

Living Table United Church of Christ

March 29, 2020 • Fifth Sunday in Lent

Prelude

Gathering Song

“God Is Holding Your Life”

Refrain: God is holding your life, God is holding your life, God is holding your life, we believe.

God is holding your life, God is holding your life, God is holding your life, we believe.

1. Lift up your eyes, behold the hills, from where will help and rescue come?

We call on One who made the earth, who blessed the stars, the moon and sun.

Refrain

2. Turn down your gaze upon the earth. Where is the One who never sleeps?

We call on One who guards you now; your spirit safe in holy keep.

Refrain

3. When venturing out or coming home, 'neath heat of day or cool of night,

we call on One who hears your voice and comes to heal and keep your life.

Refrain

Silent Reflection

Call to Worship

“See, I Am Near”

1. See, I am near, says the Lord. See, I make all things new. O. O.

Gathering Prayer

God of all times and all people, we continue to wander in this wilderness. Every day fear and anxiety are all around us. We watch. We wait. We wonder what is next. As we gather for worship, Holy One, gather us closer to you. May we know your presence and comfort in new and real ways. Sickness and pandemic are not new for you; you have guided our ancestors in the past and you will guide us today. With gratitude for your presence and love, we pray. Amen.

Welcome & Announcements

Acknowledging Our Need for God

One: Jesus told his disciples not to worry – about life, food, or clothing.

All: It must have been hard for them to hear, harder still to stop worrying. We might be like them. We might worry too much about our lives, our needs, our appearance.

One: On our tendency to worry about everyday things,

All: God, have mercy.

One: Jesus reminded his disciples that God cares for birds and flowers and values them even more.

All: They may have been uncertain of their own value, and their worries came from a place of feeling inadequate or unworthy of God's love. We might be like them. **Worry comes to us more readily than trusting in God's love for us.**

One: On our inclination to distrust our value,

All: **God, have mercy.**

One: Jesus also pointed out to his disciples that worrying added nothing to their lives. He told them to focus on bringing God's Realm into the world and acting with loving-kindness rather than letting themselves be consumed by their fears.

All: **The disciples likely found it challenging to focus on the present and not borrow trouble from the days ahead. Being agents of Divine Love in the world is sometimes more difficult than giving into fear and worry. We might be like them. It is hard for us to for us to focus on what we do have and what we are able to do. It is often easier to borrow all of tomorrow's trouble than to find gratitude in this moment.**

One: On our reluctance to live in this moment and experience God's grace here and now,

All: **God, have mercy.**

Moment of Silent Reflection

Words of Promise

One: The way of Christ is the way of Love.

All: **We are God's beloved. God's love persists through all things, even when we forget.**

One: The way of Christ is the way of forgiveness.

All: **We are loved. We are forgiven. Thanks be to God!**

Sung Response

"It Is Well" (Refrain)

Refrain: It is well (it is well) with my soul (with my soul), It is well, it is well with my soul.

We Share the Peace

Song of Centering

"Seek Ye First"

1. Seek ye first the dwelling place of God, and all righteousness, and all these things shall be added unto you. Alelu, alleluia.

2. Ask and it shall be given unto you; Seek and you shall find; Knock and the door shall be opened unto you. Allelu, alleluia.

3. Alleluia, alleluia. Alleluia, alleluia.
Alleluia, alleluia. Alelu, alleluia.

Children's Sermon

Thoughts of the People

From "Love Alone Overcomes Fear" by Richard Rohr

<https://cac.org/love-alone-overcomes-fear-2020-03-19/>

... for God to reach us, we have to allow suffering to wound us. Now is no time for an academic solidarity with the world. Real solidarity needs to be felt and suffered. That's the

real meaning of the word “suffer” – to allow someone else’s pain to influence us in a real way. We need to move beyond our own personal feelings and take in the whole. This, I must say, is one of the gifts of television: we can turn it on and see how people in countries other than our own are hurting. What is going to happen to those living in isolated places or for those who don’t have health care? Imagine the fragility of the most marginalized, of people in prisons, the homeless, or even the people performing necessary services, such as ambulance drivers, nurses, and doctors, risking their lives to keep society together? Our feelings of urgency and devastation are not exaggeration: they are responding to the real human situation. We’re not pushing the panic button; we are the panic button. And we have to allow these feelings, and invite God’s presence to hold and sustain us in a time of collective prayer and lament. I hope this experience will force our attention outwards to the suffering of the most vulnerable. Love always means going beyond yourself to otherness. It takes two. There has to be the lover and the beloved. We must be stretched to an encounter with otherness, and only then do we know it’s love. This is what we call the subject-subject relationship. Love alone overcomes fear and is the true foundation that lasts (1 Corinthians 13:13).

Matthew 6:25-34

“Therefore I tell you, do not worry about your life, what you will eat or what you will drink, or about your body, what you will wear. Is not life more than food, and the body more than clothing? Look at the birds of the air; they neither sow nor reap nor gather into barns, and yet your heavenly Abba feeds them. Are you not of more value than they? And can any of you by worrying add a single hour to your span of life? And why do you worry about clothing? Consider the lilies of the field, how they grow; they neither toil nor spin, yet I tell you, even Solomon in all his glory was not clothed like one of these. But if God so clothes the grass of the field, which is alive today and tomorrow is thrown into the oven, will God not much more clothe you—you of little faith? Therefore do not worry, saying, ‘What will we eat?’ or ‘What will we drink?’ or ‘What will we wear?’ For it is the Gentiles who strive for all these things; and indeed your heavenly Abba knows that you need all these things. But strive first for the realm of God and God’s righteousness, and all these things will be given to you as well.

“So do not worry about tomorrow, for tomorrow will bring worries of its own. Today’s trouble is enough for today.”

Message

Sermon on the Mount: Why Worry?
Rev. Dr. Rachael Keefe

Litany of Reflection

One: We are God’s people.

All: We are invited into a life of hope, healing, and peace.

One: We strive to turn from our worries about life and health and food to trusting God’s love and grace.

All: We want to believe that God loves us and is with us, even in these fear-filled times.

One: In spite of the threat of the coronavirus and all the anxiety and grief it brings, God still claims us as God's beloved.

All: We will turn from our worries about what is coming, and focus on the present moment.

One: We are not alone whether we are worried or calm, fearful or peaceful; God is with us.

All: We will trust God's loving presence and continue to seek ways to care for the vulnerable all around us.

One: The more we focus on the moment we are in, the more we are able to bring the realm of God closer and practice loving-kindness.

All: We will practice gratitude for our many blessings and put our hearts, minds, and hands to work building the realm of God.

One: Let us remember and trust that God loves us without condition or limits.

All: We will live in God's love and endeavor to build God's realm in every moment.

Prayers of the People

Holy One, we open our hearts and lives to you; receive our prayers.

Silent Prayer

Prayer of Jesus

Our Father/Mother/Creator in heaven,

hallowed/holy be your name,

thy/your kin(g)dom come,

thy/your will be done,

on earth as in heaven.

Give us today our daily bread.

Forgive us our trespasses/sins/ as we forgive (our debtors) those who trespass/sin against us.

Lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil.

For thine/yours is the kingdom, the power, and the glory forever. Amen.

Offering

Offertory

Presentation of Gifts

"That We May Be Filled"

Not as we ought but as we are able, we offer our thanks as we come to your table.

Through Word and Spirit bless us; through bread and wine refresh us

that we may be filled, that we may be filled with love.

The Great Thanksgiving

One: God be with you.

All: And also with you.

One: Lift up your hearts.

All: We lift them up to God.

One: Let us give our thanks to the Holy One.

All: It is right to give our thanks and praise.

One: It is a right, good, and a joyful thing always and everywhere to give our thanks to you, O God, who created all that is and all that ever shall be. (...) we praise your name and join their unending hymn:

Song of Praise

“Sanctus (Psallite Mass)”

Holy, holy, holy. Holy, holy, holy. Hosanna, hosanna in the highest!

We Remember

One: God who meets us in the wilderness, in the desert, in the places we fear to go, we remember your abiding presence. (...) saying, “Take and eat. This is my body broken for you.”

All: As we eat this bread, we remember God’s covenant of love and renew our promise to see Christ in ourselves and in all our neighbors.

One: When all had eaten, Jesus took the cup, gave thanks, and offered it to his disciples saying, “Take and drink for this is the cup of the new covenant poured out for you.”

All: As we fill this cup, we remember God’s covenant of love and renew our promise to live lives of loving-kindness.

One: Let us pray:

All: Holy Spirit, come! Make all things new. Bless this bread which you have given and human hands have made. Let it become for us the bread of life. Bless also this cup, fruit of the vine and work of human hands. Let it become for us the cup of liberation.

Bless us also who eat and drink, that in this sharing we may know the living Christ who is with us now and to the end of the age. Nourish us by these gifts to be willing servants of your world until your realm comes and every creature beholds it. Amen.

Communion Song

“More Than Enough”

There is more than enough in a universe that you created.

There is more than enough on a planet of sacred design.

There is more than enough humanity made in your image.

Why would I worry? Why would I doubt? Why would I ever think I'd go without?

Why would I worry? Why would I doubt? Why would I ever think I'd go without?

Your infinite love made me. Made everything I see and all that will ever be is your infinite love.

Let my soul know the truth. Whatever I choose to do

Your infinite love will prove more than enough.

There is more than enough in a universe that you created.

There is more than enough on a planet of sacred design.

There is more than enough humanity made in your image.

Why would I worry? Why would I doubt? Why would I ever think I'd go without?

Why would I worry? Why would I doubt? Why would I ever think I'd go without?

Your infinite love made me. Made everything I see
and all that will ever be is your infinite love.

Let the world know the truth. Whatever we choose to do
Your infinite love will prove more than enough.

Your infinite love made me. Made everything I see and all that will ever be is your infinite love.

Let my soul know the truth. Whatever I choose to do
Your infinite love will prove more than enough.

More than enough. More than enough.

Prayer of Thanksgiving

God of all people and places, thank you that we can come together for worship and come to your table in new and creative ways. We give you thanks for the nourishment of this community and of your table. Strengthen us for the days to come and keep us mindful that we are your body even when we are scattered. In gratitude for your love and your grace, we pray. Amen.

Sending Forth

Psalm 5

Refrain: Lead me, O God, in your righteousness.

Give ear to my words, O God;
give heed to my sighing.

Listen to the sound of my cry,
my Sovereign and my God, for to you I pray.

O God, in the morning you hear my voice;
in the morning I plead my case to you, and watch.

For you are not a God who delights in wickedness;
evil will not sojourn with you. (Refrain)

The boastful will not stand before your eyes;
you hate all evildoers.

You destroy those who speak lies;
God abhors the bloodthirsty and deceitful.

But I, through the abundance of your steadfast love, will enter your house.
I will bow down toward your holy temple in awe of you.

Lead me, O God, in your righteousness because of my enemies;
make your way straight before me. (Refrain)

Benediction

Postlude

“God’s Eye Is on the Sparrow,” Kevin Werner Holstein

Contact Us

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