

**BETHESDA MENNONITE CHURCH
HENDERSON, NEBRASKA
SUNDAY, MARCH 1, 2020, 9:30 A.M.
First Sunday of Lent**

God's people are now in the land God promised them. God has delivered the Israelites and when they entered the land with Joshua, they promised full obedience to Him. They couldn't keep this promise; they were so easily pulled into the religious pluralism of the day. But God keeps coming back to them. When they cry for mercy, God raises a new judge. And for a time, the Israelites obey. Yet even the judges become increasingly flawed and sinful – not quite the heroes our Sunday school stories sometimes make them out to be. In Judges we see a messy people and a merciful God.

We, too, are messy people. The more we confess our messiness and our brokenness the more God's transformational mercy can shape us into the people God means for us to be. The true hero of the book – and of each of our stories – is God!

Prelude Chelsea Vaught, Organist

"Of the Father's Love Begotten" Paul Wohlgenuth Chancel Choir
Directed by Rod Drews
Accompanied by Chelsea Vaught

Welcome & Call to Worship Pastor Gene Thieszen
Leader: Put aside the distractions of this world's many gods, stand in awe before God's love, prepare to worship in sincerity and faithfulness.
People: We will serve the Lord, and his voice we will trust and obey, that generations to come may know God.
Leader: Stand up and celebrate the good news this day so that others may set their hope in the living God. We will not hide our thanks and praise but tell of the glorious deeds of the Lord and all the wonders God has done for us!

* "Our Father God, Thy Name We Praise" HWB 32
(Children are invited to come forward during stanza 4.)

Children's Focus Pastor Andrea Wall

* "The Glory of These Forty Days" HWB 225

Congregational Prayer Pastor Andrea Wall

Time of Reflective Silence
† How have you seen the Judges cycle in your life? In the systems of government, society, or church?
† Which gods of our age – wealth, security, comfort, achievement, health – are you tempted to rely on?
† How does the reality of your sin and God's grace prompt you to praise and thank God today?

"And Can it Be" Dan Forrest Chancel Choir
(Lyrics on last page of Bethesda News.)

Scripture Reading: Judges 2:1-5, 16-23; 3:4-6 Pastor Gene Thieszen
Leader: This is the Word of God, for the people of God.
People: Thanks be to God!

Message "The Cycle Begins" Pastor Seth Miller

* "What Wondrous Love Is This" HWB 530

Announcements Pastor Gene Thieszen
(Children are invited to come forward following announcements.)

My Coins Count Kara Janzen

Offering to God: Mennonite Church USA Pastor Gene Thieszen
Offertory Chelsea Vaught

Litany of Release & Blessing Laura Steingard
(See back of bulletin.)

* Benediction Pastor Seth Miller

* "The Lord Bless You and Keep You" Peter C. Lutkin Chancel Choir

**If you are able, please stand.*

All are invited to participate in the Christian education hour and to stop by the Coffee Spot in the Fellowship Hall.

Litany of Release & Blessing

Leader: As we celebrate Pastor Andrea's return from maternity leave and welcome her back into her role as Pastor of Faith Formation, we mark the conclusion of Kara Janzen's service as an interim pastor among us. Kara has faithfully used her gifts in and among us and we are grateful for her care and leadership during these past months.

People: God has blessed us richly through your ministry. We now bless you as you conclude your service as an interim pastor among us.

Leader: As you, the people of Bethesda Mennonite Church, called and blessed Kara in her role as Interim Pastor for Faith Formation, do you now release her from her from those same responsibilities and relationships?

People: With the help of God, we do. We give thanks for Kara's faithfulness and acknowledge this transition in the life of our congregation. We will continue to welcome and care for Kara as a sister in this congregation recognizing her transition from this role.

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Office Hours: Monday – Thursday 8:00 a.m. – 4:30 p.m.
Phone: 402-723-4562
Email: bethesda@mainstaycomm.net or
treasurer@bethesdamc.org
Website: www.bethesdamc.org

- When you are unable to attend worship, please join us by radio at KOOL 103.5 FM or by livestream at www.bethesdamc.org. Click the WATCH LIVE tab to view live services or click LIVESTREAM ARCHIVE to view previous services.
- Hearing Impaired Worshipers: If you need hearing assistance, feel free to sit in the front center seating to take advantage of our Hearing-Loop system. Williams units are also available in the rear of the sanctuary for your use.
- When you desire pastoral care outside of office hours, please call:
 - Pastor Seth Miller: 717-824-5998 (cell) or email seth.miller@bethesdamc.org
 - Pastor Gene Thieszen: 580-660-5796 (cell) or email pastor.gene95@gmail.com
 - Pastor Andrea: 402-710-3195 (cell) or email andrea@mainstaycomm.net
- In addition to assistance from Bethesda pastors and deacons, domestic abuse support services are available to victims. Call (toll-free) 1-877-388-4673, 24 hours/day.



**A Lenten Series
The Book of Judges**