

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

This Sunday is the first Sunday in the season of Lent which began this past Wednesday, February 17. There are six Sundays of Lent, the sixth one being Palm Sunday. For the first five Lenten Services we will be offering a series that features the Psalms. Each Sunday will focus on one Psalm and the theme that is presented through it.

A reminder about our two Lenten opportunities:

24th Annual Lenten Discussion Series: This is a six-week program under the title: *Even the Cherry Blossom Falls*. Each session begins at 7 PM, all sessions are on consecutive Wednesday evenings and all will be offered through a Zoom link. There are six congregations involved in this series including First Congregational Church of Shelburne. The second session will be on Wednesday, February 24, featuring the Rev. James Koyama pastor of the Montague Congregational Church, UCC. Session Title: Snow on the Deerfield River: Reflecting on Idols

I will be sending out the Zoom link on Monday.

Franklin County Interfaith Council is offering a Lenten Ecumenical and Interfaith program titled *Lifting the Veil: Racism in Franklin County*. This is a three-part program, beginning at 7 PM and offered through a Zoom link that will be sent before each session. The next part of the series is on Thursday, March 1. The flier for this program, including the Zoom link, is attached to this note.

Wishing you God's peace,

Pastor Rob

Welcome to Sunday Worship
February 21, 2021
The First Sunday of Lent

Good Morning to our members, those from United Congregational Church in Conway and all our friends at home. The 2021 season of Lent began this past Wednesday, February 17. Lent is 40 days, as Sundays are not fast days and not counted, and concludes at midnight on the Eve of Easter Sunday. For this season of Lent a preaching series on the Psalms is being offered. Details concerning Holy Week services and Easter Sunday have not yet been finalized.

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 105)

L Give praise to the Lord, proclaim his name; make known among the nations what he has done.

**P Sing to God, sing praise to the Lord; tell of all his wonderful acts.
Glory in his holy name**

L Let the hearts of those who seek the Lord rejoice.

Morning Unison Prayer & the Lord's Prayer

Based on Psalm 145

I will proclaim your greatness, O God; I will thank you forever. Every day I will thank you; I will praise you forever and ever for you are great and beyond my understanding. What you have done will be praised from one generation to the next; they will proclaim your mighty acts. They will speak of your glory and majesty. I will meditate on your wonderful deeds and I will proclaim your greatness. You, O Lord, are loving and merciful, slow to become angry and full of constant love. I will praise your name even as I offer this prayer that Christ did teach, 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.*

Prayers of the People

Our prayers this morning mirror the theme of Psalm 19, proclamation. There will be times for your own personal prayer and meditation. Let us come before God in prayer.

O Lord, Our God, you call us to reflection and action. You bid us to be silent before you and offer words of praise. You enable us to use our solitude well and you encourage us to be in communion with those around us and with you. Help us, O Lord, to be faithful throughout this Lenten season that we may ever strive to attune our wills to yours. On this day we proclaim your goodness even as we offer our prayers of thanksgiving: for life and breath, for each moment of joy, every image of beauty that you place before us, for the bounties of our tables, and the bonds of family, fellowship, and friendship. On this day, we proclaim your love even as we ask for your healing touch for those whom we know and love (personal prayers). Gracious God allow us, in some way, to be the bearers of wholeness to those who struggle and are in need. On this day we proclaim your compassion even as we pray for those who have experienced loss, loss of loved one, loss of friend, loss of confidence, loss of direction, we ask that a new strength be found and a new capacity for renewal come to life (personal prayer). May we, some way, help to ease the burden of grief, to bring a respite from the pain of loneliness and loss. On this day we proclaim your greatness in the coming of your reign of peace even as we pray for those throughout this world who hunger and thirst for food or justice, those who live on the edge of life, who have no power or access to power, those who are outcast and out of resources, those who are engaged in conflict or victimized by it, we ask for the power of your holy spirit (personal prayer). On this day we proclaim your greatness for we know that only with the spirit of peace will we step beyond our violent nature, only with the spirit of love,

will we be able to quench the fires of hatred, only with the spirit of comfort will we be able to reach out to the afflicted and, only with the spirit of forgiveness, will we ever find our wholeness of being, and the peace of your Christ. Amen.

Scripture Reading: Psalm 19

The Book of Psalms contains 150 Psalms. It is a collection composed from older lyrics for use in the temple in Jerusalem. Most were probably composed to accompany worship and include Praise Hymns, Hymns of Kingship, Hymns of Zion, the Holy City, Hymns of Lament and Hymns of Thanksgiving. There are also Psalms about sacred history and wisdom. During this season of Lent, readings from the Book of Psalms will illustrate the themes for each of the Sundays. Psalm 19, our reading for today, is attributed to King David. It is often read on Saturday Sabbath services. The main themes in this psalm are proclaiming the glory of God and the character of God's law. During this season of Lent, readings from the Book of Psalms have illustrated the themes for each of the Sundays. Our Theme for the First Sunday of Lent is Proclamation.

The heavens are telling the glory of God; and the firmament proclaims his handiwork.

Day to day pours forth speech, and night to night declares knowledge.

There is no speech, nor are there words; their voice is not heard;

yet their voice goes out through all the earth, and their words to the end of the world.

In the heavens he has set a tent for the sun, which comes out like a bridegroom from his wedding canopy, and like a strong man runs its course with joy.

Its rising is from the end of the heavens,

and its circuit to the end of them; and nothing is hid from its heat.

The law of the LORD is perfect, reviving the soul;

the decrees of the LORD are sure, making wise the simple; the precepts of the LORD are right, rejoicing the heart; the commandment of the LORD is clear,

enlightening the eyes; the fear of the LORD is pure, enduring forever;

the ordinances of the LORD are true and righteous altogether.

More to be desired are they than gold, even much fine gold;

sweeter also than honey, and drippings of the honeycomb.

Moreover, by them is your servant warned; in keeping them there is great reward.

But who can detect their errors? Clear me from hidden faults.

Keep back your servant also from the insolent; do not let them have dominion over me.

Then I shall be blameless, and innocent of great transgression.

Let the words of my mouth and the meditation of my heart be acceptable to you,
O LORD, my rock, and my redeemer.

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 - Proclamation*

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?*