

**March 21, 2021
Fifth Sunday of Lent
Again & Again, We Are Reformed**



Written on Our Hearts by Rev. Lauren Wright Pittman

“We know the truth, not only by the reason, but also by the heart.” - **Blaise Pascal**

"There is no power for change greater than a community discovering what it cares about." - **Margaret J. Wheatley**

"In every community, there is work to be done. In every nation, there are wounds to heal. In every heart, there is the power to do it. - **Marianne Williamson**

“It is said that in some countries trees will grow, but will bear no fruit because there is no winter there.” - **John Bunyan**

“Scared and sacred are spelled with the same letters. Awful proceeds from the same root word as awesome. Terrify and terrific. Every negative experience holds the seed of transformation.” - **Alan Cohen**

ORDER OF WORSHIP

PRELUDE:

“Were You There” African American Spiritual; Arr. Mark Kellner; *Patty Meyer, piano*

WELCOME & ANNOUNCEMENTS

Good morning and welcome! My name is Elisa Lucozzi and I am pastor to the beloved community that is Guilford Community Church. We're so glad you have joined us this morning for our fifth Sunday of our Lenten series "Again & Again: A Lenten Refrain". I want to especially welcome Rev. Debbie Ingram as our guest preacher this morning.

Holy Week begins next week. We will use palm crosses as part of next Sunday's service. If you didn't pick up a Lenten kit you still can, or if you'd just like a palm cross, let us know. You can also make a paper palm. I have a link to the pattern in the additional resources section of the bulletin.

The Maundy Thursday service will be April 1st at 6:00pm. It will be a Zoom format and you will be invited to have your evening meal so we can sit around the table, hear the stories of Jesus' last night and break bread together. It will also be streamed to YouTube, so, if you don't feel comfortable potentially being on camera, you can still participate in the service there. It will also be re-broadcast on BCTV on Friday morning, as well as on our website.

Good Friday - will be live to YouTube and also on BCTV at noon, and on our website.

Easter Sunday will be at our usual time, premiering on YouTube at 10:00 , and on our website, although it will be anything but usual. We have some great music!

The Sunday after Easter, March 11th, we will join pastors from the national office in worship.

Although we really miss being together in person, we continue to gather online because we love and care about our congregation and our community, because we want to maintain physical distancing in a way that helps us to feel connected but also keeps us all safe. Although it is hard to be physically distant from one another, we also know that it can't keep our hearts from connecting and we know it is indeed the best way of caring for one another right now. Let us keep creating new ways of being church because we know that being church has nothing to do with a building and everything to do with loving each other. Let us gather to be the church in a new way with a welcome wide enough for all.

So, as we begin today let us acknowledge and honor this land we occupy by honoring and acknowledging those First Nation people to whom this land belongs:

We gather here on the bank of the Broad Brook

In the shadow of the great Mount Wantastiquet
In the valley of the rushing Connecticut
to worship and discern together the call of God
to the United Church of Christ for these days,
let us know that we do so on the hunting grounds
and homelands of the Mahican and Penacook people,
as well as the southernmost members of the Abenaki
Tribe.

These people used this land since time immemorial
and are still among us in the present.

We offer them our gratitude and respect,
Our repentance and hope in solidarity with them...

It is a Holy Communion we share of life on earth,
of past and present, of pain and reconciliation,
of mystery and majesty...let us begin.

SILENT MEDITATION and THE LIGHTING OF CANDLES

Family of faith, I invite you to close your eyes.
Rest your feet on the floor beneath you.
Release any tension you are holding
in your jaw, your neck, your shoulders, your hands, your legs, or your feet.

Take a deep breath in and slowly let it out.

The Hebrew word for breath (*ruach*) is the same word for Spirit.
So, as you breathe, imagine that it is God who is filling up your lungs with
energy and love. Trust that God is as close as your very breath.

Now I invite you to still your mind. Imagine your mind as a river.
Thoughts will drift into view; they always do.
However, instead of holding onto those thoughts, allow yourself to let them
float by.

And listen. Listen deep. Listen far. Listen wide. Listen.

The sound of your breath is the sound of the Divine. This is a holy space.

CALL TO WORSHIP

One: Every week is a new week, another chance to say:

All: Here I am. Use me.

One: Every day is a new day, another chance to say:

All: Thank you for yesterday. Thank you for tomorrow.

One: Every hour is a new hour, another chance to say,
All: Again, and again, make me new.

One: We do not come to this place to stay the same.
All: We come to this place to be changed.

One: So, let us worship holy God, who created yesterday, will create tomorrow,
and even now is creating something new.
All: Thanks be to God. Amen.

OPENING HYMN: “Spirit of the Living God” by Daniel Iverson; *GCC Virtual Choir*

Spirit of the Living God
Fall fresh on me
Spirit of the Living God
Fall fresh on me
Melt me mold me
Fill me use me
Spirit of the Living God
Fall fresh on me

OPENING PRAYER: by Pamela C. Hawkins

O God, who makes all things new,
new stars, new dust, new life;
take my heart,
every hardened edge and measured beat,
and create something new in me.

I need your newness, God,
the rough parts of me made smooth;
the stagnant, stirred;
the stuck, freed;
the unkind, forgiven.

And then, by the power of Your Spirit,
I need to be turned toward Love again. Amen.

CALL TO CONFESSION

In the Gospel of John, a group of Greek people approach the disciples and say,
“We would like to see Jesus.”

It’s a brief, beautiful moment that the text doesn’t spend a lot of time on, and
yet, it always catches my eye.

It catches my eye, because the phrase “I want to see Jesus,” feels like it should be my constant prayer.

Help me see Jesus.
I'd like to see Jesus.
Bring me closer to Jesus.

In the prayer of confession, we take a moment to recognize how much space exists between us and those words, trusting that even when we forget to seek out God, God is seeking us out.
So, join me in the prayer of confession today as we take one step closer to the Divine . . .

PRAYER OF CONFESSION

**Gracious God,
We want to see You.
We want to be known as the people who looked for Jesus;
But not only that, we want to be people who have Your covenant written
on our hearts.**

**Why do we feel so far away from that at times?
What went wrong?
Where did we lose our way?
Could You, would You, once again, write on our fragile hearts?**

We would be so grateful. Amen.

WORDS OF FORGIVENESS

One: Friends, despite our wonderings, despite our distractions, despite wrong turns time and time again, we are known and loved by God. Like a lighthouse keeper by the sea, God will never stop waving us home. So, hear and believe the good news of the Gospel:

All: Our fragile bones are held by the Great Creator. Our fragile hearts are loved by the Great Creator. Our tender spirits are forgiven by the Great Creator.

One: Today is a new day.

**All: Again and again, we are forgiven; Again and again, we are reformed.
Thanks be to God. Amen.**

Children's Story – The Invisible String by Patrice Karst *Ellen Peters*

CHILDREN'S STORY: The Invisible String by Patrice Karst read by Ellen Peters

ANTHEM: "Ubi Caritas" By Maurice Durufle; *GCC Virtual Choir; Patty Meyer, piano*

Translation: Where charity and love are, God is there.
Love of Christ has gathered us into one.
Let us rejoice in Him and be glad.
Let us fear, and let us love the living God.
And from a sincere heart let us love one.
Where charity and love are, God is there.
At the same time, therefore, are gathered into one:
Lest we be divided in mind, let us beware.
Let evil impulses stop, let controversy cease.
And in the midst of us be Christ our God.
Where charity and love are, God is there.
At the same time we see that with the saints also,
Thy face in glory, O Christ our God:
The joy that is immense and good, Unto the
World without end. Amen.

SCRIPTURE READING *Carole Crompton*

Jeremiah 31:31-34

The days are surely coming, says the LORD, when I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel and the house of Judah. ³² It will not be like the covenant that I made with their ancestors when I took them by the hand to bring them out of the land of Egypt—a covenant that they broke, though I was their husband,^[a] says the LORD. ³³ But this is the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel after those days, says the LORD: I will put my law within them, and I will write it on their hearts; and I will be their God, and they shall be my people. ³⁴ No longer shall they teach one another, or say to each other, "Know the LORD," for they shall all know me, from the least of them to the greatest, says the LORD; for I will forgive their iniquity, and remember their sin no more.

John 12:20-33

Now among those who went up to worship at the festival were some Greeks. ²¹ They came to Philip, who was from Bethsaida in Galilee, and said to him, "Sir, we wish to see Jesus." ²² Philip went and told Andrew; then Andrew and Philip went and told Jesus. ²³ Jesus answered them, "The hour has come for the Son of Man to be glorified. ²⁴ Very truly, I tell you, unless a grain of wheat falls into the earth and dies, it remains just a single grain; but if it dies, it bears much fruit. ²⁵ Those who love their life lose it, and those who hate their life in this world will keep it for eternal life. ²⁶ Whoever serves me must follow me, and where I am, there will my servant be also. Whoever serves me, the Father will honor. ²⁷ "Now my soul is troubled. And what should I say—'Father, save me from this hour'? No, it is for this reason that I have come to this

hour. ²⁸ Father, glorify your name.” Then a voice came from heaven, “I have glorified it, and I will glorify it again.” ²⁹ The crowd standing there heard it and said that it was thunder. Others said, “An angel has spoken to him.” ³⁰ Jesus answered, “This voice has come for your sake, not for mine. ³¹ Now is the judgment of this world; now the ruler of this world will be driven out. ³² And I, when I am lifted up from the earth, will draw all people^[a] to myself.” ³³ He said this to indicate the kind of death he was to die.

CONGREGATIONAL RESPONSE Hymn: #617

“Write These Words in Our Hearts ...”

SERMON: “Written on Our Hearts” Rev. Debbie Ingram

PASTORAL PRAYER – “My Secret Heart” by Jan Richardson

Not just in my heart
but in the secret space
it holds.

In the heart of my heart.
In the place where I am myself.
In the space that I protect the most
and share the least.

In the hidden chamber
that I sometimes close off
even from myself.

In the realm
where You wait
and watch,
where You see each thing
that lies in shadow,
where You know the names
of all that makes its home
in me.

Here
in my secret heart;
here
teach me to move
with Your wisdom,
to open the doors
that will draw me deeper still,
to live in the truth
that You desire;
here

let me open
the windows wide
so that those who pass by
will see You
looking out.

ANTHEM: “Ukuthula” Traditional from South Africa; *GCC Virtual Choir, Perrin Scott soloist*

Translation: Peace, in this world of sin, the blood of Jesus brings. Hallelujah. Redemption, in this world of sin, the blood of Jesus brings. Hallelujah. Praise, in this world of sin, the blood of Jesus brings. Hallelujah. Faith, in this world of sin, the blood of Jesus brings. Hallelujah. Victory, in this world of sin, the blood of Jesus brings. Hallelujah. Comfort, in this world of sin, the blood of Jesus brings. Hallelujah.

PRAYERS OF THE PEOPLE

This is the time in our service where I invite your prayers – prayers of concern or sorrow, prayers of celebration and joy. If you have something or someone you would like our gathering to pray for you can type it into the comments section that accompanies this live feed.

PRAYER by Rev. Terri C. Pilarski *Rachel and Dwayne Johnson*

Gracious God
We come to You broken –
from that which confines us:
the prejudice buried,
weighted down with fear
distorted self-protection
breaking me, breaking You.

And, so we come to You
seeking to be made whole.

**For You, God, put Your love within us;
You wrote it on our hearts,
that we may be Your people.**

On this day we pray for those who weep,
who are struggling from lack of
clean water, healthy food,
quality and affordable health care, love.

For those who are struggling with addiction,
mental illness, homelessness,
a new diagnosis or the return of disease,
for those struggling with hopelessness.

For those who are grieving the loss of
a loved one – family member, friend or animal companion,
a job, loss of financial security
life as they once knew it.

So we come to you seeking to be made whole.

**For You, God, put Your love within us;
You wrote it on our hearts,
that we may be Your people.**

Compassionate God,
God of covenant,
God of love,
We come to You tired,
yearning for peace and harmony.

Loving God,
we offer up our suffering
and come to you seeking to be made whole.
**For You, God, put Your love within us;
You wrote it on our hearts,
that we may be Your people.**

Gentle God,
God of covenant, of Love,
Glorify us through Your love.
Draw us to You, into You.
Anoint us with Your peace.
**Write Your compassion in our hearts
that we may love as You love.**

THE LORD'S PRAYER

Now let us say together the prayer that Jesus taught us using whatever words help us to embody its promise. May we bring about one small glimpse of the (kingdom) of God, a kin-dom where all are well, all are fed and free, where all are whole, where all know love, where *all* know they are beloved.

Let us pray: Our Father, (Our Father/Mother, Our Creator) who art in heaven, hallowed be Thy Name. Thy kingdom (kin-dom) come, Thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread and forgive us our trespasses, as we forgive those who trespasses against us and lead us not into temptation but deliver us from evil. For Thine is the kingdom (kin-dom), the power, and the glory, now and forever. Amen.

CONGREGATIONAL RESPONSE: Hymn #278

“Hear our Prayer, Oh Lord...”

HYMN: “I Will Arise” words - Joseph Hart 1759; traditional melody; arr. Peter Amidon; verses 1 adapted and verses 2, 3 by Peter Amidon; *GCC Virtual Choir, Julie Peterson soloist; Patty Meyer, piano*

Come ye people poor and needy,
weak and wounded, sick and sore,
Jesus patiently waits to save you
with compassion, love and pow’r.

*I will arise and go to Jesus,
He will take me in his arms.
In the arms of my dear Savior,
oh there are ten thousand charms.*

Love of Christ surpassing knowledge,
may your spirit strengthen mine;
May your healing love dwell in me,
that through faith my soul may shine.

God I fall on knees before you,
Christ I take you in my soul
After wand’ring lost and lonely
may your presence make me whole.

THE OFFERTORY

CALL TO OFFERING

Jesus compels us to join him in service to others. Our church accepts the invitation and challenge to show Jesus’ Way using the resources we share. Let us give as we are able to the ministries of our church.

Supporting the church and the mission of the church is more important than ever. You can still send in your weekly offerings to the church via US mail 38 Church Dr. Guilford, VT 05301 or consider using our online "offering plate" by going to the church’s website and clicking the PayPal donation button on the home page. So now let us gather up all these offerings as well as the offering of our time and talents and dedicate them to continuing the work of our still speaking God.

DOXOLOGY: *Katharine, Breunig, piano*

PRAYER OF DEDICATION

God, there are many who “wish to see Jesus.”
In joy and celebration of the many gifts that we share,

we ask You to bless all of our offerings.
May Jesus shine in all the world. Amen.

THE CLOSING HYMN: “In the Midst of New Dimensions” By Julian Rush;
GCC Virtual Choir, Patty Meyer piano

In the midst of new dimensions, in the face of changing ways. Who will lead the
pilgrim peoples wandering in their separate ways?

[Refrain] God of rainbow, fiery pillar, leading where the eagles soar, We your
people, ours the journey now and ever, now and ever, now and ever more.

Through the flood of starving people, warring factions and despair, Who will lift
the olive branches? Who will light the flame of care?

As we stand a world divided by our own self-seeking schemes, Grant that we,
your global village might envision wider dreams

We are man and we are woman, all persuasions, old and young, Each a gift in
your creation, each a love song to be sung.

Should the threats of dire predictions cause us to withdraw in pain, May your
blazing phoenix spirit, resurrect the church again.

BENEDICTION

As you leave this space,
May your mouth speak of God’s goodness.
May your arms hold those in need.
May your feet walk toward justice.
May your heart trust its worth.
May your soul dance in God’s grace.
And may this be your rhythm—
Again and again and again,
Until God’s promised day.
In the name of the Lover, the Beloved, and Love itself,
Go with courage, go with heart, go in peace.
Amen.

THREEFOLD AMEN: Hymn #291

POSTLUDE: “In the Garden” by C. Austin Miles; Arr. Vicki Wright; *Patty Meyer,*
piano

For Further Prayer and Reflection:

“Blessing the Seed” - written by Jan L. Richardson, and posted on [“The Painted Prayerbook”](#).

*Very truly, I tell you,
unless a grain of wheat falls into the earth and dies,
it remains just a single grain; but if it dies, it bears much fruit.*

~ John 12.24

I should tell you
at the outset
this blessing will require you
to do some work.

First you must simply
let this blessing fall
from your hand,
as if it were a small thing
you could easily let slip
through your fingers,
as if it were not
most precious to you,
as if your life did not
depend on it.

Next you must trust
that this blessing knows
where it is going,
that it understands
the ways of the dark,
that it is wise
to seasons
and to times.

Then—
and I know this blessing
has already asked much
of you—
it is to be hoped that
you will rest
and learn
that something is at work
when all seems still,
seems dormant,
seems dead.

I promise you
this blessing has not
abandoned you.
I promise you

this blessing
is on its way back
to you.
I promise you—
when you are least
expecting it,
when you have given up
your last hope—
this blessing will rise
green
and whole
and new.

[Written in Our Hearts Coloring Sheet](#)

Download and color our image from this week's service.

Create your own palms for next Sunday

[Download and color](#)

Or [download this template and cut out](#)