



April 3, 2022

## Prelude

*My Jesus I Love Thee*

## Gathering

The story of Jesus includes many moments around tables, as this was part of his ritual of relationship even to the last. In this fifth week of the Lent season, we will hear a story of love and devotion from the disciple Mary, directed at Jesus at the table. As we will see, Jesus tries to prepare his beloved companions for his death. Talk of death is like a gut-punch to many of us; we would rather believe we and our loved ones are invincible, are able to will ourselves into being strong. We all know that isn't always how the story goes. We are fragile. Our lives, like the plants in the gardens we tend, are susceptible to elemental dangers and a life-cycle of letting go in order to live.

## Choir

*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.

**Choir**

*As the Deer*

**We Hear God's Word**

*John 12:1-8 (NRSV)*

Six days before the Passover Jesus came to Bethany, the home of Lazarus, whom he had raised from the dead. There they gave a dinner for him. Martha served, and Lazarus was one of those at the table with him. Mary took a pound of costly perfume made of pure nard, anointed Jesus' feet, and wiped them with her hair. The house was filled with the fragrance of the perfume.

But Judas Iscariot, one of his disciples (the one who was about to betray him), said, "Why was this perfume not sold for three hundred denarii and the money given to the poor?" (He said this not because he cared about the poor, but because he was a thief; he kept the common purse and used to steal what was put into it.)

Jesus said, "Leave her alone. She bought it so that she might keep it for the day of my burial. You always have the poor with you, but you do not always have me."

**Thoughts about an Imperfect Life and Faith**

"We are fragile."

**We Gather at the Table**



**Set Your Place at the Table**—Communion was first celebrated in the homes of those in the early church. Friends and family would gather together to pray, singing songs, and break bread. We carry on that tradition today. Whatever you have on hand to celebrate communion will work just fine, because this ancient ritual is not about what we use for this meal or where we partake of it. Instead, it is about the act of remembrance. So, gather around the table, prepare your place, and remember that Christ is in our midst.

**Our Invitation**— *Leader:* Christ looks upon each one with love and says, “you are welcome at my table.” Christ looks upon each one with compassion and says, “whatever troubles you, bring it here.” Christ looks upon each one with grace and says, “whatever you’d like to leave behind, do it here.” Will you come? Will you bring your troubles? Will you shed all that is unnecessary in your life? This is the place where you need not be perfect, you need not be sure of yourself or your faith, you need not feel whole and right with the world. Jesus invited many to his tables and in doing so, he assured them of their place in the illogical reign of love and grace. He just wanted them to be hungry for relationship—hungry to look across a table into another’s eyes, to break open their lives, and lift a cup in the midst of the hard times and hear, “this is for all, and so this is for you, beloved.”

**The Words of Institution**— On the night in which he gave himself up for us, he took bread, gave thanks to you, broke the bread, gave it to his disciples, and said: “Take, eat; this is my body which is given for you. Do this in remembrance of me.” When the supper was over, he took the cup, gave thanks to you, gave it to his disciples, and said: “Drink from this, all of you; this is my blood of the new covenant, poured out for you and for many for the forgiveness of sins. Do this, as often as you drink it, in remembrance of me.” And so, we remember...we offer ourselves...we proclaim God’s love...

**Our Confession**—Righteous God, you made us in your divine image and yet we often turn to the gazes of others to see ourselves. We yield to the temptation of comparison and measure ourselves according to standards not made for us. You declared us good, and we question your judgment. We turn from your truth and receive the lies of the enemy of our souls that devalue and condemn even though your grace is sufficient for us. Mend the brokenness within us. Fortify us with your love, hope, and vision. Shield us from stagnation and despair. Amen.+

**Assurance of Grace**— The God of grace sees us fully, knows us fully, and loves us fully. May our eyes be ever open to see ourselves as God sees us and restore our souls.+

**Blessing Our Meal**— Pour out your Holy Spirit on us gathered here, and on these gifts of bread and fruit of the vine. Make them be for us sustenance for

our days, love for simple and ordinary lives, fuel for justice in this world. By your Spirit open us to each other. Open us to the world, making us one in you, through Christ, in the power of your amazing grace!

**We Share the Bread and the Cup** – As you eat the bread, remember, “This is the body of Christ broken for you.” Take and eat. As you drink the cup, remember, “This is the blood of Christ shed for you and the forgiveness of sins.” Take and drink.

**We Give Thanks**—Almighty God, we give you thanks for the gift of our Savior’s presence in the simplicity and splendor of this holy meal. Unite us with all who are fed by Christ’s body and blood that we may faithfully proclaim the good news of your love and that your universal church may be a rainbow of hope in an uncertain world; through Jesus Christ our Redeemer. Amen.=

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

**Invitation**— In the gospel reading, we find a story of abundant generosity. Let us be like Mary who did not count the cost of the blessing she shared but only sought the good, purpose, and reward of her gift. Let us not hesitate to pour what we have out in order to touch lives, comfort and console, and meet the needs we encounter in our community and our world.+

### **April Benevolence—OCWM**

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

*A Place at the Table*, #617, v. 1, 2, 3, & 5

## A Blessing for a When You're in Grief

"Blessed are you, dear, dear one, doing this holy work of suffering what must be suffered. Of grieving what has been lost. Of knowing the unthinkable truth that must be known. This grief can make you feel on the other side of glass from the world around you, a force field of different realities separating you. Yet blessed are you in yours, for yours is the one most seen by God who breathes compassion upon you, even now. Who has walked this path, and who leans toward you, gathering you up into the arms of love. Rest now, dear one. You are not alone."

## 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

*Jubilation*

### Worship Notes:

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