

ZION UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST OF TREMONT

February 25th, 2024
Second Sunday in Lent
A Service of the Word



Art for Lent 2B – Second Sunday in Lent – Psalm 22 and Mark 8:31-38 –
Carrying Crosses to follow Him

This Sunday's Lectionary Art - Stushie Art

Church bulletin covers and other art by artist Stushie (a Scottish pastor ministering in East Tennessee).

Unique crayon and digital worship art

<https://stushieart.com/this-sundays-lectionary-art-3/>



UNITED CHURCH
OF CHRIST
a just world for all

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WE GATHER IN COMMUNITY

*“Lent is a time for discipline, for confession, for honesty, not because God is mean or fault-finding or finger-pointing but because God wants us to know the joy of being cleaned out, ready for all the good things God now has in store”
-N.T. Wright-*

Welcome and Announcements

Prelude – Adam Petrosino

***Call to Worship**

One: Do not be afraid to answer the call to discipleship.

All: What does the call require?

One: Letting go of our life as we know it. Following the way of the cross. Aligning our soul with God’s.

All: We step out in the way of Jesus by losing our life to save it.

One: Do not be afraid to walk in the way of Jesus.

All: We answer the call, unashamed and unafraid. Amen.

***Gathering Prayer**

O God,
we are offered
every opportunity
to embrace the path
that helps us gain the world
at the expense of our soul.
Instead, you have called us
to yourself
and to follow in the way
of love and compassion.
Teach us about Jesus’ way
and lure us away
from the paths of

self-absorption and greed.
You have called us to discipleship,
to self-emptying,
and embracing your way with courage.
May it be so.
Amen.

*Gathering Hymn: NCH 407 - "How Firm a Foundation" vv. 1, 2, 3, & 5

Lenten Candle Liturgy Second Sunday in Lent

Meditation

(Silent time)

One: As we extinguish this light, we acknowledge the darkness and pain of injury done to the Earth and its ecosystems.

(A candle is extinguished.)

*Hymn: NCH 207 – “Just As I Am” – (one verse)

Just As I Am

Text: Charlotte Elliott, 1836; alt.

Tune: WOODWORTH L.M.

Composer: William B. Bradbury, 1849

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**2 Just as I am, though tossed about
with many a conflict, many a doubt,
Fightings and fears within, without,
O Lamb of God, I come, I come!**

Lenten Candle Prayer:

One: Let us pray:

**All: Loving God, as we journey through this holy season of Lent, may we be open to your presence.
Give us the strength to make the changes that are needed in our lives and the courage to take
on the work of transforming the world. Amen.**

A READING OF THE WORD

First Reading: Genesis 17:1-7, 15-16

During Lent, the selection from the Hebrew Scriptures focuses on the covenants of God. This week's reading tells of the covenant of God with Abram and Sarai, who are given new names: Abraham and Sarah. God promises they will be ancestors of a multitude of nations, with rulers as their descendants. God's covenant is not only with the two of them, but with all generations descending from them, who will be known as God's people. God promises that they will have a son, securing their own immediate future and needs for passing on inheritance, but that generations and rulers will be descended from Sarah.

17 1 When Abram was ninety-nine years old, YHWH appeared and said, "I am God Almighty. Walk in my presence and be blameless. 2 I will make a covenant between you and me, and I will increase your numbers exceedingly." 3 Abram fell on his face before God, and God said to him, 4 "This is my covenant with you: You will be the ancestor of many nations. 5 You are no longer to be called Abram, "Exalted Parent," but Abraham, "Ancestor of a Multitude," for you are the ancestor of a multitude of nations. 6 I will make you most fruitful, and I will make nations of you, and rulers will spring from you. 7 I will establish my covenant as an everlasting covenant between me and you, and your descendants after you for generations to come. I will be your God, and the God of your descendants after you.

15 God continued, "As for Sarai, her name will now be Sarah, "Noblewoman." 16 I will bless her, and I will give you a child by her. I will bless her, and she will become nations; rulers of peoples will come from her."

Psalm Response: Psalm 22:23-31 (Responsively)

The portion of Psalm 22 is a prayer of praise and thanksgiving to God who has responded. God answered the psalmist's cry, and the psalmist calls the congregation to praise God. God remembers those who are poor and all those on the margins at the ends of the earth. All the families of the nations will praise God, for God is the one who is sovereign over all nations. Future generations, even those yet to be born, will be told about what God has done for them.

22 23 "You who worship God, give praise!
Daughters of Leah, daughters of Rachel, glorify
God!
Sons of Jacob, fall down and worship!

**24 For God has not despised—not disdained—
the suffering of those in pain!
God didn't hide but answered them when
they cried for help!"**

25 You are the theme of my praise in the
Great Assembly,
and I will fulfill my vows in the presence of your
worshippers.

**26 Those, who are poor, will eat and be satisfied,
those who seek you will give you praise—
long life to their hearts!**

27 The whole earth, from one end to the other,
will remember and come back to you;
all the families of the nations will bow down to you.

**28 For yours is the dominion,
you Ruler of nations!**

29 Those who had feasted and devoured those who are poor—
now they'll bow down;
the most affluent in the land
will kneel before you. They all go down to the dust
and none can keep themselves alive.

**30 But my children will be faithful to you,
and they will be told about God
for generations to come.**

**31 They will come and proclaim your justice
to a people yet unborn:
“All this God has done!”**

Second Reading: Romans 4:13-25

This reading in Romans 4 contains Paul's argument that it is not the Law that brings faith. Abraham and Sarah were the ancestors of all nations, and it was their faith that was reckoned to them as righteousness, not the acts of the Law. The Law does not bring faith, Paul argues, so for Jewish Christians it is faith in Jesus that saves, not adherence to the Law. This same faith is available for Gentiles without living under the Law, for those who believe that Jesus is raised from the dead, for Christ was raised for the justification of all.

4 13 The promise made to Sarah and Abraham and their descendants—that they would inherit the world—did not depend on the Law; it was made in view of the righteousness that comes from faith. 14 For if those who live by the Law are heirs, then faith is pointless and the promise is worthless. 15 The Law forever holds the potential for punishment. Only when there is no Law can there be no violation.

16 Hence everything depends on faith; everything is grace. Thus the promise holds true for all of Sarah's and Abraham's descendants, not only for those who have the Law, but for all who have their faith. They are the mother and the father of us all, 17 which is why scripture says, “I will make you the parents of many nations”—all of which is done in the sight of the God in whom they believed, the God who restores the dead to life and calls into being things that don't exist.

18 Hoping against hope, Sarah and Abraham believed, and so became the mother and father of many nations, just as it was once promised them: “Numerous as this will your descendants be.” 19 Sarah and Abraham, without growing weak in faith, thought about their bodies, which were very old—he was

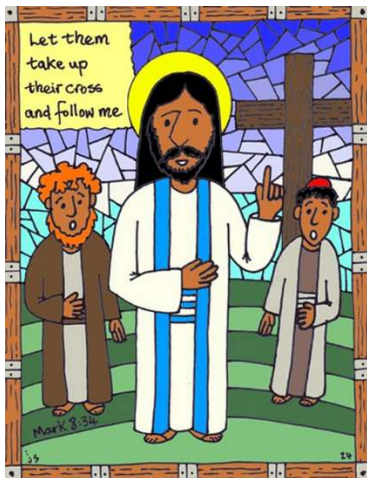
about one hundred, and she was well beyond childbearing age. 20 Still they never questioned or doubted God’s promise; rather, they grew strong in faith and gave glory to God, 21 fully persuaded that God could do whatever was promised. 22 Thus, Sarah’s and Abraham’s faith “was credited to them as righteousness.”

23 The words, “was credited to them,” were not written with Sarah and Abraham alone in mind; 24 they were intended for us, too. For our faith will be credited to us if we believe in the One who raised Jesus our Savior from the dead, 25 the Jesus who was handed over to death for our sins and raised up for our justification.

Gospel Reading: Mark 8:31-38

This is the pivotal moment in the Gospel of Mark (from here through the story of the Transfiguration in Mark 9:2-9). Before this, in Mark’s account, Jesus did not speak about his suffering and death and resurrection—this is the first time he did so, and he did so very openly. And his disciple Peter was horrified by it, so much that he pulled Jesus aside to rebuke him. However, Jesus rebuked Peter and called him Satan, a stumbling block fixed on human things and not on the divine. Jesus further instructed the crowd how to be his disciples: to deny themselves, take up their cross and follow him. This is the moment when Jesus turns toward Jerusalem, and began to teach what it really meant to follow him, but the disciples did not fully understand.

8 31 Then Jesus began to teach them that the Promised One had to suffer much, be rejected by the elders, chief priests, and religious scholars, be put to death, and rise again three days later. 32 Jesus said these things quite openly. Peter then took him aside and began to take issue with him. 33 At this, Jesus turned around and, eyeing the disciples, reprimanded Peter: “Get out of my sight, you Satan! You are judging by human standards rather than by God’s!”



34 Jesus summoned the crowd and the disciples and said, “If you wish to come after me, you must deny your very self, take up your cross and follow in my footsteps. 35 If you would save your life, you’ll lose it, but if you lose your life for my sake, you’ll save it. 36 What would you gain if you were to win the whole world but lose yourself in the process? 37 What can you offer in exchange for your soul? 38 Whoever in this faithless and corrupt generation is ashamed of me and my words will find, in turn, that the Promised One and the holy angels will be ashamed of that person, when all stand before our God in glory.”

stushieart.com this-sundays-lectionary-art 3/

Reflection – “What Does It Mean to Deny Ourselves?” - Rev. Scott Rosenstein

WE RESPOND

***Prayer of Response**

Creator of the Stars,
you made us out of stardust.
You are the one who
knits us whole when we unravel.
You are the one who
carefully shapes us back together
when we fall apart.
You are the One who
makes all things new,
and you are continuing
to remake us into vessels of your love.
There is so much heaviness among us:
climate change, politics, education,
war, genocide, fear, and so much pain.
Remind us that we do your work
when we love one another,
and when we care for
those most vulnerable in our society.
Keep us to your ways
of reparation and restoration,
and no matter how difficult it gets,
keep encouraging us to do better.
For you are the Way,
the Truth, and the Life.
Amen.

***Hymn of Response: NCH 223 - "What Wondrous Love Is This"**

Invitation to Share Our Tithes and Offerings

In a world that offers a vision of never enough, we share in God's abundant provision for all. While we could gain the world but lose our soul, it is from within our soul that we share in a generous spirit of giving.

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**

Giving God, Jesus invited us to give our lives away, take up our cross, and to follow. Rather than exchanging our souls, may the sharing of these gifts nurture our commitment to walk in your way. In the name and way of Jesus, we pray. Amen.

Choir Hymn: NCH 193 - "In the Cross of Christ I Glory"

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

Prayers 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

***Parting Hymn: NCH 198 - "Lift High the Cross" vv. 1 – 4**

***Commissioning**

One: Go now with God, on your journey through Lent.

All: We will discover the new name given to each one we meet.

One: Go now with Jesus, walking wherever he leads.

All: We will put all our fears, as well as our longings, behind us.

One: Go now with the Spirit, who is always full of surprises.

All: We will share the good news called Jesus with everyone.

***Benediction**

We step out into a world offering us the power to gain the whole world, and yet the call to discipleship is one that is less of us and more of Christ. Go forth to serve, to embrace a life of humility, and to walk in the way of the cross. For such a path is the way of life. 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, and the Benediction are adapted from *Shame: Service Prayers for the Second Sunday in Lent Year B*, written by The Rev. Dr. Chad Abbott, Conference Minister in the Indiana-Kentucky Conference. Permission given to reproduce or adapt this material for use in services of worship or church education. All rights reserved.
- (2) The Lenten Candle Liturgy is adapted from *Lenten Candle Liturgy - Second Sunday in Lent*, posted May 27, 2015, on the blog *Process & Faith*. <https://processandfaith.org/lenten-candle-liturgy>
- (3) The Prayer of Response is adapted from *Worship Resources for February 25th, 2024, 2nd Sunday of Lent*, written by the Rev Mindi Welton-Thomas, and posted February 16th, 2024, on her blog , *Rev-o-lution*. <http://rev-o-lition.org/>.
- (1) The Commissioning is adapted from *Liturgy and Communion for February 25th, 2024, The Second Sunday in Lent-B*, written by Thom M. Shuman, and posted February 17th, 2024, on the blog, *Lectionary Liturgies*. <http://lectionaryliturgies.blogspot.com/>
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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!

Zion United Church of Christ of Tremont is committed to reaching out to all people with the saving "Good News" of God's Love. To do this, we strive to attain a covenant relationship with people of all races, colors, ethnic origins, ages, sexual orientations and gender identity. We are also committed to grace-filled inclusivity in our worship, programs, membership, mission and social activities. We very strongly believe in outreach and community involvement, as well as ecumenical spiritual involvement within the surrounding community. We are committed to listening to history while joining with the future.

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 Keith Konet
1039 Bridlewood Drive
Copley, OH 44321**

Questions: Contact Keith Konet at 330.604.6939

Adam D. Petrosino, Our 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. We're grateful to you sharing your presence, faith, and your 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:

Winter 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)

A message for this second Sunday in Lent:

What does it mean to trust in God’s ways? Abraham and Sarah had to wait a long time, and even though God promised them they would be the ancestors of a multitude, they still had to wait for one baby boy to be born, long after they hoped for him. Peter wanted to trust Jesus but thought in that moment, when Jesus spoke of his death for the first time, that Jesus must be wrong. Peter had the audacity to try to call out Jesus on it, but Jesus instead called him Satan, the one who had set his mind on human ways and not on God’s ways. Paul spoke to the church in Rome that God’s ways were about faith, trust in God, pursuing God, and that the law was not necessary for that. The psalmist reminds us that trust in God is a pursuit of God’s ways of peace and justice, of giving thanks for all God has done for us and resting in the assurance of what God will do. We are called to deny ourselves—our own selfish desires, safety and security, wealth and power, the assurance of this world—and take up our cross. Put to death what holds us back, what makes us try to trust the world’s ways that will continue to fail us—and instead, put our trust in God and the assurance that God will continue to be with us, and will continue to fulfill the promises of old” (Rev. Mindi Welton-Mitchell, *Worship Resources for February 25, 2024—Second Sunday in Lent*, on her blog, *Rev-o-lution*. <http://rev-o-lution.org/>).



Rest and Resilience Following the Way of Jesus through Lent

A daily devotional spanning Ash Wednesday through Easter guides readers through Lent with weekly themes of retreat, prayer, honest, compassion, creativity, and community

When Jesus was preparing for a new phase of his ministry — or experiencing the final week — he went to Bethany, his holy retreat. Following that tradition, The Bethany Fellowships, a ministry of support for young clergy and congregations, have cultivated an intentional rhythm of life and ministry that empowers community, creativity, prayer, and resilience. This six-week-long Lenten daily devotional follows practices and relationships Jesus models for us throughout his ministry, bringing us to the biblical town of Bethany to encourage retreat, prayer, honesty, compassion, creativity, and community. The diverse contributor based is comprised of ordained ministers in a variety of denominations and ministry settings, many of whom are in their first few years of congregational leadership.

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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 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 – and for an end to violence and bloodshed particularly for the peoples of Ukraine, Afghanistan, Iraq, Yemen, Israel and Gaza.
- According to data from the Gun Violence Archive a total of 55 mass shooting incidents occurred in the US in 2024 as of February 21st

Mass shooting incidents in the past 10 years in the US:

2023 – 656 (*While mass shooting incidents increased slightly since 2022, 2023 has shown an 8-10% overall DECREASE in deaths and injuries from gun violence. Some cities saw 20%+ decreases.*)

2022 - 646

2021 - 689

2020 - 610

2019 - 414

2018 - 335

2017 - 247

2016 - 383

2015 - 332

2014 - 272

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 their 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 and family including Noah, Kate, Lucy, and Max along with Patti's brother Dave).
 - Robert O Bucklew (*Bob Bucklew's Dad*) is residing in Senior Living. Robert recently celebrated his 91st Birthday.
 - The family, loved ones, and friends of Betty Funk.
 - Marian Heffernan (*neighbor to Scott and Bob*)
 - Ken Kauffman & friends: Nim Bryant, Isadora Almaro, Joe & Janelle Reardon, and Nancy Moore's neighbor - also Ivory, Ken's downstairs neighbor.
 - Maddie (the young daughter of Scott's friend) prayers for her, her parents, Rachel and Ron, and her younger brother.
 - Keith Konet and family (including granddaughter, Jocelyn Paulette and her parents, Kevin & Jacqui - and for Keith's brother -in-law Bob Naugle.
 - The family, loved ones, and friends of Elaine Lukacs.
 - Patricia Matheny Kellogg and family (*including prayers for her Cousin Paul Kevin McCray*). Also Patricia's friend, Sue Renovitz – along with the family of Steve Linkenauger.
 - Our Music Director & Pianist, Adam Petrosino, and his partner, Kiel.
 - Our Pastor Scott Rosenstein
 - Barbara Rossington and Barb's cousin, Robert
 - Debbie Webb
 - Beverly Wurm and family