



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 27, 2022



Call to Worship

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

One: Come, let us celebrate the forgiving, reconciling love of God.

Many: For once we were lost and felt so far away; now we have been found and welcomed home.

One: Know that God's love is lavished upon you forever.

Many: We rejoice at the news of forgiveness and hope.

All: Let us celebrate and praise the God of Love.

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

O God, we journeyed to far places and lived as if you were not accompanying us. We have wanted the inheritance you entrusted to us and used other people as if they were things. Then we complain to you as if our dilemma were your fault rather than our own. O God, we are not worthy to be your children. Forgive us, and grant us just a small place in your love, which we do not deserve. 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.

www.fcclincoln.org/youtube

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Even if you are worshipping 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.
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Scripture Reading

Psalms 32

¹ Happy are those whose transgression is forgiven,
whose sin is covered.

² Happy are those to whom the LORD imputes no
iniquity,
and in whose spirit there is no deceit.

³ While I kept silence, my body wasted away
through my groaning all day long.

⁴ For day and night your hand was heavy upon me;
my strength was dried up as by the heat of summer.

Selah

⁵ Then I acknowledged my sin to you,
and I did not hide my iniquity;
I said, 'I will confess my transgressions to
the LORD',
and you forgave the guilt of my sin.

Selah

⁶ Therefore let all who are faithful
offer prayer to you;
at a time of distress, the rush of mighty waters
shall not reach them.

⁷ You are a hiding-place for me;
you preserve me from trouble;
you surround me with glad cries of deliverance.

Selah

⁸ I will instruct you and teach you the way you
should go;
I will counsel you with my eye upon you.

⁹ Do not be like a horse or a mule, without understanding,
whose temper must be curbed with bit and bridle,
else it will not stay near you.

¹⁰ Many are the torments of the wicked,
but steadfast love surrounds those who trust in
the LORD.

¹¹ Be glad in the LORD and rejoice, O righteous,
and shout for joy, all you upright in heart.

Luke 15:1-3, 11b-32

¹ Now all the tax-collectors and sinners were coming
near to listen to him. ² And the Pharisees and the scribes
were grumbling and saying, 'This fellow welcomes sinners
and eats with them.' ³ So he told them this parable:

¹¹ Then Jesus said, 'There was a man who had two sons.
¹² The younger of them said to his father, "Father, give me the
share of the property that will belong to me." So he divided
his property between them. ¹³ A few days later the younger
son gathered all he had and travelled to a distant country,
and there he squandered his property in dissolute living.

¹⁴ When he had spent everything, a severe famine took place
throughout that country, and he began to be in need. ¹⁵ So he
went and hired himself out to one of the citizens of that
country, who sent him to his fields to feed the pigs. ¹⁶ He
would gladly have filled himself with the pods that the pigs
were eating; and no one gave him anything. ¹⁷ But when he
came to himself he said, "How many of my father's hired
hands have bread enough and to spare, but here I am dying
of hunger! ¹⁸ I will get up and go to my father, and I will say
to him, 'Father, I have sinned against heaven and before
you; ¹⁹ I am no longer worthy to be called your son; treat me
like one of your hired hands.'" ²⁰ So he set off and went to
his father. But while he was still far off, his father saw him
and was filled with compassion; he ran and put his arms
around him and kissed him. ²¹ Then the son said to him,
"Father, I have sinned against heaven and before you; I am
no longer worthy to be called your son." ²² But the father
said to his slaves, "Quickly, bring out a robe—the best
one—and put it on him; put a ring on his finger and sandals
on his feet. ²³ And get the fatted calf and kill it, and let us eat
and celebrate; ²⁴ for this son of mine was dead and is alive
again; he was lost and is found!" And they began to cele-
brate.

²⁵ Now his elder son was in the field; and when he
came and approached the house, he heard music and danc-
ing. ²⁶ He called one of the slaves and asked what was going
on. ²⁷ He replied, "Your brother has come, and your father
has killed the fatted calf, because he has got him back safe
and sound." ²⁸ Then he became angry and refused to go in.
His father came out and began to plead with him. ²⁹ But he
answered his father, "Listen! For all these years I have been
working like a slave for you, and I have never disobeyed your
command; yet you have never given me even a young goat so
that I might celebrate with my friends. ³⁰ But when this son
of yours came back, who has devoured your property with
prostitutes, you killed the fatted calf for him!" ³¹ Then the
father said to him, "Son, you are always with me, and all that
is mine is yours. ³² But we had to celebrate and rejoice, be-
cause this brother of yours was dead and has come to life; he
was lost and has been found." '

Reflection

Meditation for the 4th Sunday in Lent

“A Far and Distant Country”

There is so much to unpack in this familiar story from Luke. It is probably best known by the title the parable of “The Prodigal Son,” however, I like the title provided in my edition of The Greek New Testament which calls it “The Parable of the Lost Son.” The fifteenth chapter of this Gospel includes three parables of “the lost” which are found by a loving God. Each of the parables has a lot to share about the nature of God and the relationship between God and humanity. Our passage today, the longest of these parables, is particularly rich and detailed and would take more time to unpack than we have now. Each reading of this popular story brings out something new. The comments of Rev. Dr. Baron Mullis, pastor of First Presbyterian Church in Philadelphia, really stirred my thinking about the beginning of this story. Once the son gathered up all his belongs “he travelled to a distant country.” Mullis simply asked “do you know where this distant country is?”

What probably began as an exciting adventure eventually turned into a wilderness experience. Once his resources were gone and his inheritance squandered he was forced to find work. Finding work must have been a real challenge because the place of opportunity and adventure had become a wasteland, a wilderness of famine and want. Our adventurer became a person “in need.” To add insult to injury, we learn that not only was he in need, but “no one gave him anything.” Realizing that the pigs he was hired to feed ate better than he did, our young man decided it was time to return home. Mullis went on to ponder; how often have we found ourselves in a similar position. What may have begun as an adventure turns into famine and want. This may happen to us even when we have not fled to a distant country to squander our inheritance. The land of opportunity shifts to be a lonely and isolated place. Mullis went on: “In this moment, the joy drops out of the bottom of the story. The far country is a lonely place. You can do everything right and still wind up in the far country. You can play by all the rules and work hard and still wind up in the far country.”

The younger brother was not the only one to enter a far and distant country. While the younger son entered such a land literally, the older brother entered this lonely place as well. Since he had not consciously made this journey he was unaware of entering this lonely and isolated place. When he was unable to celebrate his brother’s return, when he failed to recognize the ongoing love of their father, when he held anger and bitterness in his heart, he entered the wilderness of a far and distant country. Mullis went on to point out that just like the older brother:

Everyone knows at some point in their life what it is to be underappreciated, to work, work, work and have someone else get the party. Everyone knows what it is to get hurt, and there you are: far country. It would be hopeless, the inevitability of the far country, if it weren’t for the relentlessness of grace.

The provider of “relentless grace” in our story was the loving father. The father invited both of his sons to leave the far and distant country of isolation and wilderness to return home. So, how do we do this, how do we leave the wilderness of our distant county experiences behind? Mullis reminded us that the theologian “Karl Barth said that Jesus is the son who went into the far country for us. Jesus is the one who, in a world ‘where no one would give him anything,’ was willing to endure the sin, isolation and pain of journeying into the far country for us.”

Jesus’ willingness to enter the wilderness of a far and distant country gives us courage to acknowledge the wilderness in our lives and leave it behind. Whether our “distant country” is one of loss and grief, job loss, disrupted relationships, illness, transition, envy or jealousy, we can also make the journey to our loving God who eagerly awaits us. We can also share the journey with others as they literally or figuratively make such a journey. Life often takes us to far and distant places, but, God is always eager to welcome us home. AMEN



Prayers & Praises

March 27, 2022

In Our Church Family:

- Marvin Thurber
- William Deterding
- Vic Burgess
- Joan Dietrich
- Harold & Donna Baker
- Polly Putney
- Jessica Vocasek
- Lois Frogge

Our sympathy for the family and friends of Arlene Heimer, who died March 19.

Sympathy is also extended to Jessica Vocasek on the death of her grandmother Alice M. Stehlik.

- Friends and Family of Vic Burgess
- Greg Ogren, *prayers for healing, still ill after surgeries and treatments, son of LaVonne Ogren*
- Mark Carpenter, *with colon cancer, brother of Jill Carpenter and Dick & Roxie Pickel*
- Lorie Chrastel, *Mark Carpenter's fiancée, prayers for recovery from a stroke*
- Roger Christianson, *with stage 4 cancer, father of Brady Christianson*
- Annie DeLosSantos, *with liver cancer diagnosis, sister of Vince Ortega*

Friends:

- Our sympathy for the family and friends of Tallu Schuyler Quinn, former Kamp Kaleo Peace Intern and founder of the The Nashville Food Project; Tallu passed away on Feb. 17 after a nearly 2 year battle with glioblastoma
- Cedric Gibb, *healing prayers, friend of Cec Burkhardt*
- Carson Mousel, *grandson of Bob and Eileen Kunz, from Mildred Brockemeyer*
- Dr. Bob Kunz, *prayers for healing after second surgery for pancreatic cancer*

Our Timothys:

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

In the Nebraska Region:

- Elwood First Christian Church

Our Global Ministries Missionaries:

- Raul Santiago-Rivera serving in Puerto Rico



Find more information and stories about our Global Ministry partners at www.globalministries.org

Song of the Week

Amazing Grace, How Sweet the Sound

Amazing Grace, how sweet the sound, that saved a wretch like me! I once was lost, but now am found, was blind, but now I see.

'Twas grace that taught my heart to fear, and grace my fears relieved. How precious did that grace appear the hour I first believed!

Through many dangers, toils, and snares, I have already come. 'Tis grace has brought me safe thus far, and grace will lead me home.

The Lord has promised good to me; his word my hope secures. He will my shield and portion be as long as life endures.

When we've been there ten thousand years, bright shining as the sun, we've no less days to sing God's praise than when we'd first begun.

AMAZING GRACE

Lenten Book Study

The Power of Significance by John C. Maxwell

March 30 Session 4

Be Willing to Start Small

April 6 Session 5

Live with a Sense of Anticipation

Holy Week

No Wednesday Night fellowship

April 20 Session 6

Seize Significance Opportunities Every Day