

SUNDAY, March 12, 2023

3rd Sunday in Lent

Caldwell United Methodist Church, 8 Academy Road, Caldwell, N. J. 07006

Rev. Vivian L. Rodeffer, Pastor

Ms. Maxine Alstrom, Music Director



PRELUDE

WELCOME AND INVOCATION

Pastor Viv

*God of Community, challenge us, surprise us, stretch us, as we come together to worship you. May we find that within our shared stories, Your Story is revealed.
Amen.*

*CALL TO WORSHIP

Sometimes we wonder if it is important to come to church. Why do you come?

We come to be in God's holy presence.

And we wonder if worshipping together with others really matters.

Let us who have joined together, have praise on our lips and joy in our hearts! For hearts joined in worship pleases God.

*HYMN TFWS #2103 "We Have Come At Christ's Own Bidding"

**1 We have come at Christ's own bidding to this high and holy place,
where we wait with hope and longing for some token of God's grace.
Here we pray for new assurance that our faith is not in vain,
searching like those first disciples for a sign both clear and plain.**

**2 Light breaks in upon our darkness, splendor bathes the flesh-joined Word,
Moses and Elijah marvel as the heavenly voice is heard.
Eyes and hearts behold with wonder how the Law and Prophets meet:
Christ, with garments drenched in brightness, stands transfigured and complete.**

**3 Strengthened by this glimpse of glory, fearful lest our faith decline,
we like Peter find it tempting to remain and build a shrine.
But true worship gives us courage to proclaim what we profess,
that our daily lives may prove us people of the God we bless.**

PRAYER OF CONFESSION

Creator God, we know that we are to enter your gates with thanksgiving, joining with all the earth in shouting for joy and worshiping you with gladness. Yet, we confess that too often we forget it is you who brought us into life and you who continue to sustain us with your goodness. Thinking that we have made it all on our own, we stand alone, above and apart from those with whom you call us into community. Forgive us for our foolishness, O Lord. Remind us that we are to be found praising you together with our sisters and brothers as sheep of your pasture. *A time for meditation.*

Know that the Lord we serve is a good and gracious God. No matter how far we wander, we will always be God's people, sheep of God's pasture. Let us give thanks for God's steadfast love and faithfulness, which endures forever! **Amen.**

SCRIPTURE

Psalm 100

Tracy Voca, Reader

- 1 Make a joyful noise to the Lord, all the earth.
- 2 Serve the Lord with gladness;
come into his presence with singing.
- 3 Know that the Lord is God.
It is he who made us, and we are his;
we are his people and the sheep of his pasture.
- 4 Enter his gates with thanksgiving
and his courts with praise.
Give thanks to him; bless his name.
- 5 For the Lord is good;
his steadfast love endures forever
and his faithfulness to all generations.

CHOIR

“Song of Witness”

Donna Butler Douglas

MESSAGE

WHY SHOULD WE GO TO CHURCH?

DEDICATION OF OURSELVES AND OUR GIFTS TO THE LORD

The word of God for the people of God. **Thanks be to God.**

***PRAYER OF DEDICATION**

Lord, you are good. Your steadfast love endures forever. Your faithfulness endures to all generations. We release our gifts to you today, trusting in your good, steadfast, and faithful love. Thanks for letting us be your church. Help us to keep being your church, the body of Christ in this world, for generations to come. Amen.

***DOXOLOGY**

**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!**

MORNING PRAYER, SILENT PRAYER & THE LORD’S PRAYER

Pastor Karen

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.

***HYMN #557**

“Blest Be The Tie That Binds”

**1 Blest be the tie that binds
our hearts in Christian love;
the fellowship of kindred minds
is like to that above.**

**2 Before our Father's throne
we pour our ardent prayers;
our fears, our hopes, our aims are one,
our comforts and our cares.**

**3 We share our mutual woes,
our mutual burdens bear,
and often for each other flows
the sympathizing tear.**

**4 When we are called to part,
it gives us inward pain;
but we shall still be joined in heart,
and hope to meet again.**

**5 From sorrow, toil, and pain,
and sin, we shall be free;
and perfect love and friendship reign
through all eternity.**

***BENEDICTION**

Make a joyful noise to the LORD, all the earth! Serve the LORD with gladness! Come into his presence with singing! Know that the LORD, he is God! It is he who made us, and we are his; we are his people, and the sheep of his pasture. —Psalm 100:1-3

POSTLUDE

***Stand as able.**

THE FLOWERS ON THE ALTAR this morning are given to the glory of God and in honor of Pastor Karen on her birthday this past week by Joan Coleman.

CALENDAR

Monday, March 13

10:00 AM Prayer/ Discussion Group

Tuesday, March 14

7:00 PM Zoom Lenten Devotions

TUESDAY EVENING LENTEN DEVOTIONS. This week's special guest presenter is well known to many, and our former Music Director, Ed Alstrom. If you are following along in our study book, [Toward the Cross: Heart-Shaping Lessons for Lent](#), read the meditations on "A Gracious Heart, though you need not be reading the book to participate in the devotion. The zoom invitation is the same as the one you use for Sunday's church service. An email will be sent to you on Monday morning.