

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

This Sunday is the Fourth Sunday of Lent. This Sunday offers Psalm 148 and the theme of praise. There are two Sundays in Lent remaining. The sixth Sunday is Palm Sunday on March 28th.

After considerable conversation and deliberation, the Executive Committee arrived at the conclusion that the church will remain closed to in person worship through April. We hope to be able to safely gather once again on Sunday mornings by the end of May. There will be an Easter Sunday video posted along with a worship resource.

Lenten opportunities:

24th Annual Lenten Discussion Series: *Even the Cherry Blossom Falls* series continues. The fifth session will be on Wednesday, March 17, featuring the Rev. Dr. Cynthia Crosson-Harrington pastor of the Whately Congregational Church, United Church of Christ. Her session title: ***Beauty in Broken Places.***

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 its third and final session at 7 PM on Thursday March 25th. 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 14, 2021
The Fourth 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 Fourth Sunday of Lent and focuses on Psalm 148 with the theme of Praise.

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 145

L I will exalt you, my God, I will praise your name for ever and ever.
Every day I will praise you and extol your name for ever and ever.

P My mouth will speak in praise of the Lord.
Let every creature praise his holy name for ever and ever.

Morning Unison Prayer & the Lord's Prayer

Based on Psalm 8

O Lord, how majestic is your name in all the earth! When I look at your heavens, the work of your fingers, the moon, and the stars that you have established; what are human beings that you are mindful of us, that you care for us? In your wisdom you have made us a little lower than yourself and have crowned us with glory and honor. In your wisdom, you have given us dominion over the works of your hands and set us as stewards of your creation. O Lord, our God, how majestic is your name in all the earth! We praise your holy name even as we 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 are all about praise. The first section is based on the 38th chapter of the Book of Job where God speaks to Job about his place in the creation. The second section praises God in a more personal way for the blessings received by God's loving hand. Let us be in prayer.

Praise be to you O God, who laid the foundation of the earth.
Who determined its measurements and laid its cornerstone.
Praise be to you, O God, who shut in the sea and prescribed bounds for it.
Who set the bars and the doors and said,
Thus, you shall you come, and no farther, and here shall your proud waves be stayed.
Praise to you, O God, who commanded the morning since creation's days began.
Who caused the dawn to know its place, that it might take hold of the skirts of the earth.
Praise to you, O God, who enters the storehouses of the snow and hail.
Who has reserved the time for torrents of rain, the scattering of the east wind, the heat of the sun.
Praise to you, O God, by whose wisdom the hawk soars and the eagle mounts up on it wings.

Praise to you, God, who creates men, and women, in your own image,
and places before us the ways of life and the ways of death.
Who has sent prophets and teachers, priests, and pastors,
all manner of those who you call to speak your word, instruct on your will and your way,
so that we, O God, may be your hands, and your feet, to further our love for you,
and our love of your creation.
Praise to you, O God. Who in the fullness of time sent your only son.
That through him, we may know of your love.
Who, in the love of your son, showered us all with the gifts of your Holy Spirit.
Praise be to you, O God, lover of my soul, cool respite in the heat of life,

crisp, clear depth of peace, in the relentless pain of life,
Praise be to you, O God, who makes me glad at each sound of new life.
Who brings tears of joy to my tired eyes, and brings laughter from my worn and weary heart.
Praise to you. O God, for you know me, since you first gave me my being, and you know my voice
for all the prayers I have spoken, and sighed, shouted, and cried, and you hear all my prayers this day.
(Personal prayer and meditation)
Praise to you O God, my truth, my light, and my way. Amen.

Scripture Reading: Psalm 148

The Book of Psalms is often combined with other devotional material, such as a liturgical calendar and daily prayers. When this is done, the book is called a Psalter. One of the oldest is called the *Bog Psalter* because it was discovered in a peat bog in Ireland in 2006. *The Bog Psalter* is the second oldest in existence, having been written around 800 AD. Like all the early Psalters, the Bog Psalter was written in Latin, contains certain sections beautifully illustrated and includes all 22 Psalms of Praise.

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

Praise the LORD!
Praise the LORD from the heavens;
 praise him in the heights!
 ² Praise him, all his angels;
 praise him, all his host!
 ³ Praise him, sun and moon;
 praise him, all you shining stars!
 ⁴ Praise him, you highest heavens,
 and you waters above the heavens!
 ⁵ Let them praise the name of the LORD,
 for he commanded and they were created.
 ⁶ He established them forever and ever;
he fixed their bounds, which cannot be passed. ^[a]
 ⁷ Praise the LORD from the earth,
 you sea monsters and all deeps,
 ⁸ fire and hail, snow and frost,
 stormy wind fulfilling his command!
 ⁹ Mountains and all hills,
 fruit trees and all cedars!
 ¹⁰ Wild animals and all cattle,
 creeping things and flying birds!
 ¹¹ Kings of the earth and all peoples,
 princes and all rulers of the earth!
 ¹² Young men and women alike,
 old and young together!
 ¹³ Let them praise the name of the LORD,
 for his name alone is exalted;
 his glory is above earth and heaven.

¹⁴ He has raised up a horn for his people,
praise for all his faithful,
for the people of Israel who are close to him.
Praise the LORD!

Here ends the reading from the Book of Psalms.

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 - Praise*

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?*