserved.**

**Today’s Worship Participants**

Rev. Dr. Frederick A. Young		Pastor
Jen Mickelson	8:00am	Lay Liturgists
Catherine Hammons	10:30am	
Sara Shank		Organist
John McKay		Senior Choir Director
Mark Luckenbaugh	8:00am	Percussion
Cindy Blevins	8:00am	Ushers
Lenore O’ Rourke, Janet Sheely	10:30am	
Ruby Warren, Neil Hollabaugh	10:30am	Greeters
Bonnie Smith	10:30am	Acolyte
Georgia Hollabaugh, Kara Young, Luke Milhimes, Russell Bailey,		Tech Team
Carl Barrick, Stacey Rushwald, George Steckert, Garrison Redding, Terry Krietz		

Isaac Watts, 1707; alt.

1. When I sur-vey the won-drous cross,  
on which the Christ of glo-ry died,  
My rich-est gain I count but loss,  
and pour con-tempt on all my pride.
2. For-bid it, then, that I should boast,  
save in the death of Christ, my God;  
All the vain things that charm me most  
I sac-ri-fice them to Christ's blood.
3. From sa-cred head, from hands, and feet,  
sor-row and love flow min-gled down!  
Did e'er such love and sor-row meet,  
or thorns com-pose so rich a crown?
4. Were the whole realm of na-ture mine,  
that were a pres-ent far too small;  
Love so a-maz-ing, so di-vine,  
de-mands my soul, my life, my all.

Gal. 6:14; Phil. 3:7–8

Charlotte Elliott, 1836; alt.

1. Just as I am, with-out one plea  
but that your blood was shed for me,  
And that you called in-vit-ing me,  
O Lamb of God, I come, I come!
2. Just as I am, though tossed a-bout  
with man-y a con-flict, many a doubt,  
Fight-ings and fears with-in, with-out,  
O Lamb of God, I come, I come!
3. Just as I am, you will re-ceive,  
will wel-come, par-don, cleanse, re-lieve;  
Be-cause your prom-ise I be-lieve,  
O Lamb of God, I come, I come!
4. Just as I am, your love un-known  
has bro-ken ev-ery bar-rier down;  
Now to be yours, and yours a-lone,  
O Lamb of God, I come, I come!

John 6:37; Eph. 2:14



On a Hill Far Away  
(The Old Rugged Cross)

George Bennard, 1913; alt.

1. On a hill far a-way stood an old rug-ged cross,  
the em-blem of suf-fering and shame;  
And I love that old cross where the dear-est and best  
for a world of lost sin-ners was slain.

*Refrain:*

So I'll cher-ish the old rug-ged cross,  
till my tro-phies at last I lay down;  
I will cling to the old rug-ged cross,  
and ex-change it some-day for a crown.

2. Oh, that old rug-ged cross, so de-spised by the world,  
has won-drous at-trac-tion for me;  
For the dear Lamb of God left the glo-ry of heaven  
to bear it to cold Cal-va-ry.

*Refrain:*

3. In that old rug-ged cross, which bore Love so di-vine,  
a won-drous beau-ty I see,  
For up-on that old cross Je-sus suf-fered and died  
to par-don and sanc-ti-fy me.

*Refrain:*

4. To the old rug-ged cross I will ev-er be true,  
its shame and re-proach glad-ly bear;  
When God calls me some-day to my home far a-way,  
there God's glo-ry for-ev-er I'll share.

*Refrain:*

Trinity United Church of Christ  
Gettysburg, PA

5<sup>th</sup> Sunday of Lent  
March 17, 2024



Sermon  
*"Unconditional Grace!"*

Jeremiah 31:27-34  
John 12:20-36

Rev. Dr. Frederick A. Young  
Pastor

**Will you join me in prayer:** God of second chances and new beginnings, open our eyes to see you around us and open our hearts so that we can understand what your presence truly means to us. Amen.

---

“Jacob!” a voice demanded through the din of the bakery.

“When will the Messiah come?”

Jacob turned from the dough bench and found the man behind the question.

“You know,” said Jacob, “there is an old story that, if we were to treat every person we met as if they were the Messiah, then it wouldn’t make any difference if they weren’t.” And, while Jacob spoke, he began to wander in his own thoughts:

“If God makes us by filling us with His holy breath, then God has whispered into each of us. So, each time we exhale, we are releasing God’s breath, the message of God’s being. That means we are all messengers from the Source, and maybe, if we treated every person we met as if they were a messenger, we would get the message!”

These thoughts calmed Jacob, but the man who asked the question had grown impatient.

“Jacob, do you sincerely think we are capable of treating everyone as if they were the Messiah?”

“I don’t know,” said Jacob. The questioner seemed to enjoy the idea of this.

“You don’t know?”

“My friend,” said Jacob, meaning it with his voice, “The furthest a wise person can travel is to the border of their ignorance. The furthest a wise one can see is to the beginning of their blindness.”

The man threw up his arms, clearly disgusted with Jacob’s answers. “I was told you were a holy man, a prophet, a teacher, but, instead, you tell me that you don’t know, that you are ignorant, and that you are blind.”

Jacob patiently nodded through the negative description.

“Well,” the scoffer continued, “What should I see in you?”

“A man,” said Jacob, speaking slowly, “And, in reflection, you might find I look a great deal like you.”

**Noah BenShea**

+++++

We all possess the power to express our uniqueness, our compassion, and our ability to get life wrong in many ways. But as a child of God we are also given the glorious gift of unconditional grace. Our lives are often measured by how our faith blossoms and bears fruit, keeping in mind that even the prickly pear has a sweet and juicy center.

The beautiful words from the prophet Jeremiah continue to offer us providential peace and hope because our Still Speaking God can be felt within our individual lives and the whole of creation. The prophet's words of a new covenant are not unique to the ancient community; Noah and the rainbow, Abraham and Sarah and their descendants, the tablets Moses presented to the people at Mt. Sinai. In this passage, Jeremiah presents a new covenant which is written deep inside, etched onto the hearts of those ready and willing to celebrate its meaning.

But celebrating God's unconditional grace did not come easy to the ancient Israelites. When the Babylonians destroyed the temple in Jerusalem and dragged King Zedekiah off in chains, they destroyed the most prevalent symbols of God's covenantal presence, the heart of their worship and the Davidic kingship. God's chosen were not only defeated but devastated. Not only had they lost their God, but their power, prestige, freedom and security.

The prophet Jeremiah had warned the Israelites to change their ways and return to their God, but the sage's wise words fell on deaf ears. Now, God's chosen people had become God's chaotic mess. The people had broken their promises. Again, the prophet appeared and proclaimed that even amid disorder and desolation, their Creator's covenantal fidelity was still intact. The people had broken faith with God, God did not break faith with them. Jeremiah spoke words of hope when all hope seemed lost.

Even though Israel had abandoned their Creator, instead of words of judgement, the prophet delivered a lavish promise, unexpected, good news. God will bring newness out of destruction. God will bring hope where there is no hope. God will bring life out of death. God will make a way where there is no way.<sup>1</sup>

The law will no longer be engraved in stone and displayed for people to see, but not follow. People will no longer know *about* God,

---

<sup>1</sup> Richard Floyd. *Feasting on the Word: Year B. Vol. 2. Lent through Eastertide.* WJK. Louisville. 2008.

they will *know* God, intimately, from within themselves. God will put the law within them. And so, hopeful Israel waited for their faith to turn inward. In Christ, the early church believed God was at last fulfilling this promise, dwelling within the people and forgiving their iniquity once and for all. However, the reality facing modern day followers forces the church to confess that the new covenant does not hold, either. Faithful people, then and now, live by *hope*. But does our faith require more than hope? What does following the Light and Hope of the world require?

Jesus' message in John's Gospel claims:

*"Unless a grain of wheat falls into the earth and dies, it remains just a single grain; but if it dies it bears much fruit. Those who love their life lost it, and those who hate their life in this world will keep it for eternal life. Whoever serves me must follow me."* **John 12:24-26**

Christ's words remind us that such action requires letting go of our security. Such justice involves us going beyond our own self-interest in order for us to promote the well-being of others. But in order for this to happen we have to ask, where do we need to die? What do we need to lose in order to be faithful? What do we possess that continues to

tighten its grip, cutting us off from recognizing we are never alone, but are loved unconditionally by the Messiah who can be seen all around us?

Both Jeremiah and John write of the woes and joys of living with God. Within each prophet's words we are reminded that we, too, disappoint and bring joy to our God, who keeps offering each of us grace and compassion no matter our intentions. The wise sage, Jacob the Baker, with hands full of dough and an apron dusted with flour, calmly offers words of hope. We do not have to wait for the second coming of Christ, because our teacher can be found in both friend and foe. Everyone we encounter is the breath of God.

*The man threw up his arms, clearly disgusted with Jacob's answers. "I was told you were a holy man, a prophet, a teacher, but, instead, you tell me that you don't know, that you are ignorant, and that you are blind."*

*Jacob patiently nodded through the negative description.*

*"Well," the scoffer continued, "What should I see in you?"*

*"A man," said Jacob, speaking slowly, "And, in reflection, you might find I look a great deal like you."*



My friends, where is the beginning of our blindness? How far must we travel to pass through our ignorance? What within us must fall to the ground and open in new life in order for us to be the patience, hope, peace, love and compassion of Christ to everyone we encounter? Amen.