

PRAYER OF DEDICATION AND THANKSGIVING

From your hands, O God, come the blessings that make life possible, even the very gift of life itself. In gratitude and thanks, receive from our hands this portion of our labors. By your Spirit's leading, may we use these gifts to bless the life of others with the assurance of love, the promise of hope, and the course of justice. This we do to your glory. Amen.

GRATITUDES, PRAYER REQUESTS, LIGHT OF GOD MOMENTS

Lord's Prayer - Our Father, which 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 them that trespass against us. And lead us not into temptation, But deliver us from evil. For thine is the kingdom, The power, and the glory, For ever and ever. Amen.

Closing Hymn: Like a River Glorious #463

BENEDICTION

We are a people loved by God.

We will live as signs of this love.

We are a people blessed with hope.

We will live in light of this hope.

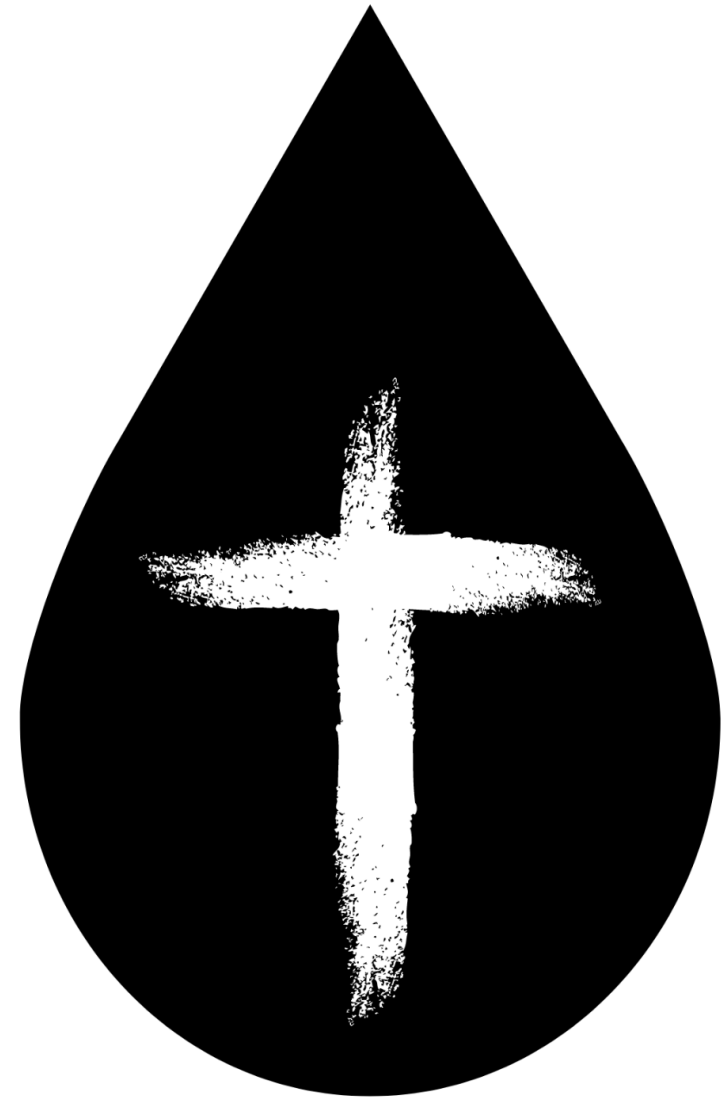
May the love of God, the grace of Christ,
and the courage of the Spirit, strengthen our faith
and set us loose to share God's love with all.

Amen and amen! - Amen 🎵

Bulletin Sources:

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**If you are visiting for the first time today, know that we are happy and blessed to have you with us.*



Peace & Life



Mont Vernon Congregational Church

UCC - United Church of Christ

March 26, 2023 - Abbie Velez

Prelude

Welcome and Announcements

Calling in the Light

CALL TO WORSHIP

Coming from places that have seen better days,

**God bids us to celebrate this day,
a day full of new possibilities.**

Coming with our breath taken away by grief,
**the Holy Spirit breathes new life within us,
renewing our connection with God
and with one another.**

Coming to worship seeking a hope that will endure,
**Christ unbinds the fetters that hold us in death,
speaking in word and sacrament,
and building community for holy service.**

Opening Hymn: What Wondrous Love #226

OPENING PRAYER

God of life, present and promised, you are the One to whom we call: for you are the One who hears, and you are the One who acts, bringing us new life with your grace and love and power. Lead us in our time of worship, that we may be prepared to follow your lead in places where life is at risk—places where hope seems far away, places where dreams die during sleep.

When we leave these walls, help us live the teachings we proclaim within this place of worship, through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

Psalm 130

#850

PRAYER OF CONFESSION

Forgive us, O God, when we see the world through rose-colored glasses rather than as it really is, much less the way you seek it to be. Forgive us, Holy One, when we forsake lively and risky faith calling us to be agents of change in our world for the bland conviction that all will be well. Renew us with your grace and ground us with your Spirit, that we might be empowered to live, in word and deed, as testimonies to the power of your love over the grave. In Jesus Christ, we pray. Amen.

*Moment of Silent Prayer

WORDS OF ASSURANCE

The God we serve is the God of life, the God of hope, the God of new beginnings—even for dried-up bones and shattered dreams. That rattling of bones in Ezekiel's vision may be heard as the shackles that once held us down in fear, sin, prejudice, and guilt. God defies these deadly entanglements with the power of life. This we trust, and by this we live. Thanks be to God!

STORY FOR ALL AGES

Drumroll please!

SCRIPTURE: *John 11:1-45*

Gloria Patri - Glory be to the Father

THE MESSAGE

Hymn of Response: O Holy Spirit, Breathe on Me #282

OFFERING INVITATION

OFFERING

Doxology - Praise God from whom all blessings flow

John 11:1-45

Reader 1: Now a certain man was ill, Lazarus of Bethany, the village of Mary and her sister Martha. Mary was the one who anointed the Lord with perfume and wiped his feet with her hair; her brother Lazarus was ill. So the sisters sent a message to Jesus, "Lord, he whom you love is ill." But when Jesus heard it, he said, "This illness does not lead to death; rather it is for God's glory, so that the Son of God may be glorified through it."

Accordingly, though Jesus loved Martha and her sister and Lazarus, after having heard that Lazarus was ill, he stayed two days longer in the place where he was. Then after this he said to the disciples, "Let us go to Judea again." The disciples said to him, "Rabbi, the Jews were just now trying to stone you, and are you going there again?"

Jesus answered, "Are there not twelve hours of daylight? Those who walk during the day do not stumble, because they see the light of this world. But those who walk at night stumble, because the light is not in them."

Reader 2: After saying this, he told them, "Our friend Lazarus has fallen asleep, but I am going there to awaken him." The disciples said to him, "Lord, if he has fallen asleep, he will be all right." Jesus, however, had been speaking about his death, but they thought that he was referring merely to sleep.

Then Jesus told them plainly, "Lazarus is dead. For your sake I am glad I was not there, so that you may believe. But let us go to him."

Thomas, who was called the Twin, said to his fellow disciples, "Let us also go, that we may die with him."

When Jesus arrived, he found that Lazarus had already been in the tomb four days. Now Bethany was near Jerusalem, some two miles away, and many of the Jews had come to Martha and Mary to console them about their brother.

Reader 3: When Martha heard that Jesus was coming, she went and met him, while Mary stayed at home. Martha said to Jesus, "Lord, if you had been here, my brother would not have died. But even now I know that God will give you whatever you ask of him."

Jesus said to her, "Your brother will rise again."

Martha said to him, "I know that he will rise again in the resurrection on the last day."

Jesus said to her, "I am the resurrection and the life. Those who believe in me, even though they die, will live, and everyone who lives and believes in me will never die. Do you believe this?"

She said to him, "Yes, Lord, I believe that you are the Messiah, the Son of God, the one coming into the world."

When she had said this, she went back and called her sister Mary, and told her privately, "The Teacher is here and is calling for you." And when she heard it, she got up quickly and went to him.

Reader 4: Now Jesus had not yet come to the village, but was still at the place where Martha had met him. The Jews who were with her in the house, consoling her, saw Mary get up quickly and go out. They followed her because they thought that she was going to the tomb to weep there.

When Mary came where Jesus was and saw him, she knelt at his feet and said to him, "Lord, if you had been here, my brother would not have died."

When Jesus saw her weeping, and the Jews who came with her also weeping, he was greatly disturbed in spirit and deeply moved. He said, "Where have you laid him?" They said to him, "Lord, come and see."

Jesus began to weep.

So the Jews said, "See how he loved him!" But some of them said, "Could not he who opened the eyes of the blind man have kept this man from dying?"

Reader 5: Then Jesus, again greatly disturbed, came to the tomb. It was a cave, and a stone was lying against it. Jesus said, "Take away the stone." Martha, the sister of the dead man, said to him, "Lord, already there is a stench because he has been dead four days."

Jesus said to her, "Did I not tell you that if you believed, you would see the glory of God?"

So they took away the stone. And Jesus looked upward and said, "Father, I thank you for having heard me. I knew that you always hear me, but I have said this for the sake of the crowd standing here, so that they may believe that you sent me."

When he had said this, he cried with a loud voice, "Lazarus, come out!"

The dead man came out, his hands and feet bound with strips of cloth, and his face wrapped in a cloth. Jesus said to them, "Unbind him, and let him go."

Many of the Jews therefore, who had come with Mary and had seen what Jesus did, believed in him.

Here ends the reading of the Lord