



First Christian Church

Disciples of Christ

430 S. 16th St. Lincoln, NE 68508 402.475.4289

Weekly Worship

love all • live spiritually • rejoice in hope • show hospitality

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Week of March 21, 2021



Call to Worship

Feel free to follow along with our Call to Worship from today's live-streamed worship service.

One: Each day is a gift from God:

Many: Each moment is that opportunity to reach out in service to all creation.

One: Each day is a reminder of the new covenant:

Many: Not written on stone tablets easily broken, but inscribed on our hearts filled with joy.

One: Each day we draw closer to God:

Many: Who has forgotten more than we ever will learn; who has forgiven us more than we will ever acknowledge.

Public Worship WILL be held at 10:30 am Sunday morning. If you are not quite ready to join us for public worship, we invite you to follow along with this printed service.

Prayer of Confession

We are reluctant, O Author of Love, to set aside our hurt, our anger, our disappointment. Heal us with your tender touch, that we might be cleansed of all unclean thoughts, all schemes of revenge, all hope of vindictive retribution. Open our eyes to the power of love, shown to us in your unselfish sacrifice of your Son, our Savior, Jesus Christ. Amen.

Check out our weekly video at www.fcclincoln.org, First Christian's Facebook page, or search for First Christian Church, Lincoln, Nebraska on YouTube.

<https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCVejAW8Dmqv8Jmk5rzj43g>

Even if you are worshiping from home, please continue your regular giving to the church in addition to your faith giving. The FCC office is accepting checks at 430 S. 16th Street, Lincoln, NE 68508. We can also mail you a debit authorization form to do automatic withdrawals. Finally, there is a "GIVE" button on the top right-hand side of the fcclincoln.org website to make an online donation via PayPal.

Scripture Reading

Jeremiah 31:31-34

³¹ The days are surely coming, says the Lord, when I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel and the house of Judah. ³² It will not be like the covenant that I made with their ancestors when I took them by the hand to bring them out of the land of Egypt—a covenant that they broke, though I was their husband, says the Lord. ³³ But this is the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel after those days, says the Lord: I will put my law within them, and I will write it on their hearts; and I will be their God, and they shall be my people. ³⁴ No longer shall they teach one another, or say to each other, ‘Know the Lord’, for they shall all know me, from the least of them to the greatest, says the Lord; for I will forgive their iniquity, and remember their sin no more.

John 12:20-33

²⁰ Now among those who went up to worship at the festival were some Greeks. ²¹ They came to Philip, who was from Bethsaida in Galilee, and said to him, ‘Sir, we wish to see Jesus.’ ²² Philip went and told Andrew; then Andrew and Philip went and told Jesus. ²³ Jesus answered them, ‘The hour has come for the Son of Man to be glorified. ²⁴ 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. ²⁵ Those who love their life lose it, and those who hate their life in this world will keep it for eternal life. ²⁶ Whoever serves me must follow me, and where I am, there will my servant be also. Whoever serves me, the Father will honor. ²⁷ ‘Now my soul is troubled. And what should I say—“Father, save me from this hour”? No, it is for this reason that I have come to this hour. ²⁸ Father, glorify your name.’ Then a voice came from heaven, ‘I have glorified it, and I will glorify it again.’ ²⁹ The crowd standing there heard it and said that it was thunder. Others said, ‘An angel has spoken to him.’ ³⁰ Jesus answered, ‘This voice has come for your sake, not for mine. ³¹ Now is the judgement of this world; now the ruler of this world will be driven out. ³² And I, when I am lifted up from the earth, will draw all people to myself.’ ³³ He said this to indicate the kind of death he was to die.

Reflection

Meditation for 5th Sunday of Lent

“Glorifying God in our Hearts”

John Rutland Wallis in the Pastoral Reflection for *Lectionary Homiletics* described this covenant in Jeremiah as transformation from Law to desire. As I indicated in our meditation for the first Sunday of Lent, our lessons from the Hebrew Scriptures during this season would explore the various Covenants made between God and humanity. In our passage today we have these words from God; “I will put my law within them, and I will write it on their hearts; and I will be their God, and they shall be my people.” Although those God loved broke the Covenant of old, God pledged to make a Covenant they could not break, a Covenant that lies deep within the human heart. In many ways this is a sign of growth and maturity for God’s people as a whole and for each individual. God’s people no longer need to rely on external sources of authority, God’s Law resides within. Wallis captured the heart of this transformation by describing the Covenant as a move from external Law to internal desire. The Law of God no longer comes from above but now resides within.

I think Benedictine nun Joan Chittister described this transformation well in her book *Called to Question: A Spiritual Memoir*. She described the movement from “religion” to “spirituality.” I think this description illuminates the transformation described in Jeremiah. Chittister talked about spirituality as the hunger in the human heart. For her, religion gives us commandments, rules, and a structure for our lives of faith. Religion provides a guide to help us live the spiritual life. It provides rites and customs that create order. “Religions are systems designed to lead the human to the divine.” She went on to say, “What forms us lives in us forever. The important thing is that it not be allowed to stunt our growth. We must remember that God is greater than reli-

gion.” This is not to say that we must discard religion, it is not an either/or proposition. But, our passage from Jeremiah reminds us that while our religious faith shapes and forms us, it is meant to point us to God. God yearns to connect with us on a deeper level. God yearns to live within our hearts. “Religion is the mooring of the soul. Spirituality is its lodestone. Religion is at best external, spirituality is the internal distillation of this externalized witness to the divine.”

It is so tempting to believe that we must leave behind the various Covenants of God to embrace the newest. God does not want us to discard the previous Covenants, but through these words of Jeremiah, God invites us deeper. As we move through Lent and reflect on the journey of Jesus, we are invited to ponder the many ways in which Jesus lived out this very tension and embraced his life and ministry as an expression of a new Covenant with God. Although Jesus regularly challenged the religiosity of his time, he did not discard it. He knew religion provided necessary mooring for the life of faith, but it was not its focus. In our Gospel lesson today, Jesus prays to glorify God’s name and the voice from heaven confirms this desire.

Through Jesus’ life and ministry God was and is glorified. Jesus was shaped and formed by Judaism, and at the same time, he was connected more deeply with God. I suspect it was that deeper connection with God that places Jesus in high esteem with other religious traditions that regard him as an important guide and teacher. For us as Christians, we look to him as the ultimate expression of God. Jesus held the Covenant in his heart and through his life, death, and resurrection invites us to do the same.

AMEN

Prayers & Praises

March 21, 2021

In Our Church Family:

- Georgann Jordan
- Arlene Heimer
- Marvin Thurber
- William Deterding
- Jill Carpenter, *diagnosed with COVID-19*
- Nancy & Leo Jelinek
- Vic Burgess
- Donna Baker
- Polly Putney
- Mildred Brockemeyer
- Rae Hope Putney

Relatives:

- Friends and Family of *Vic Burgess*
- Rick Pickel, *for returning to chemotherapy, son of Dick & Roxie Pickel*
- Fred Ogren, *prayers for healing during hospitalization, son of LaVonne Ogren*
- Tricia Gangwish, *prayers for fighting breast cancer, aunt of Lindsay Swanson*
- Will Oldenburg, *prayers as he anticipates deployment to the Middle East, cousin of D'Arcy Blosser*
- John Swanson's father, *in nursing home with COVID-19*
- Phyllis Jones, *hospitalized with COVID, cousin of Dick Pickel*
- Mark Carpenter, *with colon cancer, brother of Jill Carpenter and Dick & Roxie Pickel*

Friends:

- Our sympathy to the friends and family of Pam Larsen, *upon her recent passing, friend of Marcia Foster*
- Karen, *during cancer treatments, co-worker of Rhonda Ball*
- Tallu Schuyler Quinn, *diagnosed with glioblastoma, prayers for healing, friend of Kaleo and D'Arcy Blosser*
- Cedric Gibb, *healing prayers, friend of Cec Burkhardt*
- Tomi, *healing prayers for cancer diagnosis, friend of Sara Lugin*
- Mother of Dave Schwaninger, *upon recent stroke, friend of Marcia Foster*
- Carson Mousel, *13-year-old grandson of Bob and Eileen Kunz, from Mildred Brockemeyer*
- Judy Nord, *with bile duct cancer, friend of Dick & Roxie Pickel*
- Our condolences to the family of Cliff Cheney, *upon his recent passing, friend of Elaine Parman*
- Betty Finck, *with aggressive cancer, friend of Pastor Karen*

Our Timothy's:

- Bruce Frogge *at Cypress Creek CC in Spring, TX*
- Glenda Dietrich Moore, *Creative Arts Ministry in Lincoln, NE*

In the Nebraska Region:

Elmwood Christian Church and Rev. Jim Gordon

Our Global Ministries Missionaries:

Anne Gregory serving in Thailand

Find more information and stories about our Global Ministry partners at

www.globalministries.org



Song of the Week

My Song is Love Unknown

Text: Samuel Crossman, 1664

Music: John Ireland, 1918

My song is love unknown,
my Savior's love to me,
love to the loveless shown
that they might lovely be.
O who am I that for my sake
my Lord should take frail flesh, and die?

He came from heaven's throne
salvation to bestow;
the world that was his own
would not its Savior know.
But O my Friend, my Friend indeed
who at my need his life did spend!

Sometimes we strew his way,
and his sweet praises sing,
resounding all the day hosanas to our King.
Then "Crucify" is all our breath,
and for his death we thirst and cry.

Unheeding, we will have
our dear Lord made away,
a murderer to save, the prince of life to slay.
Yet steadfast he to suffering goes,
that he his foes from thence might free.

Here might I stay and sing,
no story so divine:
never was love, dear King,
never was grief like thine.
This is my Friend, in whose sweet praise
I all my days could gladly spend.

LENT
WALKING WITH CHRIST