Westminster
Presbyterian Church

FEBRUARY 21, 2021
FIRST SUNDAY OF LENT



Gathering Song *Vessels* CHUCK BELL

Vessels, holy and whole
Broken, needing the One
Open, body and soul
Healer, come.

Opening Prayer of Confession **Jim and Francis Bonk**

Lent developed into a season of intense inward reflection and confession centuries after the life of Jesus. Yet, as we will see, Jesus encouraged people to open up about their lives–to speak truth–no matter how broken. This is the beginning of compassion for ourselves and others. It is the beginning of healing. The Latin origins of the word "confess" is to "study and acknowledge." This will be a season of studying how we can be a healing presence in our community. To do this, we acknowledge our need to restore our own Holy Vessels.
Let us pray:

Creator God,
We are bodies fashioned by your hand in your own image,
shapes and colors of diverse and immense beauty.
And yet too often we have ignored the sacred nature of our physical lives.
The Holy Vessels you have fashioned are tired and suffering,
ravaged by months of disrupted rhythms and ailment.
Our fragility has come into full view and we are frightened.
We cannot fathom the proportions of loss and so we look away,
sometimes even from our own needs.

Help us, Healer.
Show us our strength.
Forgive our inertia.
Move us to move
one step at a time toward greater care.

In this silence, we sense and acknowledge our yearning for wholeness.

Silence

Musical Response Vessels CHUCK BELL

Vessels, holy and whole
Broken, needing the One
Open, body and soul
Healer, come.

Assurance of Forgiveness **Jim and Francis Bonk**

I invite you to feel a warmth begin to arise within the core of your body. It may help to keep your eyes closed. Imagine a warm orb of light deep within you. This warm glow begins to emerge from the recesses of your inner being to fill and flood your whole body until your skin is glowing with it, radiating outward. You are surrounded by light. Feel this warmth wrap you as a blanket of assurance.

Know this: God's love and grace surround you…
No. Matter. What.
You are a precious and holy vessel right now.
Christ's light is a treasure given freely.
For you, for me, for all.

Take a deep breath in to let this truth fill you…
and breathe out with the relief of assurance.

Opening Hymn No. 795 Healer of Our Every Ill HEALER OF OUR EVERY ILL

Prayer of Illumination **Dr. Enikő Ferenczy**

Scripture Reading Matthew 8:1-4, 16-17 **Dr. Enikő Ferenczy**

When Jesus had come down from the mountain, great crowds followed him; and there was a leper who came to him and knelt before him, saying, "Lord, if you choose, you can make me clean." He stretched out his hand and touched him, saying, "I do choose. Be made clean!" Immediately his leprosy was cleansed. Then Jesus said to him, "See that you say nothing to anyone; but go, show yourself to the priest, and offer the gift that Moses commanded, as a testimony to them."

That evening they brought to him many who were possessed with demons; and he cast out the spirits with a word and cured all who were sick. This was to fulfill what had been spoken through the prophet Isaiah, "He took our infirmities and bore our diseases."

Sermon Treasure **Dr. Enikő Ferenczy**

Hymn No. 27 Sacred the Body TENDERNESS

Prayer of the People **Jim and Francis Bonk**

…We pray in the name of the One who is to come, Jesus the Christ, who taught us to pray together:

Our Father in heaven,
hallowed be your Name,
your kingdom come,
your will be done,
on earth as in heaven.
Give us today our daily bread.
Forgive us our sins
as we forgive those
who sin against us.
Save us from the time of trial,
and deliver us from evil.
For the kingdom, the power,
and the glory are yours,
now and forever. Amen.

Closing Hymn No. 792 There is a Balm in Gilead BALM IN GILEAD

Benediction **Dr. Enikő Ferenczy**

Postlude *Vessels* CHUCK BELL

Vessels, holy and whole
Broken, needing the One
Open, body and soul
Healer, come.

*Note: The Opening Prayer of Confession and Assurance of Forgiveness were adapted from the *Holy Vessels* by Marcia McFee.

The theme song *Vessels* led by Ken Shafer, Piano, and Pong Thiemmedh, Tenor.