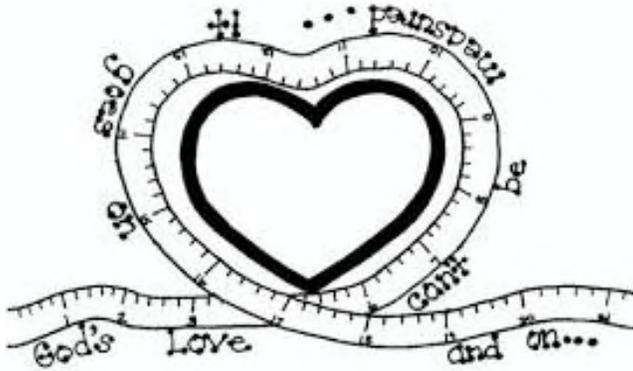


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Bethel United Church of Christ Bulletin
Fourth Sunday in Lent
March 14, 2021



“The opposite of love is not hate, it's indifference. The opposite of art is not ugliness, it's indifference. The opposite of faith is not heresy, it's indifference. And the opposite of life is not death, it's indifference.”

— Elie Wiesel 20C

WELCOME AND ANNOUNCEMENTS

GATHERING MUSIC

“We All Bow Down”

Bethel Praise Team

*CALL TO WORSHIP

Christ is lifted up on high!

When we see the cross, we see God’s love for us.

Our hope is in the grace of God offered to all today.

We approach with both humility and joy.

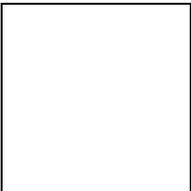
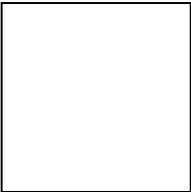
*PRAYER OF INVOCATION (unison)

Merciful God,

Abide with us in our worship today. We have gathered in your name as an act of faith, believing that you are not only among us, but that you love us. Reveal yourself to each one of us so that your love may fuel our words, our actions, and our commitment to become and remain your healing hands, your loving heart, and your welcoming face in the world. Amen

OPENING HYMN#548

“The Old Rugged Cross”



OUR SACRED STORY

John 3:1-21

Now there was a Pharisee named Nicodemus, a leader of the Jews. He came to Jesus by night and said to him, “Rabbi, we know that you are a teacher who has come from God; for no one can do

these signs that you do apart from the presence of God.” Jesus answered him, “Very truly, I tell you, no one can see the kingdom of God without being born from above.” Nicodemus said to him, “How can anyone be born after having grown old? Can one enter a second time into the mother’s womb and be born?” Jesus answered, “Very truly, I tell you, no one can enter the kingdom of God without being born of water and Spirit. What is born of the flesh is flesh, and what is born of the Spirit is spirit. Do not be astonished that I said to you, ‘You must be born from above.’ The wind blows where it chooses, and you hear the sound of it, 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 a teacher of Israel, and yet you do not understand these things? “Very truly, I tell you, we speak of what we know and testify to what we have seen; yet you do not receive our testimony. If I have told you about earthly things and you do not believe, how can you believe if I tell you about heavenly things? No one has ascended into heaven except the one who descended from heaven, the Son of Man. And just 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, so that everyone who believes in him may not perish but may have eternal life. “Indeed, God did not send the Son into the world to condemn the world, but in order that the world might be saved through him. Those who believe in him are not condemned; but those who do not believe are condemned already, because they have not believed in the name of the only Son of God. And this is the judgment, that the light has come into the world, and people loved darkness rather than light because their deeds were evil. For all who do evil hate the light and do not come to the light, so that their deeds may not be exposed. But those who do what is true come to the light, so that it may be clearly seen that their deeds have been done in God.”

CHILDREN’S MESSAGE

“Measuring God’s Love”

SPECIAL MUSIC

“Pass Me Not”

AnnaLee Kapp

MESSAGE

“Why Did the Chicken Cross the Road?”

Rev. Karen J. Aitkens

STATEMENT OF FAITH

UCC STATEMENT OF FAITH

We believe in you, O God, Eternal Spirit, God of our Savior Jesus Christ and our God, and to your deeds we testify:

You call the worlds into being, create persons in your own image, and set before each one the ways of life and death.

You seek in holy love to save all people from aimlessness and sin.

You judge people and nations by your righteous will declared through prophets and apostles.

In Jesus Christ, the man of Nazareth, our crucified and risen Savior, you have come to us and shared our common lot, conquering sin and death and reconciling the world to yourself.

You bestow upon us your Holy Spirit, creating and renewing the church of Jesus Christ, binding in covenant faithful people of all ages, tongues and races.

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

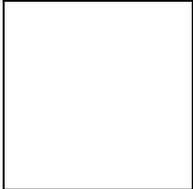
You promise to all who trust you forgiveness of sins and fullness of grace, courage in the struggle for justice and peace, your presence in trial and rejoicing, and eternal life in your realm which has no end.

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

HYMN *"Poor Wayfaring Stranger"*

PRAYERS OF THE PEOPLE/LORD'S PRAYER (*forgive us our sins...*)

RESPONSE#304 *"Into My heart"*



OFFERING OF OURSELVES AND OUR GIFTS TO GOD

Invitation

Offertory

Response to Praise

"Where He Leads Me I Will Follow" arr. Victor Labenske

Chad Willis, piano

Praise God from whom all blessings flow.

Praise God all creatures here below.

Praise God above the heavn'ly host.

Creator, Christ and Holy Ghost. Amen.

Prayer of Dedication

CLOSING HYMN

"Do Lord"

COMMISSION/BENEDICTION

We will cross the road to meet the other.

We will not seek the comfort of easy answers but will do the hard work of seeking God's will with each encounter.

May the lonely path of self-interest lead to the broad highway of wholeness and understanding between people. And let us all proclaim,

"We are reflections of Christ to the world. Let us shine." AMEN!

POSTLUDE

"There is Power in the Blood"

arr. Victor Labenske

Chad Willis, piano