



March 19, 2023  
Fourth Sunday of Lent

## GATHERING AND PRAISE

### Welcome

### Prelude

*Green Pastures*

Scarmolin

*The prelude signals the beginning of our sacred time together. During the prelude, you are invited to prepare your heart for worship by focusing your attention upon God.*

### Call to Worship

Damon Moore

We wonder why things happen the way they do.

**We come looking for answers and deeper understanding.**

Illuminate us, Lord. Teach us.

**Be near to us God--comfort us, love us.**

### Opening Prayer

All Praying

Damon Moore

**Why, Lord? Is there a pattern, a plan, a purpose to the pain of the world? While our minds seek answers, our hearts seek comfort. Gentle God, we wonder; we question; we hurt for others; hold us close. Amen.**

### Hymn

*His Eye Is on the Sparrow*

FWS 2146

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### Passing the Peace of Christ

Damon Moore

### **Prayer of Confession**

Pastor Debra

When we offer God our confession, we join the beautiful work of reconciliation.

Merciful God, we confess that there are moments in our lives when we cannot bear to lift up songs of praise. In our times of pain and suffering, unable to see anything but darkness, all we can do is weep. Forgive us, O Lord, when we fail to sense your comforting presence. Help us to remember that we are to know you as Emmanuel, God with us, for you share in our weeping and light the way to new life, even as we walk in the shadow of death. In Jesus' name, we pray. Amen.

### **Words of Assurance**

Do not be afraid, says the Lord. For God's light shines forth no matter how deep the depths of our darkness. Take heart, for wherever you are, Christ is with you! Amen.

### **Ministry of Music**

*This Is the Gospel of Love*

Choir

## **PROCLAMATION AND RESPONSE**

### **Prayer for Understanding**

*All Praying*

Damon Moore

**We ask you, our living God, to shower onto us your wisdom and knowledge. We pray that as we listen to your word, we may have the ability to see clearly what you have called us to do. We seek to live to fulfill your words urging us to love others as we love ourselves. Illuminate our eyes and reveal to us your glory. Amen.**

### **First Lesson**

*Psalms 137:1-6*

Damon Moore

Psalms 137 is a song of grief. It recalls the lonely and desolate lives of the Israelites while in captivity in Babylon. The people longed for their native land and longed for God to remember the wrongs done to Jerusalem when it was destroyed. So deep was their sorrow they could neither play their harps nor sing their songs of praise.

<sup>1</sup> By the rivers of Babylon we sat and wept  
when we remembered Zion.

<sup>2</sup> There on the poplars  
we hung our harps,

<sup>3</sup> for there our captors asked us for songs,  
our tormentors demanded songs of joy;  
they said, "Sing us one of the songs of Zion!"

<sup>4</sup> How can we sing the songs of the Lord  
while in a foreign land?

<sup>5</sup> If I forget you, Jerusalem,  
may my right hand forget its skill.

<sup>6</sup> May my tongue cling to the roof of my mouth if I do not remember you.

## **Second Lesson**

*John 11:23-35*

Damon Moore

The story of the raising of Lazarus is the sixth of seven signs John gives to prove that Jesus is the Messiah, the Christ, Son of God, and that through faith in him believers receive eternal life. Even as the event shows Jesus' divine power over death itself, it also shows him as a wonderfully sensitive human being. His love for Lazarus is clear. Martha's and Mary's accusation that Jesus' presence would have averted Lazarus' death tells how real their friendship was. So also did Jesus' tears. The story is John's reflection on the significance of the resurrection. Because Jesus is fully human and fully divine, life and death are his gifts to give.

<sup>23</sup> Jesus said to her, "Your brother will rise again." <sup>24</sup> Martha said to him, "I know that he will rise again in the resurrection on the last day." <sup>25</sup> Jesus said to her, "I am the resurrection and the life. Those who believe in me, even though they die, will live, <sup>26</sup> and everyone who lives and believes in me will never die. Do you believe this?" <sup>27</sup> She said to him, "Yes, Lord, I believe that you are the Messiah, the Son of God, the one coming into the world."

## **Jesus Weeps**

<sup>28</sup> When she had said this, she went back and called her sister Mary and told her privately, "The Teacher is here and is calling for you." <sup>29</sup> And when she heard it, she got up quickly and went to him. <sup>30</sup> Now Jesus had not yet come to the village but was still at the place where Martha had met him. <sup>31</sup> The Jews who were with her in the house consoling her saw Mary get up quickly and go out. They followed her because they thought that she was going to the tomb to weep there. <sup>32</sup> When Mary came where Jesus was and saw him, she knelt at his feet and said to him, "Lord, if you had been here, my brother would not have died." <sup>33</sup> When Jesus saw her weeping and the Jews who came with her also weeping, he was greatly disturbed in spirit and deeply moved. <sup>34</sup> He said, "Where have you laid him?" They said to him, "Lord, come and see." <sup>35</sup> Jesus began to weep.

## **Sermon**

*Why Do Bad Things Happen to Good People?*

Pastor Debra

## **Preparation for Prayer**

*I Need Thee Every Hour*

UMH 397

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*Verses 1,2,3*

## **Morning Prayer**

Pastor Debra

## **The Lord's Prayer**

**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 trespasses as we forgive those who trespass against us. And lead us not into temptation but deliver us from evil, for thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory forever. Amen.**

## **Offertory Invitation**

Damon Moore

Today we have been reminded that our relationship with God is not transactional. Even when we do all the good we can, bad things can and do happen. So, we are not asked to give today as a way of bargaining with God or buying blessings. We are asked to give as a way for us to participate in God's compassion for the world. May our gifts meet those who are hurting with a sign of holy help.

## **Worship with Our Tithes and Offerings**

*Offertory*

*Whispering Hope*

Hawthorne

*\*Doxology*

*Praise God From Whom All Blessings Flow*

***Praise God, from whom all blessings flow;***

***Praise God, all creatures here below:***

***Alleluia! Alleluia! Praise God, the source of all our gifts!***

***Praise Jesus Christ, whose power uplifts!***

***Praise the Spirit, Holy Spirit! Alleluia! Alleluia! Alleluia!***

*\*Prayer of Dedication*

Damon Moore

God who weeps with us, receive our gifts today. Bless them and bless us to go deep into the wounds of your hurting world without judgment and without explanation. Bless us to go into your world with compassion, carrying each other's crosses until the sun rises, bringing us the warmth of new life and light once again.

## **GOING FORTH TO SERVE**

### **HYMN**

*Precious Name*

UMH 536

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### **Benediction**

Pastor Debra

May the loving embrace of God

Be the comfort you desire.

May the name of the Son

Be the one on whom you rely.

May the presence of the Spirit

Be with you every hour.

May the Three in One

Be the focus of all you are. Go in peace.

**Choral Benediction**

*The Spirit Sends Us Forth to Serve*

*We go to be the hands of Christ,  
to scatter joy like seed and,  
all our days, to cherish life,  
to do the loving deed.*

**Postlude**

*Jesus, Name Above All Names*

Hearn

***His Eye Is on the Sparrow***

*Why should I feel discouraged?  
Why should the shadows come?  
Why should my heart be lonely  
and long for heaven and home,  
When Jesus is my portion?  
My constant friend is he:  
His eye is on the sparrow,  
and I know he watches me;  
his eye is on the sparrow,  
and I know he watches me.  
I sing because I'm happy,  
I sing because I'm free,  
for his eye is on the sparrow,  
and I know he watches me.*

*"Let not your heart be troubled,"  
his tender word I hear,  
and resting on his goodness,  
I lose my doubts and fears;  
though by the path he leadeth  
but one step I may see;  
His eye is on the sparrow,  
and I know he watches me;*

*his eye is on the sparrow,  
and I know he watches me.  
I sing because I'm happy,  
I sing because I'm free,  
for his eye is on the sparrow,  
and I know he watches me.*

*Whenever I am tempted,  
whenever clouds arise,  
when song give place to sighing,  
when hope within me dies,  
I draw the closer to him,  
from care he sets me free:  
His eye is on the sparrow,  
and I know he watches me;  
his eye is on the sparrow,  
and I know he watches me.  
I sing because I'm happy,  
I sing because I'm free,  
for his eye is on the sparrow,  
and I know he watches me.*

### ***I Need Thee Every Hour***

#### ***Refrain:***

***I need thee, O I need thee;  
every hour I need thee;  
O bless me now, my Savior, I come to thee.***

*I need thee every hour, most gracious Lord;  
no tender voice like thine can peace afford. **Refrain***

*I need thee every hour; stay thou nearby;  
temptations lose their power when thou art nigh. **Refrain***

*I need thee every hour, in joy or pain;  
come quickly and abide, or life is vain. **Refrain***

## ***Precious Name***

*Take the name of Jesus with you,  
child of sorrow and of woe;  
it will joy and comfort give you;  
take it then, where'er you go.*

### ***Refrain:***

***Precious name, O how sweet!  
Hope of earth and joy of heaven.  
Precious name, O how sweet!  
Hope of earth and joy of heaven.***

*Take the name of Jesus ever,  
as a shield from every snare;  
if temptations round you gather,  
breathe that holy name in prayer.*

### ***(Refrain)***

*O the precious name of Jesus!  
How it thrills our souls with joy,  
when his loving arms receive us,  
and his songs our tongues employ!*

### ***(Refrain)***

*At the name of Jesus bowing,  
falling prostrate at his feet,  
King of kings in heaven we'll crown him,  
when our journey is complete.*

### ***(Refrain)***