



Stories that Challenge: The Parable of The Laborers in the Vineyard

First United Church of Christ, Northfield
An Open and Affirming, Just Peace, Creation Justice,
Immigrant-Welcoming Congregation

Fifth Sunday in Lent
March 17, 2024 – 10:30 a.m.

Welcome to worship! Are you visiting us today? We invite you to fill out our [Virtual Visitor Card](#).

Prelude

Lamb of God, Most Holy

JS Bach

Welcome

Gathering Music

Be Still and Know

John Bell (1989)

Canon

1. 2. 3. 4.

Be still and know that I am God.

Be still and know that I am God.

Call to Worship

One: Come and worship,
you who woke early and you who slept late;
you who come often, and you who don't.

Many: **Whether we are first or last or somewhere in between,
there is room for all of us in God's kin-dom,
and more than enough grace to go around.**

All: **Let's worship God together!**

Opening Hymn

Throughout These Lenten Days and Nights

see page 9

Time with Children

All your chil-dren shall be taught by God, and they shall have peace.

Anthem

Work Your Work Betimes George MacFarren (1813-1887)

Work your work betimes, and in his time the Lord will give you your reward.
(Ecclesiasticus 51:30)

Prayer of Confession

God of fruitful labor, work can bring out the worst in us. At home, at school, volunteering, and in the workplace, even in our relationship with you—we too easily judge what others do and compare what others get—instead of taking care of our own work. Take away our judgment, our bitterness, our contempt. Forgive us. Teach us the art of care for what really matters and the embodiment of your grace. Amen

Words of Assurance

There is nowhere we can go and nothing we can do to put us beyond the reach of God's love. Thanks be to God! Amen.

Scripture

Matthew 20:1-16

See page 5

Sermon

Rev. Lauren Baske Davis

Prayer Hymn

Simple Gifts

Shaker tune

'Tis the gift to be simple, 'tis the gift to be free,
'Tis the gift to come down where we ought to be,
And when we find ourselves in the place just right,
'Twill be in the valley of love and delight.

Chorus: When true simplicity is gained
To bow and to bend we shan't be ashamed.
To turn, turn will be our delight,
Till by turning, turning, we come round right.

'Tis the gift to be loyal, 'tis the gift to be true,
'Tis the gift to labor till the day is through,
And when we find our world to be just and fair,
'Twill be in the joy of the gifts that we share. *Chorus.*

The Prayers

All joining worship online are invited to share prayers with the congregation by using the chat function at any point during this time.

Prayer Response

Out of the Depths

One: Out of the depths I cry to you, O God;

All: **God, hear my voice.**

Prayer of Jesus

You are invited to speak the words most meaningful to you, or follow with this version:

Eternal Spirit, Earth-maker, Pain-bearer, Life-giver, Source of all that is and that shall be, Father and Mother of us all, Loving God, in whom is heaven:

The hallowing of your name echo through the universe!

The way of your justice be followed by the peoples of the world.

Your heavenly will be done by all created beings.

Your commonwealth of peace and freedom sustain our hope and come on earth.

With the bread we need for today, feed us.

In the hurts we absorb from one another, forgive us.

In times of temptation and testing, strengthen us.

From trials too great to endure, spare us.

From the grip of all that is evil, free us.

For you reign in the glory of the power that is love, now and forever. Amen.

Sharing Our Gifts

The hearts in the plate are for the Children's Offering, given to support the Community Action Center Food Shelf.

Offertory

Amazing Grace

Northern spiritual,
arr. Sandy Valerio and Alan Buechner

Amazing grace! How sweet the sound
That saved a wretch like me!
I once was lost but now am found,
Was blind but now I see.

'Twas grace that taught my heart to fear
And grace my fears relieved;
How precious did that grace appear
The hour I first believed.

Through many dangers, toils, and snares
I have already come;
'Tis grace has brought me safe thus far
And grace will lead me home.

The Lord hath promised good to me,
His word my hope secures;
He will my shield and portion be
As long as life endures.

Yes, when this flesh and heart shall fail
And mortal life shall cease,
I shall possess within the veil
A life of joy and peace.
This earth will soon dissolve like snow,
The sun forbear to shine;
But God who called me here below
Will be forever mine.

—John Newton (1725-1807)

Prayer of Thanks

God of abundance, whatever our burdens, whatever our fruitful labor, we are thankful for the blessings from you and your good creation. Receive these gifts, with our thanks. May your love and grace flow like rivers in deserts of need. Amen.

Announcements

Hymn of Sending

For the Fruit of All Creation

#425 (Ar Hyd Y Nos)

V1: For the fruit of all creation, thanks be to God.

For God's gifts to every nation, thanks be to God.

For the plowing, sowing, reaping, silent growth while we are sleeping,

Future needs in earth's safe-keeping, thanks be to God.

V2: In the just reward of labor, God's will is done.

In the help we give our neighbor, God's will is done.

In our worldwide task of caring for the hungry and despairing,

In the harvests we are sharing, God's will is done.

V3: For the harvests of the Spirit, thanks be to God.

For the Good we all inherit, thanks be to God.

For the wonders that astound us, for the truths that still confound us,

Most of all that love has found us, thanks be to God.

Benediction

Postlude

We Thank Thee, Lord Jesus Christ

JS Bach

We're so glad you worshiped here today!

Please join us for a coffee hour in the Assembly Room after worship!

Thanks to this week's leaders:

Readers: Elliott and Henry Davis; Amy Haslett-Marroquin; Kate and Sonja Hoffman; Joshua McNeil-Maddox; Calvin, Leo and Winston Steinberg; Claire and Vince Turek; Sam Wilmot

Ushers: Anne Meyer Ruppel, Cheryl Rempel, Betsy Barrett, Chuck Madson, Jeffery Latterell

Digital Host: Ben Reister

Music reprinted and streamed with permission under ONE LICENSE #A-722468. All rights reserved.

Be still and know © 1989 Iona Community. Amazing grace © 1982 Continuo Music Press

Cover Art: Unknown Source

This Week at First UCC

Sunday, March 17

9:00 a.m. Reading Aloud Connect Group

9:15 a.m. Faith Formation

10:30 a.m. Worship

11:30 a.m. Coffee Hour

6:00 p.m. Evening Service

Monday, March 18

9:00 a.m. Men's Group Meeting

Tuesday, March 19

10:00 a.m. Enneagram Book Discussion

6:00 p.m. Trustee's Meeting

7:00 p.m. Spirit Voices Rehearsal

Wednesday, March 20

5:30 p.m. WFFF

6:30 p.m. OWL (7-8th Grade)

6:30 p.m. OWL (11-12th Grade)

6:30 p.m. Enneagram Book Discussion

6:30 p.m. "How is God still Speaking in our Lives?" Connect Group

7:00 p.m. Senior Choir Rehearsal

Saturday, March 23

2:00 p.m. Ecclesiastical Council for Elizabeth O'Sullivan

Sunday, March 24

9:00 a.m. Reading Aloud Connect Group

9:15 a.m. Faith Formation

10:30 a.m. Worship Palm/Passion Sunday

11:30 a.m. Coffee Hour

6:00 p.m. Evening Service

Health and Wellness Space at First UCC

We are considering setting aside one of our classrooms to be a space reserved for health and wellness appointments such as Reiki, massage, counseling, spiritual direction, or nutritional counseling. This opportunity will be open to church members who would like to offer occasional services in our space for an extremely reasonable price. These services would be available to the general community, not limited to church people. We have many details to work out - scheduling, limits per practitioner, etc. But if you would be interested in discussing this opportunity, please email Pastor Cindy.

ONA Team Opportunity

Sunday, March 31st has been named International Trans Day of Visibility. This day celebrates the joy and resilience of trans and non-binary people everywhere by elevating voices and experiences from these communities. OutFront MN highlights some issues moving through the MN legislature - find them listed in the Chronicle. Weighing in with your senator and representative on these issues is a good way to be an ally to the LGBTQ+ community and to the people right here in Northfield and at First UCC.

Living Our Faith: Building a House with Habitat and the Immigrant Welcoming Team

You're invited to volunteer with the Immigrant Welcoming Ministry at Rice County Habitat for Humanity on April 6th! We have enough hands where we could both build houses and prepare lunch. We do need a few more volunteers for both projects. If you're interested in volunteering, please email Gina Washburn as soon as possible at washburng@gmail.com. Let her know what crew you want to be on!

Ecclesiastical Council for Elizabeth O'Sullivan

Elizabeth O'Sullivan, a member of our church who has been in discernment and in preparation for ordained ministry, will be holding her Ecclesiastical Council here at our church on Saturday, March 23 at 2pm. An Ecclesiastical Council is when representatives of the conference are given an opportunity to review an applicant's materials, hear the applicant's presentation, and ask questions before voting whether or not to approve him/her/them for ordained ministry. This is an important event in the life of the conference and the individual. If you would like to see church work in action, or just to support Elizabeth, we hope you will join us next Saturday.

A Note from ISAIAH

Put your faith into action this legislative session, urging your legislators to take necessary action on healthcare, climate and water, housing and weatherization, childcare, and much more. Sign up for the "Show Up" email list for the most urgent moves through the legislative session in the Chronicle. Also find specific links for current action alerts. Questions about legislation or voicing your views? Email isaiah@firstucc.org.

Welcome to Worship at First UCC!

We are an Open and Affirming, Just Peace, Immigrant Welcoming Congregation.

Wherever you are on your journey of faith, you are welcome here!

We especially welcome all who are visiting this morning. Please let us know you're here by sharing your information in a welcome pad.

Worship Information

First UCC worships at 10:30 a.m. on Sundays. Worship is also live-streamed each week on Zoom and YouTube. Whether you are joining us in person or online, we're glad to have you here!

Giving to the Church

Thank you for your continued generosity and support of First UCC's ministry. You may give online by visiting firstucc.org and clicking on the "Give" button, or you may place your gift in the offering plate, or send in your gifts via mail.

News & Announcements

Keep up to date with all of the latest news and upcoming events! Subscribe to The Chronicle, First UCC's weekly e-newsletter, at firstucc.org, and find First UCC on Facebook and Instagram. Past issues of The Chronicle are available at firstucc.org.

First UCC Leadership & Staff

Ministers: All the people

Moderator: Anne Meyer Ruppel

Senior Minister: Rev. Cindy Maddox

Associate Minister: Rev. Lauren Baske Davis

Director of Music: Chris Brunelle

Organist: Catherine Rodland

Spirit Voices Director & Arts Coordinator: Bob Gregory-Bjorklund

Office Manager & Director of Communications: Kate Kvasnak

Finance Manager: Derek Melby

Sexton: Mark Fischer

Audio Visual Technician: Brynn Artley

THROUGHOUT THESE LENTEN DAYS AND NIGHTS

James Gertmenian, 1993

WAREHAM L.M.

William Knapp, 1698-1738

"Set of New Psalm Tunes and Anthems," 1738

1. Through - out these Lent - en days and nights
 2. The pil - grim Christ, the Lamb of God,
 3. We bear the si - lence, cross and pain
 4. And though the road is hard and steep,

We turn to walk the in - ward way,
 Who found in weak - ness great - er power,
 Of hu - man bur - dens, hu - man strife,
 The Spir - it ev - er calls us on

Where, meet - ing Christ, our guide and light,
 Em - brac - es us, though lost and flawed,
 While sis - ters, bro - thers help sus - tain
 Through Cal - v'ry's dy - ing, dark and deep,

We live in hope 'til Eas - ter Day.
 And leads us to his Ris - ing Hour.
 Our cour - age 'til the Feast of life.
 Un - til we see the com - ing Dawn. A - men.

5. So let us choose the path of one
 Who wore, for us, the crown of thorn,
 And slept in death that we might wake
 To life on Resurrection Morn!