

# FAITH UNITED METHODIST CHURCH

February 21, 2021 † 10:30 a.m.

## First Sunday in Lent

Announcements and prayer concerns will be shown on the livestream before and after the worship service.

### For Reflection Before the Service

'Prayer is an act of openness. When we pray, we participate in the ultimate practice of humanness as we yield to a Power greater than ourselves. Our best prayers engage in candor about our lives, practice vulnerability, run risks, and rest in confident trust.'

*Walter Brueggemann, Prayers for a Privileged People*

### Prelude

### Welcome and Announcements

### Greetings from Fred Leverenz, Guest Liturgist from Bethel UMC

#### Call to Worship (responsive):

Fred Leverenz, Bethel UMC

The Spirit led Jesus into the wilderness and is leading us too.

**We too will be tempted and tested.**

As we begin our Lenten journey, let us be led by the Spirit,

**Even into the uncomfortable places.**

As we seek to follow Jesus in these 40 days,

**And our whole lives long,**

May we be faithful and obedient to the perfecter of our faith, Jesus the Christ,

**Who came to preach good news to the poor, proclaim release to the prisoners,**

And to liberate the oppressed!

**This is our teacher and Savior we follow and worship this day.**

### Opening Hymn

*A Mighty Fortress Is Our God* (v. 1 & 3)

110 UMH

### Prayer of Brokenness/Confession (in unison):

**Listening God, sometimes we pray confidently, trusting in your love. Sometimes we approach you fearfully conscious of our own failure. Sometimes we are reluctant to pray, evading Your call to us. Sometimes our prayer is a snatched moment in the hassle of activity. But always You hear us. And so we have confidence in Your company, to know ourselves as You know us, and to bring our confessions of brokenness to you in silence:** [Pray in silence]

### Assurance of Forgiveness

Pastor Kathy

May all that is unforgiven in you be released. May your fears find grace and peace. May all that is un-lived in you blossom into a future, graced with love. Amen.

### Children's Message

### Children's Hymn

*O How He Loves You and Me* (v. 1 & 2)

2108 TFWS

### Offering Words

When we give, we say yes to something we value. With our offerings, which we freely give and gratefully receive, we say yes to the values of our faith. May these gifts help us show our faith within and beyond our church. Thank you for sharing your offering for the ministry of your church.

### \*Offertory Response

*A Lenten Doxology*

(sung to the tune of Praise God, from Whom All Blessings Flow)

Praise God throughout these forty days. Praise Christ, our Lord, whom God did raise.  
And praise the spirit who imparts, God's love in Christ into our hearts. Amen.

**Prayer of Thanksgiving for the Offering** (in unison)

**We walk by faith, we live by faith, we give by faith. God, you have given us so much. Accept these gifts from our hands, our faithful response to Your abundant grace. Amen**

**Pastoral Prayer and 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 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.**

**Scripture Reading**

Luke 4:1-21

Fred Leverenz

**Diminishing the Light**

During Lent, we remember the events that led Jesus to his crucifixion. He had come into the world to bring hope and light, but at every turn there were those who sought to extinguish that light. He offered healing and wisdom, yet his gifts were often rejected by those filled with hatred and fear. The Service of Diminishing Lights reminds us of the 6 weeks that rapidly move from Ash Wednesday to Easter. As a candle is extinguished each Sunday, we are reminded of the darkness of Lent as we journey to the light of Easter.

**Sermon Hymn**

*Lord, Who Throughout These Forty Days* (v. 1 & 2)

269 UMH

**Introduction to the Lenten Sermon Series from Pastor Kathy**

A few weeks ago my doctor recommended a physical therapy program for my arthritic left knee, so that hopefully I can postpone knee replacement surgery for a few more years. As we start any exercise plan, it helps to know who's instructing us; do they know normal struggles; what's their philosophy? It matters who we trust with our efforts and spirit. What do we know about Jesus? We learn in the reading from Luke today that he endured temptations in the wilderness for 40 days, which means he understands our temptations. And we know he preached justice and freedom for the oppressed, and calls us to follow this way. What areas of your spiritual life do you need to strengthen as you begin this journey of Lent? Let's see what Jesus has to teach us.

**Sermon**

A Spiritual Exercise Program: Meet the Founder

Pastor Kathy

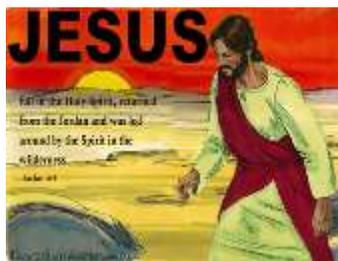
**\*Closing Hymn**

*It Is Well with My Soul* (v. 1 & 2)

377 UMH

**\*Benediction**

*And now our service begins...*



**Join us for "Virtual Fellowship" today at 11:30 a.m. via Zoom.**

*Pastors: Rev. Kathy Reid, Faith and Bethel UMCs*

*Worship Musician: Hilarie Mukavitz*

*Guest Liturgist: Fred Leverenz, Bethel UMC*

*Music Director: Chris Raisbeck*

*Song Leaders: Carl TenPas*

*Audio Visual Team: Caleb TenPas, Caren Schultz, and Sophia Koeppen*



## Five Questions to Ask Yourself during your Lenten Faith Journey

1. When I wake up on Resurrection Sunday morning, how will I be different? What am I preparing for?
2. Is there something in my life—a habit, a grudge, a fear, a prejudice, an addiction, an emotional barrier, a form of excess—that keeps me from loving God with my heart, soul, mind, and strength and loving my neighbor as myself? How might I address that over the next 40 days?
3. What are some things in my life that I tell myself I need but I don't? Can I give one or two of them up for 40 days?
4. Is there a spiritual discipline—praying the hours, Lectio Divina (a traditional monastic practice of scriptural reading, meditation and prayer intended to promote communion with God and to increase the knowledge of God's Word), stations of the cross, etc.—that I've always wanted to try? How might I alter my daily routine to include one of these disciplines? And how can I engage all my senses—sight, sound, taste, smell, touch—as I practice them?
5. How do I want Lent 2021 to affect not only the next 40 days but also the next 40 years?

Rev. Rachel Held Evans

**Get creative with what you “give up.”** A few years ago, I gave up sleeping in for Lent and found that fast surprisingly challenging and meaningful. I committed to rising just before dawn each day to pray, which not only broke my night-owl habits but also turned my heart and mind to the significance of the pre-dawn dark in the death and resurrection cycle. As Barbara Brown Taylor says: “...New life starts in the dark. Whether it is a seed in the ground, a baby in the womb, or Jesus in the tomb, it starts in the dark.” I learned a lot in those quiet, dark moments.

Other things you might want to consider “giving up”: social media, cynicism (replace with wonder, compassion, and hope), perfectionism, legalism, TV, sugar, reading authors and bloggers who tend to look and think like you, comparing yourself to others, etc. - Rev. Rachel Held Evans

### ***A Prayer for Lent*** by Thomas Merton

*My Lord God, I have no idea where I am going. I do not see the road ahead of me. I cannot know for certain where it will end. Nor do I really know myself, and the fact that I think that I am following your will does not mean that I am actually doing so. But I believe that the desire to please you does, in fact, please you. And I hope I have that desire in all that I am doing. I hope that I will never do anything apart from that desire. And I know that if I do this, you will lead me by the right road, though I may know nothing about it. Therefore will I trust you always, though I may seem to be lost and in the shadow of death. I will not fear, for you are ever with me, and you will never leave me to face my perils alone.*

*Wishing you all a blessed Lent. Pastor Kathy*