

Greetings to our members, those from United Congregational Church in Conway and all our friends at home,

This Sunday is the Third Sunday of Lent. Our Lenten worship series continues with Psalm 212 and the theme of trust. There are three Sundays in Lent remaining. The sixth Sunday is Palm Sunday on March 28th.

Our Sunday morning Fellowship Time has grown! Every Sunday from 10:30 AM – 11:30 AM a time for conversation is hosted by our moderator, Roland Giguere, through Zoom. The invitation and link to that gathering is sent via email every week. If you have not checked into this event, I would encourage you to and catch up with friends at church.

Lenten opportunities:

24th Annual Lenten Discussion Series: This six-week program under the title: *Even the Cherry Blossom Falls* continues. Each session begins at 7 PM, all sessions are on consecutive Wednesday evenings and all will be offered through a Zoom link. The fourth session will be on Wednesday, March 10, featuring the Rev. Randy Calvo pastor of the Hatfield Congregational Church. His session title: *Be Brave Pandora and Open the Jar Again*.

I will be sending out the Zoom link by Tuesday.

The Franklin County Interfaith Council Lenten Ecumenical and Interfaith program titled *Lifting the Veil: Racism in Franklin County* will be offering Part II of the three-part series at 7 PM on Thursday March 11th. The flier for this program, including the Zoom link, is attached to this note.

Wishing you God's peace in the season of Lent

Pastor Rob

Welcome to Sunday Worship

March 7, 2021

The Third Sunday of Lent

Good Morning to our members, those from United Congregational Church in Conway and all our friends at home. For this season of Lent a preaching series on the Psalms is being offered. This service is for the Third Sunday of Lent with Psalm 121. Our theme for this Sunday is Trust.

This Sunday is a communion Sunday at First Congregational Church. If you wish to participate in communion please have two elements ready. First, a drink in a cup or glass. This could be juice of any kind or water. Second, a piece of bread of any kind.

If you are unable to access the Sunday video, you are welcome and encouraged to follow this resource on your own and celebrate Communion by reading the Communion prayers and serving yourself keeping in mind that even when alone, we are all a part of the body of Christ.

Prayer Requests: We are accepting requests for prayer (healing, comfort, thanksgiving, and others). Please send your requests to the Pastor at pastor01089@gmail.com. Requests will then be sent out through our email list to the congregation for our common prayer life during the

week. PLEASE remember that all prayer requests received become public knowledge. If you are uncertain if your request for another might be confidential, do not send it.

And now let us be in worship

Call to Worship (Responsive, L=Leader, P=People Psalm 40)

L I waited patiently for the Lord; he inclined to me and heard my cry.

P He put a new song in my mouth, a song of praise to our God.

L Happy are those who make the Lord their trust.

Morning Unison Prayer & the Lord's Psalm 25

To you, O LORD, I lift up my soul. O my God, in you I trust; do not let me be put to shame. 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, do not remember the sins of my youth or my transgressions; according to your steadfast love remember me, for your goodness' sake, O Lord and for the sake of your Christ who taught us to pray saying...*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.*

Covenant of Membership: James Merriott

This Sunday we welcome Jim into church membership. The covenant and our glad welcoming of Jim are included in this Sunday's YouTube video.

Prayers of the People

Our prayers this morning speak to God about how we use the time we have been granted along with our theme of Trust for this Sunday. This prayer is based on the prayer *Occupy Our Calendars*, from The Rev. Dr. Walter Brueggemann's book *Awed the Heaven, Rooted in Earth*.

O God, once again we are deep in the season of Lent.

Once again, we are counting the days: 40 of them,

Once again, we lay them all out and take note that our times are in your hands. And then we fill each day...with us, with ourselves, with everything we must do, and everything we desire to do.

We fill each week.....with us, with ourselves, with everything we need to accomplish and everything we are compelled to invest our time in. Every day, every week, every month, we fill

up our calendars...with us. And we are anxious because we do know our times are not in our own hands, in spite of what we place on our calendars, our times are in your hands. Our time of blessing and cursing, of love and despair, of the unexpected tragedy and the uncalled for joy, our times of laughter and tears, of euphoria and depression, of gain and loss, of clarity and confusion, all our times, from our beginning to our ending, are in your hands. You, O God, have given us this season of life, this count of days, as the psalmist wrote, “*make me to know mine end, and the measure of my days, that I may know how frail I am.*” And what might be the measure of our days? Is there a way to know, except that one day our season here will be complete, and our season in you will begin? How then, shall we fill our calendars, day to day, week to week, month to month. In our counting of days, how many will we count as your days, how many moments will we fill with you? Will this season of 40 days bring us any closer to you, to Jesus, so that we might move beyond knowing of you, to knowing you? That we might look less to ourselves, and more to being the body of Christ, a community of faithful Christians, empowered by the Holy Spirit? That we might be led by your way, your truth, your life, so that we might be the light you have always intended we should be. We do pray, O Lord, that this be the case for us. That in this season, we may fill our calendars with you, and in so doing find our trust is placed only in you. Let us begin, O Lord of the ages, with this moment. This silence. We are ready to hear, to listen, to speak, and to trust in you. (personal prayer and meditation) We trust, O God, that you hear each prayer, even as we lift to you those we know and love (personal prayer). Gracious God, from whom our help comes, hear these our prayers, we trust they will be answered according to your will. Amen

Scripture Reading: Psalm 121

The Book of Psalms is divided into five sections, imitating the five books of the Torah. Just as the Torah has numerous authors, so does the Book of Psalms. 73 are attributed to King David, 12 by Asaph, 11 by the Sons of Korah, and 2 by King Solomon, leaving 52 with no name attached. Psalm 121 is a Song of Ascent with no known author. It is recognized that this psalm was sung by pilgrims on their way to Jerusalem. At the beginning of the pilgrimage, in the mountainous region of the Judean Hills, the pilgrim makes sure of the Lord's help.

This beloved text has been set to music by a number of composers. One the most familiar was written by Felix Mendelssohn and included in his oratorio, the *Elijah*, in 1846.

During this season of Lent, readings from the Book of Psalms will illustrate the themes for each of the Sundays. Our Theme for the Third Sunday of Lent is Trust.

¹ *I lift up my eyes to the hills—from where will my help come?* ² *My help comes from the LORD, who made heaven and earth.* ³ *He will not let your foot be moved; he who keeps you will not slumber.* ⁴ *He who keeps Israel will neither slumber nor sleep.* ⁵ *The LORD is your keeper;*

the LORD is your shade at your right hand. ⁶ The sun shall not strike you by day, nor the moon by night. ⁷ The LORD will keep you from all evil; he will keep your life. ⁸ The LORD will keep your going out and your coming in from this time on and forevermore.

After the reading, you may reflect on this passage.

The sermon for this text may be seen in this week's video.

Sermon: *The Psalms: A Lenten Vocabulary - Trust*

The Sacrament of Communion

The Invitation

Whether we gather in our meeting house, in the hall, on our front lawn, in our living room, on the beach, or upon a mountain top, when we gather to break bread in remembrance of Jesus, when we gather to pass the cup of life and acknowledge our new covenant in Christ, we have gathered around the Lord's Table. All are welcome here. Where you have been, where you are today, what you have done in this life, or left undone, if you are broken, or whole, joyful, or tearful, wandering or confused, you are welcome here in the hopes of finding God's love, God's forgiveness, God's mercy, and God's healing in this bread and in this cup. This is the Lord's table, come from the east and from the west, from the north and from the south, and gather here, not because you must but because you may.

The Prayer of Consecration

O Lord, My God, the journey is too great for us: unless you feed us with the bread from heaven and the cup of life, unless you share with us your own life, victorious over sin, hatred pain and death. Let your spirit flow through our hearts. Your strength be our strength. Your love be our love. Your will be our will. As we come to this table, bless this bread from heaven and this cup of life that we may be one with you, in heart, mind and will. Amen.

Blessing of the Bread

On the night that Jesus was to be betrayed, he sat at table with all of his disciples. During the course of the meal, he took bread off the table. When he had given thanks, he broke it and gave it to them, saying, "This is my body, which is given for you. Do this in remembrance of me." (You break your bread and eat)

Blessing of the Cup

Again, on that same night, Jesus took a cup after supper, saying, “This cup that is poured out for you is the new covenant in my blood. For I tell you that from now on I will not drink of the fruit of the vine until the kingdom of God comes. (You may drink from your cup)

Unison Prayer of Thanksgiving

God of our life we trust in you. When we were still far off, you met us in Jesus of Nazareth and brought us home. He declared your love, gave us grace, and opened the gates of your kingdom. May we who break bread in his name, live the life he calls us to. May we who share of his cup, bring life to others. Keep us firm in our trust and our hope that you have set before us so that we, and all your children, shall live in love and be free. Through Christ our Lord. Amen.

Benediction:

#179, *Were You There*, First Verse

Were you there when they crucified my Lord?

Were you there when they crucified my Lord?

Oh! Sometimes it causes me to tremble, tremble, tremble.

Were you there when they crucified my Lord?