

**Trinitarian Congregational Church**  
**TakeOut**  
**January 16, 2022**

**Announcements**

**Prelude**

**Call to Worship**

Randy Foster

Leader: With steadfast love, God calls our names.

Gather together under the shelter of God's grace.

**People: We thank God, who knows us and blesses us.**

**We rejoice in God, who is our safety and security.**

Leader: Delight now in the rich resources of God's house.

Come and drink deeply from the fountain of life.

**People: We are eager to hear the Word of God.**

**We want to be guided by eternal truth.**

Leader: Reach out to claim the gifts God pours on us.

The Spirit is eager to inspire and empower each one.

**People: When God calls us, we cannot remain silent.**

**When Christ is real to us, we live as disciples.**

**\*Hymn**

Joyful, Joyful, We Adore You

NCH 4, vs 1,4

**\*Gathering Prayer**

Randy Foster

**How awesome it is that you care for us, God of all life! Your delight in us calls us to bring out our best. When we become aware of your goodness to us our capacity for goodness grows. When your light and salvation dawn in our lives, we want to share its joy. Remind us now of the gifts you so freely give to us. Help us to recognize them in ourselves and in one another, that we may use them to serve people in need and give glory to your name. Amen.**

**\*Gloria Patri**

Glory be to the Father, and to the Son and to the Holy Ghost.

As it was in the beginning, is now and ever shall be, reign without end. Amen, amen.

**Scripture**

Psalm 36:5-10

Randy Foster

Like most psalms, this work lacks any type of background, yet its proclamations are so universal that it remains contemporary and authoritative in every age. This section of Psalm 36 is a profound confession of God's goodness. In the larger passage it stands in contrast to the description of the wicked. It is a confession of trust, recognizing God's greatness and human dependence on God.

- <sup>5</sup> LORD, your constant love reaches the heavens;  
your faithfulness extends to the skies.
- <sup>6</sup> Your righteousness is towering like the mountains;  
your justice is like the depths of the sea.  
People and animals are in your care.
- <sup>7</sup> How precious, O God, is your constant love!  
We find protection under the shadow of your wings.
- <sup>8</sup> We feast on the abundant food you provide;  
you let us drink from the river of your goodness.
- <sup>9</sup> You are the source of all life,  
and because of your light we see the light.
- <sup>10</sup> Continue to love those who know you  
and to do good to those who are righteous.

John 2:1-11

Rosemary Dawson

The gospel of John is a unique writing among the gospels. While it differs in many ways from the other accounts, it shares the same intent of teaching his contemporaries the authentic tradition of Jesus, the Christ. His purpose is to engage them in in story so that it may evoke a living faith.

The story of the Cana wedding feast, at the beginning of Jesus' ministry, is the first sign John points his readers to. It marks the start of Christ's work in the world and anticipates the abundant life that can only come in relationship to God.

<sup>1</sup> On the third day there was a wedding in Cana of Galilee, and the mother of Jesus was there. <sup>2</sup> Jesus and his disciples had also been invited to the wedding. <sup>3</sup> When the wine gave out, the mother of Jesus said to him, "They have no wine." <sup>4</sup> And Jesus said to her, "Woman, what concern is that to you and to me? My hour has not yet come." <sup>5</sup> His mother said to the servants, "Do whatever he tells you." <sup>6</sup> Now standing there were six stone water jars for the Jewish rites of purification, each holding twenty or thirty gallons. <sup>7</sup> Jesus said to them, "Fill the jars with water." And they filled them up to the brim. <sup>8</sup> He said to them, "Now draw some out, and take it to the chief steward." So they took it. <sup>9</sup> When the steward tasted the water that had become wine, and did not know where it came from (though the servants who had drawn the water knew), the steward called the bridegroom <sup>10</sup> and said to him, "Everyone serves the good wine first, and then the inferior wine after the guests have become drunk. But you have kept the good wine until now." <sup>11</sup> Jesus did this, the first of his signs, in Cana of Galilee, and revealed his glory; and his disciples believed in him.

**Special Music**

“Just a Closer Walk with Thee”  
Traditional, Arr. Phillip Keveren

**Sermon**

Signs!

Have you ever noticed just how many signs are surrounding us these days? There are traffic signs and advertising signs, informational signs and warning signs. There are printed signs, and there are personal signs. Some signs, like bio-hazard signs are very effective. Others, like ‘stink-eye’ not so much. But whatever signs are out there, there is one thing they all want – our attention!

This week as we read from the passage of John we run square into a very enigmatic sign, one that says ‘pay attention’ but doesn’t tell you why. The story begins with a wedding, a festive event in the life of any people, and especially in the life of ancient Israel. Jesus, his mother, and his disciples are there, celebrating with the crowd, when all of a sudden Jesus’ mother comes to him with a dilemma ‘Son, they’re out of wine.’ That is a problem, but Jesus’ response seems indifferent at best and rude at worst. Yet Mary ignores him and directs the servants to do as he says. Then Jesus steps right up, directs the servants to fill 6 huge stone jugs with water and deliver some of it to the maître’ de. And suddenly the water is wine! The groom is commended and the party goes on. Then comes the key line to the whole story:

“This is the first of his signs,  
that Jesus did at Cana of Galilee,  
and revealed his glory;  
and his disciples believed in him”

This is wonderful, the first sign of Christ! And that is where John leaves it. No questions, no conversation, no explanation. End of statement. You figure it out! And, for us, it is not necessarily clear what that sign is about. But John, like a good rabbinic teacher, is hinting at Israel’s story, teasing us to remember God’s dealing with his people.

So, when you hear the story of water becoming wine, you might turn to the act of Creation; when God spoke and it came to be. You might think of the psalm that says: “God makes grass to grow for the cattle, and plants for people to use, God brings forth food from the earth, and wine that cheers the human heart...” (Psalm 104:14,15) And you may begin to wonder - ‘who is this Jesus’? Does he even have power over creation!

Or you may think of the prophets who spoke of hope and renewal for the people of God; who time and again promised the coming day of the Lord - as Amos declared ‘The days are coming, says the Lord... when “the mountains will drip with sweet wine, and all the hills shall flow with it.” And “I will restore the fortunes of my people Israel...” (Amos 9: 13,14). Or Isaiah, who saw a day when “on this mountain the Lord Almighty will prepare a feast of rich food for all peoples - a banquet of aged wine - the best of meats and the finest of wines... and he will take away their shame.” (Isaiah 25:6, 8) You may even look back to the promise of God that “I will rejoice over you like a bridegroom rejoices over his bride.” (Isaiah 62:5). Or you may look with hope to the promise of “a new heaven and a new earth... and the holy city... prepared as a bride adorned for her husband... and “a loud voice from the throne saying ‘Now the dwelling place of God is with men’”. (Revelations 21:1-3) Then you look again at Jesus, who came to a wedding feast, and feted the people with good, rich wine, overflowing the jars that held it. And you wonder ‘who is this Jesus’? Does he bring with him the promise of the coming day!

And maybe you begin to get the point; maybe you begin to recognize the sign after all. Then you read again this story from John and it catches you... “On the third day there was a marriage”... On the third day.... You know those words don’t you- “on the third day, he was raised from the dead... according to the scriptures”. (1 Corinthians 15:4) You hear Jesus say to Mary ‘my hour has not yet come...’ and you remember Jesus also saying ‘the hour has come... the son of man is delivered into the hands of sinners...’ (Mark 14:41) And now you are compelled to ask the question “who is this Jesus”?

You think back to John’s words “this is the first of his signs ...and (he) revealed his glory” (John 2:11) and suddenly it dawns on you, John’s introduction to this man Jesus “The word became a man and

lived among us. We saw his glory, the glory of the One and Only, who came from God, full of grace and truth. And from his fullness we all have received - grace upon grace upon grace.” (John 1:14,16)

For John, the Cana story is the first of Jesus’ sign because it is the sign, that God is with us, that God loves us, that God has saved us. It is the story of redemption and resurrection. This story is the first, the beginning of God’s fulfillment, the new creation. The wedding is not only between man and woman, but between heaven and earth, God and humanity. The day when once again all flesh will know that the God who provides wine to gladden the heart, and bread to strengthen the soul is here, in Jesus.

This first of the signs of Jesus was like all of his signs, meant to help the disciples, understand who he is, why he came, and what we are to him. That is why this sign is so amazing, so enticing – when water becomes wine! This sign speaks of extravagant grace, God’s abundance and joy and blessing, sometimes bold and beautiful, sometimes hidden and ‘enigmatic’, but always there- waiting, ready, and available, now and always. And the promise of this sign, God’s abundant favor, does not just help things go ‘as is’ or ‘as expected’. Rather it interposes God’s very nature, his glory, his grace upon grace, over all things. The sign is there to reveal to us what we so often miss – the very heart of God.

There is, in this amazing and extravagant sign, an invitation to us - to open our eyes, to pay attention to the glimmers of goodness and mercy that are in our midst, to read the signs of the fullness of God in all things. The signs are all around us – in heaven above and on the earth below. The signs are right here, right now - in bread and cup, cross and candle, word and music. The signs are in this church, this gathering, the wedding feast of the lamb. And the sign, the true sign, is Jesus Christ himself.

Can you read the sign? Amen.

**\*Hymn**                      Jesus Come For We Invite You      W& R 669, vs 1, 3

## **Joys and Concerns**

## **Prayers of the People**

Wondrous God, we thank you so much for the abundance of your mercy and grace to us. We thank you for Jesus Christ who has come among us bringing the promise of salvation and the power of new life. We thank you for your Spirit, who continually opens our eyes to your truth and love, and guides us into a life which brings glory and honor to your name. So, we come to you now, O God, that we may grow as disciples and become living signs of Christ in the world.

We pray for your church and this congregation. May this be a place where the wonders of Christ are discovered, the depths of your grace are explored, the fullness of your love is celebrated, and the power of your life is shared. We pray for our world and all its leaders. Grant that they may be find encouragement in your grace and wisdom in truth, lead them so that all the world may know your justice and peace. We pray also for all who are suffering today. Grant your healing to the sick, your comfort to the sorrowful and your provision to the needy. We especially lift up... and we thank you for... We praise you, Gracious God, for all the signs of your love and works of your grace, through Jesus Christ, who taught us to pray...

## **The Lord’s Prayer**

## Choral Response

Remember Me

## Offering

The generosity of God has provided for our needs. The grace of God has satisfied our souls. God blesses us with renewed hope and transformed lives that we might share his renewing love with others. Let us dedicate our offerings in celebration of God grace for all.

You have granted us, O God, the joy of your salvation and the abundance of your provisions. It is our joy to share your blessings with others, to answer the needs of all your children and to refresh them in your grace. Use them and us for your glory. Amen.

## Doxology

(choose the one that is best for your faith)

Praise God from whom all blessings flow, praise him all creatures here below,  
praise him above ye heavenly hosts, praise Father, Son, and Holy Ghost

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. Amen

## \* Hymn

God Whose Giving Knows No Ending

NCH 572, vs 1, 3

## \*Common Commission

**Let us go forth into the world in peace, being of good courage, holding fast to that which is good, rendering to no one evil for evil, strengthening the faint-hearted, supporting the weak, helping the afflicted, honoring all persons, loving and serving the Lord, and rejoicing in the power of the Holy Spirit.**

## \* Benediction

Go now into the world

May the Lord your God be in your midst, may he renew you in his love and rejoice over you with singing. Zeph 3:17 adj.

Go in peace to love and serve the Lord. Amen.

## Postlude

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music provided by Chris Harris and Lynne Walker