



# HOLY VESSELS



A LENTEN SEASON OF RECOVERY

[www.worshipdesignstudio.com/vessels](http://www.worshipdesignstudio.com/vessels)

**Healed and Still Healing  
Holy Week  
Maundy Thursday April 1 7pm  
Good Friday April 2 7pm**

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

**NEW MEMBERS:** For more information email Pastor Kris. [pastorkris@unionucc.org](mailto: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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## Directions:

Thank you for wearing a mask throughout the service and for practicing 6 feet of social distancing.

As you arrive, please visit the welcome tables to:

1. Sign In – we will verify your name and phone number.
2. Get a paper bulletin of the service or you can view it on your phone at :



3. Share your offerings.
4. Pick up Communion. (All packs are Juice and Gluten Free)

## HOLY COMMUNION DIRECTIONS

Everyone is welcome to this meal of love and grace.

At Church/Grove: Each bag has a pre-sealed cup of grape juice and wafer for 1 person. A gluten free option is available. Wait to eat and drink until that time in the worship service. You will not be served in your seats.

At Home: Since we are worshipping virtually we invite you to take communion virtually. Please find a cracker, piece of bread or something to represent the body of Christ. And please find some juice, wine or water to represent the blood of Christ. When we get to that part of the service, the pastors will bless the elements and bless us as we share in this meal together.

## OIL and ANOINTING

We will invite you to place oil on your feet, hands, and forehead at three different times in the service as a blessing for healing.

At Home: Please place a teaspoon of oil in a bowl before

**the service. You can use any kind of oil: olive oil, vegetable oil, baby oil, or even lotion.**

**At Church: please pick up a bag with a cotton ball in it when you sign in. There is baby oil on the cotton ball.**

## **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**

Via Dolorosa

Billy Sprague and Niles Borop

### **WELCOME and ANNOUNCEMENTS**

#### **Opening Threshold**

Leader: This culminating moment of our worship series invites us to consider a commission from Christ to his disciples: to heal the sick, raise the dead, cleanse lepers, and cast out demons. These are the very things his disciples have seen him do and that we have sought to witness for our own lives in this Lenten season of recovery. What will we do with this commission? How will we address ongoing pain with hope and conviction even though we, ourselves, are “healed and yet still healing?”

**Soloist:**

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

## **Reading: Commission**

Matthew 10: 1-8

Thursday Reader: **Tammi Herzog Wassum**

Friday Reader: **Rosalie Snyder**

Then Jesus summoned his twelve disciples and gave them authority over unclean spirits, to cast them out, and to cure every disease and every sickness. These are the names of the twelve apostles: first, Simon, also known as Peter, and his brother Andrew; James son of Zebedee, and his brother John; Philip and Bartholomew; Thomas and Matthew the tax collector; James son of Alphaeus, and Thaddaeus; Simon the Cananaean, and Judas Iscariot, the one who betrayed him.

These twelve Jesus sent out with the following instructions: "Go nowhere among the Gentiles, and enter no town of the Samaritans, but go rather to the lost sheep of the house of Israel. As you go, proclaim the good news, 'The kingdom of heaven has come near.' Cure the sick, raise the dead, cleanse the lepers, cast out demons. You received without payment; give without payment.

Leader: Jesus had been teaching, healing, touching and transforming lives for three years. His presence in the midst of suffering had offered hope to so many. And yet his ways had also challenged the power of privilege. As we have seen in our Lenten journey, his actions had crossed boundaries of stigma in so many ways. When healing was needed, no one was left outside of compassion. And this threatened to upset the hierarchy of things. Touching the "untouchables," mixing with folk outside or below his status, raising up the faith of "outsiders and nobodies" had gotten attention. "The last shall be first" was not sitting well with the "first" of society, government, and religion. His popularity was evident the day he and his disciples set foot in Jerusalem for the Passover Festival. Those in seats of power who wanted to keep the peace—even an unjust, unholy, unfair, unseeing peace—were all talking about "the problem." Crowds where Jesus was teaching in Jerusalem were infiltrated by leaders seeking to catch him in controversy. Time and again, Jesus answered with truth and faith, leaving the naysayers speechless.

## **Reading: The First Commandment**

Matthew 22:34

Thursday Reader: **Claire Kern (Recorded)**

Friday Reader: **Don Penrod**

When the Pharisees heard that he had silenced the Sadducees, they gathered together, and one of them, a lawyer, asked him a question to test him. "Teacher, which commandment in the law is the greatest?" He said to him, "You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your mind. 'This is the greatest and first commandment. And a second is like it: You shall love your neighbor as yourself.' On these two commandments hang all the law and the prophets."

**Hymn** 539 Won't You Let Me Be Your Servant? (All Verses)  
New Century Hymnal (Black Hymnal)

**Soloists: Todd & Karla Bachl, Matt & Ronda Gerry**

## **Reading: The Plot to Kill Jesus**

Matthew 26: 1-5

Thursday Reader: **Sueann Hregician**

Friday Reader: **Michael Roth**

When Jesus had finished saying all these things, he said to his disciples, "You know that after two days the Passover is coming, and the Son of Man will be handed over to be crucified." Then the chief priests and the elders of the people gathered in the palace of the high priest, who was called Caiaphas, and they conspired to arrest Jesus by stealth and kill him. But they said, "Not during the festival, or there may be a riot among the people."

## **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**

ader: Matthew's Gospel is particularly concerned with indicting of the leaders of Jesus' own people for their role in his crucifixion. In this Lenten journey of recovery, we have confessed our own roles, the church' complicity at times, in the brokenness of the world. We have acknowledged our need to restore, repair, and renew our Holy Vessels so that we might be able to create and imagine new possibilities, new solutions, for the healing that is required to make the world more just, more whole.

Let us pray:

**God of Suffering,**

**You take no delight in the destruction of your creation, your people.**

**Our own broken edges, sharp and raw, contribute to the pain sometimes.**

**Especially during prolonged difficulty, we find ourselves struggling.**

**We cannot manage it on our own, yet we try, forgetting to turn to you,**

**forgetting to turn to each other,**

**forgetting the power you offer, the commission you give, to turn our tears to balm,**

**to use our broken edges to cleave new realities of justice and hope.**

**It all feels overwhelming and so we look away.**

**Help us, Healer.**

**Show us our connection to your healing power.**

**Forgive our disbelief.**

**Move us to move**

**one step at a time toward greater care for one another.**

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

*Silence*

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

**Reading: Jesus is Anointed**  
Matthew 26: 6-13  
Thursday Reader: **Doug Kuntz**  
Friday Reader: **Donna Christman**

Now while Jesus was at Bethany in the house of Simon the leper, a woman came to him with an alabaster jar of very costly ointment, and she poured it on his head as he sat at the table. But when the disciples saw it, they were angry and said, ‘Why this waste? For this ointment could have been sold for a large sum, and the money given to the poor.’ But Jesus, aware of this, said to them, ‘Why do you trouble the woman? She has performed a good service for me. For you always have the poor with you, but you will not always have me. By pouring this ointment on my body she has prepared me for burial. Truly I tell you, wherever this good news is proclaimed in the whole world, what she has done will be told in remembrance of her.’

### **The First Anointing: Extravagant Love**

Leader: Oil was used in many ways by ancient peoples. Mixed with various herbal properties, it served as healing balm, bringing increased blood flow and salve to the body. It was used in practical purposes as well, as a skin softener and odor-reducer in cleansing practices. And it was used as an agent of significance in many rituals.

The story of the woman with the alabaster jar of oil is a symbolic ritual action of great power. The pouring of oil on Jesus’ head stood in the traditions of anointing leaders—Kings to be specific—on the head. Many of the symbols in the story of Holy Week point to the sovereignty of Jesus... most of them carried out by unlikely and so-called “unsanctioned”

people. This ritual of oil on the head of Jesus was carried out by an unnamed woman whose action of love, devotion, and the clear message that this Teacher was her Sovereign forever, got angry reactions even from those who claimed to love Jesus most. Are we, like those first disciples, in danger of withholding our resources of extravagant love? Do we hesitate to proclaim the sovereignty—the reign—of love and justice, equity and relief, healing and wholeness even as we proclaim to be disciples of the one who is Love itself?

Then Jesus turns the meaning of her anointing act on its head, so to speak. He recalls another use of oil on the body common in that time... that of embalming the dead. This must have been a shock to the disciples beyond even the shock they had already expressed. His message was clear: now was not the time to worry about the treasury. The True Treasure was in relationship, the one they had right before them, right now.

And so this is our first anointing this evening. If you are at home, I invite you to dip your fingers in the bowl of oil you have. If you are at church, find the bag you have with the cotton ball and take the cotton ball out and dab your fingers with some oil. Place your hand on the top of your own head if you are on your own this evening. Or if you are with others, you may choose to place your hands on each other's heads in turn. Allow your hand to rest there for a few moments. As you do so, I invite you to think of the people whose extravagant love has been poured out upon you, offering you care in the midst of your own healing journey. Feel that care as affirmation of your worth. Know that this kind of love is always and already available to you through relationship with God. Take your time as the music plays. Allow the warmth of the hand to melt into your being, filling you with assurance that the Holy Presence moves with warmth and light within your Holy Vessel, no matter how broken or far from life you feel. You are part of the Reign of Love in this world. Accept this anointing so that you might also offer this anointing, this healing, wherever it is needed.

## **Music for the Anointing of Extravagant Love**



## **Reading: Preparation for the Feast**

Matthew 26: 14-19

Thursday and Friday Reader: **Janice Metzger (Recorded)**

Then one of the twelve, who was called Judas Iscariot, went to the chief priests and said, "What will you give me if I betray him to you?" They paid him thirty pieces of silver. And from that moment he began to look for an opportunity to betray him.

On the first day of Unleavened Bread the disciples came to Jesus, saying, "Where do you want us to make the preparations for you to eat the Passover?" He said, "Go into the city to a certain man, and say to him, 'The Teacher says, My time is near; I will keep the Passover at your house with my disciples.'" So the disciples did as Jesus had directed them, and they prepared the Passover meal.

### **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.*

### **The Second Anointing: Called to Serve**

Leader: While Matthew's Gospel omits the details of the arrival of the disciples for the meal, we know from other Gospel accounts that the customary washing of feet upon arrival took on a particular significance that night. Not only practical but symbolic, the washing of feet in the ancient world indicated status, with servants washing the feet of their masters, pupils washing the feet of their teachers, children and wives washing the feet of the "man of the house." Jesus was all these things of reverence and honor to those gathered that night. And yet we know he washed *their* feet, rejecting the norms and indicating a new order of things, a new way to honor one another regardless of

status. We do not know if Jesus' washing that night of the last supper was followed by an anointing with a fragrant oil but we do know that this extra act of tending to the feet was done to express the highest form of respect and honor in the ancient world.

And so our second act of anointing this evening follows in this tradition. You may wish to remove your shoes if that is comfortable for you. We will rub some oil into the top of our feet, the top of our hands, and over our sternum, or breast-bone. Again, you can do this for yourselves or with and for others, as you feel comfortable.

## **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?*

As we rub some oil on the top of our feet  
(or whatever we use to move ourselves about in the world),  
we honor our efforts to go where healing is needed most.  
May we be blessed and strengthened for our work in the  
world.

May we go and serve and remember  
to honor the places we go as Holy Vessels of God's love.

As we rub some oil on the top of our hands  
(or elbows or knees),  
we honor the efforts we have undertaken, or will undertake,  
to make this world a better place for all.  
May we be blessed and strengthened for our work in the  
world.

May we reach out and serve and remember  
to honor the people we encounter as Holy Vessels of God's  
love.

As we rub some oil on our chest,  
we honor the efforts of our hearts  
to heal the hurts within us, between us, and around us.  
May we be blessed and strengthened for our continued work.  
May we be filled with compassion and care and remember  
to honor ourselves so that we might honor our neighbors as  
ourselves.

### **Reading: The Supper**

Matthew 26: 20-29

While they were eating, Jesus took a loaf of bread, and after blessing it he broke it, gave it to the disciples, and said, "Take, eat; this is my body." Then he took a cup, and after giving thanks he gave it to them, saying, "Drink from it, all of you; for this is my blood of the covenant, which is poured out for many for the forgiveness of sins. I tell you, I will never again drink of this fruit of the vine until that day when I drink it new with you in my Father's kingdom."

And so,  
in remembrance of the healing, life-transforming acts in Jesus Christ,  
we offer ourselves as a holy and living sacrifice,  
in union with Christ's offering for us,  
as we proclaim the mystery of faith.

Christ has died; Christ is risen; Christ will come again.

Pour out your Holy Spirit on us gathered here,  
and on these gifts of bread and wine.  
Make them be for us your Healing Spirit through Christ,  
so that we may be for the world the body of Christ,  
healing agents in a broken world,  
offering the life-blood of hope.

By your Spirit make us one with Christ,  
one with each other,  
and one in ministry to all the world,

until Christ comes in final victory  
and we feast at his heavenly banquet.

Through your Son Jesus Christ  
with the Holy Spirit in your holy church,  
all honor and glory is yours, Healing God,  
now and forever.

Amen.

### **Sharing the Bread and the Cup**

**L** Take and eat, take and drink.

**HYMN #564 Let Us Break Bread Together**  
Hymns for the Family of God (Gold Hymnal)  
**Soloists: Todd & Karla Bachl**  
**Matt & Ronda Gerry**

### **Reading: Predictions**

Matthew 26: 30-35

When they had sung the hymn, they went out to the Mount of Olives. Then Jesus said to them, "You will all become deserters because of me this night; for it is written,

I will strike the shepherd,  
and the sheep of the flock will be scattered.'

But after I am raised up, I will go ahead of you to Galilee." Peter said to him, "Though all become deserters because of you, I will never desert you." Jesus said to him, "Truly I tell you, this very night, before the cock crows, you will deny me three times." Peter said to him, "Even though I must die with you, I will not deny you." And so said all the disciples.

Leader: Disciples, I invite you to repeat after me:

Leader: I will never desert you

**People: I will never desert you**

I will never deny you

**I will never deny you**

I will never desert you  
**I will never desert you**  
I will never deny you  
**I will never deny you**

I will never desert you  
**I will never desert you**  
I will never deny you  
**I will never deny you**

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

## **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.*

### **Reading: Jesus Prays in Gethsemane**

Matthew 26: 36-41

Then Jesus went with them to a place called Gethsemane; and he said to his disciples, ‘Sit here while I go over there and pray.’ He took with him Peter and the two sons of Zebedee, and began to be grieved and agitated. Then he said to them, ‘I am deeply grieved, even to death; remain here, and stay awake with me.’ And going a little farther, he threw himself on the ground and prayed, ‘My Father, if it is possible, let this cup pass from me; yet not what I want but what you want.’ Then he came to the disciples and found

them sleeping; and he said to Peter, "So, could you not stay awake with me one hour? Stay awake and pray that you may not come into the time of trial; the spirit indeed is willing, but the flesh is weak."

## **Prayers in the Night**

Leader: Let us take this moment, as Jesus did, to dare ask the questions that come from the most broken places of our souls—our "deepest grieving." It is in acknowledging what feels most broken, most cynical, most impossible, that healing can occur. We must address the roots of our ill in order for the salve of God's desire for us to enter. You are invited to a time of reflection, becoming awake, staying awake, to the deep need within us and around us.

(Silence)

### **Prayer of Jesus**

**ALL: 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.**

### **Reading: Jesus Prays in Gethsemane**

Matthew 26: 42-56

Again he went away for the second time and prayed, "My Father, if this cannot pass unless I drink it, your will be done." Again he came and found them sleeping, for their eyes were heavy. So leaving them again, he went away and prayed for the third time, saying the same words. Then

he came to the disciples and said to them, "Are you still sleeping and taking your rest? See, the hour is at hand, and the Son of Man is betrayed into the hands of sinners. Get up, let us be going. See, my betrayer is at hand."

While he was still speaking, Judas, one of the twelve, arrived; with him was a large crowd with swords and clubs, from the chief priests and the elders of the people. Now the betrayer had given them a sign, saying, "The one I will kiss is the man; arrest him." At once he came up to Jesus and said, "Greetings, Rabbi!" and kissed him. Jesus said to him, "Friend, do what you are here to do." Then they came and laid hands on Jesus and arrested him. Suddenly, one of those with Jesus put his hand on his sword, drew it, and struck the slave of the high priest, cutting off his ear. Then Jesus said to him, "Put your sword back into its place; for all who take the sword will perish by the sword. Do you think that I cannot appeal to my Father, and he will at once send me more than twelve legions of angels? But how then would the scriptures be fulfilled, which say it must happen in this way?" At that hour Jesus said to the crowds, "Have you come out with swords and clubs to arrest me as though I were a bandit? Day after day I sat in the temple teaching, and you did not arrest me. But all this has taken place, so that the scriptures of the prophets may be fulfilled." Then all the disciples deserted him and fled.

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

**Reading: Peter's Denial of Jesus**  
Matthew 26: 69-75

Now Peter was sitting outside in the courtyard. A servant-girl came to him and said, "You also were with Jesus the

Galilean.” But he denied it before all of them, saying, “I do not know what you are talking about.” When he went out to the porch, another servant-girl saw him, and she said to the bystanders, “This man was with Jesus of Nazareth.” Again he denied it with an oath, “I do not know the man.” After a little while the bystanders came up and said to Peter, “Certainly you are also one of them, for your accent betrays you.” Then he began to curse, and he swore an oath, “I do not know the man!” At that moment the cock crowed. Then Peter remembered what Jesus had said: “Before the cock crows, you will deny me three times.” And he went out and wept bitterly.

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

**Reading: Jesus is Sentenced**  
Matthew 27: 15-26

Now Jesus stood before the governor; and the governor asked him, “Are you the King of the Jews?” Jesus said, “You say so.” But when he was accused by the chief priests and elders, he did not answer. Then Pilate said to him, “Do you not hear how many accusations they make against you?” But he gave him no answer, not even to a single charge, so that the governor was greatly amazed.

Now at the festival the governor was accustomed to release a prisoner for the crowd, anyone whom they wanted. At that time they had a notorious prisoner, called Jesu Barabbas. So after they had gathered, Pilate said to them, “Whom do you want me to release for you, Jesu Barabbas or Jesus who is called the Messiah?” For he realized that it was out of jealousy that they had handed him over. While he was sitting on the judgment seat, his wife sent word to him,



‘Have nothing to do with that innocent man, for today I have suffered a great deal because of a dream about him.’ Now the chief priests and the elders persuaded the crowds to ask for Barabbas and to have Jesus killed. The governor again said to them, ‘Which of the two do you want me to release for you?’ And they said, ‘Barabbas.’ Pilate said to them, ‘Then what should I do with Jesus who is called the Messiah?’ All of them said, ‘Let him be crucified!’ Then he asked, ‘Why, what evil has he done?’ But they shouted all the more, ‘Let him be crucified!’

So when Pilate saw that he could do nothing, but rather that a riot was beginning, he took some water and washed his hands before the crowd, saying, ‘I am innocent of this man’s blood; see to it yourselves.’ Then the people as a whole answered, ‘His blood be on us and on our children!’ So he released Barabbas for them; and after flogging Jesus, he handed him over to be crucified.

### **Reading: Jesus is Crucified**

Matthew 27: 27-54

Then the soldiers of the governor took Jesus into the governor’s headquarters, and they gathered the whole cohort around him. They stripped him and put a scarlet robe on him, and after twisting some thorns into a crown, they put it on his head. They put a reed in his right hand and knelt before him and mocked him, saying, ‘Hail, King of the Jews!’ They spat on him, and took the reed and struck him on the head. After mocking him, they stripped him of the robe and put his own clothes on him. Then they led him away to crucify him.

As they went out, they came upon a man from Cyrene named Simon; they compelled this man to carry his cross. And when they came to a place called Golgotha (which means Place of a Skull), they offered him wine to drink, mixed with gall; but when he tasted it, he would not drink it.

And when they had crucified him, they divided his clothes among themselves by casting lots; then they sat down there and kept watch over him. Over his head they put the charge against him, which read, "This is Jesus, the King of the Jews."

Then two bandits were crucified with him, one on his right and one on his left. Those who passed by derided him, shaking their heads and saying, "You who would destroy the temple and build it in three days, save yourself! If you are the Son of God, come down from the cross." In the same way the chief priests also, along with the scribes and elders, were mocking him, saying, "He saved others; he cannot save himself. He is the King of Israel; let him come down from the cross now, and we will believe in him. He trusts in God; let God deliver him now, if he wants to; for he said, 'I am God's Son.'" The bandits who were crucified with him also taunted him in the same way.

From noon on, darkness came over the whole land until three in the afternoon. And about three o'clock Jesus cried with a loud voice, "Eli, Eli, lema sabachthani?" that is, "My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?" When some of the bystanders heard it, they said, "This man is calling for Elijah." At once one of them ran and got a sponge, filled it with sour wine, put it on a stick, and gave it to him to drink. But the others said, "Wait, let us see whether Elijah will come to save him." Then Jesus cried again with a loud voice and breathed his last. At that moment the curtain of the temple was torn in two, from top to bottom. The earth shook, and the rocks were split. The tombs also were opened, and many bodies of the saints who had fallen asleep were raised. After his resurrection they came out of the tombs and entered the holy city and appeared to many. Now when the centurion and those with him, who were keeping watch over Jesus, saw the earthquake and what took place, they were terrified and said, "Truly this man was God's Son!"

## **The Earth Shook: Musical Meditation**

### **Reading: The Burial of Jesus**

Matthew 27: 55-61

Many women were also there, looking on from a distance; they had followed Jesus from Galilee and had provided for him. Among them were Mary Magdalene, and Mary the mother of James and Joseph, and the mother of the sons of Zebedee.

When it was evening, there came a rich man from Arimathea, named Joseph, who was also a disciple of Jesus. He went to Pilate and asked for the body of Jesus; then Pilate ordered it to be given to him. So Joseph took the body and wrapped it in a clean linen cloth and laid it in his own new tomb, which he had hewn in the rock. He then rolled a great stone to the door of the tomb and went away. Mary Magdalene and the other Mary were there, sitting opposite the tomb.

### **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.*

### **The Third Anointing: Burying the Past**

Leader: We come to our third and final anointing in our remembrance of Jesus in this moment of Holy Week. All during Lent we have remembered the healing acts of Jesus, the radical nature of the boundaries he crossed in order to restore wholeness—the desire of God that transcends all things we do to stand in the way, including the death of kindness, love, and compassion.

One ingredient was perhaps the most significant in all the purposes of anointing: healing, cosmetic, and ritual. It was among the gifts at the birth of Jesus and was no doubt present in the preparation of his body after death. Myrrh was a treasured element of sap from the life of trees. It provided healing properties for a myriad of afflictions, was used in ritual anointing of leaders, and in purification. It was likely more costly than the other birth gifts of gold and frankincense put together.

And so we are inspired by the connection of healing and death through the common use of myrrh in the story of Jesus. In this Good Friday moment, are there things that need to die within us to make room for the resurrection of our lives? Are there things we can lovingly lay to rest that are no longer needed, indeed that may stand in the way of our recovery of wholeness? What can you let go of in this moment—old hurts and disappointments of the past that need forgiveness? Perhaps God has already forgiven but you cannot forgive yourself?

When you ready, I invite you to dip your finger into the bowl of oil at home or touch the cotton ball with oil one more time and then make the sign of the cross on your forehead. This act is a sign and seal, a practice begun in the early church as they baptized new members, reminding us of our death and resurrection in Christ. What is embalmed in death is made new in resurrected life. This is what we believe. This is what we know because it is what Jesus promised: “I am the resurrection and the life. Those who believe in me, though they die, will live.”

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

## **Reading: The Tomb in Sealed**

Matthew 27: 62-66

The next day, that is, after the day of Preparation, the chief priests and the Pharisees gathered before Pilate and said, 'Sir, we remember what that impostor said while he was still alive, 'After three days I will rise again.' Therefore command the tomb to be made secure until the third day; otherwise his disciples may go and steal him away, and tell the people, 'He has been raised from the dead,' and the last deception would be worse than the first.'" Pilate said to them, "You have a guard of soldiers; go, make it as secure as you can." So they went with the guard and made the tomb secure by sealing the stone.

### **Blessing**

Now go in silence but not in despair.

May the words of Jesus ring in your ears:

"I am with you always."

And may the Spirit hover, move,  
and deliver salve to your soul  
until we meet again on the Day of Resurrection.

**Amen.**

### **Postlude**

The Old Rugged Cross

George Bennard

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[www.worshipdesignstudio.com](http://www.worshipdesignstudio.com).

## **Donate to God's Mission and Ministry at UNION UCC**

**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](mailto: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**

<b>Offering (e-giving, envelopes, and plate)</b>		<b>2021 Donations to the Northern Lehigh Food Bank:</b>	
Last Week	\$7,107	Last	145lbs, \$45
Calendar 2021 (Feb)	\$30,541	Total YTD:	2,221 lbs, \$172
Calendar 2020 (Feb)	\$35,077	<b>Easter Mission</b>	
Change from Last Year	-12.9%	\$1,566.20	
Budget (July-Feb.)	\$270,560		
Actual (July-Feb.)	\$244,882		
Giving vs. Budget	-9.5%		
<i>Additional financial information available in Consistory Minutes</i>			

## **SPREAD THE GOOD NEWS SPONSORS:**

*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.*