



United Methodist Church of Westport and Weston

February 28, 2021
2nd Sunday in Lent

*Our Vision is to Know, to Live
and to Share the Love of Jesus Christ.*

Holy Vessels: A Season of Lenten Healing Livestream Worship – 10:00am

THOUGHT FOR MEDITATION

Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., in *Letter from a Birmingham Jail*

We are caught in an inescapable network of mutuality, tied in a single garment of destiny.

GATHER

*People gather around Jesus as his reputation becomes known from town to town.
As we gather virtually or physically, we too are yearning for presence, for peace, for help.*

PRELUDE

There's a Wideness in God's Mercy
Ahyoung Son, organ

L. S. Tourjee
harm. by C. H. Webb

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WELCOME & ANNOUNCEMENTS

Pastor Heather

CALL TO WORSHIP

Based on Psalm 22:23-31

Awe-inspiring God, we gather to praise you
for your tender compassion and care of needy people.
Come, all who seek God, offer your prayers.

Listening God, we gather to honor your
justice and concern for people who cry to you for help.
Come, all who seek God, offer your praise.

People of every nation are called to gather together to
worship God, in thankfulness for God's loving mercies.
Come, all who seek God, offer your worship. Amen.

APPROACH

*People opened their lives to Jesus. We are drawn to the Healer – opening our hearts
with honesty about our lives and finding assurance that offers peace.*

PRAYER OF CONFESSON

God of All,
You created us for each other. You set in us a yearning for companionship and an empathy that binds us together, protecting each other and delighting in one another.
Yet too often we have broken down our relationships instead of building them up.
We have been set against one another with the lie of scarcity.
We have built systems and economies that widen the gap of resources rather than safeguarding equitable practices.
Too many, and growing numbers, are suffering hardship, food insecurity, joblessness. *(continues on next page)*

We cannot fathom the proportions of loss and so we look away,
sometimes even from the need in our own community.
Help us, Healer.
Show us our capacity for empathy.
Forgive our complacence.
Move us to move one step at a time toward greater care,
greater connection with you, our neighbors and ourselves.
In this silence, we sense and acknowledge our yearning for wholeness.

SILENT PRAYERS OF CONFESSION

WORDS OF ASSURANCE

Know this: The love and security of God is meant for all people.
No. Matter. What.
We are capable of sharing our light and not running out of “enough.”
Christ’s hospitality that broke through false boundaries points the way.
For you, for me, for all.
In the name of Jesus Christ, we are forgiven. Thanks be to God.

THE PEACE OF CHRIST

OPENING HYMN

O God of Every Nation

UMH 435

Verse 1

O God of every nation, of every race and land,
redeem your whole creation with your almighty hand;
where hate and fear divide us and bitter threats are hurled,
in love and mercy guide us and heal our strife-torn world.

Verse 2

From search for wealth and power and scorn of truth and right,
from trust in bombs that shower destruction through the night,
from pride of race and nation and blindness to your way,
deliver every nation, eternal God, we pray!

Verse 3

Lord, strengthen all who labor that we may find release
from fear of rattling saber, from dread of war's increase;
when hope and courage falter, Lord, let your voice be heard;
with faith that none can alter, your servants undergird.

Verse 4

Keep bright in us the vision of days when war shall cease,
when hatred and division give way to love and peace,
till dawns the morning glorious when truth and justice reign
and Christ shall rule victorious o'er all the world's domain.

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BELIEVE

*People were fortified by Jesus' words and deeds that revealed care for all – especially those marginalized.
We strengthen our belief in the possibility for renewed health and vigor for all.*

MESSAGE FOR ALL GOD'S CHILDREN

“A Blanket of Love”

Pastor Heather

GOSPEL READING

Matthew 8: 5-13

Ralph Nebelung

⁵ When he entered Capernaum, a centurion came to him, appealing to him ⁶ and saying, "Lord, my servant is lying at home paralyzed, in terrible distress." ⁷ And he said to him, "I will come and cure him." ⁸ The centurion answered, "Lord, I am not worthy to have you come under my roof; but only speak the word, and my servant will be healed. ⁹ For I also am a man under authority, with soldiers under me; and I say to one, 'Go,' and he goes, and to another, 'Come,' and he comes, and to my slave, 'Do this,' and the slave does it." ¹⁰ When Jesus heard him, he was amazed and said to those who followed him, "Truly I tell you, in no one in Israel have I found such faith. ¹¹ I tell you, many will come from east and west and will eat with Abraham and Isaac and Jacob in the kingdom of heaven, ¹² while the heirs of the kingdom will be thrown into the outer darkness, where there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth." ¹³ And to the centurion Jesus said, "Go; let it be done for you according to your faith." And the servant was healed in that hour.

This is the Word of God for the people of God. **Thanks be to God.**

SERMON

"A Single Garment of Destiny"

Rev. Heather A. M. Sinclair

ASK

People who were healed by Jesus were not afraid to ask. And so we humbly come before the Holy One, with reverence and gratitude, making our petitions and desires known, trusting the work of the Spirit.

GIVING THANKS FOR OUR GIFTS

The ministry of the church is ongoing during these days. Your gifts, tithes and offerings continue to allow us to "be the church." Checks may be sent to the church office or given online through our website. Your generosity is a blessing. Thank you.

PRAYER OF THANKSGIVING

God of all, you love us and have claimed us. You have invited us into the blessing of connection within the family of humanity whom you continue to bless. We give our tithes and offerings in celebration of the depths of our blessing and pray that they will strengthen the church across the world to bless all your children. In the holy name of Christ, our Savior and Redeemer, we pray in gratitude. Amen.

SPECIAL MUSIC*Walk in a Rainbow*

Music by Nancy Faber

Grace Hisey, piano

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HYMN OF THANKSGIVING*Praise God, from Whom All Blessings Flow*

UMH 95

*Praise God, from whom all blessings flow; praise him, all creatures here below;
praise him above, ye heavenly host; praise Father, Son, and Holy Ghost. Amen.*

PRAYERS OF THE PEOPLE

THE LORD'S PRAYER *You are invited to pray in the version and language of your heart.*

Our Father who art 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 trespasses as we forgive those who trespass against us. And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil, for yours is the kingdom, and the glory, forever. Amen.

RESPOND

The parting words Jesus' gave to those he healed were often as much balm as the healing act itself. We hear words of encouragement from the One who makes beauty from brokenness. How will we proceed into the brokenness of this world and respond as the Body of Christ?

CLOSING HYMN

This Is My Song

UMH 437

Verse 1

This is my song, O God of all the nations, a song of peace for lands afar and mine.
 This is my home, the country where my heart is; here are my hopes, my dreams, my holy shrine;
 but other hearts in other lands are beating, With hopes and dreams as true and high as mine.

Verse 2

My country's skies are bluer than the ocean, and sunlight beams on clover leaf and pine;
 but other lands have sunlight too, and clover, and skies are everywhere as blue as mine.
 O hear my song, thou God of all the nations, A song of peace for their land and for mine.

Verse 1

This is my prayer, O Lord of all earth's kingdoms: Thy kingdom come; on earth thy will be done.
 Let Christ be lifted up till all shall serve him, and hearts united learn to live as one.
 O hear my prayer, thou God of all the nations; myself I give thee; let thy will be done.

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BENEDICTION

SUNG BENEDICTION

Shalom to You

UMH 666

*Shalom to you now, shalom, my friends, May God's full mercies bless you, my friends.
 In all your living and through your loving, Christ be your shalom, Christ be your shalom.*

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POSTLUDE

Sing Praise to God Who Reigns Above
Ahyoung Son, organ
Kirschengesange
harm. by M. F. Bell

Portions of the Order of Worship are adapted from:

The United Methodist Hymnal, The United Methodist Book of Worship, and The Faith We Sing,

Nashville, TN: The United Methodist Publishing House

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Our Mission is:

**To Know the love of Jesus in personal ways through worship, prayer and study
 To Live the love of Jesus through acts of compassion, gentleness and justice
 To Share the love of Jesus in our homes, our community and the world
 To Welcome all of God's children regardless of age, race, ability,
 sexual or gender orientation, and economic circumstance.**

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OUR MINISTERS

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