



HOLY VESSELS



A LENTEN SEASON OF RECOVERY

www.worshipdesignstudio.com/vessels

Treasure
February 21, 2021
1st Sunday in Lent

GUESTS, Welcome to worship. To learn more about us, please visit our website at www.unionucc.org or like us on Facebook at www.facebook.com/unionneffs. If you would like us to follow up with you contact Pastor Kris at 610-767-6961, pastorkris@unionucc.org

NEW MEMBERS: For more information email Pastor Kris. pastorkris@unionucc.org or call the church office to speak to her.

We believe in extravagant welcome. We believe in God's inclusive love. We start worship with a greeting that reflects that welcome and love.

No matter who you are or where you are on life's journey and
faith's journey
You are welcome here.

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GATHER

People gather around Jesus as his reputation becomes known from town to town. As we gather virtually or physically, we too are yearning for presence, for peace, for help.

PRELUDE

Für Elise

Ludwig van Beethoven

Garet Hill, piano

WELCOME and ANNOUNCEMENTS

Opening Threshold

Ryleigh Minnich & Hannah Minnich

Leader: Each of us is created a precious and holy vessel of embodied love. We have been through a harrowing time since last Lent that has shattered our sense of wholeness—body, mind, and spirit—like a glass vessel fractured into pieces. Let us enter a Lenten “season of recovery” as we focus on Jesus, the Healer of our every ill.

SUNG (SOLO):

**Vessels, holy and whole
Broken, needing the One
Open, body and soul
Healer, come.**

Leader: Beach glass begins as something whole and yet discarded. As it is tumbled by the sea, it is broken and polished until it becomes a treasured “mineral gem.” We do not embrace that suffering is necessary or God-given, but that suffering is a part of life. When pain comes and brokenness enters our lives, Jesus reaches out to touch and remind us of the Treasure that we *all* are—worthy of new life in the midst of hopelessness. In a year when pandemic has wreaked havoc on our world, we begin by affirming our journey to physical health.

SUNG:
Vessels, holy and whole
Broken, needing the One
Open, body and soul
Healer, come.

APPROACH

People opened their lives to Jesus. We are drawn to the Healer—opening our hearts with honesty about our lives and finding assurance that offers peace.

Prayer of Confession **Luke Thrash & Bryce Thrash**

Leader: Lent developed into a season of intense inward reflection and confession centuries after the life of Jesus. Yet, as we will see, Jesus encouraged people to open up about their lives—to speak truth—no matter how broken. This is the beginning of compassion for ourselves and others. It is the beginning of healing. The Latin origins of the word “confess” is to “study and acknowledge.” This will be a season of studying how we can be a healing presence in our community. To do this, we acknowledge our need to restore our own Holy Vessels.

Let us pray:

ALL: Creator God, We are bodies fashioned by your hand in your own image, shapes and colors of diverse and immense beauty. And yet too often we have ignored the sacred nature of our physical lives. The Holy Vessels you have fashioned are tired and suffering, ravaged by months of disrupted rhythms and ailment. Our fragility has come into full view and we are frightened. We cannot fathom the proportions of loss and so we look away, sometimes even from our own needs.

Help us, Healer.
Show us our strength.

Forgive our inertia.

Move us to move

one step at a time toward greater care.

**In this silence, we sense and acknowledge our yearning
for wholeness.**

Silence

SUNG:

Vessels, holy and whole

Broken, needing the One

Open, body and soul

Healer, come.

Assurance

Zane Roth

Leader: I invite you to feel a warmth begin to arise within the core of your body. It may help to keep your eyes closed. Imagine a warm orb of light deep within you. This warm glow begins to emerge from the recesses of your inner being to fill and flood your whole body until your skin is glowing with it, radiating outward. You are surrounded by light. Feel this warmth wrap you as a blanket of assurance.

Know this: God's love and grace surround you...

No. Matter. What.

You are a precious and holy vessel right now.

Christ's light is a treasure given freely.

For you, for me, for all.

Take a deep breath in to let this truth fill you...

and breathe out with the relief of assurance.

HYMN #448 Take My Life, God, Let It Be (New Century Hymnal (Black)

1. Take my life, God let it be consecrated faithfully

Take my moments and my days, let them flow in ceaseless praise.

2. Take my spirit, let it move at the impulse of your love.

Take my intellect and use all its powers as you choose

3. Take my will; your will be done! Make your will and mine be one

Take my hear, and by your grace make of it your dwelling place

4. Take my love and help it grow; let my loving over flow.

Take me now, and help me be part of Christ's community.

BELIEVE

People were fortified by Jesus' words and deeds that revealed care for all—especially those marginalized. We strengthen our belief in the possibility for renewed health and vigor for all.

A Contemporary Word

Emma Milander, Delaney Chilcote, & Brody Wolfe

“True wisdom is like an ocean; the deeper you go the greater the treasures you'll find.”

— **Matshona Dhlwayo**

Some people spend so much time hunting treasure that they fail to see it all around them. It's like sifting through gold to find the silt.

— **Richard Paul Evans**

Bad things do happen; how I respond to them defines my character and the quality of my life. I can choose to sit in perpetual sadness, immobilized by the gravity of my loss, or I can choose to rise from the pain and treasure the most precious gift I have - life itself.

— **Walter Anderson**

It is by going down into the abyss that we recover the treasures of life. Where you stumble, there lies your treasure.

— **Joseph Campbell**

Where there is ruin, there is hope for a treasure.

— **Rumi**

An Ancient Word
Ellyana Belletieri-Beiber

Matthew 8: 1-4; 16-17

When Jesus had come down from the mountain, great crowds followed him; and there was a leper who came to him and knelt before him, saying, "Lord, if you choose, you can make me clean." He stretched out his hand and touched him, saying, "I do choose. Be made clean!" Immediately his leprosy was cleansed. Then Jesus said to him, "See that you say nothing to anyone; but go, show yourself to the priest, and offer the gift that Moses commanded, as a testimony to them."

That evening they brought to him many who were possessed with demons; and he cast out the spirits with a word, and cured all who were sick. This was to fulfill what had been spoken through the prophet Isaiah, "He took our infirmities and bore our diseases."

MUSIC OFFERING

Peace Patricia Mock

Arr. Richard A Nichols

Adult Choir: **Todd Bachl, Lucy Boyer, Ronda Gerry, Susan Glosan, Stephen Kareha, Jason Klinger, Karl Klinger, Carol Pope, Julie Wehr**

ASK

People who were healed by Jesus were not afraid to ask. And so we come before the Holy One, making our petitions and desires known, trusting the work of the Spirit.

MESSAGE

Pastor Kayli Freeman

Song of Preparation

Make us Holy, Make Us Whole

Song Select #3315976

SUNG:

**In your love, make us whole.
May we rest in your compassion.
Calm the lost, weary soul
in the warmth of your love.
May your peace fill our hearts.
May we know the love of Jesus.
By your grace, you console.
Make us holy, make us whole.**

Prayers of the People

Garet Hill & Isabelle Fekula

Leader: Healer of our every ill,
especially our malady of separation and fear,
we come before you to make our petitions known.
Hear our cries for healing of body, mind, and spirit.
We know that already you are at work among us,
showing us the way to recovery from the toxicities and
grief of our time.

As demolished pieces that are treasured when found,
we trust that beauty from brokenness is possible
when we seek to bind together that which is wounded.

We pray especially for those who have experienced
the physical loss of family and friends in the pandemic
and those who are still suffering the consequences of the
illness.

We pray for each person who suffers in body in other
ways—
weariness from inactivity or weariness from overactivity in
this time.

We pray for those whose treatment of maladies have
been put on hold and those who suffered isolation in their
illness, whatever the cause.

We pray grateful thanks for the medical staff everywhere around the world who have shown unbelievable strength and stamina

and we mourn the demise of too many caregivers who risked their lives for our sake.

We pray this day for...

Prayer of Jesus

Regan Haley

**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.**

SUNG:

**In your love, make us whole.
May we rest in your compassion.
Calm the lost, weary soul
in the warmth of your love.
May your peace fill our hearts.
May we know the love of Jesus.
By your grace, you console.
Make us holy, make us whole.**

KNOW

The parting words Jesus' gave to those he healed were often as much balm as the healing act itself. We hear words of encouragement from the One who makes beauty from brokenness.

Reflection and Action for the Week

Leader: The words of Jesus we heard in this week's healing story were "I do choose. Be made clean!" Faced with a request, and given the choice, Jesus chooses to say "yes." And he says "yes" to each precious and treasured life. Recovered wholeness is offered to everyone and will look different for each one. I invite you to take up a piece of beach glass and examine it closely, noticing the worn edges and the color, feeling the texture and thickness. Examine it as a treasure that is completely unique, which of course it is.

Then shift your thinking to your own rough edges. What broken edges in your own life need help? What will you do in this Lent season to focus on healing of body, mind, and spirit?

Take a moment to think on this and then when you are ready, enclose the broken piece in your hand and hold it to your heart, breathing deeply and inviting that Spirit to live and move in you in a special way over the next six weeks. Keep your piece close at hand... perhaps on your desk, nightstand, or pocket where you can feel it regularly this week.

RESPOND

Scriptural accounts of healing often end with responses from the "crowd" of witnesses. How will we proceed into the brokenness of this world and respond as the Body of Christ?

COMMISSION

Tina Jaret & Karen Nuschke

Leader: Jesus' healing actions often get "buzz" from onlookers. Some are amazed and in awe and sing praises. Some are bewildered and wonder at this teacher. Some are disgruntled and feel threatened by the boundaries he breaks and the change he invites. We

are perhaps prone to all of these at one time or another. Our own work of recovery will sometimes feel immediately refreshing and sometimes it will demand uncomfortable effort. But the rewards are great.

We are working on healing for ourselves in this season, but we are also working toward something communal. How can we as a church community become a “health hub” through our ministry and mission? The needs are so great, especially now. Throughout this time, I invite you to explore with us the possibilities for a new or renewed commitment to a contribution we can make at Union UCC to our larger community’s effort to recover from this past year.

Blessing

Dan Topp

Leader: Now go with confidence
as “Treasures of God,”
recovering your depth of love for all
and our joy of living in this world.

May the words of Jesus ring in your ears:
“I do choose you.”

And may the Spirit hover, move, and deliver
salve to your soul
and a spring in your step.
Amen.

Threshold Into the World

SUNG: ALL

**Vessels, holy and whole
Broken, needing the One
Open, body and soul
Healer, come.**

Postlude

Just As I Am, Without One Plea Tune: WOODWORTH

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Donate to God's Mission and Ministry at UNION UCC

February Mission-

Blanket Sunday and Souper Bowl Sunday: Check donations may be made through the special envelope in the February newsletter or in any envelope. Checks made to "Union UCC" and please mark them "Blanket Sunday" (to help those facing emergencies) or "Souper Bowl Sunday" (to support the Lehigh Conference of Churches with housing and food needs) and mail to the church. Cans of soup can be dropped at the church on Saturdays or Sundays and will go to the Northern Lehigh Food Bank.

Easter Mission-

Lehigh Conference of Church and the Parkland Cares Food Pantry: Check donations may be made through the "Easter Mission" envelope in your envelop pack or in any envelope marked Easter Mission. Checks to "Union UCC" and mail them to church.

Give online at <http://www.unionucc.org/resources/giving-and-sponsorship/ways-to-give/> for Easter Mission.

OFFERING ENVELOPES you can mail your envelopes to the church. The church address is on one side, just add a stamp.

ELECTRONIC GIVING **This is a great time to try e-giving!** Choose a weekly, semi-monthly or monthly donation to be transferred electronically. Fill out the form at <http://www.unionucc.org/egive.pdf> and return it to the church office. financialmanager@unionucc.org

DONATE ONLINE with your Credit or Debit Card
Go to <http://www.unionucc.org/resources/giving-and-sponsorship/ways-to-give/> and click **GIVE ONLINE**.

AMAZON SMILE Donate to Union UCC, Neffs (Search by zip code 18065) while you shop at Amazon. <https://smile.amazon.com>.

EVIDENCE OF STEWARDSHIP LAST SUNDAY

Offering (e-giving, envelopes, and plate)	
Last Week	\$7,546
Calendar 2021 (January)	\$30,541
Calendar 2020 (January)	\$35,077
Change from Last Year	-12.9%
Budget (July-Jan.)	\$270,560
Actual (July-Jan.)	\$244,882
Giving vs. Budget	-9.5%
<i>Additional financial information available in Consistory Minutes</i>	

2021 Donations to the Northern Lehigh Food Bank:	
Last Week:	lbs, \$20
Total YTD:	649 lbs, \$107

Blanket Sunday
\$1,621.50

SPREAD THE GOOD NEWS SPONSORS:

Don & Marlene Steffy

Your support is especially important now as we work to provide spiritual care and connection for members and the community through Facebook posts, ads, and online worship.

Be a sponsor for \$20, send to Union UCC through your offering envelope or online marked Spread the Good News.

Contact Marissa to sign up for a certain date or to sponsor in honor or memory of someone.