



Grace United Methodist Church

March 7, 2021

OUR WELCOMING STATEMENT

God's love is for all and God's grace is present in all creation. God's spirit draws us into community. We are filled with genuine care and love for one another.

Honoring the diversity of our faith journeys, our welcome is extended to all – people of all races, sexes, ethnic backgrounds, generations, physical and mental abilities, economic conditions, sexual orientations, gender identities, and gender expressions. No matter who you are, no matter where you are in your life, you are welcome here.

We are all invited to bless this church with our love, our presence, and our participation.

WELCOME, ANNOUNCEMENTS, AND GREETING ONE ANOTHER

CALL TO WORSHIP

The presence of God is here among us;

Protecting us, loving us, encouraging us.

We come as a people of hope, longing to witness God's power;

May our hearts and minds dwell in the peace that only God can provide.

OPENING PRAYER

Gracious God, there is nowhere for us to escape your grace. Your Spirit is bound to our souls and nothing can separate us from Your love. Work in our hearts that, despite our efforts to evade your presence, we would truly know that deliverance belongs to the Lord. Amen.

SCRIPTURE READING

Jonah 1:17-2:1

Meanwhile, the Lord provided a great fish to swallow Jonah. Jonah was in the belly of the fish for three days and three nights. Jonah prayed to the LORD his God from the belly of the fish: "I called out to the LORD in my distress, and he answered me. From the belly of the underworld I cried out for help; you have heard my voice. You had cast me into the depths in the heart of the seas, and the flood surrounds me. All your strong waves and rushing water passed over me. So I said, 'I have been driven away from your sight. Will I ever again look on your holy temple? Waters have grasped me to the point of death; the deep surrounds me. Seaweed is wrapped around my head at the base of the undersea mountains. I have sunk down to the underworld; its bars held me with no end in sight. But you brought me out of the pit.' When my endurance was weakening, I remembered the LORD, and my prayer came to you, to your holy temple. Those deceived by worthless things lose their chance for mercy. But me, I will offer a sacrifice to you with a voice of thanks. That which I have promised, I will pay. Deliverance belongs to the LORD!" Then the LORD spoke to the fish, and it vomited Jonah onto the dry land.

HYMN

UMH 515

"Out of the Depths I Cry to You"

SERMON

"Prayer and Regurgitation"

Pastor Nate Nims

COMMUNION

PASTORAL PRAYER AND THE PRAYER JESUS TAUGHT

Our God (Father, Mother, Creator) 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.

OFFERING

If you have not yet made your pledge for 2021, you can do so at:

<https://gracedesmoines.org/2021-stewardship-campaign/>

CLOSING HYMN

UMH 400

"Come, Thou Fount of Every Blessing"

Guide to Prayer and Study: March 8-13

Monday, March 8

Read - Psalm 40:1-8

Notice - The psalmist writes that it is folly to pay attention to “the proud” and “those who follow lies.” Instead, they call us to celebrate God’s wonderful deeds and plans. “Those who put their trust in the LORD... are truly happy,” said verse 4. We’re bombarded with claims that nearly anything, from whitening toothpaste to a luxury cruise to the best new smartphone, will make us truly happy. Do you believe that the source of true happiness to which Psalm 40 pointed is more credible than the ads that barrage you from all sides? In what ways have you found a greater depth of true joy and hope by trusting in God? “An arresting phrase in Psalm 40:6 serves admirably as a metaphor...: `aznayim karitha li, literally, ‘ears thou hast dug for me’.... The psalms poet was bold to imagine God swinging a pickaxe, digging ears in our granite blockheads so that we can hear, really hear, what he speaks to us.”* What steps can you take to use those God-given “ears” to implant God’s hope-giving instruction deep within yourself?

Pray - God, sometimes it’s hard for me to look beyond today’s circumstances, beyond even tomorrow’s problems. Keep teaching me how to focus on your wonderful deeds and your plans for us. Amen.

* Eugene H. Peterson. *Eat This Book: A Conversation in the Art of Spiritual Reading* (Kindle Locations 1048-1051). Kindle Edition.

Tuesday, March 9

Read - Psalm 27:1-5, 14

Notice - This powerful Hebrew poem called every child of God to live without fear, which is hard in tough times. But living without fear did not mean that God would solve all immediate problems. Instead, the psalmist trusted that God was with us in any situation. “Living in hope relates to living with a focus on ‘one thing’—not living in hope that we will be able to achieve and get everything but living in hope of gaining the ‘one thing.’”* The Hebrew language linked “hope” and “wait.” The Common English Bible used “hope” in verse 14. Other good translations chose “wait.” Israelites prayed Psalm 27 yet saw Babylon destroy Jerusalem, saw Greece and Rome conquer their land—but kept on waiting and hoping. Christians prayed Psalm 27 yet saw Jesus crucified, the apostles Paul and Peter killed, met in dim Roman catacombs—but kept on waiting and hoping. What most tests your trust and tugs you toward fear? How can you choose to wait and hope that in the end God will set you “up high, safe on a rock”?

Pray - Jesus, you so often greeted your people with the words “fear not.” Teach me how to look to you as my light and my salvation even at the most frightening times. Amen.

Wednesday, March 10

Read - Psalm 3:1-6

Notice - Have you ever had trouble sleeping due to worry? Scribes likely added “A psalm of David, when he fled from his son Absalom,” the note (or “superscription”) on this psalm, long after David’s time. This psalm’s prayer did fit when David had to abandon Jerusalem to Absalom’s strong rebel force (2 Samuel 15:13-16), as well as many times when God’s servants faced apparently irresistible problems. Yet the psalm said any besieged person could lie down and sleep, trusting in God. How do you keep going when up against a genuine threat? Scholar John Goldingay found clues in Psalm 3: “You face facts (cf. verses 1-2); even more, you face God with the facts.... Facts can be inconvenient or frightening. But if God is part of the picture, facts can be faced, and if we are to lay hold on God in connection with the dangers that threaten us, facts must be faced.”* How can you honestly talk with God about the specific facts of any problems or enemies you currently face?

Pray - God, at moments I fear this plague will go on forever, and life will never be “normal” again. Be my shield. Help me keep trusting you even when I can’t see just how you are at work for your world. Amen.

* John Goldingay, *Psalms for Everyone, Part 1: Psalms 1–72*. Louisville: Westminster John Knox Press, 2014, p. 14.

Thursday, March 11

Read - Genesis 1:2, 26-27, Psalm 33:6-9

Notice - In Biblical Hebrew, the word *rûah* meant spirit, wind, and/or breath. “In the OT the spirit (*rûah*) of Yahweh is God’s power in action. Yahweh’s spirit is God himself present and at work, as are his ‘hand’ and his ‘arm’.... A term for both breath blown out and wind blowing (wind is viewed as God’s breath, Is. 40:7; Ezk. 37:9), *rûah* has vivid and awesome associations when used as God’s energy let loose. It is so used in nearly 100 of its nearly 400 OT appearances. Yahweh’s spirit is said to... shape creation, animate animals and mankind, and direct nature and history (Gen. 1:2, 2:7; Jb. 33:4; Ps. 33:6, 104:29–30; Is. 34:16).”* The Bible describes God’s Spirit existing before, and at work during the creation of the world. Where do you see the Spirit at work today? What is being created? Where are the winds blowing and creating new possibilities? What energy is waiting to be let loose? The biblical assertions about the poetry and wonder of creation tells us of how we are a part of and partners with the movement of the Spirit. How does it change your sense of why you exist to believe that the fullness of God (“us”) brought this world, and the life processes that created you, into being?

Pray - Holy Spirit, you are the spiritual air I breathe. Help me to grow more aware of the

inner strength and vitality you offer me as I make you the “oxygen” of my life with God. Amen.

* J. I. Packer, article “Holy Spirit” in *New Dictionary of Theology*. Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1988, p. 317.

Friday, March 12

Read - Psalm 118:5-6, 28-29

Notice - Psalm 118 was the last hallel (hymn of praise) Hebrews sang at Passover as they recalled God freeing Israel from slavery in Egypt. The Psalmist asked, simply yet profoundly, “The Lord is for me.... What can anyone do to me?” To what extent are you able to trust that God is indeed “for” you? Mark 14:23-26 showed that Jesus, on the dark night just before his arrest and crucifixion, likely sang, “The Lord is for me—I won’t be afraid. What can anyone do to me?” and “Give thanks to the Lord because [God] is good, because [God’s] faithful love lasts forever.” Even the darkness gathering around Jesus couldn’t stop him from praising God’s eternal goodness. How do you imagine Jesus singing Psalm 118 just before he faced the cross and what does this Psalm show about the gratitude that Jesus likely sang with? How can you nurture gratitude for even basic gifts like shelter, food—and life itself?

Pray - God, my goal is to remember that you are for me, so I won’t be afraid. My goal is to never forget that your faithful love lasts forever. I don’t always reach that goal, yet. I ask your continued presence with me to help me grow toward the goal. Amen.

Saturday, March 13

Read - Psalm 136:1-4, 2 Peter 2:8-9

Notice - Today’s reading is just a sampling from the great Hebrew poem we call Psalm 136. All 26 stanzas of the poem or hymn ended with “God’s faithful love (Hebrew hesed) lasts forever.” The apostle Peter, raised in the Hebrew faith and with additional insight from following Jesus, was convinced that God doesn’t want anyone to perish. That’s very different from the eager-to-condemn, sadistic God that some people picture. Hesed is “one of the most important words in the Old Testament... a Hebrew word translated as ‘faithful love’... the word occurs twice in God’s self-revelation to Moses (see ‘loyalty’ in Exodus 34:6-7). It’s a one-word summary of God’s character.”* Writing in Greek, the New Testament writers didn’t have a single word like hesed. But as today’s passage from Peter showed, they held the same belief about God. Peter said God is patient, “not wanting anyone to perish.” The apostle Paul wrote in 1 Timothy 2:4 that God “wants all people to be saved.” What does this hesed, this faithful love, look like in your life? own, and trustingly open your life more to the Holy Spirit’s reordering presence in your life?

Pray - Jesus, thank you for showing, in actions as well as words, how “faithful love” defines God’s character. Amen.

* J. Clinton McCann, Jr., sidebar note “God’s Faithful Love” in *The CEB Study Bible*. Nashville: Abingdon Press, 2013,

Grace currently has a membership to Amplify, a media ministry of the United Methodist Publishing House. You can look at free options at <https://amplifymedia.com/>, even without the Grace “code” for our membership. If you would like to look at other content, please email bob.dean@iaumc.net for information on how to access all the materials with Grace’s code.



Throughout Lent, the sanctuary will be open and available for prayer and meditation each Wednesday from 11 am to 1 pm and from 5 pm to 6 pm. Masks and social distancing are required in the church. When you enter from the south parking lot doors, you will need to sign in. As you leave the sanctuary, we ask that you sanitize your seat; cleaning supplies will be provided.



Applications are now being accepted for the 2021-2022 Grace Foundation/ Bolsinger Scholarships. An electronic copy is available on the Grace UMC website. Paper applications are available in the church office. The deadline to apply is March 31, <https://6aos52vebxt3btwzjr7s2umc-wpengine.netdna-ssl.com/wp-content/uploads/sites/115/2021/01/Cecil-Bolsinger-GRANT-APPLICATION-2021-v1.1.pdf>

WORSHIP LEADERS: Rev. Nate Nims; Muriel Pemble, liturgist.

RESOURCES USED IN THIS SERVICE:

Opening Prayer from enfleshed (www.enfleshed.com.)

All music used under OneLicense A-727197

Guide to Prayer and Study modified from cor.org

† In hymns, prayers, and liturgies, use language that makes worship meaningful, enriching, and inclusive.



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Like us on Facebook and follow us on Twitter at GraceDesMoines

In-person services are suspended for the time being, Please join us online for worship.
Watch the livestream of the 10:15 am service on the GraceDesMoines Facebook page
or on our YouTube channel..