



March 27, 2022

## Prelude

*Shepherd of Love*

**Gathering**— Each week of this Lent season, we are focusing on ways that we can practice a counter-cultural theology that emphasizes the beauty and grace of the reality of life-right-now rather than waiting with increasing judgment to reach some vision of a perfected existence. Our ladder-climbing efforts sometimes end up taking us down a rung or two as things don't work out just right. And so let us continue to turn ladders into gardens, nurturing our souls and embracing our holy, "good enough," lives.

### *Music Refrain:*

*What in our lives do we dream about for tomorrow, void of sorrow?  
Time spent regretting decisions of our yesterdays, mistakes we made?  
Sometimes we get what we get,  
life disappoints us and yet,  
God is still here and somehow, this faith is good enough.*

## Sharing Our Joys and Concerns

*You are welcome to send prayer requests to Pastor Sarah. Spend a few moments connecting with God and lifting up your prayers.*

## A Time of Prayer

**The Lord's Prayer** (unison)—Our Father, who art in heaven, hallowed be thy name, thy kingdom come, thy will be done, on earth as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread. And forgive us our debts, as we forgive our debtors.

And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil. For thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, forever. Amen.

## **Bell Choir**

### **We Welcome New Members**

### **We Hear God's Word**

*Luke 15:1-3, 11b-32 (NRSV)*

*Now all the tax collectors and sinners were coming near to listen to him. And the Pharisees and the scribes were grumbling and saying, "This fellow welcomes sinners and eats with them." So he told them this parable:*

*"There was a man who had two sons. The younger of them said to his father, 'Father, give me the share of the property that will belong to me.' So he divided his property between them. A few days later the younger son gathered all he had and traveled to a distant country, and there he squandered his property in dissolute living.*

*"When he had spent everything, a severe famine took place throughout that country, and he began to be in need. So he went and hired himself out to one of the citizens of that country, who sent him to his fields to feed the pigs. He would gladly have filled himself with the pods that the pigs were eating; and no one gave him anything. But when he came to himself he said, 'How many of my father's hired hands have bread enough and to spare, but here I am dying of hunger! I will get up and go to my father, and I will say to him, "Father, I have sinned against heaven and before you; I am no longer worthy to be called your son; treat me like one of your hired hands."'"*

*"So he set off and went to his father. But while he was still far off, his father saw him and was filled with compassion; he ran and put his arms around him and kissed him. Then the son said to him, 'Father, I have sinned against heaven and before you; I am no longer worthy to be called your son.'*

*"But the father said to his slaves, 'Quickly, bring out a robe—the best one—and put it on him; put a ring on his finger and sandals on his feet. And get the fatted calf and kill it, and let us eat and celebrate; for this son of mine was dead and is alive again; he was lost and is found!' And they began to celebrate.*

*"Now his elder son was in the field; and when he came and approached the house, he heard music and dancing. He called one of the slaves and asked what was going on. He replied, 'Your brother has come, and your father has killed the fatted*

*calf, because he has got him back safe and sound.' Then he became angry and refused to go in. His father came out and began to plead with him. But he answered his father, 'Listen! For all these years I have been working like a slave for you, and I have never disobeyed your command; yet you have never given me even a young goat so that I might celebrate with my friends. But when this son of yours came back, who has devoured your property with prostitutes, you killed the fatted calf for him!'*

*"Then the father said to him, 'Son, you are always with me, and all that is mine is yours. But we had to celebrate and rejoice, because this brother of yours was dead and has come to life; he was lost and has been found.'"*

### **Thoughts about an Imperfect Life and Faith**

“We often believe we are the problem?”

### **We Respond to God's Word with Our Giving**

**Invitation**—Today we come to God with thanksgiving—thanksgiving for God’s abundant grace and mercy, for God’s love that never fails, for the joy with which God embraces us each and every day. As a sign of our gratitude, let us bring our gifts to God, knowing that God will work through these gifts to do wondrous things through our ministry together.

**March Benevolence**—God’s Bounty Food Pantry

You can mail your offerings to our office or give online at [www.zionuccindy.net/donate](http://www.zionuccindy.net/donate)

### **Doxology**

Praise God from whom all blessings flow,  
Praise Jesus Christ, our burdens know,  
Praise Spirit through whom our hearts grow,  
Praise Three-in-One, from here below.

**We Give Thanks**— Generous God, in light of your extravagant blessings—no matter what the state of the world or our imperfect lives—we offer our gifts and ourselves, and know that you transform what we plant into the produce of love. Amen.

## Hymn

*Blessed Assurance*, #426

**A Blessing for Becoming Real**—*"Blessed are you who do not despise your realness. It may hurt. You may not recognize yourself in the mirror. But this is what we hoped for, right? To live and love. To be loved. To have our experiences show on our faces and in our cells. It is the real life of Jesus in us, being made visible, as all our seams show."*

## Benediction

And now, may the God who loves all of creation, especially the ordinary parts, and Jesus, our companion along this crooked path called life, and the Holy Spirit, who loves to improvise in surprising ways, go with you, dwell among you, and give you joy. Amen.

## Postlude

*O For a Thousand Tongues*

### Worship Notes:

- All liturgy and leader parts Marcia McFee © [www.worshipdesignstudio.com/goodenough](http://www.worshipdesignstudio.com/goodenough). Used and adapted with permission.
- "Good Enough" theme song by Marsha Charles, Marcia McFee, Chuck Bell. Used with permission of Worship Design Studio.
- "A Blessing for Becoming Real [excerpt]" from [Good Enough: 40'ish Devotionals for a Life of Imperfection](http://www.katebowler.com/goodenough) by Kate Bowler and Jessica Richie. Used with permission. Purchase the book at [www.katebowler.com/goodenough](http://www.katebowler.com/goodenough).