

Worship Guide Forth Sunday of Lent

Sunday, March 14, 2021

Welcome

Announcements

OPENING HYMN: *Take Time to be Holy*

UMH #395, vv. 1, 2, 4

Take time to be holy, speak oft with the Lord;

Abide in him always, and feed on his word.

Make friends of God's children, help those who are weak,

Forgetting in nothing God's blessing to seek.

Take time to be holy, the world rushes on;

Spend much time in secret with Jesus alone.

By looking to Jesus, like him thou shalt be;

Thy friends in thy conduct his likeness shall see.

Take time to be holy, be calm in thy soul,

Each thought and each motive beneath his control.

Thus led by his spirit to fountains of love,

Thou soon shalt be fitted for service above.

Opening Prayer

O God, our Guide and Guardian, you have led us apart from the busy world into the quiet of your space. Grant us grace to worship you in Spirit and in truth, to the comfort of our souls and the upbuilding of every good purpose and holy desire. Enable us to do more perfectly the work to which you have called us, that we may not fear the coming of night, when we shall resign into your hands the tasks which you have committed to us. So may we worship you not with our lips at this hour, but in word and deed all the days of our lives through Jesus Christ our Savior. Amen.

Scripture lesson: Luke 18:1-8 (The Message)

¹⁻³ Jesus told them a story showing that it was necessary for them to pray consistently and never quit. He said, “There was once a judge in some city who never gave God a thought and cared nothing for people. A widow in that city kept after him: ‘My rights are being violated. Protect me!’

⁴⁻⁵ “He never gave her the time of day. But after this went on and on he said to himself, ‘I care nothing what God thinks, even less what people think. But because this widow won’t quit badgering me, I’d better do something and see that she gets justice—otherwise I’m going to end up beaten black-and-blue by her pounding.’”

⁶⁻⁸ Then the Master said, “Do you hear what that judge, corrupt as he is, is saying? So what makes you think God won’t step in and work justice for his chosen people, who continue to cry out for help? Won’t he stick up for them? I assure you, he will. He will not drag his feet. But how much of that kind of persistent faith will the Son of Man find on the earth when he returns?”

Scripture lesson: Ephesians 2: 1 – 10 (The Message version, modified)

It wasn’t so long ago that you were mired in that old stagnant life of sin. ² You let the world, which doesn’t know the first thing about living, tell you how to live. You filled your lungs with polluted unbelief, and then exhaled disobedience. ³ We all did it, all of us doing what we felt like doing, when we felt like doing it, all of us in the same boat. It’s a wonder God didn’t lose his temper and do away with the whole lot of us. ⁴ Instead, immense in mercy and with an incredible love, ⁵ God embraced us. God took our sin-dead lives and made us alive in Christ. God did all this alone, with no help from us! ⁶ Then God picked us up and set us down in highest heaven in company with Jesus,



our Messiah. Now God has us where God wants us, with all the time in this world and the next to shower grace and kindness upon us in Christ Jesus. ⁸ Saving is all God's idea, and all God's work. All we do is trust God enough to let God do it. It's God's gift from start to finish! ⁹ We don't play the major role. If we did, we'd probably go around bragging that we'd done the whole thing! ¹⁰ No, we neither make nor save ourselves. God does both the making and saving. God creates each of us by Christ Jesus to join him in the work he does, the good work Jesus has gotten ready for us to do, work we had better be doing.

MESSAGE: Kicking at the Darkness

SONG BEFORE & AFTER TIME OF PRAYER: *Nothing Can Trouble*

Nothing can trouble, nothing can frighten, Those who seek God shall never go wanting.

Nothing can trouble, nothing can frighten, God alone fills us.

PRAYERS OF THE PEOPLE (after each time of silence, we'll finish with the words "Lord in your mercy" and you are invited to respond, "**Hear our prayer.**")

THE LORD'S PRAYER

OFFERING

This is an opportunity to share the goodness that has been given to you. Consider sending an offering to PO Box 630, Skowhegan, ME 04976. You are also invited to support an organization or church in our local community that is making a positive difference in people's lives.

CLOSING HYMN: *Wounded World that Cries for Healing*

FWS #2177

*Wounded world that cries for healing – here we hold each other's pain,
Wounded systems, bruised and bleeding bear the load, the scars of strain;
Dollars ration our compassion, hard decisions rule the day,
Jesus of the healing Spirit, free us to another way!*

*Through our nation's spent frustration, through the corridors of stress
May there move a kindlier wisdom all may feel, and all may bless;
Tax and tithe are for a purpose shared to shield the poor and weak;
Past the symptoms of our sickness let the voice of justice speak.*

*Honor those whose loving spirit nurses hope, restores and heals,
Towel and basin used in service like the Christ who comes and kneels;
In the tending, in the mending may we see the right and fair,
In our common quest for wholeness heal each other by our care.*

BENEDICTION