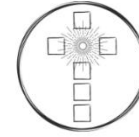




WHAT ARE YOU UP TO? Lent 2024



Serve & Enrich
Zion United Church
of Christ

The 3rd Sunday of Lent

Prelude

Oh How He Loves You and Me

Gathering—The story of Jesus' response to the temple being made into a marketplace was profound and may have been another step toward his death on the cross. He refers to raising up a new temple in three days — something his disciples later remembered as a foretelling of his resurrection. How might we raise up as the Body of Christ and be a holy temple—a holy dwelling place of God—in the world?

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**

Prayer—God of restoration and rebuilding, we are here today seeking resurrection and renewal for our tired and worn-out bodies and the body of this community. In this moment of quiet, we lift up to you those things we'd like to give up for good...for the sake of The Good.

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**

I Need Thee Every Hour, 476

Exploring God's Word for All Ages

Lessons from Up

We Hear God's Word—*John 2:13-22 (NRSV)**Greg Miller*

The Passover of the Jews was near, and Jesus went up to Jerusalem. In the temple he found people selling cattle, sheep, and doves and the money changers seated at their tables. Making a whip of cords, he drove all of them out of the temple, with the sheep and the cattle. He also poured out the coins of the money changers and overturned their tables. He told those who were selling the doves, "Take these things out of here! Stop making my Father's house a marketplace!" His disciples remembered that it was written, "Zeal for your house will consume me."

The Jews then said to him, "What sign can you show us for doing this?" Jesus answered them, "Destroy this temple, and in three days I will raise it up." The Jews then said, "This temple has been under construction for forty-six years, and will you raise it up in three days?" But he was speaking of the temple of his body.

After he was raised from the dead, his disciples remembered that he had said this, and they believed the scripture and the word that Jesus had spoken.

Meditation*Raise Up***We Gather at the Table**

Set Your Place at the Table—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.

Hymn*Let Us Break Bread Together, 699*

Our Invitation—You are welcome at this table where forgiveness is made real and God's grace made known.

A Prayer for Transformation— God of love and truth, we long to walk in your paths. We yearn to follow you in the ways that lead to life and wholeness. Yet it is hard to know if we are taking the right paths on our journey of faith. We worry that we will wander off, even when we don't mean to. May your love set us right, forgive our mistakes, and show us where we should go. Amen.~

Assurance of Grace— God promises forgiveness, that we may be blameless and innocent of any transgression.~

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...

Blessing Our Meal— Pour out your Spirit on those gathered at this table and on these gifts of bread and wine. May they become for us the living Christ, renewing us for your work. May we become the body of Christ, sent forth into the world as the living presence of love incarnate, serving creation with joy. Transform us in the power of your Spirit and unite us with Jesus, that we may continue his ministry of peace and reconciliation. Through your child, Jesus Christ, with the Holy Spirit in your holy church, all honor and glory is yours, Holy God, now and forever. Amen.~

We Share the Bread and the Cup—Take now and eat, this is the body of Christ broken for you. Take now and drink, this is the cup of the renewed covenant, Christ’s blood given for you.

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—The richness of God’s love extends to all persons and in response to God’s abundant compassion, we are invited into a spirit of generosity so that God’s love may be known to the very ends of the earth. Let us give generously.+

An Uplifting Gift—Hot Air Balloon Messages: You’re invited throughout the season of Lent, to share uplifting messages with our church family by writing them on the hot air balloons that you’ll find on the side table. The messages

could be scriptures you've found inspiring, quotes that nurture your spirit, or just a simple message like "you are not alone." We'll add those messages to our sky each week.

"Your love, Lord, reaches to the heavens. Your faithfulness to the skies."
Psalm 36:5 (NIV)

"Don't ask what the world needs. Ask what makes you come alive and go do it. Because what the world needs is more people who have come alive."
Howard Thurman

March Benevolence—One Great Hour of Sharing

****Doxology**

We Give Thanks—Revolutionary God, we share this portion of our resources today not as those looking to turn a profit or to amass wealth, but as stewards of your gifts — along with our time, talents, and unique passions—charged with the responsibility and the desire to put them to use in your name. Amen.

Hymn

To God Be the Glory, 66

Benediction— And so now go from this holy dwelling place, ready to encourage and raise your neighbors up from a foundation built on grace, holding fast to the vision for God's kin-dom on earth, knowing that you have all you need to be up to something.

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!**

Postlude

We Will Glorify