



February 5, 2023
Greenfield Charge United Church of Christ

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Sunday Morning Meditation

For the law rules and governs mankind; therefore the law judges mankind, and not mankind the law.

– Martin Luther
Table Talk (16th Century)

Greenfield Charge United Church of Christ

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Joint Service - Mt Hope 11:00am

5th Sunday after Epiphany / “*Break Forth*”

Community News

Prayer List and Prayers of the People

Prelude/Lighting of the Candles

* *Call to Worship*

inspired by Psalm 112:1-10

Praise the Holy One! Be in awe of God!

Happy are those who delight in the Holy One’s presence!

Fear no evil. Keep your heart firm. Be secure in God!

Happy are those who delight in the Holy One’s protection!

Arise for what is right. Be pursuers of justice.

Happy are those who delight in the Holy One’s power!

* *Invocation*

Sovereign God, we gather as a community to worship you in spirit and in truth. May we resist empty actions. Let our rituals and routines hold meaning and connect us to you. May we seek an encounter with you to receive your revelation and be transformed, healed, and renewed. Let it be so. Amen.

* *Opening Hymn*

“Stand Up and Bless the Lord”

PH #25

Prayer for Transformation and New Life

Righteous One, it is not easy to follow your path. Your way requires sacrifice and intention—resisting cultural norms and societal pressures and abandoning our need to control and to function from our own power. Sometimes, we add complexity in order to assure ourselves it is not possible to be faithful. Yet, your way is simple. Soften our hearts and encourage us to return to the journey with you.

Words of Grace

God, who is faithful, can redeem our detours and misdirections on the journey for our good and the good of others. God’s invitation to covenantal life has no expiration date, and the Holy One receives us with joy and grace when we take even a step toward the kingdom. Amen.

Old Testament Reading

Isaiah 58:1-9a NIV

True Fasting

58 “Shout it aloud, do not hold back.

Raise your voice like a trumpet.

Declare to my people their rebellion
and to the descendants of Jacob their sins.

²For day after day they seek me out;
they seem eager to know my ways,
as if they were a nation that does what is right
and has not forsaken the commands of its God.

They ask me for just decisions
and seem eager for God to come near them.

³‘Why have we fasted,’ they say,
‘and you have not seen it?’

Why have we humbled ourselves,
and you have not noticed?’

“Yet on the day of your fasting, you do as you please
and exploit all your workers.

⁴Your fasting ends in quarreling and strife,
and in striking each other with wicked fists.

You cannot fast as you do today
and expect your voice to be heard on high.

⁵Is this the kind of fast I have chosen,
only a day for people to humble themselves?

Is it only for bowing one’s head like a reed
and for lying in sackcloth and ashes?

Is that what you call a fast,
a day acceptable to the LORD?

⁶“Is not this the kind of fasting I have chosen:

to loose the chains of injustice
and untie the cords of the yoke,

to set the oppressed free
and break every yoke?

⁷Is it not to share your food with the hungry
and to provide the poor wanderer with shelter—
when you see the naked, to clothe them,
and not to turn away from your own flesh and blood?

⁸Then your light will break forth like the dawn,
and your healing will quickly appear;
then your righteousness will go before you,
and the glory of the LORD will be your rear guard.

⁹Then you will call, and the LORD will answer;
you will cry for help, and he will say: Here am I.

Epistle Reading

1 Corinthians 2:1-12 NIV

And so it was with me, brothers and sisters. When I came to you, I did not come with eloquence or human wisdom as I proclaimed to you the testimony about God. ²For I resolved to know nothing while I was with you except Jesus Christ and him crucified. ³I came to you in weakness with great fear and trembling. ⁴My message and my preaching were not with wise and persuasive words, but with a demonstration of the Spirit's power, ⁵so that your faith might not rest on human wisdom, but on God's power.

God's Wisdom Revealed by the Spirit

⁶We do, however, speak a message of wisdom among the mature, but not the wisdom of this age or of the rulers of this age, who are coming to nothing. ⁷No, we declare God's wisdom, a mystery that has been hidden and that God destined for our glory before time began. ⁸None of the rulers of this age understood it, for if they had, they would not have crucified the Lord of glory. ⁹However, as it is written:

“What no eye has seen,
what no ear has heard,
and what no human mind has conceived”—
the things God has prepared for those who love him—

¹⁰ these are the things God has revealed to us by his Spirit.

The Spirit searches all things, even the deep things of God. ¹¹For who knows a person's thoughts except their own spirit within them? In the same way no one knows the thoughts of God except the Spirit of God. ¹²What we have received is not the spirit of the world, but the Spirit who is from God, so that we may understand what God has freely given us.

* *The Reading of the Holy Gospel*

Matthew 5:13-20 NIV

Gloria Tibi (Glory be to Thee, O Lord.)

TH #497

Salt and Light

¹³“You are the salt of the earth. But if the salt loses its saltiness, how can it be made salty again? It is no longer good for anything, except to be thrown out and trampled underfoot.

¹⁴“You are the light of the world. A town built on a hill cannot be hidden. ¹⁵Neither do people light a lamp and put it under a bowl. Instead

they put it on its stand, and it gives light to everyone in the house. ¹⁶ In the same way, let your light shine before others, that they may see your good deeds and glorify your Father in heaven.

The Fulfillment of the Law

¹⁷ “Do not think that I have come to abolish the Law or the Prophets; I have not come to abolish them but to fulfill them. ¹⁸ For truly I tell you, until heaven and earth disappear, not the smallest letter, not the least stroke of a pen, will by any means disappear from the Law until everything is accomplished. ¹⁹ Therefore anyone who sets aside one of the least of these commands and teaches others accordingly will be called least in the kingdom of heaven, but whoever practices and teaches these commands will be called great in the kingdom of heaven. ²⁰ For I tell you that unless your righteousness surpasses that of the Pharisees and the teachers of the law, you will certainly not enter the kingdom of heaven.

* *Gloria Patri*

Children's Message / Congregation Conversation

* *Meditation Hymn*

“Near the Cross”

VH #347

Today's Message

* *The Apostle's Creed*

I believe in God the Father Almighty, Maker of heaven and earth; And in Jesus Christ his only begotten Son, our Lord; who was conceived by the Holy Ghost, born of the Virgin Mary, suffered under Pontius Pilate, was crucified, dead, and buried; he descended into hades; the third day he rose again from the dead; he ascended into heaven, and sitteth on the right hand of God the Father Almighty; from thence he shall come to judge the quick and the dead.

**I believe in the Holy Ghost, the holy catholic/Christian church; the communion of saints; the forgiveness of sins; the resurrection of the body; and the life everlasting.
Amen.**

* *The Lord's Prayer*

**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.**

** Sung Response* *“Hear Our Prayer, O Lord”* TH # 501

The Giving of Our Tithes and Offerings

Offertory Statement

Offertory (MH)

** Doxology* TH # 551

** Offertory Prayer*

**God of Heaven and Earth, receive our gifts as a deposit of
trust in your faithfulness and a seed of hope for the
flourishing of your kingdom. Amen.**

** Closing Hymn* *“When I Survey the Wondrous Cross”* VH #110

** Benediction*

Break forth in the world secure in the love of God. Break forth into
the kingdom for love of God and neighbor.

Trust the good news.

Proclaim the good news.

Be the good news. Amen.

** Three-Fold Amen* TH # 558

** Postlude/Extinguishing of the Candle*

Break Forth: Service Prayers for the Fifth Sunday after Epiphany was written by The Rev. Dr. Cheryl A. Lindsay,
Minister for Worship and Theology, United Church of Christ.