

5 Lent – March 21, 2021

Dear Zion Family,

How many of you who heard or read Pastor Janet's sermon, "The Great However," have that wonderful vision of the aerialist, the man who believed in him, a wheelbarrow and a tightrope over Niagara Falls still on your mind? Do you see yourself in the wheelbarrow? Who is with you? What else is in the wheelbarrow? I see flowers with labels that say "sin," "forgiven," "grace," "salvation," "service," "love," "kindness," "joy," "hope," "promise," "save," "lift," "reach," "shine," "faith," "trust," "steadfast," "strength," "gift," "heart," "compassion," "sharing," "embracing," "courage," "envelop," and "believe." Pastor Janet's sermon concluded with, "Let God's grace envelop you, ease your tiredness, calm your anxiety, release you from the grip of sin and doubt. For by grace, you have been saved through faith, and this is not your doing. It is the gift of God. All praise and thanks be to God. Amen and amen." Thank you, Pastor Janet, for all your enlightening words of promise and hope for us this week.

Spring arrives on Saturday, March 20<sup>th</sup>, and Sunday is the fifth Sunday in Lent. Pastor Janet Hoover will lead our worship service.

**This Sunday, March 21<sup>st</sup>, we continue with our remote worship practice**, offering the service via Zoom, livestreamed on Facebook, or by using the printed Service of the Word, which you will find later in this mailing. To join this Sunday's service via Zoom, same log-in info as last week:

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/84354840714?pwd=TDJGTkwwSTBER2lNbl01Qzd6WGxDdz09Meeting> ID: 843-5484 0714, Password: 022654. Or by PHONE, +16465588656, 84354840714#, 1#, 022654# US (New York). If you would prefer to view the service via livestream on our YouTube channel, you can do so by visiting our page at: <https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCWzOtbCe2z7-bIPvxp62IA>.

### WEDNESDAY EVENING LENTEN WORSHIP

Pastor Anita and the Our Saviour congregation continue to invite Zion members to this series. The last Wednesday evening service is March 24<sup>th</sup> at 7:00. Holden Evening Prayer booklets are still available in the bin outside our church. Sara will send the Zoom link before the event.

### PALM SUNDAY, HOLY WEEK, AND EASTER WORSHIP OPPORTUNITIES

**Palm Sunday**, March 28, 2021 at 10:00 am: **In-person worship at Zion**, service on Zoom or livestreamed on Facebook with Pastor Jennifer DeWeerth.

**Maundy Thursday**, April 1, 2021 at 7:00 pm: Service on Zoom at Our Saviour with Pastor Anita Mohr.

**Good Friday**, April 2, 2021 at 7:00 pm: Service on Zoom at Our Saviour with Pastor Anita Mohr.

(Links will be sent for these two Zoom services)

*In addition, copies of "The Passion of Our Lord According to Mark" are going to be mailed or emailed to Zion members before Palm Sunday so that it may be read during Holy Week.*

**Easter Sunday**, April 4, 2021 at 10:00 pm: **In-person worship at Zion**, service on Zoom or livestreamed on Facebook with Pastor Jennifer DeWeerth.

## SOME IN-PERSON WORSHIP REMINDERS DUE TO COVID-19

- Arrive by 9:45 at the latest to allow time for the temperature check and health questions.
- Arrive by 9:30 if you will need to use the elevator or if you are coming with guests and extended family.
- Wear a face covering.
- Communion will be offered at both Zion services. The elements will be available in the Narthex. Pastor Jen will consecrate them from the altar and we will commune from our seats.
- We will be allowed to *quietly* recite the Creed, the Lord's Prayer, and other refrains.
- There will be no singing at this time.
- The nursery will not be open.
- Please take everything with you when you leave the sanctuary.

## FOUR VOLUNTEERS ARE NEEDED TO STAFF EACH SERVICE

Two greeters at the front door will welcome congregants, take temperatures, and ask health questions. Two ushers will direct people to take the communion elements and a bulletin and to place their offerings in the offering plate just inside the sanctuary. They may also assist people in finding seats. We already have four volunteers for Palm Sunday, but volunteers are still needed for Easter and April 25th. Please call the office (315-732-4110) to let Sara know if you are willing to staff one of these services.

## EASTER FOOD BASKETS

If you would like to request a food basket for yourself or another family, please call Sara at the office.

## ZION'S DISABILITIES MINISTRY

At Sunday's Joyful Chaos, Dan Rodahan shared about the transportation and accessibility needs of many people who would like Zion to be their church home. Please email Dan at [rodahan2@yahoo.com](mailto:rodahan2@yahoo.com) if you are interested in contributing to this important new ministry at Zion.

## FAITHFUL LEARNING AND TEACHING TOGETHER (FLATT)

Please consider taking advantage of the three new courses being offered after Easter. Details may be found on page 7 of the March 14<sup>th</sup> mailing.

If you Zoomed the church service on the 14th, you heard Kelli Watson's beautiful playing of the anthem, "Abide with Me." William H. Monk created the music and Henry F. Lyte finished the lyrics in 1847. He based his text on John 15:7, "If you abide in me and my words abide in you, you will ask what you desire, and it shall be done for you." The next verse says, "This is my Father's glory, that you bear much fruit, showing yourselves to be my disciples." During the next two weeks, please hold in prayer all those who are working so hard to make our in-person Palm Sunday and Easter services possible.

May your days be peaceful,  
Laurel McCurdy, church council co-president



SERVICE OF THE WORD  
GATHERING

**WELCOME**

**CONFESSION AND FORGIVENESS**

Blessed be the Holy Trinity, one God, the keeper of the covenant, the source of steadfast love, our rock and our redeemer. **Amen.** God hears us when we cry, and draws us close in Jesus Christ. Let us return to the one who is full of compassion.

Fountain of living water,

**Pour out your mercy over us. Our sin is heavy, and we long to be free. Rebuild what we have ruined and mend what we have torn. Wash us in your cleansing flood. Make us alive in the Spirit to follow in the way of Jesus, as healers and restorers of the world you so love. Amen.**

Beloved, God's word never fails. The promise rests on grace: by the saving love of Jesus Christ, the wisdom and power of God, your sins are forgiven, and God remembers them no more. Journey in the way of Jesus. **Amen.**

**Opening Hymn:** *Jesus on the Mountain Peak, vs. 1 & 4* Hymn #317 –Kelli Watson

**Vs. 1** Jesus on the mountain peak stands alone in glory blazing; let us, if we dare to speak, join the saints and angels praising. Alleluia, alleluia!

**Vs. 4** This is God's beloved Son! Law and prophets sing before him, first and last and only One. All creation shall adore him! Alleluia, alleluia!

**Prayer of the Day**

O God, with steadfast love you draw us to yourself, and in mercy you receive our prayers. Strengthen us to bring forth the fruits of the Spirit, that through life and death we may live in your Son, Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. **Amen.**

**Psalm: 51:1-12**

**First Reading:** Hebrews 5:5-10

**Gospel:** John 12:20-33

**Second Reading:** Jeremiah 31:31-34

**Sermon:** *A Change of Heart* –Pr. Janet Hoover

Times were tough for the Israelites in the 8<sup>th</sup> Century BC. Their ancestors had struggled through the wilderness to find a land where they could live in freedom, where they could worship God and God alone. They began to shape a nation where children could laugh and play without danger, where old people could rest and remember in safety. Where the sick would receive care, and all could eat their fill. But soon the people forgot. They forgot that loving God and loving neighbor were inextricably tied together. They forgot that all that they had came from God. They forgot that God's gifts were meant to be shared. And soon the land and the people began to suffer—the poor became poorer. Worship of God became less important than accumulating power and wealth. Into this amnesia, strode Jeremiah—prophet of God. With a voice that cut like steel through butter, Jeremiah uttered words of condemnation and warning. He strips away all their pretensions and hypocrisies, revealing a people more interested in their own security than in caring for their neighbor. More confident in their own abilities to control their future, than willing to trust in God. He lambastes their idolatries. He speaks of destruction and devastation if they don't return to God's ways. He cries out to them to repent. Jeremiah's words are harsh, because the situation requires drastic measures. The book of Jeremiah doesn't make for comforting reading. But, here and there, the light of grace and promise shine through. Our text this morning brings us the good news of Jeremiah. While the people will have to live with the consequences of their disobedience, sin won't have the last word. God will do a new thing—etching into

the hearts of all God's people a design of grace and love, marking them so that, no matter what happens, they will remember who they are and whose they are. God is even now at work...forgiving the past, transforming the present, ushering in a future bright with promise. And so, even as the people weep over the destruction of Jerusalem, even as they experience the pain of exile, they can continue to trust that God is at work in their lives. As they struggle to make sense of the chaos around them, as they wrestle with new ways of living—far from all that is familiar and comfortable, in the silence of loss and grief, they will be sustained by the movement of God's finger writing in the core of their being: **I am your God. You are my child.** Through the ebb and flow of their days, through triumph and tragedy, through times of difficulty and times of plenty, in all circumstances, God's people will discover that the treasure of God's grace is not to be found in things and accomplishments. Instead, abundant life is theirs in every breath they take, for they live as God's own.

Times are tough here in the 21<sup>st</sup> century. We live in a land of great beauty and promise, with fields of grain and flowing rivers. Our ancestors worked to make this a land where children could laugh and learn and play without danger, where old people could rest and remember in safety. But it's so easy to forget. To forget that loving God and loving neighbor are inextricably tied together. To forget that all we have comes from God. Our schedules are cluttered with things to do. Our lives are bombarded with minute-by-minute coverage of world crises, hitting us like icy pellets. These words from Jeremiah are like a warm blanket wrapped around our shivering spirit. **I will watch over you, God says—I will mark you as my own.** Through the covenant God had made with the Israelites, God had revealed the law, by which they should live. But it failed—in part because it was an external covenant. Knowledge of God was always dependent on someone else calling you to faith and repentance. People kept nervously reminding one another: Know the Lord. Know the Lord. But their hearts are turned away from God and neighbor in the idolatrous worship of the self. More concerned about their own desires and needs than God. The old covenant worked for change from the outside into the personal by surrounding the people with institutions and laws and social conventions. Or rather, it didn't work. So God establishes a new covenant, one that works from the inside out. God's people are now marked with an internal identity that will be evidenced by external behavior.

They...we...will live God's law not because we are obliged to, or someone tells us we have to, or people will judge us if we don't. We will live in ways that please God because our hearts are shaped that way. Faith and obedience will spring from the inside, for God has written the capacity for love and faith into us. A story is told of a rich man who is traveling far from home. A dishonest man notices his fine clothes and his bulging moneybag and decides to travel with him and look out for a way to steal his treasure. Every night, in the humble inns along the roadside, the poor man unrolls his bedroll early and pretends to sleep. Then, as the rich man leaves the room to get washed up and ready for bed, the thief rummages through his belongings in search of the treasure. But he never can find it. As soon as he hears the rich man's footsteps, he leaps back into his bedroll, certain he's just moments away from finding the treasure. Every morning, the poor man once again pretends to sleep, until the rich man goes down for breakfast, yet morning is the same as evening. The thief never can find the moneybag. Day after day this goes on, until the two men finally reach their destination. As they are leaving to go their separate ways, the thief's curiosity gets the better of him. He admits to the rich man what he's been up to and asks, "How have you eluded me so long?" "It was very simple," replied the rich man. "Every night, while you went to get cleaned up before bed, I put my treasure in your pack, and every morning when I returned from eating and you went to breakfast, I retrieved it." Sometimes, in our anxiety over finances, our worry about illness and health, we miss the treasure that is as close to us as our next breath. We look for security in all the wrong places—scrambling for more powerful weapons, a larger share of the financial pie, some magic formula that will ensure a long, healthy, trouble-free life. We wear ourselves out trying to hold on to what we have, and all the time—right here—we have what we need. We are branded by love. God's grace is etched deep into your hearts, marking you so that no matter what happens, you will remember who you are and whose you are. God promises: **I will write what really counts, what is most real. I will write with love and light. I will write possibilities and promise on my people's hearts, and I will be their God and they shall belong to me.** C.S. Lewis writes: *People often think of Christian morality as a kind of bargain in which God says: If you keep a lot of rules, I'll reward you, and if not I'll do the other thing. I do not think that is the best way of looking at it. I would much rather say that every time you make a choice you are turning the central part of you, the part of you that chooses, into something a little different than it was before.* As we give up our need to control and manipulate our lives and let God in, as we allow God to mark us with joy and courage, as we turn to God in prayer, as we live each day trusting in God's goodness, as we set aside time each day to read Scripture and reflect on its message, we will find that buried beneath all our activity and motion, all the worry and concern, at the very core of our being beats a rhythm of grace and courage. As we surrender our will to God's, as we give our lives and the lives of those we love into God's keeping, as we open our clenched fists to give and receive, this rhythm of mercy and blessing will move us

forward. And when we fail. When we say the harsh words that wound the one we love. When we allow our fear to keep us from reaching out to those in need. When we let our doubts erode our joy. When we place other things before God. When we judge others instead of looking into our own lives. God is there to pick us up and dust us off and set us back on the road of love. God's forgiveness renews our spirits and clears out the accumulation of selfishness and resentment that have blocked the channel of grace. Each day, we face decisions on how we will live, who we will love, how we will react to the challenges around us. We are surrounded by choices. The good news is that we aren't in it alone. Jeremiah reminds us that, at all times and in all circumstances, we are to remember we belong to God. As we breathe in and out, we are allowing God's spirit to move in us marking us as a people of courage and trust, joyous generosity and overflowing love. Let the rhythm of God's love move you and sustain you—as you wait for a doctor's report, as you struggle to get a vaccine appointment, as you worry about political turmoil, as you deal with a difficult boss, a stubborn parent, a troubled child, remember—you belong to God. As you try to pick up the pieces of shattered dreams. As you cry out in loneliness and despair. As you struggle to lead a life free from fear in a world filled with uncertainty, remember—you belong to God. As the challenges of an aging body frustrate and frighten you. As you ache for understanding and rest. As you try to balance work and family and community responsibilities, remember—you belong to God. Our lives have roots in eternity, and as we open ourselves to God's will, we will blossom with joy and peace. And, as we remember, as we live trusting in God's ever-present love, we will move out of the miry places of biases and doubts and suffering into the fresh air of God's kingdom. That place where all are welcomed, where all have a place at the table, where generosity spills over from one to another to another until the broken are made whole, the wounded restored to health, and we are at last, the people God created us to be. All praise and thanks be to God.

### **Apostles' Creed**

**I believe in God, the Father almighty, creator of heaven and earth.**

**I believe in Jesus Christ, God's only Son, our Lord,**

**who was conceived by the Holy Spirit, born of the virgin Mary, suffered under Pontius Pilate, was crucified, died and was buried; he descended to the dead. On the third day he rose again; he ascended into heaven, he is seated at the right hand of the Father, and he will come to judge the living and the dead.**

**I believe in the Holy Spirit, the holy catholic church, the communion of saints, the forgiveness of sins, the resurrection of the body, and the life everlasting. Amen.**

*ANTHEM      Kyrie by John Leavitt                      Kelli Watson*

### **Prayers of Intercession**

Relying on the promises of God, we pray boldly for the church, the world, and all in need.

You fill the earth—from tiny grains of wheat to the mighty thunder—with your presence, and you call us to attend to your will for all creation. Grant weather that prepares the soil for seeds; protect all from violent storms, flooding, and wildfires. Hear us, O God. **Your mercy is great.**

You promise to write your law on our hearts. Guide citizens throughout the world to shape communities that reflect your mercy, justice, and peace, and give them creativity to work for the welfare of all. Hear us, O God. **Your mercy is great.**

Jesus calls us to follow him in life and death. Empower this congregation in discipleship. Equip children and teachers in Sunday school, confirmation, and learning ministries. Give us your truth and wisdom and teach us to follow Jesus. Hear us, O God. **Your mercy is great.**

Listen to the cries of your people waiting patiently for your healing hand and comforting Spirit, especially those who suffer with chronic pain and all cancer patients, Pr. Mary Etta, Gail, Doris, comfort for Patsy, Joyce Maher, Claudia, Bill & Rusty, Don & Wanda, Rosemary, Jeanette & Kjell and family, Rani and family, Kelly, Claudia & Fran, Edie Marie, Ed and family, prayers for Michael Gilleece and family, Your Neighbors clients, Theresa, and our country, that the light of Christ may shine upon them with hope. Hear us, O God. **Your mercy is great.**

We entrust ourselves and all our prayers to you, O faithful God, through Jesus Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

## Thanksgiving at the Table

Holy, mighty, and merciful Lord, heaven and earth are full of your glory. In great love you sent to us Jesus, your Son, who reached out to heal the sick and suffering, who preached good news to the poor, and who, on the cross, opened his arms to all. In the night in which he was betrayed, our Lord Jesus took bread, and gave thanks; broke it, and gave it to his disciples, saying: Take and eat; this is my body, given for you. Do this for the remembrance of me. Again, after supper, he took the cup, gave thanks, and gave it for all to drink, saying: This cup is the new covenant in my blood, shed for you and for all people for the forgiveness of sin. Do this for the remembrance of me. Remembering, therefore, his death, resurrection, and ascension, we await his coming in glory. Pour out upon us the Spirit of your love, O Lord, and unite the wills of all who share this heavenly food, the body and blood of Jesus Christ our Lord; to whom, with you and the Holy Spirit, be all glory and honor, now and forever. **Amen.**

## 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 and ever. Amen.**

**Closing Hymn:** *Tree of Life and Awesome Mystery, vs. 1 & 3* Hymn #334 -Kelli Watson

**Vs. 1** Tree of Life and awesome myst'ry, in your death we are reborn; though you die in all of hist'ry still you rise with ev'ry morn, still you rise with ev'ry morn.

**Vs. 3** Christ, you lead and we shall follow, stumbling though our steps may be; one with you in joy and sorrow, we the river, you the sea, we the river, you the sea.

## Blessing

You are what God made you to be: created in Christ Jesus for good works, chosen as holy and beloved, freed to serve your neighbor. God bless you that you may be a blessing, in the name of the holy and life-giving Trinity. **Amen.**

## Dismissal

Go in peace. Share the good news. **Thanks be to God.**

*Christ with me,*  
*Christ before me,*  
*Christ behind me,*  
**CHRIST IN ME. CHRIST OVER ME.**  
*Christ to right of me,*  
**CHRIST TO LEFT OF ME,**  
**CHRIST IN LYING DOWN. CHRIST IN SITTING.**  
*Christ in rising up, Christ in the heart*  
*of every person who may think of me,*  
*Christ in the mouth of every*  
*person who may speak of me,*  
**CHRIST IN EVERY EYE,**  
**WHICH MAY LOOK ON ME!**  
**CHRIST IN EVERY EAR. WHICH MAY HEAR ME!**

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