



5th AVE. UNITED METHODIST CHURCH
323 South 5th Avenue ~ West Bend WI 53095

Fourth Sunday In Lent ~ March 19, 2023



Jonah...for Lent?
It sounds fishy, but
it's a natural fit.
When the people
asked Jesus for a
sign, he said, "I will
give you only the sign
of Jonah."

After three days in
the belly of the earth,
Jesus rose with the
Good News of God's
extravagant grace for
the people of the
world.

This Lenten series will explore the meaning of "the sign of Jonah" as we follow the Hebrew prophet Jonah on his journey and see how it parallels the journey of Jesus to the cross.

What does this old story reveal about our hearts, our relationships, our passions, and our world view? How does this story connect to your Lenten journey story?

Come. Together we will journey through the story of Jonah ... and find ourselves in it!

Kelly Louk, Liturgist
Dave Bertelsen, Singer
Rev. Clarissa Martinelli, Senior Pastor

JOIN US IN PERSON OR ONLINE
Sundays, 9:30 A.M.

WELCOME TO FIFTH AVE. UMC

Whether you're just beginning to explore your faith or have been following Christ for years,
you and your whole family can belong at Fifth Ave. UMC

*Note: L: denotes worship "Leader" ~ P: denotes "People"

~GATHERING GOD'S PEOPLE~

HANDBELL PRELUDE: **“Were You There?”** **Kathy Schneider, Director**

~WELCOME~

GREETING:

Pastor: Welcome. Christ is calling you as disciples! He is calling us to leave our comfortable ways and venture forward with him. You will be led into fields of mission and service. Jesus, knows you are afraid, so it's easier to remain bound to your habits. Come. Let your hearts and spirits be open. Listen for Christ's call to you. *Lord, give us the courage to follow you all of our lives.* All are welcome!

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~COME, LET US WORSHIP TOGETHER~

CENTERING MUSIC: **“Meditation”** **Felix Mendelssohn**

***CALL TO WORSHIP: (Responsively)**

L: Jesus is calling you to follow him.

P: We'd really like to but we have too much to do right now. Check back later, OK?

L: Jesus sees your labors and knows your gifts

P: Flattery will not work on us. We have bills to pay and work to do.

L: Jesus is ready for you to come.

P: Look, the stories are nice and all, but they really don't work for us.

L: Have faith, place your trust in Jesus.

P: Well, everyone else seems to let us down. How can we be sure he won't do the same?

L: He will prove his love to you with his life.

P: We didn't ask for that.

L: What will it take for you to trust in him?

P: We don't know. Trust is risky.

L: Then take the risk. Place your lives in his hands. He can handle all your problems.

P: Will he really guide us?

L: Absolutely, through bright days and dark nights, everywhere, all the time.

P: Can we rely on him?

L: Yes. He will not abandon you.

P: Perhaps we can try.

L: Don't just try. Go ahead. Follow Jesus. You won't regret it.

P: Jesus, help our unbelief. Where we are weak, give us strength; where we falter and hold back, gently bring us forward; where we fail, please forgive us. AMEN

***PRAYER OF CONFESSION:**

L: God...you call us...and sometimes...we duck under the table...hoping you didn't notice us when you walked into the room. You call us...and sometimes...we grab a stapler and a stack of papers...trying to look too busy to be bothered at the moment. You call us...and sometimes we just say, “No!” We know that we aren't expected to do everything...but we often forget that you call us

to be ourselves in the places where our very self is what is most needed. So, give us the grace to say “Yes” to your call...even now...as we offer our silent confessions...

***PRAYING IN COMUNITY: unison**

Holy One, what a blessing and privilege we share here in this sacred space and among this loving Methodist community. But, like Jonah, we sometimes are jealous of what we share here. We know that others are longing and thirsting for what we know and experience as children of God. Forgive us our reluctance to open our doors, open our hearts to others; some like us, some not. We repent of our hesitations and unwillingness to witness to those we have considered strangers and even enemies for fear they just might become Christian brothers and sisters. Amen.

***WORDS OF ASSURANCE:**

L: The one who calls us to this place calls us to reconciliation through grace. God will not deny a repentant heart or an open spirit. Know that you are forgiven and walk in the new way that is made known to you in God's love. **Amen.**

***HYMN:**

“The Summons” (vs. 1, 2, 3)

TFWS 2130

~WE PROCLAIM~ in unison

*** Jonah 3:1-5; 8-10 ~ GOD’S WORD Translation (GW)**

Then the Lord spoke his word to Jonah a second time. He said, “Leave at once for the important city, Nineveh. Announce to the people the message I have given you.” Jonah immediately went to Nineveh as the Lord told him. Nineveh was a very large city. It took three days to walk through it. Jonah entered the city and walked for about a day. Then he said, “In forty days Nineveh will be destroyed.” The people of Nineveh believed God. They decided to fast, and everyone, from the most important to the least important, dressed in sackcloth. Cry loudly to God for help. Turn from your wicked ways and your acts of violence. Who knows? God may reconsider his plans and turn from his burning anger so that we won’t die.” God saw what they did. He saw that they turned from their wicked ways. So, God reconsidered his threat to destroy them, and he didn’t do it.

L: Word of God for the people of the God. **P:** Praise to our Living God.

CHOIR ANTHEM “This is not My Place of Resting” Dave Bertelsen, Director

SERMON: “Prophet Jonah’s Second Chance with God” Pastor Clarissa

~FOURTH SUNDAY IN LENT HOLY COMMUNION~

L: The Lord be with you.

P: And also with you.

L: Lift up your hearts.

P: We lift them up to the Lord.

L: Let us give thanks to the Lord our God.

P: It is right to give our thanks and praise.

L: You are true to who You are and reveal to us the glories of your presence. You are a God of love, who speaks against oppression and injustice. You are a God of grace, who asks us to forgive those who are blind to their privilege, even as You invite the world to learn from You. You are the Creator God, who weaves the beauty of diversity into something fresh and new, the garment of understanding and wonder.

L: You call us to follow You out of the familiar and comfortable, and to live by faith: calling upon Your holy name, and trusting in the power of Your grace. You invite us to be like Jonah and preach Your word in Nineveh, bringing salvation to our historical oppressors. You move our hearts to say with Ruth; “Wherever you live, that is where I will now live. You will be family. Your God will be mine. I will even die for you, buried next to you.”

L: Because You show Your mercy to every nation and people upon the earth; because You speak every language and delight in every culture; we join in your praise with all the earth. Because You have embraced people from every continent; have walked with all of our ancestors, continue to hear our praise around Your throne; we join in their endless praise, saying:

All: Holy, holy, holy Lord, God of power and might. Heaven and earth are full of your glory. Hosanna in the highest. Blessed are they who come in the name of the Lord. Hosanna in the highest.

Pastor: You are holy and Jesus is Immanuel, God with us. Leaving all that was familiar in heaven, Jesus was born into the people and culture of Israel. Jesus was taught the language and the traditions of his family. Jesus worshiped in the Temple in Jerusalem. Jesus came first to the lost sheep of Israel, people of his race, people of his culture. Jesus also shared Your grace with Roman oppressors, who killed his people. Jesus entered into deep theological discussions with a Samaritan woman, breaking cultural taboos and stereotypes. Jesus responded to the needs of a Syro-Phoenician woman, going against the deeply ingrained prejudices that his society had taught him. Jesus realized that You, O God, love the world so much that You wanted everyone to believe, even if it meant personal sacrifice.

When culture dictated that the least important was to wash feet, Jesus broke with social convention, left the seat of honor, took off his robe, and with a towel and basin in his hands, knelt and washed the feet of the one who would betray him; washed the feet of the one who would deny him not once but three times; and the feet of those who would desert him to save their own lives. Jesus invites us to do the same.

As an expression of culture, Jesus took the bread and remembered the historical struggles of his people, and shared it with everyone, saying: “Take, eat, this is my body given for you.”

As an expression of culture, Jesus took the cup and remembered the historical struggles of his people, and shared it with everyone, saying: “Drink with me all of you, for this is my blood poured out as a witness to the Divine Covenant of forgiveness with you and the whole world.”

Out of specific culture Jesus works cross-culturally to bring salvation to the whole world. Jesus came not just to save his own people but all peoples. Jesus came not just to save his own economic class but those of any class. Jesus came not just to save those of his own gender identity, but those of every

gender identity. We have testified that this mystery of salvation found in Jesus Christ is for all, when we say:

All: Christ has died, Christ is risen, Christ will come again.

Pastor: Cross-cultural Dancer, Wind of Change use these simple gifts of bread and wine to become for us the body and blood of Christ, source of Your transforming power.

Cross-cultural Dancer, Wind of Change use the simple gift of our lives, our culture, our faithfulness, and our dreams to become for the world, the church: the authentic body and devoted bride of Christ, source of Your transforming power.

Cross-cultural Dancer, Wind of Change be with all those called to cross the social boundaries of race and culture to boldly go where only Your grace could send them. Give them the courage to accept Your challenge to pick up their cross and follow You. Use their faithfulness to set the captives free, to restore sight to the blind, to liberate the oppressed, and to share the Good News of the availability of your grace to all.

Be blessed by the presence of Christ. Be blessed by the power of the Holy Spirit. Be blessed by the creativity of The Divine Inspiration, who will continually receive all our glory, thanks and praise. **Amen.**

PRAYER AFTER COMMUNION

L: Now as those called and empowered by God let us join with Christ in prayer:

All: 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 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.

~PRAYERS & CONCERNS OF THE PEOPLE~

L: Lord in your mercy,

All: hear our prayer.

Pastor: We listen to the stories of the call of the disciples and find them interesting but unrealistic. When we look at our own lives, we believe that we could not leave everything to follow someone we didn't know. We have many responsibilities and ties which keep us from following. But God is persistent. God understands our confusion and doubts. And God continues to call us to be in ministry and mission in this world. It may not mean leaving everything behind, but it does mean being willing to serve wherever God calls us. That's hard. We want to place conditions on service, and usually those conditions are "if we have time", "if we have energy"; "if we can just try serving God for a little while to see how it all works out". Still God calls to each of us. Discipleship is difficult. Forgive us, patient and persistent Lord, for the very many times we turn our backs on serving you and focus on our own comforts. Forgive us when we look the other way when people are in need. Forgive us our angry attitudes and actions which hurt rather than heal. Wrap your arms around us, healing our wounds, binding us to you. Gently move us into service in your name. **Amen.**

Nicholas Jacques Lemmens