

***The First Church of Christ in Marblehead
Old North Church, United Church of Christ
An Open and Affirming Congregation***

THE ORDER OF WORSHIP

March 14, 2021

Fourth Sunday in Lent

GATHERING

WELCOME

Rev. Dr. Dennis Calhoun

CALL TO WORSHIP

Rev. Dr. Dennis Calhoun

One: When we are lost in the wilderness,
ALL: God's steadfast love endures forever.
One: When we complain about our problems,
ALL: God's steadfast love endures forever.
One: When we ignore our abundant blessings,
ALL: God's steadfast love endures forever.
One: When we sneak around in the dark,
ALL: God's steadfast love endures forever.
One: When questions loom and our faith falters,
ALL: God's steadfast love endures forever.
One: In this time of worship, O God,
may we release our failures and rest in your love.

HYMN

The King of Love My Shepherd Is

#87

Holly Cameron, *soprano*; Stepanie Scarella, *mezzo-soprano*; Maria vanKalken, *piano*

CENTERING

PRAYER OF INVOCATION

Rev. Lindsay Popperson

(a prayer by the 20th century American Minister Henry Emerson Fosdick)

O God, come to us, we pray thee, with the resources of thy power,
that we may be strong within.

We ask not for easy lives, but for adequacy.

We ask not to be freed from storms,
but to build our houses on rocks that will not fall.

We pray not for a smooth sea, but for a stout ship, a good compass, and a strong heart;
in the name of him who faced enmity and death without flinching,
thy Son Jesus Christ our Savior,
who taught us to pray:

LORD'S PRAYER (debts)

Our Father, who art in heaven, hallowed by 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 and ever. Amen.

PRAYER OF CONFESSION

Rev. Lindsay Popperson

God asks us to examine our hearts always, but especially during these forty days of Lent. Of course, God knows our hearts, our actions, our faults and our failings. We confess not so that we can reveal these things to God, but so that we can examine them ourselves, and commit to changing our ways.

In the silence, we examine our hearts and confess our sins.

SILENT PRAYER

Holy one, we long to care for ourselves better, to care for one another better, to care for our world better. Forgive us all these sins, and give us the courage to change, in the name and in the spirit of Jesus. Amen.

ASSURANCE OF GRACE

Rev. Lindsay Popperson

Hear this good news: “For God so loved the world that he gave his only Son, so that everyone who believes in him may not perish but may have eternal life.” Whoever you are, and whatever you’ve done, all you have to do is believe in the never-ending love of God, and it is yours. Abundant life is yours. Flourishing is yours. Thanks be to God. Amen.

LISTENING

MOMENTS WITH OUR CHILDREN

Karen Kilty

Director of Children's Ministries

HYMN

Accept, O God, The Gifts We Bring
Maria vanKalken, piano

#457

FIRST LESSON

Numbers 21:4-9

Read by Melissa MacDonald

From Mount Hor they set out by the way to the Red Sea, to go around the land of Edom; but the people became impatient on the way. The people spoke against God and against Moses, ‘Why have you brought us up out of Egypt to die in the wilderness? For there is no food and no water, and we detest this miserable food.’ Then the Lord sent poisonous serpents among the people, and they bit the people, so that many Israelites died. The people came to Moses and said, ‘We have sinned by speaking against the Lord and against you; pray to the Lord to take away the serpents from us.’ So Moses prayed for the people. And the Lord said to Moses, ‘Make a poisonous serpent, and set it on a pole; and everyone who is bitten shall look at it and live.’ So Moses made a serpent of bronze, and put it upon a pole; and whenever a serpent bit someone, that person would look at the serpent of bronze and live.

GOSPEL LESSON

John 3:14-21

Read by Melissa MacDonald

And just as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, so must the Son of Man be lifted up, that whoever believes in him may have eternal life.

'For God so loved the world that he gave his only Son, so that everyone who believes in him may not perish but may have eternal life.

'Indeed, God did not send the Son into the world to condemn the world, but in order that the world might be saved through him. Those who believe in him are not condemned; but those who do not believe are condemned already, because they have not believed in the name of the only Son of God. And this is the judgement, that the light has come into the world, and people loved darkness rather than light because their deeds were evil. For all who do evil hate the light and do not come to the light, so that their deeds may not be exposed. But those who do what is true come to the light, so that it may be clearly seen that their deeds have been done in God.*

SERMON

"The Gospel in a Nutshell"

Rev. Dr. Dennis Calhoun

PASTORAL PRAYER

Rev. Dr. Dennis Calhoun

RESPONDING**OFFERTORY MOMENT**

Rev. Lindsay Popperson

DOXOLOGY (#45)

Praise God for love we all may share.
Praise God for beauty everywhere.
Praise God for hope of good to be.
Praise God for truth that makes us free. Amen.

SENDING**MUSICAL OFFERING***Banks of Bann/Be Thou My Vision*

Arranged and performed by Raymond Gonzalez, guitar

BENEDICTION

Rev. Dr. Dennis Calhoun