

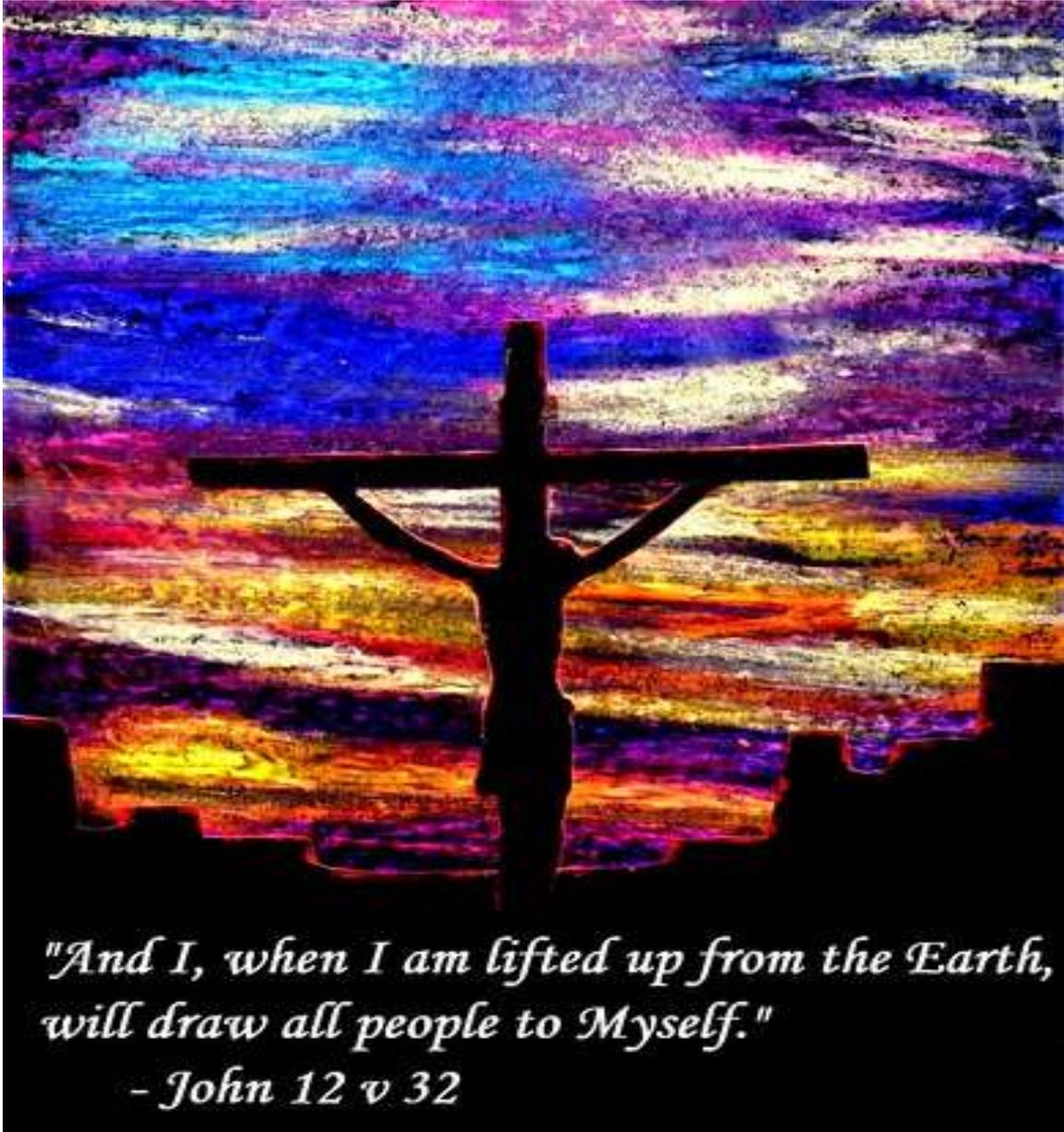
ZION UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST OF TREMONT

March 17th, 2024

Fifth Sunday in Lent

St. Patrick's Day

A Service of the Word



Jesus on Cross Art, John 12:32

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-5B/Lent>



UNITED CHURCH
OF CHRIST
a just world for all

March 17^h, 2024
Fifth Sunday in Lent
St. Patrick's Day
A Service of the Word

WE GATHER IN COMMUNITY

"God is bringing life to birth, restoring and renewing our world. Do we see it? God is calling us to partner in rolling away the stones and untying the bonds of injustice. Do we hear it?"

-Joann Melina Lopez-

Welcome and Announcements

Prelude – *Adam Petrosino*

*Call to Worship

L: New life rises!

A: That which rises, must first fall and die.

L: Single grains merely remain as they are unless they are released to the ground.

A: The grains of the earth that fall will multiply and nourish.

L: Come, die to the self and live a life of service to the Living God.

A: And God will raise us up anew. Amen.

*Gathering Prayer

God of grains and grace,
we gather today seeking
to follow in the way of Jesus.
The path he chose for his disciples
was one of service
and it requires of us
that we lay down
our desires, our ambitions,
and serve you with our whole heart.
May our worship this day
inspire our dying and rising with you
as we seek to love and serve like Jesus.

May it be so.
Amen.

*Gathering Hymn: Pilgrim Hymnal (blue) 38 - "Morning Has Broken"

Lenten Candle Liturgy Fifth Sunday in Lent

Meditation

Silent Time

One: As we extinguish this light, we acknowledge the darkness and pain of war and oppression in the world.

(A candle is extinguished.)

Hymn: NCH 207 - Just As I Am vv. 1, 2, 3 & 4

1 Just as I am, without one plea
but that your blood was shed for me,
and that you called inviting me,
O Lamb of God, I come, I come!

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!

3 Just as I am, you will receive,
will welcome, pardon, cleanse, relieve;
Because your promise I believe,
O Lamb of God, I come, I come!

4 Just as I am, your love unknown
Has broken every barrier down;
Now to be yours, and your alone,
O Lamb of God, I come, I come.

Lenten Candle Prayer:

One: Let us pray:

Many: Loving God, we open our hearts to you. We invite you into our inmost being, only to find you already there. Strengthen us in our quiet places and then lead us into the work of justice and peace. Amen.

A READING OF THE WORD

First Reading: Jeremiah 31: 31-34

Through most of Lent, the Hebrew Scripture readings have followed the theme of the covenants of God, starting with all of the earth (Genesis 9 after the flood), with Abraham and Sarah and all of their descendants (Genesis 17), and then with the people of Israel (Exodus 20). Last week's lesson from Numbers was a reminder of what happens when the people forget the covenant. This week, the new covenant that God shares through the prophet in Jeremiah 31 is a covenant that cannot be broken. It is a covenant written into the people's very hearts. No one can say, "know YHWH" because everyone will know God, because everyone is beloved by God. God's love is that powerful that even though the people are about to be taken into exile, God will not forget them. Their identity is in God's love for them. God will forgive them, remembering their sin no more.

31 31 "Behold, the days are coming, says YHWH, when I will establish a new covenant with the house of Israel and the house of Judah. 32 It will not be like the covenant I made with their ancestors when I took them by the hand to bring them up out of the land of Egypt—a covenant they broke, though I was their spouse, says YHWH. 33 But this is the covenant I will make with the house of Israel after those days, says YHWH: I will put my Law in their minds and on their hearts. I will be their God, and they will be my people.

34 "No longer will they need to teach one another or remind one another to know YHWH. All of them, high and low alike, will listen to me, says YHWH, for I will forgive their misdeeds and will remember their sins no more.

Psalm Response: Psalm 51:1-12 (Responsively)

Psalm 51 is a song of confession to God and plea for forgiveness, for the psalmist knows they have sinned. Attributed to David, admitting his sin after the prophet Nathan confronted him, the psalmist prays not only for forgiveness but to be purified before God, restored in relationship with God in a way that they might sin no more. They seek a new heart from God, and a new spirit that is right with God and may rejoice again, for while they acknowledge their sin, the guilt remains. The psalmist desires full restoration with God and asks for the willing spirit to keep themselves true to God's ways.

51 1 O God, have mercy on me!

Because of your love and your great compassion, wipe away my faults;

**2 wash me clean of my guilt;
purify me of my sin.**

3 For I am aware of my faults,
and have my sin constantly in mind.

**4 I sinned against you alone,
and did what is evil in your sight. You are just when you pass sentence on me,
blameless when you give judgment.**

5 I was born in sin,
conceived in sin,

6 yet you want truth to live in my innermost being. Teach me your wisdom!

7 Purify me with hyssop until I am clean;
wash me until I am purer than new-fallen snow.

**8 Instill some joy and gladness into me;
let the bones you have crushed rejoice again.**

9 Turn your face from my sins,
and wipe out all my guilt.

**10 O God, create a clean heart in me,
put into me a new and steadfast spirit;**

11 do not banish me from your presence,
do not deprive me of your holy Spirit!

2 Be my savior again, renew my joy, keep my spirit steady and willing;

Second Reading: Hebrews 5:5-10

Jesus is now the high priest according to Hebrews 5. Jesus has fulfilled the role of the high priest in the temple, the perfect priest who saves all who are faithful by his sacrifice, submitting to God and suffering by human hands. He is the eternal priest and source of salvation. The writer of Hebrews declares Jesus in the line of Melchizedek, a priest who met Abraham and blessed him in Genesis 14:7-20, but again mentioned in Psalm 110:4 in an obscure verse about a line of priests established forever. Because Jesus cried out to God to save him, those prayers were heard by God, and Jesus' salvation is salvation for all humankind.

5 5 Even Christ didn't presume to take on the office of high priest. Christ was appointed high priest by the One who said,

"You are my Own;
today I have begotten you";

6 and in another place,
"You are a priest forever,
according to the order of Melchizedek."

7 In the days when he was in the flesh, Jesus offered prayers and supplications with loud cries and tears to God, who was able to save him from death, and Jesus was heard because of his reverence. 8 Firstborn though he was, Jesus learned to obey through suffering. 9 But having been made perfect, Jesus became, for all who obey, the source of eternal salvation, 10 and he was designated by God to be a high priest according to the order of Melchizedek.

Gospel Reading: John 12:20-33

When some Greeks come to see Jesus in these verses in John 12, he knew the time had come to prepare for his death. He told those who wished to follow him that they must follow and serve him.

Those who loved their life would lose it. Those who would hate their life in this world would keep it for eternal life. For a grain of wheat must fall to the earth and die in order to bear fruit. Jesus was troubled by what was to happen, but knew it must happen. Jesus knew that after his death, when he was lifted up, all kinds of people, including Greeks and other Gentiles, would be drawn to him, and seemed to recognize that the hour was at hand when Greeks were drawing close to the disciples and wanted to see him. Those around him did not understand, and thought he was speaking to an angel as he spoke about his time to be glorified. The writer of the Gospel of John's view is that Jesus spoke plainly, but the people around him did not get it. Jesus made it obvious, in John's account, that he was the Messiah sent by God, but others refused to recognize him as the Messiah.

12 20 Among those who had come up to worship at the Passover festival were some Greeks/Gentiles. 21 They approached Philip, who was from Bethsaida in Galilee, and put forth this request: "Please, we would like to see Jesus." 22 Philip went to tell Andrew, and together the two went to tell Jesus.

23 Jesus replied,

"Now the hour has come
for the Chosen One to be glorified.

24 The truth of the matter is,
unless a grain of wheat
falls on the ground and dies,
it remains only a single grain;
but if it dies,
it yields a rich harvest.

25 If you love your life
you'll lose it;
if you hate your life in this world
you'll keep it for eternal life.

26 Anyone who wants to work for me
must follow in my footsteps,
and wherever I am,
my worker will be there too.
Anyone who works for me
will be honored by Abba God.

27 Now my soul is troubled.

What will I say:

'Abba, save me from this hour?'

But it was for this very reason

that I have come to this hour. 28 Abba, glorify your name!"

A voice came from heaven: "I have glorified it, and I will glorify it again."

29 The crowds that stood nearby heard this and said it was a clap of thunder; others said, "It was an angel speaking."

30 Jesus answered, "It was not for my sake that this voice came, but for yours.

31 "Sentence is now being passed on this world;
now the ruler of this world will be overthrown.

32 And when I am lifted up from this earth,
I will draw all people to myself."

33 By these words Jesus indicated the kind of death he would die.

Reflection – "The Cross: Compelling and Mysterious" - Rev. Scott Rosenstein

WE RESPOND

*** Prayer of Response - *St. Patrick's Day Prayer*:**

God of walking sticks and bells, little shamrocks and big ideas, thank you for Patrick. Let us remember him not only for his sake, but most of all for your sake, and for the sake of your good and brilliant green creation. Grant us the patience to trust the work you have given us, so that it might take root, grow, and bloom. Grant us the dignity and clarity of a simple, iron bell. Grant us new eyes to see your creation afresh, out on the horizon but also down around our feet, where great mysteries dwell nearby, hidden in the grass. For we are all your sheep, and you, our good shepherd. In Jesus' name, Amen.

***Hymn of Response: NCH 198 - "Lift High the Cross" vv. 1, 2, 3, & 4**

Invitation to Share Our Tithes and Offerings

As yeast rises to create bread, so do the rising of our gifts multiply the love of God in the life of the world. Give of your treasure, whatever it may be, however large or small. And trust God will use it for the building of the kin-dom of God that is emerging among us.

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**

O God who causes our lives to rise, we lay down to you the abundance you have given us and allow it to fall so that you may multiply it to give life to your world. May it be so. Amen.

Choir Hymn: NCH 199 – "Alas! and Did My Savior Bleed (At the Cross)"

*Author: Isaac Watts, 1707; alt.
Tune: HUDSON C.M. with refrain
Composer: Ralph E. Hudson, 1885
Choir: Bob Bucklew, Keith Konet, & Barbara Rossington
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

***Parting Hymn: NCH 451 - "Be Now My Vision"**

***Commissioning**

One: God sends us forth as people of the covenant.

All: Our hearts are filled with compassion which we will share with others.

One: Jesus call us to share hope with all we meet.

All: Our hands will bring food for the hungry and build shelters for the homeless.

One: The Spirit of hospitality is engraved upon our spirits.

All: We will welcome everyone we meet with the grace which is written large upon our hearts.

***Benediction**

God's people, may we go out and nurture this world so that new life will rise. May we let go of that which binds us to distraction and isolation. And may we look towards our days with the hope of a single grain multiplying into the abundance of God's joy and love. Amen.

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

* * * * *

Credits

- (1) The Call to Worship, Gathering Prayer, Invitation to Share our Tithes and Offerings, Blessing of the Gifts, and the Benediction are adapted from *Single Grains: Service Prayers for the Fifth 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 – Fifth 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 March 17th, 2024, 4th Sunday of Lent*, written by the Rev Mindi Welton-Thomas, and posted March 6th, 2024, on her blog, *Rev-o-lution*. <http://rev-o-lution.org/>.
- (4) The **Commissioning** is adapted from *Liturgy and Communion for March 17th, 2024, The Fourth Sunday in Lent-B*, written by Thom M. Shuman, and posted March 10th, 2024, on the 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!

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:

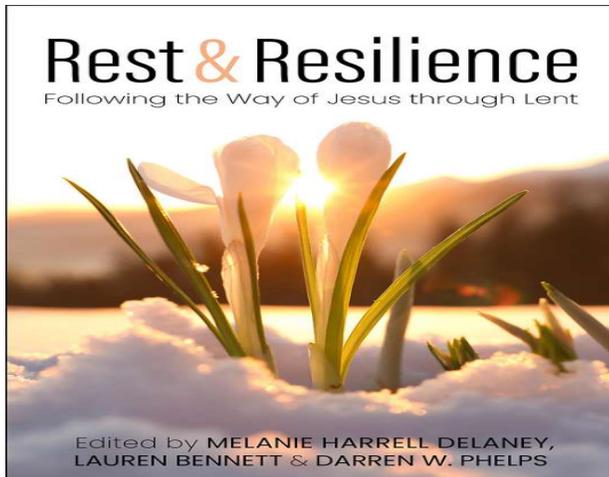
Winter Schedule:

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)



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.

A Brief Theology of St. Patrick's Day

The lives of the saints are full of stories passed down for generations, stories so polished that the lines between history and legend are blessedly impossible to find. And so in honor of St. Patrick's Day this year, three ancient, delightful stories — but first, a little background.

St. Patrick is one of the patron saints of Ireland. He died just over fifteen hundred years ago, reportedly on March 17, and he is closely associated with the growth of Christianity throughout the Emerald Isle, the rise of Celtic styles of Christianity, and of course that famous shamrock (more on that in a bit).

He first encountered Ireland as an enslaved young man. Patrick was born in the Roman imperial province of Britannia (today known as Great Britain), and as a youth he was captured by Irish raiders and forced to serve as a sheep herder. After six years of captivity, he escaped and made his way home — only to return to Ireland years later as a bishop and missionary.

St. Patrick's Walking Stick

Patrick was an itinerant preacher, and it is said that he carried a walking stick made of ash wood. In his travels between Britannia and Ireland, whenever he would stop to preach, he would plant the stick beside him, upright in the ground. At the English site now called Aspatria ("ash of Patrick"), he preached so patiently, the story goes, that when at last he finished, he couldn't remove the stick. It had sprouted roots, you see. It was already on its way to becoming a tree.

St. Patrick's Bell

In his life as an enslaved sheep herder, St. Patrick was quite familiar with the sheep bell: a simple bell of hammered iron with a small handle on top. As a bishop, that bell continued to have great meaning for him, perhaps because it reminded him of his youth, or of the ringing good news of the gospel, or of his ongoing role as a pastor (from the Latin *pastorem*, "shepherd"). Whatever the reason, he was laid to rest with one resting on his breast: the dead shepherd, buried with his bell.

Sometime later, the bell was removed from the tomb as a precious relic. And in the eleventh century, artists intricately covered the bell in bronze, gems, and Celtic designs of crosses and birds — not to make the bell appear more holy, it is said, but rather to shield the eyes of onlookers from the brilliant holiness of the iron original. Now on display in Dublin's National Museum, St. Patrick's Bell is considered one of Ireland's signature treasures.

St. Patrick's Shamrock

The Christian idea of the divine Trinity — God's simultaneous Threeness and oneness as Creator, Christ, and Holy Spirit — has always been a great challenge for preachers to grasp and explain. St. Patrick did it this way: he looked around, and then plucked a shamrock from the ground at his feet. Three leaves, he said, and yet one stem, one life. Add to that the shamrock's vibrant shade of green, the color of growth and vitality — and while it's easy to imagine a more technical, lengthy explanation of the Trinity, it's hard to imagine a better one.

(adapted from: "A Brief Theology of St. Patrick's Day, posted on March 11, 2024, on SALT Progressive Christian Blog. <https://www.saltproject.org/progressive-christian-blog/2019/3/12/a-brief-theology-of-st-patricks-day>)

Palm and Passion Sunday, Holy Week, Good Friday and Easter Sunday

- **Sunday, March 24th - Palm Sunday (Blessing of the Palms) and the beginning of the Holy Week of the Passion of Christ is a week away.**
- **The Good Friday Tenebrae Service (Service of Shadows) is on Friday, March 29th, 7:30 P.M. "Tenebrae" is the Latin word meaning "darkness." For Protestants, this single service is typically held at night on Maundy Thursday or Good Friday.**
- **Our service on Good Friday evening (March 29th, 2024) has three main parts:**
 - **A Service of Light--**
based on the traditional Vespers service in which we recognize Christ our Light;
 - **A Lenten Candle Liturgy**
a meditation (which is not printed in the bulletin) from Lenten Candle Liturgy contributed by Jeanyne Slettom, 2015. processandfaith.org
a candle is extinguished, followed by a unison prayer.
singing one verse of the hymn – "Just As I Am";

- **A Service of Shadows--Tenebrae--in which we meditate on the Passion of Christ and experience in dramatic form the extinguishing of the Light. After each reading, one of the candles will be extinguished. Members of the congregation may extinguish their own candles (lit during the service of light) at any time during the readings. At the conclusion of the reading telling of Christ's death on the cross, the Christ candle is extinguished. A loud noise is made to signify Christ's death. After a pause, the Christ candle is relit to stand as a symbolic promise of the resurrection. At the end of the readings, the chapel should be completely dark, except for one remaining Christ candle. Worshipers leave in silence to ponder the impact of Christ's death and await the celebration of the coming Resurrection.**
- **EASTER - a festival celebrating the resurrection of Jesus Christ and our new life in the reign of God is celebrated on Sunday, March 31st with an 11 A.M. worship service.**
- **An Easter Brunch follows worship on March 31st. You may bring a dish to share (optional) - but join us for a meal of celebration and community!**

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 90 mass shooting incidents occurred in the US in 2024 as of March 14th..

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.

- 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