

Hope United Church of Christ
 Worship Bulletin
 Entering the Passion of Jesus
 Fifth Sunday in Lent
 “The Last Supper: Risking the
 Loss of Friends”
 March 29, 2020 ~ 10:00 a.m.



Welcome & Announcements
 Prelude

ENTERING THE STORY

We continue on our journey through Lent as we step inside the heartbreaking story of saying goodbye to friends. 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 listen to one another and treasure each other—all equal and precious in the eyes of God. Jesus’ words at the Last Supper were shocking to those in attendance. His words can seem familiar, even comforting to *us* because we hear these words every time we celebrate the sacrament of Holy Communion. But at the moment of their utterance, they were anything but “usual.” This week we enter the scene of that last supper long enough to get a grasp of the shock that would have rippled through Jesus’ friends. When Jesus said the bread and cup are his body and blood, it was absolutely jarring for his friends at the table. Jesus, their Lord, washing feet like a servant? Unbelievable! Breaking bread with the enemy? What?! But Jesus knew his time with them in body was coming to an end. It was time for the disciples to get the message, even if it came in a shocking way: love one another as I have loved you—by serving, forgiving, freeing, communing—becoming one with God.

SUNG RESPONSE

“Enter the Passion”

Marcia McFee and Chuck Bell

Congregation:

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:

Revitalizing God, sometimes we just aren't paying attention. Your power goes far beyond our own, and yet still we act as though the pains of this world have final claim upon us. We can keep our heads in the sand when we really need to attend to difficult situations, or the needs of your people. We give in to the despair and hopelessness of death, not trusting in your ability to call forth new life from the tombs of our lives. Forgive us for doubting your power to raise up new life in the midst of all the deaths we experience. Forgive us for wanting to limit you to "the last day" or "the world beyond this one", not trusting you to move and act among us, within us, through us. Forgive us, help us to care for what's right in front of us. Open our eyes to the wonder of new life sprouting into being in our very midst. Amen

Opening Hymn: Jesu Jesu Fill Us with Your Love #498 (Chereponi) Verse 1 only

Jesu, Jesu

Refrain

Je - su Je - su fill us with your love, show
us how to serve the neigh - bors we have from you.

Verses

1. Kneels at the feet of his friends,
2. Neigh - bors are rich and poor,
3. These are the ones we should serve,
4. Kneel at the feet of our friends,
Si - lent - ly wash - es their feet,
Neigh - bors are black and white,
These are the ones we should love.
Si - lent - ly wash - ing their feet,
Mas - ter who pours out him - self for them.
Neigh - bors are near and far a - way.
All are neigh - bors to us and you.
This is the way we should live with you.

Text: Tom Colvin, b.1925
Tune: CHEREPONI, Irregular; Ghana folk song; adapt. Tom Colvin, b.1925; acc. by Jane M. Marshall, b.1924
© 1969, Hope Publishing Co.

Assurance of Pardon

Know this: Our lives contain continual opportunities to be in humble service to friends and strangers. You are forgiven and freed; you are encouraged and loved by a God who wants you to live fully. Jesus calls each of us, and his word unbinds us from the oppressive weight of our past and pushes away the rocks that close us off from love. We are made free in the spirit of God, and forgiven all our sins. Let us enter the passion of Christ, and pass the peace of Christ with each other.

(If you are using this liturgy as a private devotion or participating in the live stream worship, please hold out your hands in blessing for all you are joined with in spirit. If you are participating in the live stream worship, please type in your peace greeting.)

GETTING PERSPECTIVE

Telling the Story

Old Testament Lesson

Ezekiel 37:1-14

The hand of the Lord came upon me, and he brought me out by the spirit of the Lord and set me down in the middle of a valley; it was full of bones. He led me all around them; there were very many lying in the valley, and they were very dry. He said to me, "Mortal, can these bones live?" I answered, "O Lord God, you know." Then he said to me, "Prophecy to these bones, and say to them: O dry bones, hear the word of the Lord. Thus says the Lord God to these bones: I will cause breath to enter you, and you shall live. I will lay sinews on you, and will cause flesh to come upon you, and cover you with skin, and put breath in you, and you shall live; and you shall know that I am the Lord."

So I prophesied as I had been commanded; and as I prophesied, suddenly there was a noise, a rattling, and the bones came together, bone to its bone. I looked, and there were sinews on them, and flesh had come upon them, and skin had covered them; but there was no breath in them. Then he said to me, "Prophecy to the breath, prophesy, mortal, and say to the breath: Thus says the Lord God: Come from the four winds, O breath, and breathe upon these slain, that they may live." I prophesied as he commanded me, and the breath came into them, and they lived, and stood on their feet, a vast multitude.

Then he said to me, "Mortal, these bones are the whole house of Israel. They say, 'Our bones are dried up, and our hope is lost; we are cut off completely.' Therefore prophesy, and say to them, Thus says the Lord God: I am going to open your graves, and bring you up from your graves, O my people; and I will bring you back to the land of Israel. And you shall know that I am the Lord, when I open your graves, and bring you up from your graves, O my people. I will put my spirit within you, and you shall live, and I will place you on your own soil; then you shall know that I, the Lord, have spoken and will act, says the Lord."

Gospel Lesson

John 13:1-8

Now before the festival of the Passover, Jesus knew that his hour had come to depart from this world and go to the Father. Having loved his own who were in the world, he loved them to the end. The devil had already put it into the heart of Judas son of Simon Iscariot to betray him. And during supper Jesus, knowing that the Father had given all things into his hands, and that he had come from God and was going to God, got up from the table, took off his outer robe, and tied a towel around himself. Then he poured water into a basin and began to wash the disciples' feet and to wipe them with the towel that was tied around him. He came to Simon Peter, who said to him, "Lord, are you going to wash my feet?" Jesus answered, "You do not know now what I am doing, but later you will

understand.” Peter said to him, “You will never wash my feet.” Jesus answered, “Unless I wash you, you have no share with me.”

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

This is an opportunity to enter the story of Jesus’s Passion in a different way. Our painting today, is a detail from the mural *Jesus Washing the Disciples’ Feet* by David Paynter (1900-1975).



My master’s banquet hall upstairs was booked for this night, and the time had arrived for this evening’s group to come for the banquet. All was prepared according to their wishes, and I was ready with the water and basin as I always am. Years ago, my parents had given me to the owner as collateral for the debt they owed him. But things did not go well for them, and the debt had never been paid. And so I work to pay it off. Roman law says that some day I could be a free person, but I will never again have the full rights in society like those who have never been slaves. It is a mark for life. I keep my head

down and do what the master asks because legally he has the right to punish, abuse, and humiliate me. I’ve witnessed it happen to others. Right now, I have no rights.



So there I was with the bowl, just waiting for the go-ahead to start. It would be the honored guest first, of course, and I knew which one that was by where he was seated. This was all protocol, everyone has a place according to status. When he showed up, I recognized him and remembered the stories I had been hearing about this teacher. He was saying things that were really upsetting the people who enjoy the system that keeps me a slave. He keeps saying things like “the last shall be first.”



My friend who serves in the kitchen had to tell me to stop staring. I just couldn't imagine a world like he described. And then he came right up to me and took the basin of water from my hands. He took my servant's towel and wrapped it around his own waist and knelt, telling Peter to come sit down. This was going to be no ordinary night. And I realized my life, my view of myself and my station in life, was never going to be the same.

Sermon: Shock and Awe

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

Holy and loving God, We thank you for the images of the many ways you come to us and make yourself known to us: as we picture Jesus washing the feet of his disciples, or Ezekiel hearing your voice and watching dry bones renewed to life, or as we watch the heroes working tirelessly in hospitals, clinics, laboratories, and retirement and assisted living communities finding - ways to save lives alongside the heroes who are working in our stores and industries and keeping all these spaces and so many any others clean and disinfected around the country, putting their lives in danger helping us to keep comfortable and safe and secure as we have to remain in our homes. As we consider how confused the disciples are and how afraid Ezekiel must have been, help us to remember the great trust they have in you, God. As we confront our own fears, confusion, stress, and anxiety that accompanies this season in our lives, help us to continue to feel and experience your presence in all of this. Open our eyes, our hearts, and our minds, to what it is you would have us understand and learn from this time that we are physically apart, yet spiritually connected as your Body. Strengthen us in this journey, o God, that we are forever changed to have hearts broken wide open to live your love in a way we never imagined possible. Let us always remember that your creation, all aspects of your beautiful creation, are deserving of care and mercy and grace. Guide us to be your stewards in caring for the entirety of your creation – strengthen us to boldly hear your voice calling us to do this, even when the worldly powers are telling us to take an easier, less challenging path.

We ask your blessings on those people and events in our lives that need our advocacy, presence and prayers. Hear our prayers that we lift to you....

We lift these prayers with the assurance of your presence, your holy love as we join together and pray the words Jesus taught us:

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.

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 and spiritual connection. 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 – mail and messages are checked daily by Pastor Santina. Thank you for your generosity- your commitment is vital to continuing our congregation's ministries and commitments. Hope Grows! And there is nothing, not even a global pandemic, that can stop it! 😊

Prayer of Dedication

Spirit of Life, we breathe our lives upon these gifts that they may be become a fertile plain of green life and strengthened hope for all who live in the valley of dry bones. May the wind of your love carry these gifts far beyond us to the places most in need of your compassionate grace. We pray in Jesus' name. Amen.

ENTERING THE WORLD'S STORY

Benediction

Although we are apart, we are together. God is with us in this time and in all times. Our worship together has ended, but our love for one another, for God, and God's creation never ends. My the love of Christ Jesus ever enfold you, the love of God ever encircle you, and the power of the Holy Spirit ever enrich you, now and for all our days. Amen!