

ZION UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST OF TREMONT

November 12th, 2023

24th Sunday after Pentecost

(Pentecost 24/Trinity 23/Ordinary 32-A)

A Service of the Word



The Wise and Foolish Bridesmaids

by James B. Janknegt (Texas)

posted Nov. 7, 2014 on the website of Global Christian Worship

<https://globalworship.tumblr.com/post/102060199530/the-wise-and-foolish-bridesmaids-in-global-art>



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WE GATHER IN COMMUNITY

“Humanity is made of two kinds of people: wise people who know they are fools, and fools who think they are wise.”

- Socrates -

**Please stand as you are able*

Welcome and Announcements

Prelude – Adam Petrosino

***Call to Worship (Inspired by Wisdom of Solomon 6:12-16)**

One: Wisdom is radiant and unfading, and she is easily discerned by those who love her, and is found by those who seek her.

Many: We hear your Still Speaking voice. We come to you, Wisdom, seeking knowledge and understanding.

One: Wisdom is radiant and unfading, and she is easily discerned by those who love her and is found by those who seek her.

Many: We remember your marvelous acts and faithful instruction. We come to you, Wisdom, as you have been near to us!

One: Wisdom is radiant and unfading, and she is easily discerned by those who love her and is found by those who seek her.

Many: We trust in your guidance and place our hope in you through feast and famine. We come to you, Wisdom, to worship and to serve.

*** Invocation**

**Wisdom, your presence illuminates our path.
Shine your light into dim spaces
so that we do not stray from your teaching.**

**Help us discern what you are calling us, your church,
to do and be in this moment in time.**

**Give us urgency to be good news
in the world and for our neighbors.**

**Let your glory reign among us
and your Spirit lead us into truth, justice, and love.
For your name and in your name,
we pray. Amen.**

***Hymn - NCH 117 - Lift Up Your Heads, O Mighty Gates vs. 1, 2, & 3**

A READING OF THE WORD

First Reading: Amos 5:18-24

This selection of the Hebrew scriptures focuses on the prophet Amos, and in these verses, the prophet speaks about the day of God. This day of judgment of God is not what people think it is. It is not something to be desired, but a reminder that we all, the entire world, are held accountable for not living into God's ways. God further speaks through the prophet that what God desires is not festive worship for a show—God actually despises worship that is empty—but the actual practice of justice and living into righteousness, like waters that never cease.

- 5** 18 You who wish for the Day of YHWH to come—
why do you want it?
What will the Day of YHWH mean to you?
It will be a day of darkness, not light!
- 19 It will be like running from a lion
only to meet a bear,
or like getting home safe at last,
only to get bitten by a snake hiding in the corner!.
- 20 Rest assured:
the Day of YHWH will be darkness, not light.
It will all be gloom, without a single ray of light.
- 21 I despise and reject your feasts!
I am not appeased by your solemn assemblies!.
- 22 When you offer me burnt offerings,
I reject your oblations,
and refuse to look at your sacrifices of fattened
cattle!
- 23 Spare me the racket of your chanting!
Relieve me of the strumming of your harps!
- 24 Instead, let justice flow like a river,
and righteousness flow like an unending stream.

Response: Wisdom of Solomon 6:17-20

The book, Wisdom of Solomon, is an example of the “wisdom” genre of religious literature, which commends a life of introspection and reflection on human existence, especially from an ethical perspective. It is an apocryphal work (non-canonical for Jews and Protestants) but is included in the Septuagint (the Greek translation of the Hebrew Scriptures) and accepted as canon by Roman Catholics. In the book, Wisdom is depicted as a feminine personification of an attribute of God; she is “a breath of the power of God, and a clear stream of the glory of the Almighty.” From this concept was developed the Logos (Word) theology of early and influential Christian theologians to explain Jesus Christ’s relationship to God..

6 17 The true meaning of Wisdom is the desire to learn,
and to be passionate about learning is to love Her.
18 The love of Wisdom
means keeping Her laws at all times—
keeping Her standards assures you of immortality,
19 and staying pure brings you close to God.
20 In this way, the desire for Wisdom
leads you to true sovereignty.

Second Reading: 1 Thessalonians 4:13-18

The Epistle reading continues in 1 Thessalonians with these verses in chapter 4, turning to the apostle Paul’s understanding of the resurrection for those who have died while waiting for Christ’s return. Paul writes against the belief held by the Romans that there was no resurrection, but that they who are faithful in Christ believe that he rose and that those who have died will also rise. Paul held on to the hope that Christ would return in his lifetime, and that somehow all the faithful would be gathered together with Christ. The worldview of the first century was that the heavens were physically above the earth, so we have to understand Paul’s words in the context of how he understood the physical world.

4 13 Sisters and brothers, we want you to be clear about those who sleep in death; otherwise you might yield to grief and lose all hope. 14 For if we believe that Jesus died and rose again, in the same way God will bring with Jesus all who have fallen asleep believing in Jesus. 15 We are speaking to you now just as if Jesus were speaking to you: we who live, who survive until Jesus returns, will have no advantage over those who have fallen asleep. 16 No, Jesus will personally come down from heaven with a shout, at the sound of the archangel’s voice and the trumpet of God, and those who have died in Christ will rise first. 17 Then we the living, the survivors, will be caught up with them in the clouds to meet Jesus in the air—and thenceforth we will be with Jesus unceasingly. 18 Therefore console one another with these words.

Gospel Reading: Matthew 25:1-13

Jesus returns to teaching parables in this final discourse before his betrayal. In the Parable of the Ten Bridesmaids, we often focus on the bridesmaids who were foolish and didn’t bring enough oil, but the scripture teaches us that they all fell asleep. None of them were innocent; not one of them

were completely faithful. While the surface level of this parable teaches that the wise were prepared for a longer wait for the return of the bridegroom while the foolish were not, when we dig deeper, we might ask why the wise didn't think they could share with the "foolish?" Why was their salvation more important? Perhaps the lesson could be that we are all called to share, and that we are responsible for living into the Gospel with our neighbors and not focusing on only ourselves.

25 1 "Then again, the kingdom of heaven could be likened to ten attendants who took their lamps and went to meet the bridal party. 2 Five of them were wise; five were foolish. 3 When the foolish ones took their lamps, they didn't take any oil with them, 4 but the wise ones took enough oil to keep their lamps burning. 5 The bridal party was delayed, so they all fell asleep. 6 "At midnight there was a cry: 'Here comes the bridal party! Let's go out to meet them!' 7 Then all the attendants rose and trimmed their lamps. 8 The foolish ones said to the wise, 'Give us some of your oil, for our lamps are going out.' 9 But the wise replied, 'Perhaps there won't be enough for us; run to the dealers and get some more for yourselves.' 10 "While the foolish ones went to buy more oil, the bridal party arrived; and those who were ready went to the marriage feast with them, and the door was shut. 11 When the foolish attendants returned, they pleaded to be let in. 12 The doorkeeper replied, 'The truth is, I don't know you.' 13 "So stay awake, for you don't know the day or the hour."

Reflection --"Don't Allow Your Fear or Sense of Inadequacy to Keep You Away from the Party"
 . Rev. Scott Rosenstein

WE RESPOND

***Prayer of Response**

**Holy One, as we lean deep into this season,
knowing that the year is drawing soon to a close,
we pause and give thanks for all you have done for us.
You have brought us through hardship and loss.
You have brought us through cold and warmth.
You have brought us through brokenness and healing.
We are not fully restored, but we feel your healing work in us.
As the season is about to turn again soon,
we pause and give thanks that you are a God that is
forever turning us to look at things in a new way,
to view our world at a new angle, to open our hearts more deeply
to your love than we thought possible.
We bring our brokenness, our messiness, to you,
and know that you will turn our mourning into dancing,
our sorrow into joy, even if we cannot feel it yet.
We give thanks for all you have done, and all you will do. Amen.**

***Hymn of Response - NCH 172 - Jesus Call Us, o'er the Tumult vvs. 1, 3, 4, & 5**

Invitation to Share Our Tithes and Offerings

As the people of ancient days said to Joshua, let us proclaim that we will serve the Holy One. Let us choose this day to serve with all the gifts and resources we have been given to the glory of God and in generous hope for the world.

The Offertory – *Adam Petrosino*

***Presentation of Offerings – Doxology**

**Praise God, from whom all blessings flow;
Praise God, all creatures here below;
Praise God above, you heavenly host;
Praise Father, Son, and Holy Ghost. Amen.**

***Blessing of the Gifts**

Discerning God, receive our offerings and gifts for your kingdom. Let them be a blessing to those in need of encouragement, material goods, and evidence of your presence among us. Magnify them beyond our imagining and grant us insight into the possibilities before us for ministry and witness. We are grateful to give. Amen.

Choral Hymn- NCH 769 - Hear Our Prayer, O God

***Choir: Keith Konet, Barb Rossington, Bob Bucklew
Accompanist Adam Petrosino***

Prayer of the People

The Lord's Prayer (using "debts" and "debtors")

**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.**

GOING FORTH

***Veterans' Day Prayer**

God, we give you thanks today for our nation's veterans. We honor them for their faithful service to our country, and for what they have done to defend and preserve our freedom. Generation after generation, young men and women have answered our country's call. And as a result, their lives have been changed forever.

We are grateful to all who have served, whether in peacetime or in periods of conflict. But today we especially remember those who have been tempered by fire, those who continue to bear wounds of the body or the spirit as a result of what they endured. They lie in our veterans' hospitals or struggle for recovery in rehabilitation centers; they suffer from post-traumatic stress and survivor' guilt; they yearn for peace in their souls.

Dear God, we ask you to heal their wounds, to banish whatever inner demons may haunt them, and to give them peace within so they may return fully to their families and to society.

We thank you, God, for all of our country's veterans—those of past generations, and those who continue to earn this title today. May we never forget what our country has asked of them and what they have given in return. Help us to care enough to give them the respect and honor they are due. And strengthen our resolve to build a world modeled on your realm, where war will be pursued no more.

This we ask in the name of Jesus, the Prince of Peace. Amen.

***Parting Hymn - NCH 43 - Love Divine, All Loves Excelling**

***Commissioning and Benediction**

One: Go forth as God's people!

All: We will take hope to all who have none.

One: Go forth as the Bridegroom's beloved!

All: We will open the floodgates of God's compassion for all.

One: Go forth to share the Spirit!

All: We will be rivers of justice flowing through the world. Amen.

Postlude - Adam Petrosino (please be seated for the Postlude)

Credits

- (1) The Call to Worship, Invocation, Invitation to Share our Tithes and Offerings, and the Blessing of the Gifts, are adapted from *Wisdom: Service Prayers for the Twenty-Fourth Sunday after Pentecost*, written by The Rev. Dr. Cheryl A. Lindsay, Minister for Worship and Theology, United Church of Christ. Copyright 2023 Faith INFO Ministry Team, United Church of Christ, 1300 E. 9th Street, Suite 1100, Cleveland, Ohio 44114. Permission granted to reproduce or adapt this material for use in services of worship or church education. All publishing rights reserved.
- (2) Prayer of Response is adapted from *Sunday Worship Resources for November 12th, 2023*, written by Rev. Mindi Welton-Mitchell, posted November 3rd, 2023, on her blog, *Rev-o-lution*, <http://revo-lu-tion.org/>
- (3) Veteran's Day Prayer was written by The Rev. John Gundlach, a UCC's minister for government chaplaincies and a retired Navy Chaplain of 27 years. Posted November 10, 2010 following *Opinion: A Veteran's Day Reflection*, on the website of the United Church of Christ. <https://www.ucc.org/opinion-a-veterans-day/>
- (4) Commissioning and Benediction is adapted from *Alternate Text Liturgy and Communion from November 12th, 2023 (Pentecost 24/Trinity23/Proper 27/Ordinary 32-A)*, written by Thom M. Shuman, and posted November 5th, 2023, on his blog, *Lectionary Liturgies*, <http://lectionaryliturgies.blogspot.com/>
- (5) Permission to stream the music in this service obtained from ONE License #A-736636. All rights reserved

Ministers, *All of Us*

Scott Rosenstein, *Pastor*

Adam Petrosino, *Music Director and Pianist*

Keith Konet, *Council President*

Beverly Wurm, *Administrative Assistant*



NEWS AND UPCOMING EVENTS

God is Still Speaking...

No matter who you are, or where you are on life's journey, you will find a spiritual home in this United Church of Christ congregation. WELCOME!

Tithes and Offerings - Checks and Money Orders can be made payable to: "Zion United Church of Christ" and placed in the offering basket or mailed to:

**Zion United Church of Christ
c/o San Sofia Apartments
2700 W. 14th Street, Suite C-13
Cleveland, OH 44113**

Questions: Contact Keith Konet at 330.604.6939

Welcome to Adam D. Petrosino, Our New Music Director/Pianist

We are so pleased to welcome Adam, and his partner, Kiel, to our community of faith here at Zion United Church of Christ of Tremont, Cleveland, Ohio. We're grateful to you sharing your presence, faith, and musical gifts with us.

Adam can be reached by e-mail at A.D.Petrosino@gmail.com and by phone at 234.205.9397.

Administrative Assistant, Beverly Wurm

Beverly is keeping some limited Office Hours at church (2700 W. 14th)/home. The days and hours are:

Fall Schedule :

Tuesday– 9am – 1pm

Wednesday – 10am-2 pm

Thursday – 9am – 1pm

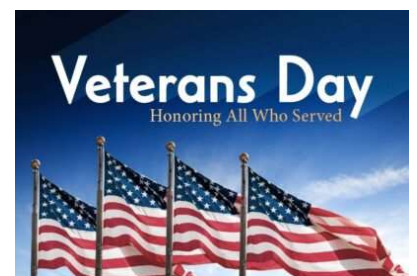
Beverly can be reached at: zionchurchtremont@gmail.com or by phone at: 216-273-7561 (church) or 216-310-6810 (mobile).

Opinion: A Veterans Day reflection

by Gregg Brekke | published on Nov 10, 2010 on the website of the United Church of Christ. ucc.org

Vernon J. Baker, an African American who received the Medal of Honor for his heroic service in Italy during World War II, died this past July. His picture is displayed in the Pentagon. Beneath the picture are his eloquent and deeply moving words about war and war's impact on the lives of those who serve. Baker wrote: "War is the most regrettable proving ground. Those who launch it, and those who seek to create heroes from it, should remember war's legacy. You have to be there to appreciate its horrors — and die to forget them."

There are many veterans in our country today who know first-hand the truth of Baker's words. Veterans of World War II, Korea, Vietnam and now the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan, are living their war's legacy. For many, the legacy is one of pride for having served and helped to preserve freedom for ourselves and win it for others. For some, the legacy includes unhealed wounds of the body, mind or spirit; living with addictions, broken relationships, dreams that haunt their nights, feelings of shame or guilt because of what they did, or deep grief because of what and whom they have lost.



Though we hate war and may disagree about the justification for particular wars, we are

morally obligated to recognize the sacrifices of those who have served on our behalf, and to care for them in return. We also have a moral obligation as Christians and citizens to demand of our leaders that no wars be entered into unless the cause is clearly just.

Today we hear words that were not often uttered a generation ago: “Thank you for your service.” Though these words will never go far enough to bring healing for some wounds, it is at least a way to acknowledge what veterans have given to us and to our nation.

So, this Veterans Day we say to our veterans, “Thank you for your service — and may the peace of God be with you.”

Help for Ukraine

Gifts made to UCC Ukraine Emergency Appeal will provide shelter, food, and other care to war refugees and internally displaced people.

Donate online with the link below:
<https://tinyurl.com/yc6aesk4>



Or designate a check for Ukraine Relief and mail to:

United Church of Christ,
P.O. Box 71957
Cleveland, OH 44194

Please know that your gifts of any size make a difference in this critical time.

Responding to Wildfires on Maui and the Hawai’ian Islands

DONATE
Hawai'i 2023 Wildfires Relief Fund
bit.ly/hcuccrelief
We are working with our churches on Maui to distribute funds to those in need in devastated areas.
We are praying with Maui.
HAWAII CONFERENCE OF THE UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST
www.hcucc.org

We encourage all UCC folks outside of Hawai'i to give through Global H.O.P.E. by going to:
<https://support.ucc.org/hawaii-wildfires>.

Please Remember in Prayer

- The Universal Church, its members and mission,
- The nation and all in authority, the leaders of our nation - federal, state, and local.
- For democracy and our democratic institutions and norms in the United States.
- The welfare of the world and the concerns of the local community.
- The interrelationship of Gospel values and civic engagement.
- Ministries of the United Church of Christ and of Zion Church.
- The leaders of our church: local, regional, and national, including The Rev. Karen Georgia Thompson, General Minister and President of the United Church of Christ. We also pray for our Living Water Association UCC, Association General Minister, The Rev. Nayiri Karjian, and Association Faith in Action Minister, The Rev. Michael Howard.
- The ministers and missionaries of the world.
- Those who are refugees and immigrants.
- For children separated from their parents at detention camps along our southern border.
- For racial and religious justice and reconciliation in the United States and around the world.
- Mother Earth and the global reflection on climate disruption.
- For peace, justice, and freedom throughout the world and particularly for the peoples of Ukraine, Afghanistan, Iraq, Iran, and the United States.
- The people of Turkey and Syria: more than 50,000 people have died following two devastating earthquakes. Turkish authorities say some 13.5 million people have been affected in an area spanning roughly 280 miles from Adana in the west to Diyarbakir in the east, and 186 miles from Malatya in the north to Hatay in the south. At least 44,374 deaths have been reported in Turkey, while 5,800 people have died in Syria.
- We pray as well for the people of Vermont, upstate New York and New York City (including the borough of Brooklyn), and Atlantic Canada (including the province of Nova Scotia) affected by catastrophic flooding.
- In early August 2023, a series of wildfires broke out in the U.S. state of Hawai'i. Affecting the island of Maui, and to a lesser extent Hawai'i (also known as the Big Island), the wind-driven fires prompted evacuations, caused widespread damage, and killed at least 96 people in the town of Lahaina. The proliferation of the wildfires was attributed to dry, gusty conditions created by a strong high-pressure area north of Hawaii and Hurricane Dora to the south. By August 9, the state government of Hawaii issued a state of emergency for the entirety of the state. On August 10, President Biden issued a federal major disaster declaration. The typical area burned by wildfires in Hawaii has increased in recent decades, almost quadrupling. Experts blame the increase on the spread of non-native vegetation and hotter, drier weather
- Gaza is ruled by Hamas, an Islamist militant group that is committed to the destruction of Israel and is designated as a terrorist group by the US and many other powers. Hamas launched an unprecedented assault on Israel on Saturday, October 7th, 2023 with hundreds of gunmen infiltrating communities near the Gaza Strip. At least 1,400 Israelis have been killed, while around 250 soldiers and civilians, including women and children, are being held in Gaza as hostages. It is reported by the Gaza Health Ministry that almost 11,000 Palestinians (does not distinguish between civilians and militants) have also been killed in numerous air strikes on Gaza that Israel's military is carrying out in response, and Israel has imposed a total blockade on the territory, denying it food, fuel, water, and other essentials. Israel has also launched a

ground operation into Gaza which could cost many more deaths. Please pray for Israel and Gaza.

- Two significant earthquakes jolted Nepal on Monday, November 6th, just three days after a powerful temblor killed more than 150 people in the Himalayan nation. A magnitude 5.2 earthquake struck Nepal on Monday, centered in the Jajarkot district about 250 miles northeast of the capital, Kathmandu, which was hit hard by the magnitude 5.6 earthquake on Friday. At least 153 people were killed by that first quake, according to the latest official figures from Nepalese authorities on Monday, which was a slightly lower toll than provided over the weekend. More than 339 people were also injured.
- The people of Lewiston, Maine and surrounding communities following a mass shooting at two locations on October 25th that took the lives of 18 people and injured 13 other people.
- According to data from the Gun Violence Archive a total of 597 mass shooting incidents have occurred in the US as of November 11th, 2023. In 2022 a total of 648 mass shootings. In 2021 a total of 693 mass shooting incident occurred across the US, in 2020 a total of 611, in 2019 a total of 417, with 337 incidents in 2018. While we pray for the families and friends of those whose lives have been taken in violent acts – and we pray for those injured in body, mind, soul, and spirit—and for their neighborhoods and communities across the United States – We know that our words and prayers are not enough. We must repent for our collective inaction and commit to tirelessly working toward meaningful gun violence prevention.
- For those affected by the coronavirus COVID-19 pandemic and the various variant surges: for all those who are infected and/or sick, and those who are grieving, for all who are affected, all around the world, for essential workers and frontline workers...we pray for comfort, for safety, for health and for wholeness.
- The residents and management of the San Sofia Apartments who share a campus with us.
- Those anticipating surgery, recovering from surgery, or undergoing medical procedures, tests, or treatments.
- Those living in assisted living or in a nursing home
- Those who are homebound and those who are caregivers
- Those who suffer or are in any trouble, and the departed.
- Those on our church prayer list:
 - Patti Augustine (*health concerns*) and family. *Patti's brother Dave is recovering from recent open-heart surgery.*
 - Robert O. Bucklew (*Bob Bucklew's Dad*) is residing at Mapleridge Senior Living
 - Willoughby, OH. Robert recently celebrated his 91st Birthday.
 - The family and loved ones of Betty Funk.
 - Marian Heffernan (*neighbor to Scott and Bob – health concerns*)
 - Ken Kauffman & friends: Nim Bryant, Isadora Almaro, Joe & Janelle Reardon, Barbara Reed, Nancy Moore's sister has passed away.
 - Jocelyn Paulette and her parents, Kevin & Jacqui Konet - prayers for recovery.
 - Keith Konet and family.
 - Marcia Leslie (*friend – health concerns*)
 - The family and loved ones of Elaine Lukacs.
 - Patricia Matheny and family (*including prayers for her Cousin Paul Kevin McCray*).
 - Our new Music Director, Adam Petrosino, and his partner, Kiel.
 - Barbara Rossington (*Prayers for Barb for recovery of procedure to remove a stone -*

& Prayers for Barb's cousin, Robert, for tests and procedures).

- The family, loved ones, and friends of Henry Senyak.
- Debbie Webb (*continued prayers*)
- Beverly Wurm (*prayers for family and friend, Jon Brant, awaiting more tests, and procedures.*)

