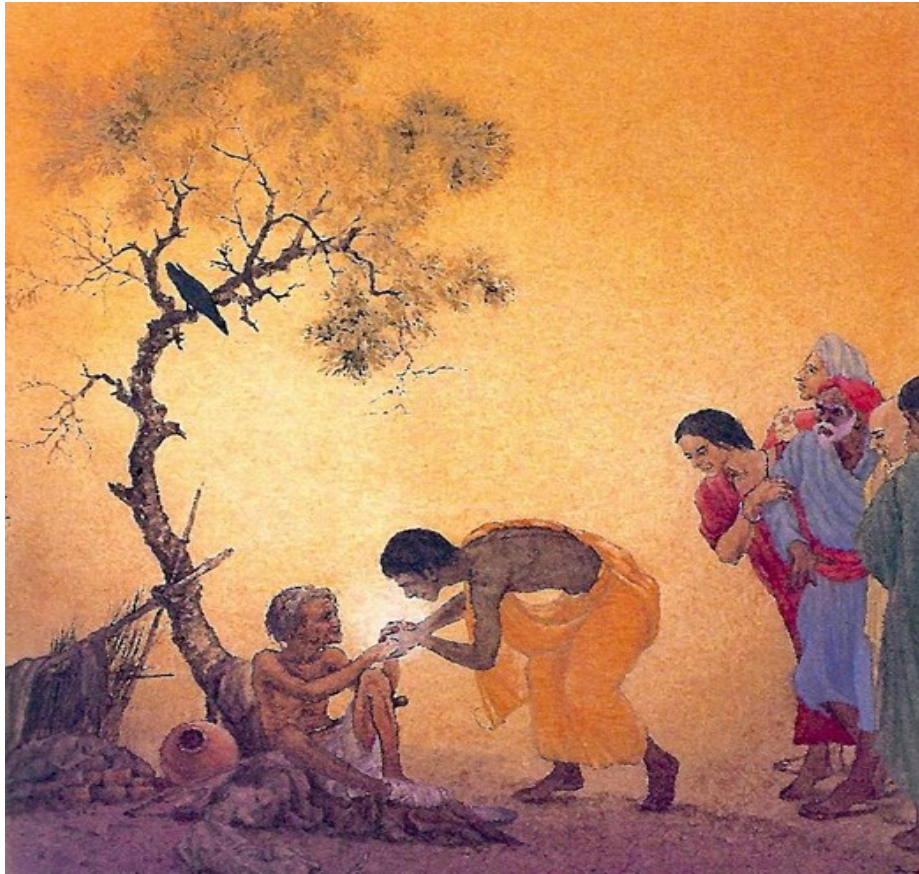


First Congregational United Church of Christ

JANUARY 22, 2023



"Cleansing the Leper" by Frank Wesley

Third Sunday after Epiphany

Ministers: All who are a part of this church

Pastor: Rev. Enno K. Limvere

Musician: Karina Roth

Choir Director: Ann Russ

Peace Candle Lighter: Nancy Starr

Liturgist: Ranna LeVoir

Gathering Music

Words of Welcome

Prelude

Words to Enter Worship

People who love: We come to celebrate the kin-dom of God. Where all are welcome and all are loved.

People who feel loved: We are a community that values diversity in God's creation and in faiths that practice the ethic of love.

People who have felt healing: God is the one who loves us, show us the ways of life, laughs and cries with us, lifts us up, and holds us close.

People who have known illness: We come to worship, to heal, to learn about justice, and empowered to love our neighbors, whoever and wherever they may be.

Opening Hymn Kindom (See Music Insert)

Words of Lament

Merciful God, there are times in our lives when our bodies are so frail, our hearts are heavy, our spirits are withdrawn, and our minds cannot think straight. Sometimes one or two are out of balance and sometimes all of them seem under siege. Listen, O God, through Jesus we are promised abundant life, that the sick will be cured, and our sorrow will be taken away. Help us follow in the healing ministry of Christ. Help us find cures, and healing, and wholeness. Amen.

Time of Silence

Words for Blessing the Earth (by Sue Ellen Herne, Mohawk)

One: Thank you, Creator of the universe, for the people gathered around us today. We give thanks for the things of the earth that give us the means of life.

Many: Thank you for the plants, animals, and birds that we use as food and medicine.

All: Thank for you the natural world, in which we find the means to be clothed and housed.

One: Thank you, LORD, for the ability to use these gifts of the natural world.

Many: Help us to see our place among these gifts, not to squander them or think of them as means for selfish gain.

All: May we respect the life of all you have made. May our spirits be strengthened by using only what we need, and may we use our strength to help those who need us. Amen.

Words of Poetry & Lighting the Candle of Peace

It is a custom in our congregation to light our Peace Candle during worship, as a witness to the Prince of Peace and our communal intention to be peace-makers as a Just Peace Church.

The Tree of Love

*The tree of love its roots hath spread
Deep in my heart, and rears its head;
Rich are its fruits: they joy dispense;
Transport the heart, and ravish sense.
In love's sweet swoon to thee I cleave,
Bless'd source of love . . . ,*

– *St. Francis of Assisi*

Passing of the Peace

Hymn #553 There is a Balm in Gilead (public domain)

Refrain:

There is a balm in Gilead
to make the wounded whole,
there is a balm in Gilead
to heal the sin-sick soul.

1. Sometimes I feel discouraged
and think my work's in vain,
but then the Holy Spirit
revives my soul again. Refrain
2. Don't ever feel discouraged,
For Jesus is your friend.
Who, if you ask for knowledge,
Will never fail to lend.
3. If you cannot preach like Peter,
if you cannot pray like Paul,
you can tell the love of Jesus
and say, "He died for all." Refrain

Scripture Readings

1st Scripture 1 Corinthians 1:10-18 (The Message)

¹⁰ I have a serious concern to bring up with you, my friends, using the authority of Jesus, our Master. I'll put it as urgently as I can: You *must* get along with each other. You must learn to be considerate of one another, cultivating a life in common. ¹¹⁻¹² I bring this up because some from Chloe's family brought a most disturbing report to my attention—that you're fighting among yourselves! I'll tell you exactly what I was told: You're all picking sides, going around saying, "I'm on Paul's side," or "I'm for

Apollos,” or “Peter is my man,” or “I’m in the Messiah group.” ¹³⁻¹⁶ I ask you, “Has the Messiah been chopped up in little pieces so we can each have a relic all our own? Was Paul crucified for you? Was a single one of you baptized in Paul’s name?” I was not involved with any of your baptisms—except for Crispus and Gaius—and on getting this report, I’m sure glad I wasn’t. At least no one can go around saying he was baptized in my name. (Come to think of it, I also baptized Stephanas’s family, but as far as I can recall, that’s it.) ¹⁷ God didn’t send me out to collect a following for myself, but to preach the Message of what he has done, collecting a following for him. And he didn’t send me to do it with a lot of fancy rhetoric of my own, lest the powerful action at the center—Christ on the Cross—be trivialized into mere words. ¹⁸ The Message that points to Christ on the Cross seems like sheer silliness to those hellbent on destruction, but for those on the way of salvation it makes perfect sense.

2nd Scripture Matthew 4:12-23 (New Revised Standard Version Catholic Edition)

¹² Now when Jesus heard that John had been arrested, he withdrew to Galilee. ¹³ He left Nazareth and made his home in Capernaum by the sea, in the territory of Zebulun and Naphtali, ¹⁴ so that what had been spoken through the prophet Isaiah might be fulfilled:

¹⁵ “Land of Zebulun, land of Naphtali,
on the road by the sea, across the Jordan, Galilee of the Gentiles—
¹⁶ the people who sat in darkness
have seen a great light,
and for those who sat in the region and shadow of death
light has dawned.”

¹⁷ From that time Jesus began to proclaim, “Repent, for the kingdom of heaven has come near.”

¹⁸ As he walked by the Sea of Galilee, he saw two brothers, Simon, who is called Peter, and Andrew his brother, casting a net into the sea—for they were fishermen. ¹⁹ And he said to them, “Follow me, and I will make you fish for people.” ²⁰ Immediately they left their nets and followed him. ²¹ As he went from there, he saw two other brothers, James son of Zebedee and his brother John, in the boat with their father Zebedee, mending their nets, and he called them. ²² Immediately they left the boat and their father, and followed him. ²³ Jesus went throughout Galilee, teaching in their synagogues and proclaiming the good news of the kingdom and curing every disease and every sickness among the people.

Choir Anthem “I Will Arise” (words by Joseph Hart, traditional melody, arr. by Peter Amidon)

Message Curing and Healing

Musical Reflections

Anointing for Healing and Strength (use colored insert)

Joys and Concerns, Pastoral Prayer and the Lord's Prayer

Our Father, Mother God, 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 trespasses as we forgive those who trespass against us. And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil. For thine is the kingdom and the power and the glory, forever. Amen

Our Time of Giving

Doxology

*Praise God from whom all blessings flow;
Praise God, all creatures here below;
Praise God for all that love has done;
Creator, Christ, and Spirit, One. Amen*

News of God at Work in our Congregation & Community

Closing Hymn #179 We Yearn, O Christ, for Wholeness

1. We yearn, O Christ for wholeness, and for your healing touch;
Too long have we felt helpless; our burdens seem too much.
Forgetting all pretenses, we make our pleadings heard.
In hope and expectation await your gracious Word.
2. We long to have companions who travel by our side,
Strong friends to call and answer with whom we are allied;
As we lift up each other when struggles lay us low,
Community develops; our faith and caring grow.
3. We need your living presence, O Christ of Galilee,
A presence that revives us and sets our spirits free.
No longer are we fearful, your love pervades each place.
Empower us with courage to claim you healing grace.

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Benediction

Sending Music