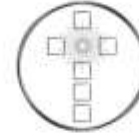




WHAT ARE YOU UP TO? Lent 2024



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 51 as we go to God in prayer:

Have mercy on me, O God, according to your steadfast love; according to your abundant mercy, blot out my transgressions. Wash me thoroughly from my iniquity, and cleanse me from my sin. For I know my transgressions, and my sin is ever before me... Create in me a clean heart, O God, and put a new and right spirit within me. Do not cast me away from your presence, and do not take your holy spirit from me. Restore to me the joy of your salvation, and sustain in me a willing spirit. (*Psalm 51, excerpts*)

By the grace of God, may your spirit be uplifted. In the name of Christ, you are forgiven. Glory to God. Amen.

Hymn

Be Thou My Vision, 502

We Hear God's Word—*John 12:20-33 (NRSV)*

Now among those who went up to worship at the festival were some Greeks. They came to Philip, who was from Bethsaida in Galilee, and said to him, "Sir, we

wish to see Jesus.” Philip went and told Andrew, then Andrew and Philip went and told Jesus. Jesus answered them, “The hour has come for the Son of Man to be glorified. Very truly, I tell you, unless a grain of wheat falls into the earth and dies, it remains just a single grain, but if it dies it bears much fruit. Those who love their life lose it, and those who hate their life in this world will keep it for eternal life. Whoever serves me must follow me, and where I am, there will my servant be also. Whoever serves me, the Father will honor.

“Now my soul is troubled. And what should I say: ‘Abba, save me from this hour’? No, it is for this reason that I have come to this hour. Abba, glorify your name.” Then a voice came from heaven, “I have glorified it, and I will glorify it again.” The crowd standing there heard it and said that it was thunder. Others said, “An angel has spoken to him.” Jesus answered, “This voice has come for your sake, not for mine. Now is the judgment of this world; now the ruler of this world will be driven out. And I, when I am lifted up from the earth, will draw all people to myself.” He said this to indicate the kind of death he was to die.

A Message that Uplifts

The work of transformation is never easy. Jesus was about to experience a transformation like no one had yet seen. As his hour to die approached, though his soul was troubled, Jesus was able to face the struggle ahead trusting that God would lift him up. Perhaps there is a transformation being born in you. Hear these messages that uplift.

“All great spirituality is about what we do with our pain. If we do not transform our pain, we will most assuredly transmit it.” Richard Rohr

“Heartbreaks, disappointments and even our own weaknesses can serve as stepping-stones to the second half of life transformation. Failings are the foundation for growth. Those who have fallen, failed or ‘gone down’ are the only ones who understand ‘up.’” Richard Rohr

“Change does not roll in on the wheels of inevitability, but comes through continuous struggle.” Martin Luther King, Dr.

“Be like seeds; do not see dirt thrown at you as your enemy, but as ground to grow.” Matshona Dhliwayo

Up to Something Good

Prayers of the People

Each midweek service, 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 seek your vision, O God, to restore our sight so that we may see all people and all things as connected to you and forever redeemed by your love. We ask for you to make your presence known among us and to lift our spirits high with your hope and joy, and 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 all the crayons that have already been collected through our ministry at Zion, with the help of our partners, so that we can something uplifting with the kids at Riley Hospital for Children; for all the promise and renewal held in this season of Spring that is blooming before our very eyes; for the courage and trust it takes to plant seeds of hope in this uncertain world...

**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 pain that comes with the work of transformation, for the seeds planted that did not grow, for the sorrows that are buried deep within...

**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. *[pause for a few moments]*

**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

How Can I Keep from Singing, 424

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!**