

Hope United Church of Christ
Worship Bulletin
Entering the Passion of Jesus
Fourth Sunday in Lent
“The First Dinner: Risking Reputation”
March 22, 2020 ~ 10:00 a.m.



Welcome & Announcements

Prelude

ENTERING THE STORY


Pastor Santina: We continue on our journey through Lent as we step inside the story full of difficult moments. We put ourselves in the picture of Holy Week, so that we might take a closer look and let the ancient story open us to deeper love for Jesus.

Besides the Last Supper, Holy Week contains another important story that happens at dinner. Earlier in the week, Jesus and his followers gather for a meal, and a woman shows up unexpectedly to anoint Jesus in an extravagant show of devotion. To say she caused quite a “stir” might be understating it a bit. We imagine ourselves in the room and we see the looks of judgment and even outrage on the faces around us. Are we ourselves moved by her generosity and outpouring of emotion? Or are we uncomfortable as Jesus refers to his own death? Does our complaining or anger really serve to hide our own fear? Jesus invites us to tell this story “in remembrance of her.” What uncomfortable stories are we called to tell in our time?

SUNG RESPONSE

“Enter the Passion”

Congregation: Marcia McFee and Chuck Bell



En - ter... En-ter the pas - sion... En-ter the place we be-long,
not just look-ing on. For this is our pas - sion... En-ter the pas - sion...
En-ter the sto - ry... En-ter the pas - sion... En-ter His pas - sion...

Prayer of Confession

Pastor Santina: Let us pray together:

People: It is so hard to not be afraid. Sometimes our fear makes us less compassionate, and more judgmental. We think we can ward off getting hurt by holding back, unwilling to risk putting ourselves out there for the sake of love. Forgive us, O God. Encourage us to extravagant acts of love, especially when we are frightened. You entered our story through Jesus, now help us to enter fully into the story of your kingdom, that we experience as kin-dom, on earth as it is in heaven. Amen

Opening Hymn: *Immortal Invisible God Only Wise* #1(St. Denio)

GOD

Immortal, Invisible, God Only Wise

1

Walter C. Smith, 1867; alt.

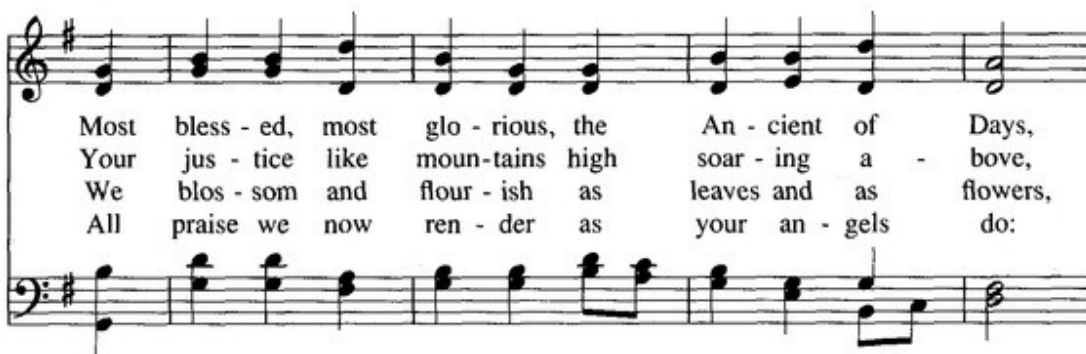
1 Tim. 1:17; Ps. 36:6



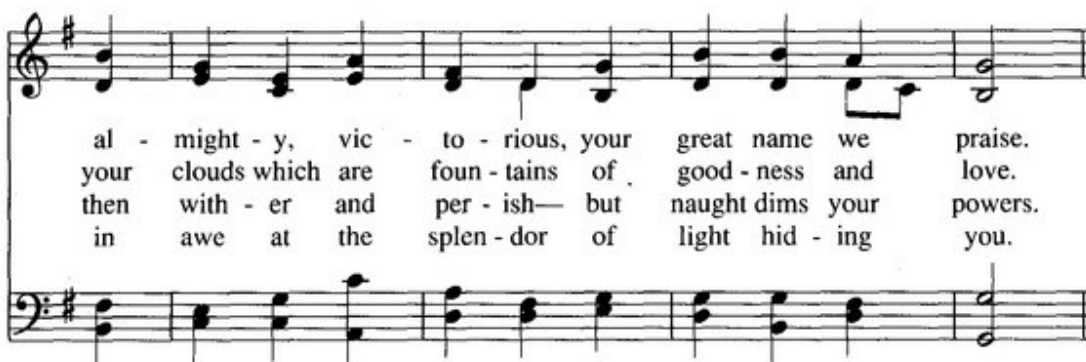
1 Im - mor - tal, in - vis - i - ble, God on - ly wise,
2 Un - rest - ing, un - hast - ing, and si - lent as light,
3 Your life is life - giv - ing— to both great and small;
4 So per - fect your glo - ry, so bril - liant your light,



in light in - ac - ces - si - ble hid from our eyes,
not want - ing, not wast - ing, but rul - ing in might;
in all life you're liv - ing, the true life of all;
your an - gels a - dore you, all veil - ing their sight;



Most bless - ed, most glo - rious, the An - cient of Days,
Your jus - tice like moun - tains high soar - ing a - bove,
We blos - som and flour - ish as leaves and as flowers,
All praise we now ren - der as your an - gels do:



al - might - y, vic - to - rious, your great name we praise.
your clouds which are foun - tains of good - ness and love.
then with - er and per - ish— but naught dims your powers.
in awe at the splen - dor of light hid - ing you.

Walter C. Smith, minister of the Free Church of Scotland and later moderator of the Assembly, wrote poetry as a retreat from work and to say what could not be fully expressed in the pulpit.

Tune: ST. DENIO 11.11.11.11.
Adapt. from a Welsh ballad in John Roberts' Caniadaeth y Cysegr, 1839

Assurance of Pardon and Entering the Peace of Christ

Pastor Santina: Know this: There is no limit on love. Love doesn't run out, and you can start giving more of it anytime. You are forgiven and freed, encouraged and loved by a God who wants you to live fully. Let us enter the passion of Christ, and pass the peace of Christ with each other.

Children's Message

Prayers of God's People/Lord's Prayer (debts)

Holy and loving God, we are filled with uncertainty that turns to fear so easily. Help us to remember your hand upon us through all we do. Your hand that calms us in our fear. Your hand that assures us of your presence. Your hand that guides us when it feels like we are not sure where to turn or who to listen to. Help us to recognize your hand and the many ways you appear in our lives.

We remember today the extravagant love shown to Jesus and his invitation to remember this woman through our actions of loving others. For when we experience the valley of the shadow of death, we are called to be with one another – in person and in spirit. You have taught us what community means – what the Body of Christ looks like and how we are to live. Let us always live into that knowledge and truth.

We remember today those who tend to the sick and dying—caregivers, medical professionals, hospice workers and humanitarians who risk leaving home and even enter dangerous places to help others. Bless them and protect them, almighty God. We ask your blessings and love to cover those people in our lives that need our advocacy, presence and prayers.

We ask your abundant love and grace be known to Sam and Linda who have entered this new season in their lives. Bring your healing love and peace upon them today and all the days ahead.

We ask your peace be felt for all who are quarantined in retirement and assisted living facilities and their loved ones. It is so hard to be separated when our loved ones need us the most.

I invite you to lift aloud names or places that you would add to our prayers today.

Be assured of God's love and presence in your lives. Know that God is here with us – wherever we are, wherever our prayers are lifted. The Holy Spirit empowers us to keep moving forward in faith and know the power of our Creator. The one who taught us this, Jesus the Christ, gave himself for us to know and begin to understand this. Please join me in the prayer Jesus offers:

Our Father, who is in heaven, hallowed be your name, your kingdom come, your 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 yours is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, forever. Amen.

GETTING PERSPECTIVE

Telling the Story

Old Testament Lesson

Psalm 23

The Lord is my shepherd, I shall not want.

He makes me lie down in green pastures;
he leads me beside still waters;
he restores my soul.
He leads me in right paths
for his name's sake.

Even though I walk through the darkest valley,
I fear no evil;
for you are with me;
your rod and your staff—
they comfort me.

You prepare a table before me
in the presence of my enemies;
you anoint my head with oil;
my cup overflows.
Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me
all the days of my life,
and I shall dwell in the house of the Lord
my whole life long.

New Testament Lesson

Mark 14:3-9

While he was at Bethany in the house of Simon the leper, as he sat at the table, a woman came with an alabaster jar of very costly ointment of nard, and she broke open the jar and poured the ointment on his head. But some were there who said to one another in anger, "Why was the ointment wasted in this way? For this ointment could have been sold for more than three hundred denarii, and the money given to the poor." And they scolded her. But Jesus said, "Let her alone; why do you trouble her? She has performed a good service

for me. For you always have the poor with you, and you can show kindness to them whenever you wish; but you will not always have me. She has done what she could; she has anointed my body beforehand for its burial. Truly I tell you, wherever the good news is proclaimed in the whole world, what she has done will be told in remembrance of her.”

Dwelling in the Story

Meditation Hymn:

Turn Your Eyes upon Jesus (refrain only)

*Turn your eyes upon Jesus, look full on his wonderful face,
and the things of earth will grow strangely dim in the light of his glory and grace.*

WORDS and MUSIC: Helen H. Lemmel, 1922, © 1950 Singspiration Music

Seeing the Story

This is an opportunity to enter the story of Jesus’s Passion in a different way. Our painting today, *Mary Anoints Jesus’ Feet*, was created by an anonymous artist in Germany in the 19th Century.



None of us around the table liked the way things were going here in Jerusalem. The conversation had turned once again to the dire situation for many of the people we had encountered, those who were hungry, poor, sick, disturbed. But does the Roman state care about them? No. At least we try. Every penny we can scrape up we try to pass on to those who need it. I had to wonder, though, whether the talk of asking our patrons for more money right now was really because we are afraid. Before Jesus arrived to dinner that night, some of the disciples had said with the way things are going, perhaps we should be saving money in case we needed to hide out in the not-too-distant future.

And then SHE walked in.



I saw the jar she carried. Beautiful. Alabaster. And as soon as I smelled the oil as she began to anoint Jesus, I knew it was nard and it had been expensive. And there was a lot of it. Across the table the others were beginning to stop their conversations and looks of contempt began to cross their faces. Mumbling began. Do you know how much that kind of oil costs? It seemed a ridiculous waste, given what we had just been talking about. That kind of money could go a long way.



I looked down at her. I was close, and although she had not said a word, I could sense her intensity and devotion. This love lavished on him was somewhat embarrassing and yet it was what I really wanted to do—tell him how he had changed my life and how finally I felt I had purpose in my life. I felt loved, and it was such a gift. But how can you offer any gift to this beloved one? He IS “The Anointed One,” anointed by God. But here she is anointing

him! I realized that what I felt was jealousy mixed with a deep fear that we were losing him

I think we all are afraid of losing him. He tells us to stop judging her. “She is preparing me for burial.” No, I thought, don’t say that. It can’t happen. Later, I will remember her, just as he asked me to do. And I will remember that he asked us to care for all people the way she cared for him that night.

Sermon Hymn *Come O Font of Every Blessing* #459 (Nettleton)

*Come, O fount of every blessing
Tune my heart to sing your grace
Streams of mercy, never ceasing
Call for songs of endless praise.
Teach me some melodious sonnet,
Sung by flaming tongues above.
Praise the mount, I'm fixed upon it,
Mount of God's unfailing love.*

*Here I pause in my sojourning,
Giving thanks for having come,
Come to trust, at every turning,
God will guide me safely home.
Jesus sought me when a stranger,
Wandering from the fold of God,
Came to rescue me from danger,
Blessed body, precious blood.*

*Oh to grace how great a debtor
Daily I am drawn anew!
Let that grace now, like a fetter,
Bind my wandering heart to you.
Prone to wander, I can feel it,
Wander from the love I've known:
Here's my heart, O take and seal it,
Seal it for your very own.*

Sermon "For the Love of Others"

Offertory

We are profoundly grateful for your continued support of Hope UCC as we stay connected as a faith community in this time of 'social distancing.' As we continue the ministry of our church and live as God's people, we invite you to mail your offering to the church office which remains open throughout the week. Thank you for your generosity- your commitment is vital to continuing our congregation's ministries and commitments.

Prayer of Dedication

Gracious God, All that we have, all that we give this day already belongs to you. Bless these, our gifts, and give us vision to use them to glorify you. Amen.

ENTERING THE WORLD'S STORY

Closing Hymn

There's a Wideness in God's Mercy #23 (In Babilone)

Benediction

This season we are putting a frame around a bit of life. We section off a scene, we look long into a face, to see what we can see, to know what we can know. Just as we have done with the art and story today, zoom in your focus on the art and story of life all through the week. The Divine Artist offers us such poignant beauty each day in our own stories, in the stories around us, in the heartbreak and pain and joy and awe of a simple moment turned significant. That's what happens when we put a frame around it. We zoom in for an existential close-up and search for clues for living this life with more attention and intention. May you be blessed by the sacred frames that surround the moments of your life that you dare not miss. Amen.

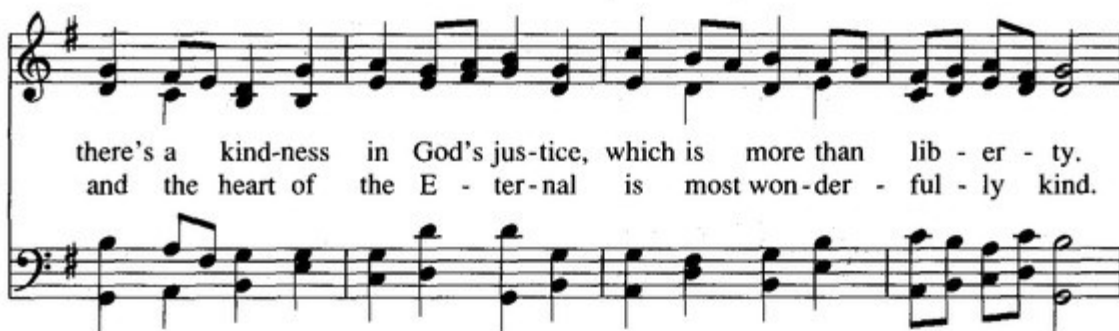
Postlude

There's a Wideness in God's Mercy

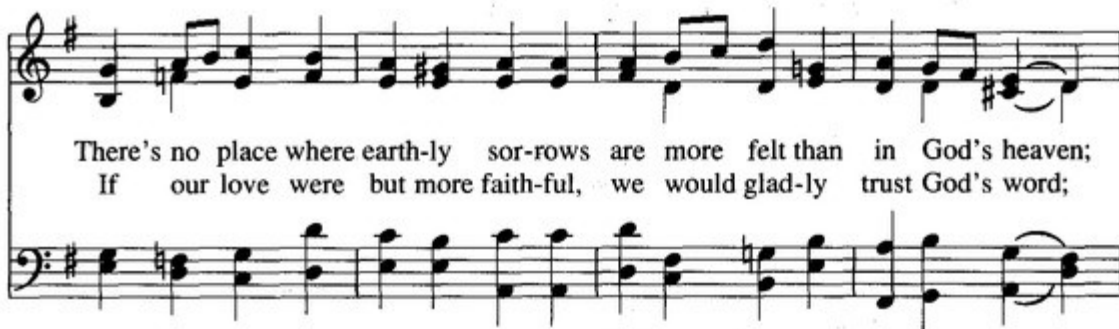
Frederick William Faber, 1854; alt.



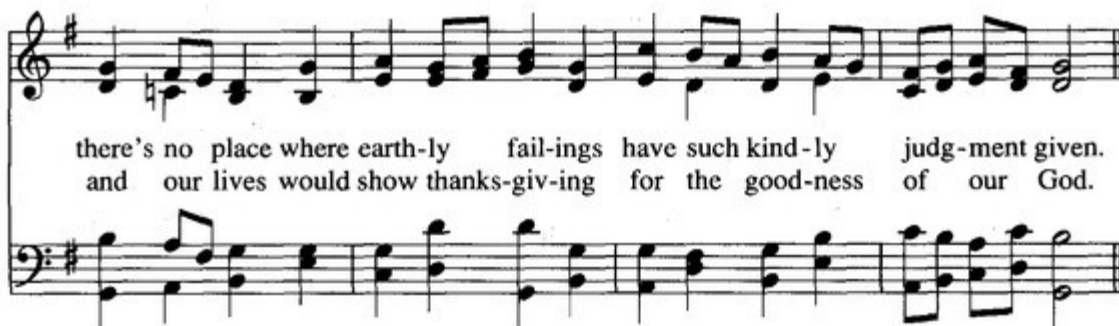
1 There's a wide-ness in God's mer-cy, like the wide-ness of the sea;
2 For the love of God is broad-er than the mea-sures of our minds;



there's a kind-ness in God's jus-tice, which is more than lib-er-ty.
and the heart of the E-ter-nal is most won-der-ful-ly kind.



There's no place where earth-ly sor-rows are more felt than in God's heaven;
If our love were but more faith-ful, we would glad-ly trust God's word;



there's no place where earth-ly fail-ings have such kind-ly judg-ment given.
and our lives would show thanks-giv-ing for the good-ness of our God.

Of Huguenot Protestant ancestry, Frederick William Faber was influenced by the Oxford Movement and eventually became a Catholic priest. He wrote 150 hymns to correspond to the number of psalms.

Tune: IN BABILONE 8.7.8.7.D.
Dutch melody
Arr. Julius Röntgen, 1906
Alternate tune: HOLY MANNA