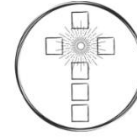




WHAT ARE YOU UP TO? Lent 2024



Serve & Enrich
Zion United Church
of Christ

Welcome

Lenten Chorus: "You Raise Me Up"

**When I am down and, oh my soul, so weary
When troubles come and my heart burdened be
Then, I am still and wait here in the silence
Until You come and sit awhile with me**

**You raise me up, so I can stand on mountains
You raise me up, to walk on stormy seas
I am strong, when I am on Your shoulders
You raise me up to more than I can be**

Meditative Moment: An important aspect of the season of Lent is turning to God with an honest heart and asking for the grace we need. This Lent, we are praying the Psalms as we confess our brokenness and seek God's mercy. Hear assurance in what the Psalmist proclaims in Psalm 25 as we go to God in prayer:

To you, O Lord, I lift up my soul. O my God, in you I trust; do not let me be put to shame; do not let my enemies exult over me... Make me to know your ways, O Lord; teach me your paths. Lead me in your truth, and teach me, for you are the God of my salvation; for you I wait all day long. Be mindful of your mercy, O Lord, and of your steadfast love, for they have been from of old. Do not remember the sins of my youth or my transgressions; according to your steadfast love remember me, for your goodness' sake, O Lord! Good and upright is the Lord.
(Psalm 25, excerpts)

In the name of Christ, you are forgiven. Amen.

Hymn

Praise the One Who Breaks the Darkness, 93

We Hear God's Word—*Mark 1:9-15*

In those days Jesus came from Nazareth of Galilee and was baptized by John in the Jordan. And just as he was coming up out of the water, he saw the heavens

torn apart and the Spirit descending like a dove on him. And a voice came from heaven, “You are my Son, the Beloved; with you I am well pleased.” And the Spirit immediately drove him out into the wilderness.

He was in the wilderness forty days, tempted by Satan; and he was with the wild beasts; and the angels waited on him.

Now after John was arrested, Jesus came to Galilee, proclaiming the good news of God, and saying, “The time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God has come near; repent, and believe in the good news.”

A Message that Uplifts

Up to Something Good

Prayers of the People

Each Wednesday during our worship, we’ll have an extended time of prayer. If you like incense, or candles, we encourage you to light them at home each day when you spend time in reflection and prayer. This connects our practice to an ancient practice mentioned by the Psalmist in chapter 141: *“I call upon you, O Lord; come quickly to me; give ear to my voice when I call to you. Let my prayer rise up as incense before you and the lifting up of my hands as an evening sacrifice.”*

During our time of prayer, you’ll be invited to speak aloud, at different points, that refrain from Psalm 141. It will appear on your screen. Let us pray:

We call upon you, O God, in the midst of all the contours of our lives — those that feel life-giving as well as those that pain us. All of life is filled with the joy and sorrow of living and loving. Especially in times when life feels like the difficulties of journeying in the desert, we pray that we can be “up to something good” for our selves, our neighborhoods, and our world. And so this week we start with thanksgiving for these acts of uplifting goodness: for our church family that cares for one another, for a community that comes together during a time of loss, for words of encouragement spoken when they are needed most...

**Let my prayer rise up
like incense before you,
the lifting up of my hands
as an offering to you.**

We call upon you, O God, to incline your ear and extend your love and healing power for these laments: for the loss of loved ones, for celebrations turned into traumatic moments of violence, for wars that seem to have no end in sight...

**Let my prayer rise up
like incense before you,
the lifting up of my hands
as an offering to you.**

We call upon you, O God, to give us the strength and courage to be up to something good for the sake of The Good. In this moment — in our mind’s eye — we imagine and offer our commitment to one small thing this week that will lift someone up, elevate and affirm the good when we see it, and bring a bit more calm or joy where we are. And if we find we are not up to it, we pray we can accept the goodness of others and feel your encouraging love.

Time for silent reflection...

**Let my prayer rise up
like incense before you,
the lifting up of my hands
as an offering to you.**

We pray this in the name of Jesus, who taught us to pray...

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.

Hymn

Breathe on Me, Breath of God, 461

Benediction— Beloved, go forth to uplift those around and to get up to something good. When someone asks you, “What are you up to?” you can respond, “**With God’s help, I’m up to something good!**” Let the people say, Amen! **Amen!**