

**United Church of Christ, First Congregational  
Norwich, New York  
March 7, 2021 – Third Sunday of Lent**

**PRELUDE** *Prayer (Ah, Holy Jesus)*  
Hand Bell Choir

arranged by Arnold B. Sherman  
based on HERZLIEBSTER JESU by Johann Crüger

**WELCOME** (Pastor John)

**ANNOUNCEMENTS** (Linda Oehme)

**PRAYER OF THE DAY** (Ed Tucker)

Gracious God,  
whose power is made perfect in weakness,  
whose wisdom appears as foolishness in this world,  
we thank you for the scandal of the cross.  
In Jesus Christ,  
you overturn all our usual ways of behaving  
and believing.  
You scatter our false notions of discipleship  
as easily as coins are spilled from a box.  
You correct our notions of piety and order  
with fierce passion.  
Do not let your church become content or  
contained as an institution.  
Raze to ruins what is distorted in us,  
and raise us to new life as a community  
so that we may be the body of Christ in and for the world.  
With fear and joy we ask this in Christ's name. **Amen.**

**MISSION MOMENT** (Joan Griffith)  
One Great Hour of Sharing

**CALL TO WORSHIP** (Ed Tucker)

Heaven is declaring God's glory;  
**the sky is proclaiming God's handiwork.**  
One day gushes the news to the next,  
**and one night informs another what needs to be known.**  
There is no speech; there are no words;  
**their voices cannot be heard by us.**  
Yet their sound extends throughout the world;  
**their words reach the ends of the earth!**

**HYMN** *Hope of the World*

Words by Georgia Harkness, 1954  
Tune: WELWYN by Alfred Scott-Gatty, 1900

**CHILDREN'S TIME** (Linda Oehme)  
The Lord's Prayer

**CONGREGATIONAL GREETING OF PEACE**

ONE: May the peace of Christ be with you.  
**ALL: And also with you.**

**WE LISTEN FOR GOD'S WORD**

**SCRIPTURE** (Ed Tucker)

Exodus 20:1-17

Then God spoke all these words:

<sup>2</sup>I am the LORD your God, who brought you out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of slavery; <sup>3</sup>you shall have no other gods before me.

<sup>4</sup> You shall not make for yourself an idol, whether in the form of anything that is in heaven above, or that is on the earth beneath, or that is in the water under the earth. <sup>5</sup> You shall not bow down to them or worship them; for I the LORD your God am a jealous God, punishing children for the iniquity of parents, to the third and the fourth generation of those who reject me, <sup>6</sup> but showing steadfast love to the thousandth generation of those who love me and keep my commandments. <sup>7</sup> You shall not make wrongful use of the name of the LORD your God, for the LORD will not acquit anyone who misuses his name. <sup>8</sup> Remember the sabbath day, and keep it holy. <sup>9</sup> Six days you shall labor and do all your work. <sup>10</sup> But the seventh day is a sabbath to the LORD your God; you shall not do any work—you, your son or your daughter, your male or female slave, your livestock, or the alien resident in your towns. <sup>11</sup> For in six days the LORD made heaven and earth, the sea, and all that is in them, but rested the seventh day; therefore the LORD blessed the sabbath day and consecrated it. <sup>12</sup> Honor your father and your mother, so that your days may be long in the land that the LORD your God is giving you. <sup>13</sup> You shall not murder. <sup>14</sup> You shall not commit adultery. <sup>15</sup> You shall not steal. <sup>16</sup> You shall not bear false witness against your neighbor. <sup>17</sup> You shall not covet your neighbor's house; you shall not covet your neighbor's wife, or male or female slave, or ox, or donkey, or anything that belongs to your neighbor.

### **READING OF THE TEN COMMANDMENTS** (Bob Oehme)

Brothers and sisters in Christ,  
as forgiven people,  
we are now freed to live in grateful response to God,  
following God's law, which is our guide for  
full and abundant life:

We are freed to worship God and God alone . . .  
freed from having to make anything an idol.

We are freed to call on the name of the Lord without  
abusing God's name.

We are freed for a day of worship and rest,  
freed to love those who gave us birth and nurtured us.

Freed from all that binds us,  
we shall not kill or break sacred bonds;  
we need not steal or lie,  
nor crave anything that belongs to another.

God's law brings us goodness and blessing;  
God's grace gives us confidence and joy.

### **SCRIPTURE** (Bob Oehme)

Psalms 19

*To the leader. A Psalm of David.*

<sup>1</sup> The heavens are telling the glory of God;  
and the firmament proclaims his handiwork.  
<sup>2</sup> Day to day pours forth speech,  
and night to night declares knowledge.  
<sup>3</sup> There is no speech, nor are there words;  
their voice is not heard;  
<sup>4</sup> yet their voice goes out through all the earth,  
and their words to the end of the world.  
In the heavens he has set a tent for the sun,  
<sup>5</sup> which comes out like a bridegroom from his wedding canopy,  
and like a strong man runs its course with joy.  
<sup>6</sup> Its rising is from the end of the heavens,  
and its circuit to the end of them;  
and nothing is hid from its heat.  
<sup>7</sup> The law of the LORD is perfect,  
reviving the soul;

the decrees of the LORD are sure,  
making wise the simple;  
<sup>8</sup> the precepts of the LORD are right,  
rejoicing the heart;  
the commandment of the LORD is clear,  
enlightening the eyes;  
<sup>9</sup> the fear of the LORD is pure,  
enduring forever;  
the ordinances of the LORD are true  
and righteous altogether.  
<sup>10</sup> More to be desired are they than gold,  
even much fine gold;  
sweeter also than honey,  
and drippings of the honeycomb.  
<sup>11</sup> Moreover by them is your servant warned;  
in keeping them there is great reward.  
<sup>12</sup> But who can detect their errors?  
Clear me from hidden faults.  
<sup>13</sup> Keep back your servant also from the insolent;  
do not let them have dominion over me.  
Then I shall be blameless,  
and innocent of great transgression.  
<sup>14</sup> Let the words of my mouth and the meditation of my heart  
be acceptable to you,  
O LORD, my rock and my redeemer.

**ANTHEM** *The Heavens Are Telling*  
from *The Creation*

by Franz Joseph Haydn  
Adapted by Hal H. Hopson

The heavens are telling the glory of God.  
The wonder of God's work displays the firmament.  
The day that is coming flows from today.  
The night that is gone is followed by tonight,  
In all the land resounds the word.  
Words are never spoken, yet ever understood,  
Ever, ever, ever understood.

**SCRIPTURE** (Bob Oehme)  
John 2:13-22

<sup>13</sup> The Passover of the Jews was near, and Jesus went up to Jerusalem. <sup>14</sup> In the temple he found people selling cattle, sheep, and doves, and the money changers seated at their tables. <sup>15</sup> Making a whip of cords, he drove all of them out of the temple, both the sheep and the cattle. He also poured out the coins of the money changers and overturned their tables. <sup>16</sup> He told those who were selling the doves, "Take these things out of here! Stop making my Father's house a marketplace!" <sup>17</sup> His disciples remembered that it was written, "Zeal for your house will consume me." <sup>18</sup> The Jews then said to him, "What sign can you show us for doing this?" <sup>19</sup> Jesus answered them, "Destroy this temple, and in three days I will raise it up." <sup>20</sup> The Jews then said, "This temple has been under construction for forty-six years, and will you raise it up in three days?" <sup>21</sup> But he was speaking of the temple of his body. <sup>22</sup> After he was raised from the dead, his disciples remembered that he had said this; and they believed the scripture and the word that Jesus had spoken.

**SERMON** (Pastor John)

**INTERLUDE** *Christe, Du Lamm Gottes*, BWV 619  
Jason Handy, organ

J.S. Bach

**PRAYERS OF INTERCESSION** (Pastor John)

Holy God,  
you have called us to live before you  
and with one another  
in all faithfulness.  
Unable to live as you intend,  
we inflict harm and hurt on others  
and on ourselves as well.

In all these ways,  
we know we grieve your heart also.  
Hear, then, our prayers of intercession.  
Restore us to communion with you and one another  
that we might live in the freedom you have bestowed.

We pray for healing and reconciliation where trust  
has been broken,  
hostility has flared, or misunderstanding has grown.  
Restore us not only to one another,  
but reconcile us to ourselves and to you, loving God.

Gracious God,  
we pray for those who are ill, in mind, body, or spirit;  
for those lonely and isolated from community;  
for those burdened by guilt or grief,  
by depression or despair.  
Do not let us turn inward as a church,  
lest we shut out or neglect  
those who long for a community of welcome  
and companionship.

Send us out in love, with open eyes, ears, and hearts.  
Make us true neighbors to one another  
and true children of your own calling.  
We pray in the name of Christ,  
who has come to set us free. **Amen.**

**CHARGE** (Pastor John)

In the Lenten week ahead,  
study God's commandments,  
practice the way of life they teach,  
and see how God's laws revive your soul.

**POSTLUDE** *Epilogue*  
Bob Oehme, organ

Lani Smith

---

Call to Worship, Prayers, Charge and Reading of the Ten Commandments reprinted by permission of Westminster John Knox Press from *Feasting on the Word Worship Companion* © 2015

Permission to reprint, podcast, and / or stream the music in this service obtained from ONE LICENSE with license #735996-A. All rights reserved.