

4th Sunday of Lent

March 27, 2022



Plymouth United Church of Christ Rev. David Huber, Pastor

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Plymouth United Church of Christ

March 27, 2022

10:30 A.M.

The Family of God Gathers

Gathering Music

“Oh, How He Loves You and Me”

Greeting

Call to Worship ¶§

L: A new day has dawned, God’s gift to us; the fruits of the land are ours to enjoy.

P: **We are a new creation in Jesus Christ; the old has passed away, the new has come.**

L: This is a day for forgiveness and reconciliation; celebrate God’s love for the lost who are found.

P: **The glad cries of deliverance surround us; shouts of joy arise from our hearts.**


Opening Hymn Bulletin page 9

“When We Are Tested”

Prayer of Confession †

Merciful God, we confess that we stray from your ways. Like the Prodigal Son, we waste our inheritance. Like the older brother, we live as competitors for your grace. You give us neighbors to love, but we pursue selfish ambitions. You give us neighbors to welcome, but we find ways to judge them as unworthy. Forgive us and bring us to repentance. Draw our wandering and hardened hearts back to you that we may find freedom in obedience to your love. Amen.

Kyrie



Lord have mer-cy. Lord have mer-cy. Lord have mer - cy.
Christ, have mer-cy. Christ have mer-cy. Christ have mer - cy.
Lord have mer-cy. Lord have mer-cy. Lord have mer - cy.

Assurance of Pardon §

L: Our return to God is always met with holy arms spread wide in welcoming joy and love. Hear the Good News that in Jesus' name, you are forgiven!

P: **You are forgiven!**

L: May the peace of Christ be with you!

P: **And also with you!**

The Sign of Peace

Now please take a moment and share the peace with those in your household and/or offer a moment to send prayers of peace to those you love who are not with you.

Centering Music



1. Sow the seeds of life, dear Lord. Help us grow by your word
2. May our minds be made a - new by your word break-ing through



Life will bloom with bless- ings when we your voice have heard.
Let the sun come shin- ing in; ev - 'ry heart re - new.

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The Service of the Word

New Testament Lesson

2 Corinthians 5:16–21

From now on, therefore, we regard no one from a human point of view; even though we once knew Christ from a human point of view, we know him no longer in that way. So if anyone is in Christ, there is a new creation: everything old has passed away; see, everything has become new! All this is from God, who reconciled us to himself through Christ, and has given us the ministry of reconciliation; that is, in Christ God was reconciling the world to himself, not counting their trespasses against them, and entrusting the message of reconciliation to us. So we are ambassadors for Christ, since God is making his appeal through us; we entreat you on behalf of Christ, be reconciled to God. For our sake he made him to be sin who knew no sin, so that in him we might become the righteousness of God.

Psalm 32

L: Happy are those whose transgression is forgiven, whose sin is covered.

P: Happy are those to whom the Lord imputes no iniquity, and in whose spirit there is no deceit.

L: While I kept silence, my body wasted away through my groaning all day long.

P: For day and night your hand was heavy upon me; my strength was dried up as by the heat of summer.

L: Then I acknowledged my sin to you, and I did not hide my iniquity;

P: I said, “I will confess my transgressions to the Lord,” and you forgave the guilt of my sin.

L: Therefore let all who are faithful offer prayer to you; at a time of distress, the rush of mighty waters shall not reach them.

P: You are a hiding place for me; you preserve me from trouble; you surround me with glad cries of deliverance.

L: I will instruct you and teach you the way you should go; I will counsel you with my eye upon you.

P: Do not be like a horse or a mule, without understanding, whose temper must be curbed with bit and bridle, else it will not stay near you.

L: Many are the torments of the wicked, but steadfast love surrounds those who trust in the Lord.

P: Be glad in the Lord and rejoice, O righteous, and shout for joy, all you upright in heart.

Gospel

Luke 15:1–3, 11b–32

Now all the tax collectors and sinners were coming near to listen to him. And the Pharisees and the scribes were grumbling and saying, “This fellow welcomes sinners and eats with them.”

So he told them this parable:

“There was a man who had two sons. The younger of them said to his father, ‘Father, give me the share of the property that will belong to me.’ So he divided his property between them. A few days later the younger son gathered all he had and traveled to a distant country, and there he squandered his property in dissolute living. When he had spent everything, a severe famine took place throughout that country, and he began to be in need. So he went and hired himself out to one of the citizens of that country, who sent him to his fields to feed the pigs. He would gladly have filled himself with the pods that the pigs were eating; and no one gave him anything. But when he came to himself he said, ‘How many of my father’s hired hands have bread enough and to spare, but here I am dying of hunger! I will get up and go to my father, and I will say to him, “Father, I have sinned against heaven and

before you; I am no longer worthy to be called your son; treat me like one of your hired hands.” So he set off and went to his father. But while he was still far off, his father saw him and was filled with compassion; he ran and put his arms around him and kissed him. Then the son said to him, ‘Father, I have sinned against heaven and before you; I am no longer worthy to be called your son.’ But the father said to his slaves, ‘Quickly, bring out a robe—the best one—and put it on him; put a ring on his finger and sandals on his feet. And get the fatted calf and kill it, and let us eat and celebrate; for this son of mine was dead and is alive again; he was lost and is found!’ And they began to celebrate.

“Now his elder son was in the field; and when he came and approached the house, he heard music and dancing. He called one of the slaves and asked what was going on. He replied, ‘our brother has come, and your father has killed the fatted calf, because he has got him back safe and sound.’ Then he became angry and refused to go in. His father came out and began to plead with him. But he answered his father, ‘Listen! For all these years I have been working like a slave for you, and I have never disobeyed your command; yet you have never given me even a young goat so that I might celebrate with my friends. But when this son of yours came back, who has devoured your property with prostitutes, you killed the fatted calf for him!’ Then the father said to him, ‘Son, you are always with me, and all that is mine is yours. But we had to celebrate and rejoice, because this brother of yours was dead and has come to life; he was lost and has been found.’”

Sermon

Offering

“How Deep the Father’s Love for Us”

Doxology

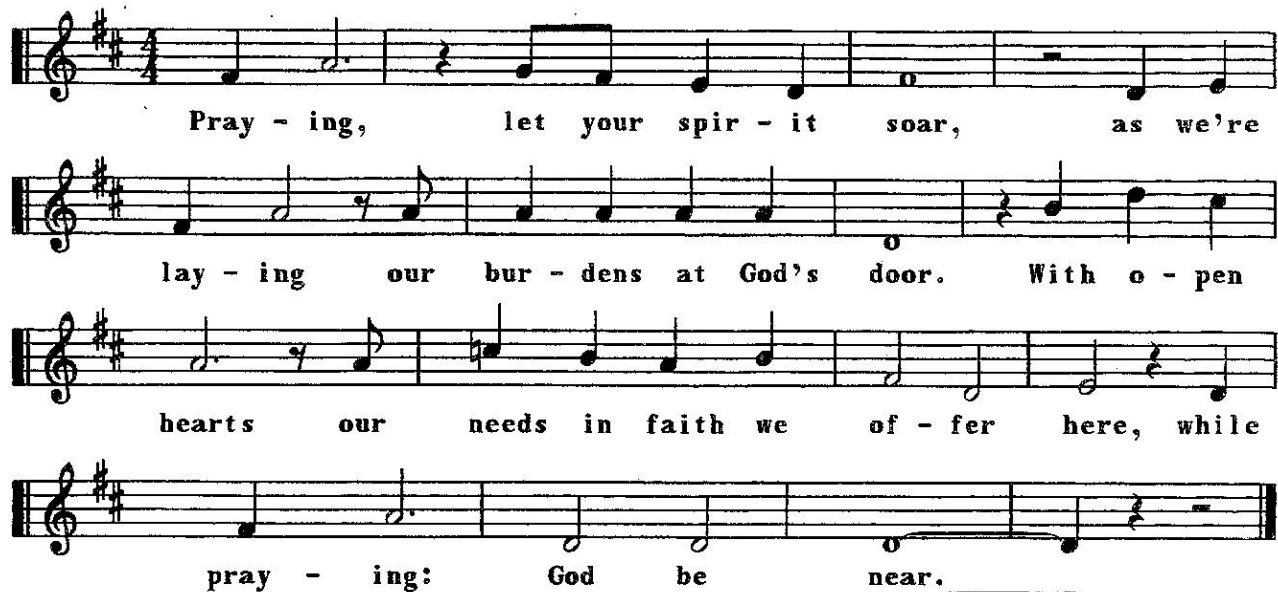
**Praise God from whom all blessings flow
Praise God all creatures here below
Praise God above ye heavenly host
Creator, Christ, and Holy Ghost. Amen.**

Prayer of Dedication of Gifts and Self ☛

**Thank you, God, for proclaiming our worth when we do not value ourselves.
Thank you for welcoming us to a celebration of life with so many precious gifts.
Thank you now for the privilege of sharing so others may be led to your joyous embrace. Help us to be generous in gratitude for your lavish provision for all our needs. Amen.**

Joys and Concerns

Invitation to Prayer



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Prayers of the People

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.

Closing Hymn 202 Bulletin page 10

"Oh God, How We Have Wandered"

*Benediction ☩§

L: Stay near to God during the week that lies ahead; practice what Jesus has told you.

P: We will listen to the words of Christ, to welcome, not judge, our neighbors and to rejoice whenever they turn to God.

L: Seek to love as you are have been loved.

P: Trusting in God's grace, we leave this sanctuary to enter the world as Jesus' disciples, sharing God's love.

All: Amen!

Postlude

“Oh God, How We Have Wandered”

☪ *Gathered by Love* by Levon Baylor ©1994 United Church Press. Used with permission.

† *Feasting on the Word* Worship Companion, Year C, Vol. 1 ©2012 Westminster John Knox Press. Used with permission.

§ Modified/written by Rev. David Huber

This bulletin was sponsored by an anonymous donor.

Cross illumination for March is sponsored by Ben Bechle in memory of his father, Dave Bechle.

Worship Leaders

Pastor: Rev. David Huber • Ministers: All the people of Plymouth • Pianist: Megan Sorenson • Liturgist: Ben Bechle

We of Plymouth extend to you our hand of fellowship and an invitation to become a member. If you are interested, or have any questions, please speak with or send a note to Pastor David or our Moderator, Barb Kleist. Our table always has room for more.

This Week at Plymouth

Sunday, March 27

10:00 A.M. Coffee

10:30 A.M. Worship

Tuesday, March 29

10:00 A.M. Quilters

Sunday, April 3

Community Table offering

10:00 A.M. Coffee

10:30 A.M. Communion Worship

We pray for:

- All houses of worship—churches, temples, and mosques in the Chippewa Valley who provide ecumenical and interfaith combined fellowship and service to our community.

FREE Foot and Nail Care Clinic

University of Wisconsin-Eau Claire, Continuing Education will offer free foot and nail care clinics for community members April 26–29, 2022. Registered nurses will perform foot and nail care services as part of a certification program. The clinic will be supervised by nurse instructors certified in foot and nail care. To ensure the safety of our clients, nurses, and staff, masks are required at the clinical.

Sessions:

Tuesday, April 26, 2022, Wednesday, April 27, 2022 , Thursday, April 25, 2022, Friday, April 26, 2022 (7:30 A.M.–1:30 P.M.)

Time: 7:30 A.M. to 5:30 P.M.

Location:

Grace Lutheran Church
202 West Grand Avenue (near the Courthouse)
Eau Claire, WI 54703

How to schedule an appointment:

The services are free. Appointments are required and will be accepted beginning:

Monday, April 11, 2022, at 8:30 A.M. To schedule an appointment or request accommodations for disabilities, call UW-Eau Claire Continuing Education at 715-836-3636.

When We Are Tested



1 When we are test - ed and wres - tle a - lone,
 2 When in the des - ert we cry for re - lief,
 3 When we are tempt - ed to bar - ter our souls,
 4 When we have strug - gled and searched through the night,



fam - ished for bread when the world of - fers stone,
 plead - ing for paths marked by cer - tain be - lief,
 trad - ing the truth for the pow'r to con - trol,
 sort - ing and sift - ing the wrong from the right,



nour - ish us, God, by your word and your way,
 lift us to love you be - yond sign and test,
 teach us to wor - ship and praise on - ly you,
 Sav - ior, sur - round us with cir - cles of care,



food that sus - tains us by night and by day.
 trust - ing your pres - ence, our on - ly true rest.
 seek - ing your will in the work that we do.
 an - gels of heal - ing, of hope, and of prayer.

Text: Ruth Duck ©1996 Hope Publishing Co.

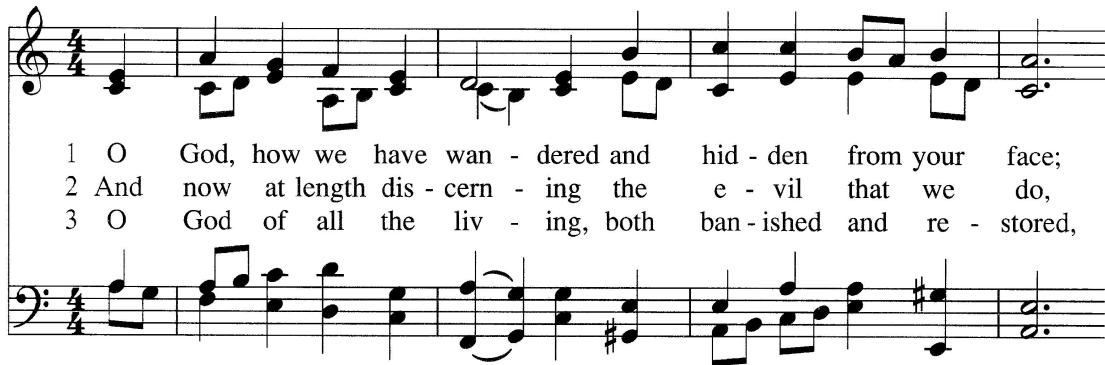
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O God, How We Have Wandered

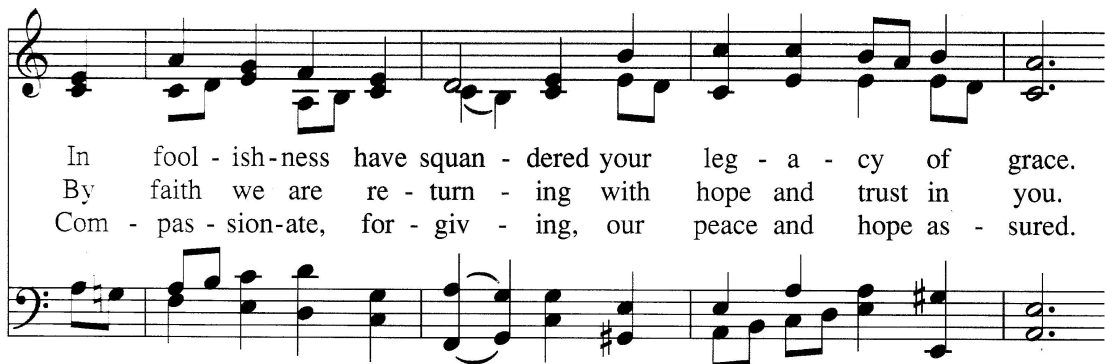
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Kevin Nichols, 1980; alt.

Luke 15:11-32; 2 Cor. 5:16-20



1 O God, how we have wan - dered and hid - den from your face;
 2 And now at length dis - cern - ing the e - vil that we do,
 3 O God of all the liv - ing, both ban - ished and re - stored,



In fool - ish-ness have squan - dered your leg - a - cy of grace.
 By faith we are re - turn - ing with hope and trust in you.
 Com - pas - sion-ate, for - giv - ing, our peace and hope as - sured.



But how, in ex - ile dwell - ing, we turn with fear and shame,
 In haste you come to meet us, and home re - joic - ing bring,
 Grant now that our trans - gress - ing, our faith-less-ness may cease.



As dis - tant but com - pell - ing, you call us each by name.
 In glad-ness there to greet us with calf and robe and ring.
 Stretch out your hand in bless - ing, in par - don, and in peace.

The tune for this contemporary text appears five times in J. S. Bach's St. Matthew Passion, and first appeared as a hymn setting in the early 1800s. It has an ecumenical history reaching back many centuries. Originally it was a German love song.

Tune: PASSION CHORALE 7.6.7.6.D.
 (HERZLICH TUT MICH VERLANGEN)
 Melody by Hans Leo Hassler, 1601
 Harm. J. S. Bach, 1729
 For another harmonization, see 179

Who we are...

Plymouth UCC is an Open and Affirming congregation, embracing diversity and affirming the dignity and worth of every person, since we are all created in God's image. We welcome into full membership and participation in the Body of Christ persons of every race, ethnic background, age, gender identity and expression, sexual orientation, physical or mental ability, socio-economic background, marital status and background. We welcome all to share in the life, leadership, ministry, fellowship, worship, sacraments, responsibilities, humor, and blessings of participation in our congregation.

Spiritual Care Package

Questions for Reflection

In what ways am I like the Prodigal Son? In what ways am I like the elder son?

Household Prayer: Morning

Loving God, in all I do this day, use me as a sign of your reconciling love. Let me not view anyone from a human point of view, but let me see all whom I will encounter with the eyes of Christ, through whom I pray. Amen.

Household Prayer: Evening

Merciful God, if like the Prodigal Son I have strayed from you this day, call me back to your loving embrace. If like the elder son, I have harbored resentment for the grace you give to others, reprove me. Help me claim in thought and deed the inheritance of the saints who share with Jesus compassion and forgiveness to all who lose their way. Amen.

God is still speaking,