

**United Church of Christ, First Congregational
Norwich, New York
March 21, 2021 – Fifth Sunday in Lent**

PRELUDE *O Sacred Head, Now Wounded*
Hand Bell Choir

Hans Leo Hassler
Arranged by Barbara B. Kinyon

WELCOME (Pastor John)

PRAYER OF THE DAY (Lilit Danielyan)
Holy God, by the cross and resurrection of Jesus,
you lift the suffering world toward hope and transformation
and open the way to eternal salvation.
As we move ever closer to the passion of Christ,
may your law of love be written on our hearts
as he draws all people to himself revealing
your love for the world. **Amen.**

ANNOUNCEMENTS (Mary Williams, Linda Oehme)

CALL TO WORSHIP (Brad Morrison)
Jesus said, "When I am lifted up, I will draw all people to myself."
Blessed be the God of our salvation who bears our burdens and forgives our sins.

HYMN *O Love That Will Not Let Me Go* (#485)

George Mattheson, 1882
Tune: St. Margaret by Albert L. Peace, 1885

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 (John Kolb)
Psalm 119:9-16
How can young people keep their way pure?
By guarding it according to your word.
¹⁰With my whole heart I seek you;
do not let me stray from your commandments.
¹¹I treasure your word in my heart,
so that I may not sin against you.
¹²Blessed are you, O LORD;
teach me your statutes.
¹³With my lips I declare
all the ordinances of your mouth.
¹⁴I delight in the way of your decrees
as much as in all riches.
¹⁵I will meditate on your precepts,
and fix my eyes on your ways.
¹⁶I will delight in your statutes;
I will not forget your word.

ANTHEM *Create In Me A Clean Heart O God*
(Psalm 51:10-12)

by Arnold B. Sherman

Create in me a clean heart, O God;
Create in me a clean heart, O God,
and renew a right spirit, a holy spirit in me.

Cast me not from thy presence,
O cast me not from thy presence,
but renew a right spirit within me.

Restore unto me the joy of thy salvation,
and uphold me with thy loving spirit.

Create in me a clean heart, O God;
Create in me a clean heart, O God,
and renew a right spirit, a loving spirit,
a holy spirit in me.
Create in me a clean heart, O God.

SCRIPTURE (Brad Morrison)

John 12:20-33

²⁰ Now among those who went up to worship at the festival were some Greeks. ²¹ They came to Philip, who was from Bethsaida in Galilee, and said to him, "Sir, we wish to see Jesus." ²² Philip went and told Andrew; then Andrew and Philip went and told Jesus. ²³ Jesus answered them, "The hour has come for the Son of Man to be glorified. ²⁴ Very truly, I tell you, unless a grain of wheat falls into the earth and dies, it remains just a single grain; but if it dies, it bears much fruit. ²⁵ Those who love their life lose it, and those who hate their life in this world will keep it for eternal life. ²⁶ Whoever serves me must follow me, and where I am, there will my servant be also. Whoever serves me, the Father will honor.

²⁷ "Now my soul is troubled. And what should I say—'Father, save me from this hour'? No, it is for this reason that I have come to this hour. ²⁸ Father, glorify your name." Then a voice came from heaven, "I have glorified it, and I will glorify it again." ²⁹ The crowd standing there heard it and said that it was thunder. Others said, "An angel has spoken to him." ³⁰ Jesus answered, "This voice has come for your sake, not for mine. ³¹ Now is the judgment of this world; now the ruler of this world will be driven out. ³² And I, when I am lifted up from the earth, will draw all people to myself." ³³ He said this to indicate the kind of death he was to die.

SCRIPTURE (John Kolb)

Jeremiah 31:31-34

³¹ The days are surely coming, says the LORD, when I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel and the house of Judah. ³² It will not be like the covenant that I made with their ancestors when I took them by the hand to bring them out of the land of Egypt—a covenant that they broke, though I was their husband, says the LORD. ³³ But this is the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel after those days, says the LORD: I will put my law within them, and I will write it on their hearts; and I will be their God, and they shall be my people. ³⁴ No longer shall they teach one another, or say to each other, "Know the LORD," for they shall all know me, from the least of them to the greatest, says the LORD; for I will forgive their iniquity, and remember their sin no more.

SERMON (Pastor John)

INTERLUDE *Solitude*
Bob Oehme, organ

Flor Peeters

PRAYERS OF INTERCESSION (Pastor John)

Create in us a clean heart, O God,
and renew a right spirit within us.
During the final days of his earthly life,

Jesus offered up prayers and supplications with
loud cries and tears,
and in faithful obedience, he opened the way
to eternal salvation.

Let us open our hearts this day as we lift up
our deepest needs and concerns
to the One who is mighty to save.

We pray for all leaders and people,
that by the power of your cross
you would drive out all violence, domination,
and injustice in our world
as you draw us to your Christ.

We pray for our war-ravaged world,
that you would teach us to walk together
in your way of righteousness and peace.
We pray for the vocation of the church,
that our prayers would bear the fruit of action
as we hear the cries of pain and suffering of those in need.
We pray for the poor, the terrified, and the oppressed,
and those who are too much alone,
that they may find a home in you as we serve them
in your name.

As your son anticipated his death on the cross
in light of your steadfast love,
may all who have died or who are dying be at rest
in your eternal care.
Through Christ, with Christ,
in the unity of the Holy Spirit,
we glorify you, almighty God,
with unending thanks and praise. **Amen.**

BLESSING (Pastor John)

May God, whose hand has written the law of love upon your heart,
fill you with peace from deep within
and the commitment to live in harmony.
And the blessing of God, who loves, forgives,
and calls us home,
be with you now and always.

POSTLUDE *Glorious Faith in God*
Bob Oehme, organ

by Rachel Sawyer

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