



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 2<sup>nd</sup> Sunday of Lent – Safe Keeping*  
February 28, 2021

**PRELUDE**

*Beneath the Cross*, 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.*

God gathers us as a Beachcomber gathers and marvels at every precious surviving piece of beach glass found. We are never alone, we are never lost to the One who seeks humanity’s wholeness. We affirm our commitment to be the Body of Christ that knows we cannot be personally healed until we see the interconnected community as part of the process of healing. Jesus has the power to re-vision the family of God in which false boundaries are overcome. In a year of devastating loss of livelihood, we consider the economic health that reimagines status quo.

*Vessels, holy and whole*

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

**CENTERING HYMN**      *In Christ There is No East or West, Zion Virtual Choir*

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

Let us acknowledge our need to restore, repair, renew our Holy Vessels, which include the communities of which we are a part. Let us pray:

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. 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 empathy. Forgive our complacency. 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...*

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

## **ASSURANCE OF GRACE**

Again this week, I invite you to imagine a warmth begin to arise within the core of your body. It may help to keep your eyes closed. This warm orb of light is deep within you, a flame always there and ready when you need it. 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. This warmth that wraps you as a blanket of assurance is one you want to share. You want all to feel this presence, to kindle this hope.

Know this: This love and security 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.

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

## **HYMN**

*Community of Christ, Martha Main*

## **WE HEAR GOD’S WORD**

*Matthew 8:5-13*

When he entered Capernaum, a centurion came to him, appealing to him and saying, “Lord, my servant is lying at home paralyzed, in terrible distress.” And he said to him, “I will come and cure him.” 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. 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.” 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. I tell you, many will come from east and west and will eat with Abraham and Isaac and Jacob in the kingdom of heaven, while the heirs of the kingdom will be thrown into the outer darkness, where there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth.” 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.

## **MEDITATION**

*Beach Combing*

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

**Invitation** – The abundant blessings we find in Christ are boundless. When we call Christ answers. In faith let us bring our gifts in gratitude and thanksgiving, with hope that these gifts might in turn offer blessing to our communities longing for healing care. Whatever we bring this day, through these gifts, Christ can do great things.

**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** – God of manifold blessings, bless our lives to your service, even as we consecrate these gifts in service of a world in need. May our offering go forth this day, and be a reflection of your glory for all who struggle to know your ways. As these gifts go forth to do your work, may they help others hear your voice as you call their names. In the spirit of your grace and peace, we pray. Amen.~

## COMMISSION

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

Jesus' healing actions often get "buzz" from onlookers. In this week's story we do not know how his followers reacted to his words, but we can assume that it was hard to hear for some. Jesus makes sure to point out that the belief of this "outsider" and his care for his servant was something he didn't always see from the "insiders"—from the ones who profess to be "faithful." His words no doubt affirmed some and offended others. That's what happens when we get "called out," as we say. Perhaps we are in need of being "called out." Not in a way that shames but in a way that energizes. How could our faith call us out more and more until we cannot stand by as some are suffering?

As I said last week, we are working on healing for ourselves in this season, but we are also working toward something communal. 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 again 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.

*Lenten Anthem: "Holy Vessels"*

*Vessels, holy and whole*

*Broken, needing the One*

*Open, body and soul*

*Healer, come.*

Now go with confidence that the Holy Beachcomber is gathering us all for "Safe Keeping," recovering our depth of love for all and our joy of living in this world. May the words of Jesus ring in your ears: "I will come." 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**

*Penitence, Martha Main*

Worship Notes: ~ Scifres, Mary; Beu, B. J.. The Abingdon Worship Annual 2021 (p. 62). Abingdon Press. *Worship series design and original music* ©Worship Design Studio, used with permission. [www.worshipdesignstudio.com/vessels](http://www.worshipdesignstudio.com/vessels)