

Sunday March 14, 2021
God So Loved the World- Even When We Detest God's Food

Prelude

Words of Welcome

Announcements

Call to Worship

Leader: Beloved in Christ, why have you come to worship this morning?

People: *(Out loud, but muted)* **We come to celebrate the love of God in the form of Jesus Christ.**

Leader: This love reaches through the shadows of our lives to embrace us. Our challenge is to trust the light of God's love in the midst of our struggles.

People: *(Out loud, but muted)* **We come to celebrate the light of God in Christ who offers love and acceptance, not judgment and rejection.**

Leader: If only we will trust, Christ leads us in the way of light and love.

People: *(Out loud, but muted)* **We come to celebrate our God who loved and loves us so much!**

Time of Preparation for our Unison Prayer (Pastor)

Settle into your seats and close your eyes.

Visualize a place of inner quietness that is a place

Unperturbed by wind, storms, or turmoil.

Awash in stillness that stems from depths we cannot plumb.

What comes up for you?

Imagine your presence there.

Now imagine that with you

is the presence of Christ as an all-encompassing gentle light.

Stay there a moment with Christ, the Light.

As you focus your attention on the glimmer of light, hear this:

For God so loved the World that God gave God's only begotten child

For God so loved the World that God gave

For God so loved the World

For God so loved

So loved

The World

God

I am.

Love All.

Opening Prayer **Unison** (*Out loud, but muted*)

Out of the silences hidden within the depths of our inward beings

We LISTEN.

We OBSERVE.

We take NOTE.

We place what we experience of you oh God into the deep tucks and folds of our hearts.

Guide us through these times as faithful creatures of your hope, light, and love.

Amen.

Hymn # 365: How Blessed Are They Who Trust in Christ

(Please see separate attachment for the score)

- 1) How blessed are they who trust in Christ
When we and those we love must part;
We yield them up; for go they must,
But do not lose them from our heart.

- 2) In ripened age, their harvest reaped,
Or gone from us in youth or prime,
In Christ they have eternal life,
Released from all the bonds of time.

- 3) In Christ, who tasted death for us,
We rise above our natural grief,
And witness to a stricken world
The strength and splendor of belief.

Pastor's Call to Confession

Sisters and Brothers, in our daily lives we need the gift of the season of Lent.

These 40 days can help us restore right relationships with God and with others.

This is a fine time to focus,

clear our hearts and minds of distractions, and re-orient and restore our whole selves.

May God be with us. Let us join in our unison Prayer of Reconciliation.

Prayer of Reconciliation **Unison** (*Out loud, but muted*)

O God of Comfort and Challenge,

we come to you this morning the way the Israelites did,

full of anxieties, fears, unmet needs, and questions about the future.

The many blessings of God failed to quell their inner storms and anxieties.

Sometimes we too do not recognize your blessings at work in our day to day lives.

**Forgive us for shutting ourselves off from you in moments of greatest need.
Help us to consider the bigger picture of others being in great need and the need
for us to serve in love by the power of grace.**

**May we also be mindful of the effects of oppression, injustice, and inequality on
others.**

**Forgive us when we close our eyes for fear of what you might show us;
Lift up loving and compassionate leaders to open our eyes until we see what you
see in our world.**

Teach us how to respond in love to the challenges of our times.

Silent Prayer

Assurance of Pardon

We are blessed because God's presence resides deep within each of you.
So return God's blessing by the way you love others. **Amen.**

Passing of the Peace (unmute for Passing of the Peace)

Pastor: The Peace of Christ be with you

People: **And also with you!**

Reading

Carol Griffith

Numbers 21:4-9 (NIV)

21:4 From Mount Hor they set out by the way to the Red Sea, to go around the land of Edom; but the people became impatient on the way.

21:5 The people spoke against God and against Moses, "Why have you brought us up out of Egypt to die in the wilderness? For there is no food and no water, and we detest this miserable food."

21:6 Then the LORD sent poisonous serpents among the people, and they bit the people, so that many Israelites died.

21:7 The people came to Moses and said, "We have sinned by speaking against the LORD and against you; pray to the LORD to take away the serpents from us." So Moses prayed for the people.

21:8 And the LORD said to Moses, "Make a poisonous serpent, and set it on a pole; and everyone who is bitten shall look at it and live."

21:9 So Moses made a serpent of bronze, and put it upon a pole; and whenever a serpent bit someone, that person would look at the serpent of bronze and live.

Special Music

“A Song of Peace” Jean Sibelius, tune Finlandia

Jim Tilton

Gospel Reading**John 3:14-21 (NIV)**

3:14 And just as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, so must the Son of Man be lifted up,

3:15 that whoever believes in him may have eternal life.

3:16 "For God so loved the world that he gave his only Son, so that everyone who believes in him may not perish but may have eternal life.

3:17 "Indeed, God did not send the Son into the world to condemn the world, but in order that the world might be saved through him.

3:18 Those who believe in him are not condemned; but those who do not believe are condemned already, because they have not believed in the name of the only Son of God.

3:19 And this is the judgment, that the light has come into the world, and people loved darkness rather than light because their deeds were evil.

3:20 For all who do evil hate the light and do not come to the light, so that their deeds may not be exposed.

3:21 But those who do what is true come to the light, so that it may be clearly seen that their deeds have been done in God."
changers seated at their tables.

Musical Interlude**Sermon: God So Loved the World- Even When We Detest God's Food****Music for Meditation**

Prayers of the People (unmute yourself to offer a request, giving first names only, please)

Hymn #508 Prayer Is the Soul's Sincere Desire (verses 1 and 5)
(sung muted but together, Wei Der playing)

Prayer is the soul's sincere desire, unuttered or expressed;
The motion of a hidden fire that trembles in the breast.
O Christ, by whom we come to God, the Life, the Truth, the Way,
The path of prayer you too have trod: Christ, teach us how to pray.

Pastoral Prayer

The Lord's Prayer **Unison** (*Out loud, but muted*)

Offering Invitation

Consider the steadfast love of God in every breath you breathe.
May this steadfast love inspire you to give generously
so that we may live into God's Reign of peace and compassion
through the offerings of our own church.

Offering and Dedication **Unison** (*Out loud, but muted*)

**O Generous One, we give thanks to you
for your steadfast love endures forever.
May these gifts be used to feed the hunger and satisfy the thirst
of all those you love throughout your creation. Amen.**

Blessing and Benediction **Unison** (*Out loud, but muted*)

**Let us rejoice: God so loves the world!
May God our Maker
send you back into the world with creative energies refreshed.
May Christ the Light
illuminate your fearful moments.
And may the Holy Spirit of steadfast love
guide you until we worship together again.
This day and forevermore. Amen!**