



HIGHLANDS UNITED METHODIST CHURCH

THE FIRST SUNDAY IN LENT

FEBRUARY 18, 2024

10:30 A.M.



The Season of Lent

Today is the first Sunday in the season of Lent, when we are invited to examine the roots of our Christian discipleship and identify Jesus' journey to the cross. The early Sundays are a wilderness time, an opportunity to go deep into our hearts and the souls of our communities, to recognize the depth of our estrangement from God, and to begin to put things right. We observe the tradition of removing Alleluias or flowers in the Sanctuary during Lent: these will return with a burst of joy on Easter Day.

Christ in the Wilderness, Moretto da Brescia (c. 1515-1520)

The gospel lesson for the first Sunday in Lent describes the fasting and temptation of Jesus in the wilderness. Our bulletin cover art today depicts a fatigued and famished Christ sitting pensively on a rocky terrain punctuated by clefts. Two beech trees are planted in the center. The first is dead and dry while the second, fresh with green leaves, leans towards Jesus offering shelter. As Jesus dwells in solitude, a variety of 'wild' creatures attend him. Each animal is turned towards Jesus bending low, some in submission and others in adoration, which connotes Christ victory over sin and temptation.

The raven perched on the rocks stands for unrest, indifference and ill-fortune. Next to the raven lies a dove in flight, a symbol of the Holy Spirit. The dove in the wilderness emphasizes and reassures us of the presence of God in our lives even in the midst of trials and temptations. The bird next to it on the twig of the parched tree is the goldfinch, which represents victory over death.

Comprising the second group of beasts and birds is the crane, the pelican and the stag. According to medieval bestiaries, cranes are said to sleep together in a group, choosing one among them to keep watch. In order to keep alert and avoid the temptation of sleep, the crane keeping watch drops stones on its own foot, exemplifying its loyalty and faithfulness. Bending low by its side is the pelican, which was believed to wound itself in order to feed its young with its own blood. It liturgically expresses Christ sacrificing himself for humanity and thus becomes a symbol of atonement. The stag nearby stands for purity in times of persecution.

The next band of beasts are the wily and the crafty ones – the fox, the basilisk, the bear, and the adder. Thanks to its ever-scheming nature, the fox is the perfect symbol for the devil who is always on the prowl to strike those who succumb. On its right is the mythical creature, the basilisk, acclaimed as the king of the serpents. The bear stooping before Jesus symbolizes evil. The adder, right in front of the bear, is a serpent with a deadly bite. Representing ardent sin, it is often depicted crushed by the feet of Jesus.

The last group consists of the black bird, known for its enticing song; the jay, symbolic of gossip; the phoenix, a reminder of the resurrection; and the lion, known for alertness and watchfulness. Thus through their appealing allegories the beasts and birds bring out the essence of the Gospel narrative and the substance of art.

During the season of Lent, the crosses carried in our processions and on the altar are draped in purple, the color of repentance and preparation. The crosses will remain draped from Ash Wednesday to Palm Sunday. On Palm Sunday, the cloth will change to red, and will remain through Maundy Thursday in preparation for Jesus's crucifixion. On Good Friday, the crosses will be draped in black, symbolizing Jesus' earthly death. On Easter Sunday, the crosses will be uncovered or draped in white, in celebration of the resurrection.

Lent, Passion, and Easter are the only times the crosses are draped in the liturgical year. This is to remind us of the redemptive purpose of Jesus' suffering (purple), crucifixion (red), death (black), and resurrection (white), which these liturgical seasons commemorate. The rest of the year the cross is uncovered to assure us that Jesus is risen.

ORDER FOR MORNING WORSHIP

PREACHING – THE REVEREND MIKAH HUDSON
CHOIRMASTER AND ORGANIST – RICHARD PHILLIPS
VERGER – BRIAN BELLENGER

***Congregation please stand. Words in bold are spoken or sung by the congregation.**

Serving for Altar Guild: Leslie Davis, Lynn L'Eplattenier

Serving as Ushers: Jim Shannon, Jimmy Shannon

Serving as Lay Reader: Gordon Short

Serving as Acolytes: Amelia Rathmell, John Marshall Rathmell

PEALING OF THE TOWER BELLS

Kara Cargile, chimer

WELCOME AND CALL TO WORSHIP

The Reverend Mikah Hudson

PRELUDE

Fantasia in C Minor

Johann Sebastian Bach (1685-1750)

BWV 537

And the Spirit immediately drove him out into the wilderness.

He was in the wilderness forty days, tempted by Satan; and he was with the wild beasts; and the angels waited on him. – Mark 1:12-13

*HYMN IN PROCESSION 61

Come, Thou Almighty King

ITALIAN HYMN

*THE INVITATORY & GLORIA PATRI 70

MEINEKE

O Lord, open our lips. And we shall declare your praise.

We praise you, Lord. Your holy name be praised.

Glory be to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Ghost.

As it was in the beginning, is now and ever shall be, world without end. Amen.

*THE PEACE

The peace of the Lord Jesus Christ be with you. And also with you.

*VENITE

Psalm 95: Come, Let Us Sing to God on High

HURSLEY



1. Come, let us sing to God on high, The Rock of our sal - va - tion praise;

2. For God is Lord a - bove all gods, The heights and depths are in his hand;



Come with thanks - giv - ing to his courts and joy - ful psalms be - fore him raise.

He made the sea and it is his; his hands have mold - ed the dry land.

FIRST LESSON

Genesis 9:8-17

May these words reveal Christ to us. Thanks be to God.

¹To you, O Lord, I lift up my soul; my God, I put my trust in you;
let me not be humiliated, nor let my enemies triumph over me.
²Let none who look to you be put to shame; let the treacherous be disappointed in their schemes.
³Show me your ways, O Lord, and teach me your paths.
⁴Lead me in your truth and teach me, for you are the God of my salvation; in you have I trusted all the day long.
⁵Remember, O Lord, your compassion and love, for they are from everlasting.
⁶Remember not the sins of my youth and my transgressions;
remember me according to your love and for the sake of your goodness, O Lord.
⁷Gracious and upright is the Lord; therefore he teaches sinners in his way.
⁸He guides the humble in doing right and teaches his way to the lowly.
⁹All the paths of the Lord are love and faithfulness to those who keep his covenant and his testimonies.
¹⁰For your Name's sake, O Lord, forgive my sin, for it is great.
Glory be to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Ghost.
As it was in the beginning, is now, and will be forever. Amen.

EPISTLE LESSON

1 Peter 3:18-22

May these words reveal Christ to us. Thanks be to God.

*CANTICLE

A Song of Penitence

KINGSFOLD



1. O Lord who rules the heav-en's host, O God of A - bra - ham, Lord,
2. But yet your love sur - pass - es all the mea - sure of our mind; You,
3. And now, O Lord, I bend my knee and make my sure ap - peal; For



God of Isa - ac, Ja - cob, and of all their right eous clan. You
Lord, are pa - tient, mer - ci - ful, and in - fi - nite - ly kind. You
I have sinned, Lord, and I know my wick - ed - ness too well. I



made the heav'ns and formed the earth with all their vast ar - ray, be -
do not judge as we de - serve, and in your good - ness, Lord, You
there - fore make this prayer to you: for - give me, Lord, for - give; Let



fore you all things quake with fear and trem - ble in dis - may.
of - fer par - don that we may re - pent and be re - stored.
me not per - ish in my sin, nor let me die but live.

***GOSPEL LESSON**

The Holy Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ according to Mark. Glory to you, Lord Christ.

The Lesson

Mark 1:9-15

The Gospel of the Lord. Praise to you, Lord Christ.

THE HOMILY

The Reverend Mikah Hudson

THE GREAT LITANY

*Adapted from BCP - Church of Ireland
Musical Setting: Richard Phillips (b. 1959)*

The Great Litany is an intercessory prayer including various petitions with fixed responses by the congregation. It is the first recorded English-language rite – prepared by Archbishop Thomas Cranmer, first published in 1544, and printed in the 1549 Book of Common Prayer. John Wesley, the founder of Methodism, included The Great Litany in his Sunday Service for the Methodists of North America. This prayer of supplication is broadly inclusive. Because of its penitential tone, The Great Litany is especially appropriate during Lent. The clergy will speak each petition, followed by a sung response. The congregation is encouraged to join in singing each response.

GENERAL PETITIONS

God the Father, creator of heaven and earth,



God the Son, Redeemer of the world,
Have mercy upon us.

God the Holy Spirit, giver of life,
Have mercy upon us.

Holy, blessed, and glorious Trinity, three persons in one God,
Have mercy upon us.

Save us, good Lord, from all sin and wickedness, from pride, hypocrisy and conceit, from envy, hatred and malice, and all uncharitableness,



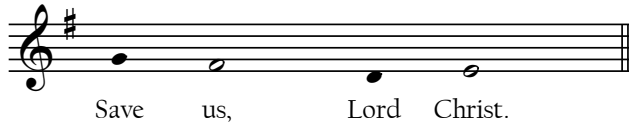
From sins of thought, word and deed, from the lusts of the flesh, from the deceits of the world and the temptations of evil,
Save us, good Lord.

From fire, storm and flood, from disease, pestilence and want, from war and murder, and from dying unprepared,
Save us, good Lord.

From all false doctrine, from hardness of heart, from contempt of your word and commandment, and from the evil of schism.
Save us, good Lord.

In times of sorrow and in times of joy, in the hour of death, and in the day of judgment,
Save us, good Lord.

Save us, Lord Christ, by the mystery of your holy incarnation, by your birth, childhood and obedience, by your baptism, fasting and temptation,



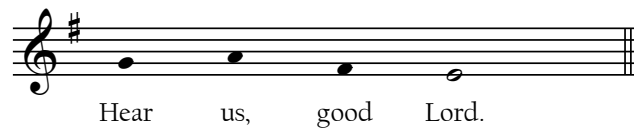
By your ministry in word and work, by your mighty acts of power, and by your preaching of the kingdom,
Save us, Lord Christ.

By your agony and trial, by your cross and passion, and by your precious death and burial,
Save us, Lord Christ.

By your mighty resurrection, by your glorious ascension, and by your sending of the Holy Spirit,
Save us, Lord Christ.

FOR THE CHURCH

Hear us, good Lord: govern and direct your holy Church, fill it with love and truth, and grant it that unity which is your will,



Give your Church courage to preach the gospel and to make disciples of all the nations,
Hear us, good Lord.

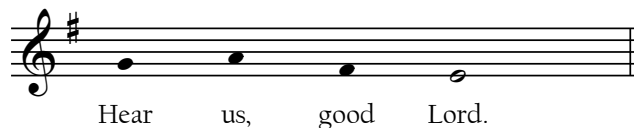
Give knowledge and understanding to ministers of the Gospel, that by their life and teaching they may proclaim your word,
Hear us, good Lord.

Give all people grace to receive your word and to bring forth the fruit of the Spirit,
Hear us, good Lord.

Bring all who have erred and are deceived into the way of truth,
Hear us, good Lord.

FOR THE STATE

Guard and bless all in government, especially our president, our governor, and all other elected officials; grant that they may trust in you, and seek your honor and glory,



Bless our country, and give grace, wisdom and understanding to all in authority,
Hear us, good Lord.

Bless the global community, and draw us closer to one another in justice and freedom,
Hear us, good Lord.

Bless those who administer the law, that they may uphold justice in honesty and truth,
Hear us, good Lord.

Bless and keep all who maintain peace and safety,



Hear us, good Lord.

Give to all nations unity, peace and concord,

Hear us, good Lord.

FOR ALL PEOPLE ACCORDING TO THEIR NEEDS

Strengthen the faithful, comfort and help the faint-hearted, raise up those who fall, and drive out all evil,



Hear us, good Lord.

Support and encourage all who are in poverty, unemployment or distress, protect those whose work is dangerous, and keep in safety all who travel,

Hear us, good Lord.

Keep parents and children united in their family life, and give them wisdom and strength in times of stress,

Hear us, good Lord.

Heal the sick, care for the aged and lonely, and comfort the bereaved,

Hear us, good Lord.

Remember the poor who long to hear good news: give us the will to strengthen them through acts of generous love,

Hear us, good Lord.

Show your pity on victims of strife, on the homeless and the hungry, on prisoners, and on all who live in fear,

Hear us, good Lord.

Forgive our enemies, persecutors and slanderers, and turn their hearts,



Hear us, good Lord.

Guide and direct all who influence others through the written or the spoken word, and inspire all who serve in science, industry and art,

Hear us, good Lord.

Bless and keep all your people,

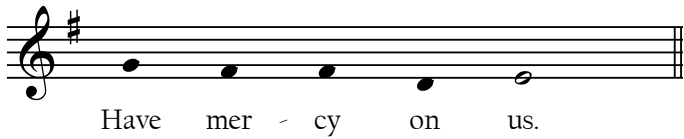
Hear us, good Lord.

Teach us to use the resources of the earth to your glory, that all may share in your goodness and praise you for your loving kindness,

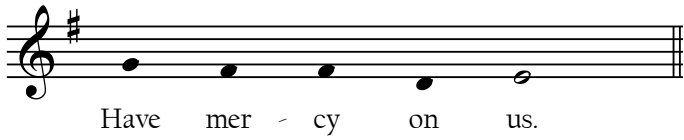
Hear us, good Lord.

Savior of the world, forgive our sins, known and unknown, things done, and left undone; grant us the grace of your Holy Spirit that we may amend our lives according to your holy word, and share with all your people the joys of your eternal kingdom.

Jesus, Lamb of God,



Jesus, bearer of our sins,



Jesus, Redeemer of the world,



THE LORD'S PRAYER 895

GREETING AND PARISH NOTICES

OFFERTORY ANTHEM

Remember Not, Lord, Our Offences
The Choir

*Remember not, Lord, our offences, nor the offences of our forefathers,
Neither take thou vengeance of our sins, but spare us, good Lord,
Spare thy people, whom thou hast redeemed with thy precious blood, and be not angry with us for ever.*

Henry Purcell (1659 – 1695)

Text, Wisdom of Solomon 15:1-3

*DOXOLOGY 95

OLD 100TH

Praise God from whom all blessing flow. Praise God all creatures here below.
Praise God above, ye heavenly hosts. Praise Father, Son, and Holy Ghost. Amen.

*HYMN 340

Come, Ye Sinners, Poor and Needy
Verses 1-3

RESTORATION

*BLESSING AND SENDING FORTH

ORGAN IMPROVISATION ON A HYMN TUNE

Highlands United Methodist Church is blessed to have one of the most beautiful pipe organs in the Southeast. Our Möller pipe organ is currently being re-leathered and repaired by the R. A. Colby Organ Company and will be out of commission for several months. I want to thank our congregation for raising over \$300,000 to refurbish our beloved instrument. Until the restoration is completed, we will be using an electronic organ as a substitute during our worship services.

Rick Phillips, Choirmaster and Organist



WELCOME TO HIGHLANDS!

ALL ARE WELCOME



A Reconciling Congregation with the Reconciling Ministries Network – rmnetwork.org

Highlands United Methodist Church is a community of disciples of Christ; a beacon of hope, inviting all to become new persons in Christ to be sent into the world to share the Gospel and to serve our neighbors; and a sanctuary for those in need of God's love and grace.

Highlands United Methodist Church affirms that nothing can separate anyone from the love of God. We invite all to worship, wonder, and discover God's grace as we aspire to create a safe space for all to participate fully in the life of this community of faith. We are called to shine as a beacon of hope, grace, belonging, and respect for all people. Regardless of age, gender identity, ethnicity, sexual orientation, family, financial status, nationality, physical or mental ability, past or future, there is room for you at Highlands.

INVITATION TO CHRISTIAN DISCIPLESHIP

The message of the Hebrew prophets, Jesus, Paul, and the early church was always a message of welcome and inclusion for all. The image of God's kingdom is of something small and insignificant growing into something larger and of great significance. The oppressed, the alien, and the outcast were all welcomed, included, and cared for. In this sense, our faith is built upon the idea of gracious hospitality. Followers of Jesus are not about walls of exclusion but bridges of grace and acceptance. Ours is a faith of invitation, for all to come to know Jesus as the living Christ who overcomes all brokenness, sin, and even death, offering a way to make all things new. This invitation extends to you. If you desire to explore what this means for you, please speak to a member of the clergy after the service or sometime this week. We welcome the opportunity to visit with you.

OFFERING

Cash or Check Giving:

- Giving envelopes are available in the pew racks.
Checks may be made payable to HUMC.

Electronic Giving:

- Text GIVE to 205-900-3040. A link will be provided for a simple, quick way to give with one click.
- Visit www.highlandsumc.net/giving to give using a debit, credit card, or bank account.

Sustainable Giving:

- To set up automatic monthly bank drafts, contact financial manager Tyra Johnson-Pirtle at finance@highlandsumc.net.



SCAN THE CODE WITH YOUR MOBILE
DEVICE TO LEARN MORE ABOUT WHAT'S
HAPPENING AT HIGHLANDS!

Music and lyrics presented in this bulletin are reprinted with permission under CCLI Licensing#1845134. All Rights Reserved.
