

Sunday March 10, 2019 - 10:00 a.m.

*Please stand if you are able

Prelude
Welcome

We Gather Around God's Word

Bells and Chimes Call To Worship:

Introit: "As We Gather" (See PowerPoint)

*Call to Worship: ☺

L: *Our souls are created to be God's dwelling place,
and the dwelling place of the soul is God.*

**All: As we worship, we experience the God who dwells in us.
Through our worship, we dwell in God.**

L: *As we make the Holy One our dwelling place, no evil shall overtake us.
Come, live and love in the shelter of the Most High and say,
"God is my refuge and fortress in whom I trust."*

**All: Through our worship, we love the God who dwells in us,
and in whom we dwell. God is our refuge and our home.**

*Hymn:#59 "Holy Spirit, Ever Dwelling"

Prayer of Confession: ☺ (See PowerPoint)

L: God did not say,

"You shall not be tempted; you shall not be troubled;
you shall not be distressed."

God did say, "You shall not be overcome."

Jesus, full of the Holy Spirit, was led into the wilderness,
where he was tempted.

All: Sheltering God, Guiding God,

as you were present with Jesus

in his wilderness experience,

so you are present with us:

you have urged us to trust you saying:

"Love me and call upon me, and I will answer you,

I will be with you in trouble, and will honor you."

Still, we have felt discouraged,

and at times even abandoned and betrayed by you, O God,

when all manner of things have not gone well with us. O Lord, have mercy on us.

L: Instead of following where you lead, O God,

**All: at times we follow a tempter who shows us a vision of
The world that is a mere counterfeit of what you desire for
us. At times we are deceived and enticed by imitations of
love, abundance, and joy. O Christ, have mercy.**

L: O God, when you have not answered in the ways or in the time we desire,

**All: we have been tempted to lean on our own
understanding and not acknowledge you in all ways.
We so often have sought to control our lives and order our
own steps, often ignoring you and pushing you aside.
O Lord, have mercy.
Help us to trust you to journey with us and to guide us.
Help us to rest in your promise to never leave us
or forsake us. Amen.**

Assurance of God's Grace: 🙏

Dear Ones, God is at work in us and with us!

God is our clothing in which love enwraps us, holds us, and all encloses us because of God's tender love, so that God may never leave us.

We are protected safely in love—in woe as in well—
by the goodness of God.

God urges us, "Keep the word near you,
even on your lips and in your heart...

This word is your salvation."

As we worship today, with the word on our lips and in our hearts,
experience the salvation of God for all manner of things in our lives.

In the promise, presence, and power of God for all manner of things, Amen.

Passing God's Peace

*In the spirit of peace and the hope of unity,
let us offer each other a sign of Christ's peace!*

Special Music: by Sandra Wilke – ***"Put Your Hand in the Hand"***

We Engage God's Word

Scripture Readings: Psalm 91:1-2, 9-16

Romans 10:8b-13

Luke 4:1-13

Youth Moment/ The Lord's Prayer

A Time of Reflection: “Filled with the Spirit ... Led By the Spirit”

Henri Nouwen, from the 20th century writes this, *"Success, popularity, and power can indeed present a great temptation, but their seductive quality often comes from the way they are part of the much larger temptation to self-rejection. When we have come to believe in the voices that call us worthless and unlovable, then success, popularity, and power are easily perceived as attractive solutions....Self-rejection is the greatest enemy of the spiritual life because it contradicts the sacred voice that calls us the 'Beloved.' Being the Beloved constitutes the core truth of our existence."*

(http://www.ucc.org/worship_sermon_seeds_march_10_2019)

What do you think about that last statement about self-rejection? How can that be the greatest enemy of spiritual life? What difference does it make if we believe the voice of truth that we are beloved?

After being filled with the Holy Spirit during baptism Jesus was led by that same Spirit into the wilderness where he fasted and prayed and was continually tempted for forty days. It wasn't just the three temptations we heard of in today's scripture reading. Those three temptations, focused on self, were the culmination of forty days of temptation. Mary Schaller Blaufuss says this, *"This wilderness experience helps Jesus shape the practical ways in which he will live out his ministry. He is confronted with real temptations that have real implications, not just for their end result but also for the nature of the journey. Jesus confronts the temptation to serve his own needs, to assert authority for its own sake, and to seek only safety and security. Over and over he chooses relationship with God as his reason for being and his way of acting in the world." When we have a relationship with God it incorporates us being in relationship with others and creation."*

What guides our way of being and acting in the world? To what truths do we listen? When have we been tempted to seek first our needs, to assert authority in order to demonstrate who is boss, or to only be concerned for our own safety and security while others suffer?

Most, if not all of us have been baptized. Having said that, the truth is that we too are filled with that same Holy Spirit that filled Jesus, led Jesus, and helped Jesus to choose to remain faithful to God even in times of temptation and deep trial. Kate Matthews asked the question "Where does the struggle come from?" Is it coming from an outer voice or from a voice within? I say does it really matter? Every day we are faced with both inner and outer temptations. No matter the source, Jesus chose to remain in relationship with God and to work and respond in cooperation with the Holy Spirit to guide his life and life choices. We too are faced with both inner and outer temptations. No matter what the source of temptation we too have been filled with the Holy Spirit. The question is how often we draw from the well of living water that has been placed within us by the power of that same Spirit in order that we might have the wisdom, strength, and courage to choose to walk with God.

In Psalm 91 it says because you have made the Lord your refuge no evil shall befall you. Clearly harm came to Jesus. Yet, I would have to say Evil did not befall him. Though Jesus experienced the consequences of evil and his life was impacted by evil; evil did not befall him. Jesus never once lowered himself to repay evil with evil. Jesus never once allowed an evil choice to guide his life in order to make things easier on

himself. Were there times Jesus fled from danger? Absolutely! But there were other times Jesus walked right into the face of danger. I believe the determination to hide or face danger was all guided by the Holy Spirit's guidance on timing. When there was still work left to be done it was important that Jesus not yet be captured. When Jesus asked others to follow him it wasn't to have others be him; rather it was to have others learn to listen to God and seek first God's ways in all that they do.

This Lent, let us not fear the Spirit's guidance even when it leads us to places of wilderness where temptation is continual. Where ever the Spirit guides us, let us trust the Spirit will be there with us. Let it reveal to us the untruths we believe about ourselves and others. Let us also be open to the receiving God's truths. May we let the Spirit strengthen us to resist both the inner and outside voices of temptation that lead us away from God so that we too might have the strength, courage and desire to choose God's will.

God of deliverance and freedom, you taught the people of Israel to acknowledge that all things come from your bountiful hand. Deepen our faith so that we may resist temptation, temptation to power as we know it; power that dominates; power that controls; power that lifts up for the sake of idolatry and ideology; power that insists on our own power. And the temptation not only to power itself, but what the claim of power then leads to, has a hold on, or determines. In the midst of trial, help us to remember that we are filled with the Holy Spirit and thus empowered and able to choose relationship, relationship with you, with humanity, and with all of creation as our reason for being and our way of acting in the world as we proclaim that Jesus Christ is Lord, now and forever. Amen.

We Respond to God's Word

Hymn: *"On Eagles Wings"* (See PowerPoint)

Sharing Joys, Concerns, and Prayers for the World

Call to Offering/ Offertory

*Doxology:

**Praise God from whom all blessing flow;
Praise God, all creatures here below;
Praise God for all that love has done:
Creator, Christ, and Spirit, One. Amen**

*Prayer of Dedication: 🙏 (In Unison)

L: God carries us within God's own self in love, and labors until full term, then suffers the sharpest throes and the hardest pains that ever were or ever shall be.

All: Thank you, O God, for loving us and laboring with us as we seek you and as we help others in their seeking. Bless these offerings which we return to you, that in our seeking and our serving, our light might illumine someone's path. Guide us in your wisdom and love that we may use these gifts to manifest your presence in the world in all that we do. Amen.

We Are Sent Into the World

Church News

***Sending Hymn: #211 “Lord Jesus, Who through Forty Days”**

*** Benediction and Response:**

GO NOW IN PEACE

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