



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 5<sup>th</sup> Sunday of Lent – Restoration*  
March 21, 2021

**PRELUDE**

*Abide with Me*, Martha Main

**GATHERING**

We continue our Lenten “season of recovery” as we focus on health as essential to our spiritual lives.

*Lenten Anthem: “Holy Vessels”*

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

This Lent we have considered the ways we can begin to restore our health—body, mind, spirit, and community—after such a long and difficult year. Jesus invites us to follow him to new place as his disciples. Entering new territory can be disorienting and scary, but we discover this week that we are in the boat with the One who shows us he has power to even calm the storm. We turn our attention this week to what it is to work toward the healing of creation, of caring for this beautiful world that God has given us.

*Vessels, holy and whole*

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

## **CENTERING HYMN**

*Praise the One Who Breaks the Darkness  
Zion Virtual Choir*

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

Let us acknowledge our need to restore, repair, renew our Holy Vessels, especially this holy container of life on which we live—this very planet. Let us pray:

Life-giving God, in the beginning, you created this universe with a phrase, “Let there be...” and the waters and dry land, the sky and the creatures were formed. You set humanity among these wonders and invited us to care and honor all things. We have not successfully answered that call. Seeing the abundance as a feast that would never end, we gorged ourselves, taking more than we could replenish at a rate that could not be sustained. We are beginning to comprehend the magnitude, beginning to see that things cannot just keep going “as usual.” Too often we think there is nothing we can do—that the change required is too great. It all feels overwhelming and so we look away, sometimes even from the small things that could make a difference for our own community.

Help us, Healer. Show us our ability to chart a different course. Forgive our inaction. Move us to move one step at a time toward greater care for one another. In this silence, we sense and acknowledge our yearning for wholeness. *Time for silent confession...Amen.*

## **ASSURANCE OF GRACE**

Know this: Jesus asks us to do hard things, to make changes, *knowing* we are capable. No. Matter. What. We *can* change in order to heal this jewel planet called home. The calm of Christ in the storm is available. 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. Thanks be to God. Amen.

## **HYMN**

*Fairest Lord Jesus, Martha Main*

## **WE HEAR GOD’S WORD**

*Matthew 8:18-27*

Now when Jesus saw great crowds around him, he gave orders to go over to the other side. A scribe then approached and said, “Teacher, I will follow you wherever you go.” And Jesus said to him, “Foxes have holes, and birds of the air have nests; but the Son of Man has nowhere to lay his head.” Another of his disciples said to him, “Lord, first let me go and bury my father.” But Jesus said to him, “Follow me, and let the dead bury their own dead.”

And when he got into the boat, his disciples followed him. A windstorm arose on the sea, so great that the boat was being swamped by the waves; but he was asleep. And they went and woke him up, saying, “Lord, save us! We are perishing!” And he said to them, “Why are you afraid, you of little faith?” Then he got up and rebuked the winds and the sea; and there was a dead calm. They were amazed, saying, “What sort of man is this, that even the winds and the sea obey him?”

## **MEDITATION**

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

**Invitation** – Jesus invites us to get into the boat with him, to travel to new shores, that we might serve our neighbors. May the offerings we bring today be a sign of our commitment to following in Christ’s ways and answering Christ’s call.

**March Benevolence** – Our March Benevolence Offering will go to support One Great Hour of Sharing (OGHS). OGHS, part of Our Church’s Wider Mission, is the special mission offering of the United Church of Christ that carries God’s message of love and hope to people in crisis. The UCC works with international partners to provide sources of clean water, food, education and health care, small business micro-credit, advocacy and resettlement for refugees and displaced persons, and emergency relief and rehabilitation. One Great Hour of Sharing also supports domestic and international ministries for disaster preparedness and response. If you’d like to support OGHS, please, clearly indicated on your envelope, check, or PayPal note what portion of your donation you’d like to go to support this ministry.

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** – God of all creation, the One who called the world into being and settles the storms, we give you thanks that through Christ you have called us to do your work. We bring these gifts to you this day with the hope that they might be used for the healing of our world. Bless these gifts and multiply them. Amen.

## COMMISSION

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

This week the reaction of the crowd in the story is amazement at Jesus' connection to the cosmic forces of wind and wave. As scientists now try to teach us, all things are connected, and so our actions today will have an impact on the livelihood of future generations. Since the beginning, God has called us to be stewards and caretakers of creation. Consider this week the ways in which our ministry at Zion might live into this call to care for this beautiful gift, this wondrous world, God has created to be our home.

Now go with confidence that we can face the storm with Jesus in the boat, recovering our depth of love for all and our joy of living in this world. May the words of Jesus ring in your ears: "follow me." And may the Spirit hover, move, and deliver salve to your soul and a spring in your step. Amen.

## POSTLUDE

*Andante Tranquilo*, Martha Main

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