



ZION UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST  
**LENT WORSHIP @ HOME**  
**HOLY VESSELS:**  
**A LENTEN SEASON OF RECOVERY**

[www.zionuccindy.net/worshipathome](http://www.zionuccindy.net/worshipathome)

*Holy Vessels: A Season of Recovery*  
*The 1<sup>st</sup> Sunday of Lent - Treasure*  
February 21, 2021

**PRELUDE**

*More Love to Thee O Christ, Martha Main*

**GATHERING**

Each of us is created a precious and holy vessel of embodied love. We have been through a harrowing time since last Lent that has shattered our sense of wholeness—body, mind, and spirit—like a glass vessel fractured into pieces. Let us enter a Lenten “season of recovery” as we focus on Jesus, the Healer of our every ill.

*Lenten Anthem: “Holy Vessels”*

***Vessels, holy and whole***  
***Broken, needing the One***  
***Open, body and soul***  
***Healer, come.***

Beach glass begins as something whole and yet discarded. As it is tumbled by the sea, it is broken and polished until it becomes a treasured “mineral gem.” We do not embrace that suffering is necessary or God-given, but that suffering is a part of life. When pain comes and brokenness enters our lives, Jesus reaches out to touch and remind us of the Treasure that we *all* are—worthy of new life in the midst of hopelessness. In a year when pandemic has wreaked havoc on our world, we begin by affirming our journey to physical well-being.

*Vessels, holy and whole  
Broken, needing the One  
Open, body and soul  
Healer, come.*

## **CENTERING HYMN**

*Beneath the Cross of Jesus, Zion Virtual Choir*

## **WE CONFESS OUR SINS TO GOD**

Lent developed into a season of intense inward reflection and confession centuries after the life of Jesus. Yet, as we will see, Jesus encouraged people to open up about their lives—to speak truth—no matter how broken. This is the beginning of compassion for ourselves and others. It is the beginning of healing. The Latin origins of the word “confess” is to “study and acknowledge.” This will be a season of studying how we can be a healing presence in our community. To do this, we acknowledge our need to restore our own Holy Vessels.

Let us pray: Creator God, we are bodies fashioned by your hand in your own image, shapes and colors of diverse and immense beauty. And yet too often we have ignored the sacred nature of our physical lives. The Holy Vessels you have fashioned are tired and suffering, ravaged by months of disrupted rhythms and ailment. Our fragility has come into full view and we are frightened. We cannot fathom the proportions of loss and so we look away, sometimes even from our own needs.

Help us, Healer. Show us our strength. Forgive our inertia. Move us to move one step at a time toward greater care. In this silence, we sense and acknowledge our yearning for wholeness. *Silence...*

*Vessels, holy and whole  
Broken, needing the One  
Open, body and soul  
Healer, come.*

## **ASSURANCE OF GRACE**

I invite you to feel a warmth begin to arise within the core of your body. It may help to keep your eyes closed. Imagine a warm glow of light deep within you. This warm glow begins to emerge from the recesses of your inner being to fill and flood your

whole body until your skin is glowing with it, radiating outward. You are surrounded by light. Feel this warmth wrap you as a blanket of assurance.

Know this: God's love and grace surround you...No. Matter. What. You are a precious and holy vessel right now. Christ's light is a treasure given freely. For you, for me, for all.

Take a deep breath in to let this truth fill you...and breathe out with the relief of assurance. Amen.

## **HYMN**

*Healer of Our Every Ill, Martha Main*

## **WE HEAR GOD'S WORD**

*Matthew 8: 1-4*

When Jesus had come down from the mountain, great crowds followed him; and there was a leper who came to him and knelt before him, saying, "Lord, if you choose, you can make me clean." He stretched out his hand and touched him, saying, "I do choose. Be made clean!" Immediately his leprosy was cleansed. Then Jesus said to him, "See that you say nothing to anyone; but go, show yourself to the priest, and offer the gift that Moses commanded, as a testimony to them."

## **MEDITATION**

*Embodied Love, Embodied Restoration*

## **WE RESPOND TO GOD'S WORD WITH OUR GIVING**

**Invitation** – Our church's ministries are extensions of God's love and faithfulness made possible through the generous giving of our time, energy, and money. With love let us offer our gifts to God.+

**February Benevolence** – Our February Benevolence Offering will go to support Our Church's Wider Mission, one of the five offerings of the United Church of Christ. A significant portion of your donations will stay right here in our Indiana-Kentucky Conference to support to work and ministry of our wider church family. By covenantal partnership we have committed ourselves to support these joint ministry efforts, and by working together as many different congregations united by one mission, we can make an even greater impact on the world.

You can mail your offerings to our office. We check the mail regularly.  
Zion United Church of Christ

8916 E. Troy Ave.  
Indianapolis, IN 46239

Or, you can donate through our website through our secure PayPal button at [www.zionuccindy.net/donate](http://www.zionuccindy.net/donate). Please know that PayPal receives a 2.2% processing fee and a \$0.30 transaction charge. You are able to set up reoccurring, monthly payments.

**We Give Thanks** – Because you are the God who saves us, we give you these gifts. Take our lives and our gifts and use them to save our world. We put our hope in you. Amen.

## **COMMISSION**

Jesus' healing actions often get "buzz" from onlookers. Some are amazed and in awe and sing praises. Some are bewildered and wonder at this teacher. Some are disgruntled and feel threatened by the boundaries he breaks and the change he invites. We are perhaps prone to all of these at one time or another. Our own work of recovery will sometimes feel immediately refreshing and sometimes it will demand uncomfortable effort. But the rewards are great.

We are also working toward something communal in this season. How can we as a church community become a "health hub" through our ministry and mission? The needs are so great, especially now. I invite you to spend time this week exploring the possibilities for a new or renewed commitment to a contribution we can make at Zion UCC to our larger community's effort to recover from this past year. Especially, as we continue on in our visioning process, let us be open to the healing and renewing Spirit that has called us together in this common ministry and mission.

## **We Are Sent Forth with a Blessing**

*Lenten Anthem: "Holy Vessels"*

*Vessels, holy and whole  
Broken, needing the One  
Open, body and soul  
Healer, come.*

Now go with confidence as “Treasures of God,” recovering your depth of love for all and our joy of living in this world. May the words of Jesus ring in your ears: “I do choose you.” And may the Spirit hover, move, and deliver salve to your soul and a spring in your step. Amen.

*Vessels, holy and whole  
Broken, needing the One  
Open, body and soul  
Healer, come.*

**POSTLUDE**

*Surely Goodness and Mercy, Martha Main*

Worship Notes: +UCC Worship Ways. *Worship series design and original music* ©Worship Design Studio, used with permission. [www.worshipdesignstudio.com/vessels](http://www.worshipdesignstudio.com/vessels)