

St. Mark's United Church of Christ
Wednesday Lenten Service ~ March 30, 2022

Rev. Dr. Patrick Schultz, Pastor

Kathy Jurk, Organist & Choir Director

Meditative Music
Bells Ring Prelude
Gathering for Worship

Jesus , Keep Me Near the Cross

Call to Worship (responsively):

L: How much does God love us?

P: Enough to send the divine heart, hope, and spirit to us.

L: God did not come to condemn us, but to save us.

P: Not by our speaking or doing, but by God's good and precious grace are we saved.

L: God is Good!

P: All the Time.

L: All the Time.

P: God is Good!

Opening Prayer:

Gracious God, thank you for calling us together this morning. For removing barriers and building bridges, taking down walls and opening doors that otherwise might have kept us away.

Let this time of worship be an encounter with you that will enable us to behold you in all the people we meet and all the situations we greet. You are from everlasting to everlasting, so we are confident that you are here; help us to be aware of your holy presence. O Lord, enrich this act of worship with the power of the Holy Spirit, we pray in Jesus' name. *Amen.*

Hymn of Praise: (#204 Pilgrim People) (insert)

Because He Lives

A Prayer of Submission:

Too often and too easily, our eyes are drawn down, God,
to the suffering of victims
and the pain of perpetrators,
to the wounds we inflict on others
and the wounds we inflict on ourselves.

We need to see these things and pray,
But we also need our eyes to be lifted, God,
to the signs of your life among us,
to the touch of your healing on our souls,
to the cross that casts its liberating shadow
across all human affairs.

We need our eyes to be lifted, God,
so our hearts may be filled with faith
and hope
and love.

Words of Assurance (together): The Statement of Faith

We believe in God, the Eternal Spirit, Father of our Lord Jesus Christ and our Father, and to his deeds we testify:

He calls the worlds into being, creates man in his own image and sets before him the ways of life and death.

He seeks in holy love to save all people from aimlessness and sin.

He judges men and nations by his righteous will declared through prophets and apostles.

In Jesus Christ, the man of Nazareth, our crucified and risen Lord, he has come to us and shared our common lot, conquering sin and death and reconciling the world to himself.

He bestows upon us his Holy Spirit, creating and renewing the church of Jesus Christ, binding in covenant faithful people of all ages, tongues, and races.

He calls us into his church to accept the cost and joy of discipleship, to be his servants in the service of men, to proclaim the gospel to all the world and resist the powers of evil, to share in Christ's baptism and eat at his table, to join him in his passion and victory.

He promises to all who trust him forgiveness of sins and fullness of grace, courage in the struggle for justice and peace, his presence in trial and rejoicing, and eternal life in his kingdom which has no end.

Blessing and honor, glory and power be unto him. Amen.

Choir Anthem:

The Cross was His Own

Scripture Reading:

John 3:1-21

Message:

Look Up & Live

Rev. Dr. Patrick Schultz

Song of Assurance: (#176 Hymnal)

Crown Him With Many Crowns

Offering

Offering, tithes and gifts can be made before or after worship in the offering baskets/plates at the welcome area of the church. St. James is also set up to take on-line offerings through the website (stmstjucc.org).

Offertory Music:

Must Jesus Bear the Cross Alone?

~ The offering is brought to the altar ~

Prayer of Dedication and Thanksgiving (together):

Great and generous God, we are surrounded by things that steal our lives, inflict and destroy us. The tithes and offering we share with you this day are a way of keeping us focused not on the things that would take life away but will renew our lives: hope, love, compassion, empathy. As the Israelites looked to a serpent on a pole for healing, we look to a Savior on a cross to be brought back to life. In that holy name, Jesus the Messiah, we pray. Amen.

Silent 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 debts, as we forgive our debtors. And lead us not into temptation but deliver us from evil. For thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, forever. *Amen.*

A Sending Forth Song: (#217 Hymnal)

Rock of Ages

Benediction:

People of God; made by God; in the image of God... Go thanking and telling others of God's goodness. Go and share the love of God with those in need. Go and bring comfort, wisdom, encouragement and prayer. Go now to love and serve the Lord in all that you do, all that you are, and all you will be. *Amen.*

Postlude:

Jesus Christ, Our Blessed Savior

John 3:1-21

Now there was a man of the Pharisees named Nicodemus, a ruler of the Jews. This man came to Jesus by night and said to him, "Rabbi, we know that you are a teacher come from God, for no one can do these signs that you do unless God is with him." Jesus answered him, "Truly, truly, I say to you, unless one is born again^[a] he cannot see the kingdom of God." Nicodemus said to him, "How can a man be born when he is old? Can he enter a second time into his mother's womb and be born?" Jesus answered, "Truly, truly, I say to you, unless one is born of water and the Spirit, he cannot enter the kingdom of God. That which is born of the flesh is flesh, and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit. Do not marvel that I said to you, 'You must be born again.' The wind blows where it wishes, and you hear its sound, but you do not know where it comes from or where it goes. So it is with everyone who is born of the Spirit."

Nicodemus said to him, "How can these things be?" Jesus answered him, "Are you the teacher of Israel and yet you do not understand these things? Truly, truly, I say to you, we speak of what we know, and bear witness to what we have seen, but you do not receive our testimony. If I have told you earthly things and you do not believe, how can you believe if I tell you heavenly things? No one has ascended into heaven except he who descended from heaven, the Son of Man. And as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, so must the Son of Man be lifted up, that whoever believes in him may have eternal life.

"For God so loved the world, that he gave his only Son, that whoever believes in him should not perish but have eternal life. For God did not send his Son into the world to condemn the world, but in order that the world might be saved through him. Whoever believes in him is not condemned, but whoever does not believe is condemned already, because he has not believed in the name of the only Son of God. And this is the judgment: the light has come into the world, and people loved the darkness rather than the light because their works were evil. For everyone who does wicked things hates the light and does not come to the light, lest his works should be exposed. But whoever does what is true comes to the light, so that it may be clearly seen that his works have been carried out in God."