

Wednesday, March 24, 2021:

Fifth Wednesday in Lent:

*I will arise and go to my father, and I will say to him,
"Father, I have sinned against heaven, and before you; I
am no longer worthy to be called your son."* Luke 15:18, 19

+ **OPENING CALL TO PRAISE AND PRAYER**

O God, open our lips,
and our mouths shall proclaim your praise.
From the rising of the sun to its setting,
we praise your name, O God.

+ **REMEMBRANCE OF BAPTISM**

By Word and water God renews us this day
in the living fountain of God's grace,
and raises us with Christ Jesus
to live a new life in the Spirit.

* OSL

***Satisfy us in the morning
with your steadfast love, O God,
that we may sing for joy
and be glad all our days.***

+ **MORNING CANTICLE** - *The Second Song of Isaiah*

Seek the Lord while he wills to be found;
call upon him when he draws near.
***Let the wicked forsake their ways
and the evil ones their thoughts;***
And let them turn to the Lord,
and he will have compassion,
and to our God, for he will richly pardon.
***For my thoughts are not your thoughts,
nor your ways my ways, says the Lord.***
For as the heavens are higher than the earth,
so are my ways higher than your ways,
and my thoughts than your thoughts.
***For as rain and snow fall from the heavens
and return not again, but water the earth,***
Bringing forth life and giving growth,
seed for sowing and bread for eating,
***So is my word that goes forth from my mouth;
it will not return to me empty;***
But it will accomplish that which I have purposed,
and prosper in that for which I sent it. Isaiah 55:6-11

+ **MORNING PRAYER**

The Holy One* be with you;
And also with you.

Let us pray:

***Oh God, The Holy Spirit,
come to us, and among us;
come as the wind, and cleanse us;
come as the fire, and burn;
come as the dew, and refresh;
convict, convert, and consecrate many hearts and
lives to our great good and to your greater glory;
and this we ask for Jesus Christ's sake. Amen***

[UM Book of Worship.]

+ **WORD: Jeremiah 25:30-38** CEV

³⁰ The LORD told me to say:

From my sacred temple
I will roar like thunder,
while I trample my people
and everyone else
as though they were grapes.

³¹ My voice will be heard
everywhere on earth,
accusing nations of their crimes
and sentencing the guilty
to death.

³² The LORD All-Powerful says:

You can see disaster spreading
from far across the earth,
from nation to nation
like a horrible storm.

³³ When it strikes, I will kill so many people that their
bodies will cover the ground like manure. No one will be
left to bury them or to mourn.

³⁴ The LORD's people are his flock,
and you leaders

were the shepherds.

But now it's your turn
to be butchered like sheep.

You'll shatter like fine pottery
dropped on the floor.

So roll on the ground,
crying and mourning.

³⁵ You have nowhere to run,
nowhere to hide.

³⁶ Listen to the cries
of the shepherds,

³⁷ as the LORD's burning anger
turns peaceful meadows
into barren deserts.

³⁸ The LORD has abandoned
his people
like a lion leaving its den.

Holy wisdom, holy word.

Thanks be to God!

+ **Psalm 119:145-176** NRSV

***Yet you are near, O LORD,
and all your commandments are true.***

¹⁴⁵ With my whole heart I cry; answer me, O LORD.
I will keep your statutes.

¹⁴⁶ I cry to you; save me,
that I may observe your decrees.

¹⁴⁷ I rise before dawn and cry for help;
I put my hope in your words.

¹⁴⁸ My eyes are awake before each watch of the night,
that I may meditate on your promise.

¹⁴⁹ In your steadfast love hear my voice;
O LORD, in your justice preserve my life.

¹⁵⁰ Those who persecute me with evil purpose draw near;
they are far from your law.

¹⁵¹ Yet you are near, O LORD,
and all your commandments are true.

¹⁵² Long ago I learned from your decrees
that you have established them forever.

¹⁵³ Look on my misery and rescue me,
for I do not forget your law.

¹⁵⁴ Plead my cause and redeem me;
give me life according to your promise.

¹⁵⁵ Salvation is far from the wicked,
for they do not seek your statutes.

¹⁵⁶ Great is your mercy, O LORD;
give me life according to your justice.

¹⁵⁷ Many are my persecutors and my adversaries,
yet I do not swerve from your decrees.

¹⁵⁸ I look at the faithless with disgust,
because they do not keep your commands.

¹⁵⁹ Consider how I love your precepts;
preserve my life according to your steadfast love.

¹⁶⁰ The sum of your word is truth;
and every one of your righteous ordinances endures
forever.

¹⁶¹ Princes persecute me without cause,
but my heart stands in awe of your words.

¹⁶² I rejoice at your word
like one who finds great spoil.

¹⁶³ I hate and abhor falsehood,
but I love your law.

¹⁶⁴ Seven times a day I praise you
for your righteous ordinances.

¹⁶⁵ Great peace have those who love your law;
nothing can make them stumble.

¹⁶⁶ I hope for your salvation, O LORD,
and I fulfill your commandments.

¹⁶⁷ My soul keeps your decrees;
I love them exceedingly.

¹⁶⁸ I keep your precepts and decrees,
for all my ways are before you.

¹⁶⁹ Let my cry come before you, O LORD;
give me understanding according to your word.

¹⁷⁰ Let my supplication come before you;
deliver me according to your promise.

¹⁷¹ My lips will pour forth praise,
because you teach me your statutes.

¹⁷² My tongue will sing of your promise,
for all your commandments are right.

¹⁷³ Let your hand be ready to help me,
for I have chosen your precepts.

¹⁷⁴ I long for your salvation, O LORD,
and your law is my delight.

¹⁷⁵ Let me live that I may praise you,
and let your ordinances help me.

¹⁷⁶ I have gone astray like a lost sheep; seek out your
servant,
for I do not forget your commandments.

Glory to you, O Trinity, most holy and *blessed*,
one God, now and for-ever, *A-men*.

***Yet you are near, O LORD,
and all your commandments are true.***

+SILENCE FOR REFLECTION

+ **WORD: John 10:1-18** CEV

“Very truly, I tell you, anyone who does not enter the sheepfold by the gate but climbs in by another way is a thief and a bandit. ² The one who enters by the gate is the shepherd of the sheep. ³ The gatekeeper opens the gate for him, and the sheep hear his voice. He calls his own sheep by name and leads them out. ⁴ When he has brought out all his own, he goes ahead of them, and the sheep follow him because they know his voice. ⁵ They will not follow a stranger, but they will run from him because they do not know the voice of strangers.” ⁶ Jesus used this figure of speech with them, but they did not understand what he was saying to them.

⁷ So again Jesus said to them, “Very truly, I tell you, I am the gate for the sheep. ⁸ All who came before me are thieves and bandits; but the sheep did not listen to them. ⁹ I am the gate. Whoever enters by me will be saved, and will come in and go out and find pasture. ¹⁰ The thief comes only to steal and kill and destroy. I came that they may have life, and have it abundantly.

¹¹ “I am the good shepherd. The good shepherd lays down his life for the sheep. ¹² The hired hand, who is not the shepherd and does not own the sheep, sees the wolf

coming and leaves the sheep and runs away—and the wolf snatches them and scatters them. ¹³ The hired hand runs away because a hired hand does not care for the sheep. ¹⁴ I am the good shepherd. I know my own and my own know me, ¹⁵ just as the Father knows me and I know the Father. And I lay down my life for the sheep. ¹⁶ I have other sheep that do not belong to this fold. I must bring them also, and they will listen to my voice. So there will be one flock, one shepherd. ¹⁷ For this reason the Father loves me, because I lay down my life in order to take it up again. ¹⁸ No one takes it from me, but I lay it down of my own accord. I have power to lay it down, and I have power to take it up again. I have received this command from my Father.”

Holy wisdom, holy word.

Thanks be to God!

+SILENCE FOR REFLECTION

+ **CANTICLE OF ZECHARIAH**

We bless you, Adonai, God of *Israel*,
for you come to visit us and ransom us from *bondage*.
You have brought forth a strong *De-liverer*
in the house of your child *David*.

**This is what your holy prophets an-nounced:
deliverance from enemies
and from the hand of all who hate *us*;
mercy a-mong our *ancestors*,
and remembrance of your ho-ly covenant.**

This is the promise

you swore to our an-cestor, *Abraham*,
to make us un-a-*fraid*,
to rescue us from our *enemies*,
to serve before you, holy and just,
all the days of our *lives*.

**And this, my little child,
shall be called prophet of the Most *High*,
going before you, Adonai, to pre-pare your *paths*,
making your people know de-*liverance*
by the forgiveness of their *sins*.**

**Through your merciful compassions, God our *God*,
the dawn from on high shall *visit us*,
to shine on those kept in dungeons and the
shadows of *death*
and to guide our feet onto the path of *peace*.**

Glory to you, O Trinity, most holy and *blessed*,
one God, now and for-ever, *A-men*.

+ THE APOSTLE'S CREED

***I believe in God, the Father Almighty,
maker of heaven and earth.
And in Jesus Christ, his 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;
the third day he rose from the dead;
he ascended into heaven,
and sits at the right hand of the Father Almighty.
From there he shall come again 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.***

+ **COMMEMORATION: Ida Bell Wells-Barnett**

Wells-Barnett was an active participant in the various movements for social changes of her day. Her greatest contributions were her untiring work in the anti-lynching movement and her vocation as a journalist and social justice advocate. She negotiated societal conventions surrounding domesticity and took time away from the sociopolitical world to raise her children, returning to her work as quickly as time and circumstance allowed.

* For All the Saints

+SILENCE FOR REFLECTION

+ **COLLECT: Ida Bell Wells-Barnett**

Purify us with your holy fire, O God, and send us prophets in our day like Ida Bell Wells-Barnett whose voice called for cleansing and honesty. Turn our hearts toward others in repentance. Refine our devotion and service to be pleasing to you as when we first loved you. For your mercy, we revere you, through Jesus, our redeemer. Amen.

* For All the Saints

+ **PRAYERS**

The Holy One be with you,
and also with you.

Let us pray: *(stop and pray for those on your heart today)*

+ FOR THOSE WHO INFLUENCE PUBLIC OPINION

Almighty God, you proclaim your truth in every age by many voices: Direct, in our time, we pray, those who speak where many listen and write what many read; that they may do their part in making the heart of this people wise, its mind sound, and its will righteous; to the honor of Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

+ PRAYERS FOR LOCAL GOVERNMENT

Almighty God our heavenly Father, send down upon those who hold office in this State of New Jersey, the spirit of wisdom, charity, and justice; that with steadfast purpose they may faithfully serve in their offices to promote the well-being of all people; through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

+ PRAYER: Wednesday The Fifth Week Of Lent

Almighty God our heavenly Father, renew in us the gifts of your mercy; increase our faith, strengthen our hope, enlighten our understanding, widen our charity, and make us ready to serve you; through Jesus Christ our Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, for ever and ever. Amen.

+ COLLECT OF THE WEEK

Almighty God, you alone can bring into order the unruly wills and affections of sinners: Grant your people grace to love what you command and desire what you promise; that, among the swift and varied changes of the world, our hearts may surely there be fixed where true joys are to be found; through Jesus Christ our Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and for ever. Amen

+ PRAYER OF JOHN CHRYSOSTOM

Almighty God, you have given us grace at this time with one accord to make our common supplication to you; and you have promised through your well-

beloved Son that when two or three are gathered together in his Name you will be in the midst of them: Fulfill now, O Lord, our desires and petitions as may be best for us; granting us in this world, knowledge of your truth, and in the age to come life everlasting. Amen.

+ **THE LORD'S PRAYER**

*Our Father in heaven,
hallowed be your name,
your kingdom come,
your will be done, on earth as in heaven.
Give us today our daily bread.
Forgive us our sins
as we forgive those who sin against us.
Save us from the time of trial
and deliver us from evil.
For the kingdom, the power,
and the glory are yours
now and forever. Amen.*

+ **CONCLUDING PRAYER**

Lord God, almighty and everlasting Father,
You have brought us in safety to this new day:
preserve us with your mighty power,
that we may not fall into sin,
nor be overcome by adversity;
and in all we do direct us to the fulfilling of your purpose,
through Jesus Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

+ **BLESSING**

I pray that God, the source of all hope, will infuse our lives
with an abundance of joy and peace in the midst of our
faith, so that our hope will overflow through the power of
the Holy Spirit. **Amen.**

Romans 15:13 *THE VOICE*

Morning Prayer

A ministry of the faithful at
Elwood United Methodist Church

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