

SUNDAY, MARCH 20, 2022 **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**



WELCOME AND INVOCATION

Pastor Viv

Open our eyes, our ears, our hearts and spirits this morning, Lord, that we may be healed of our faithlessness, freed from our fears and anxieties, and placed on the pathways that lead to peace and service to you. In Jesus' Name, we pray. Amen.

***CALL TO WORSHIP**

Wrap yourselves in the healing love of God!

We seek God's presence in our lives.

Know that God continually surrounds us with patience and persistence.

Even though we have not produced the "fruits" of hope that God seeks, yet God forgives and heals our weakness.

Rejoice! Great is the Lord, and greatly to be praised!

We will turn our lives again to the Lord, to serve and seek God's presence.

***HYMN #577**

"God of Grace and God of Glory"

**1. God of grace and God of glory,
 on thy people pour thy power;
 crown the ancient church's story;
 bring its bud to glorious flower.
 Grant us wisdom, grant us courage,
 for the facing of this hour,
 for the facing of this hour.**

**2. Lo! the hosts of evil round us,
 scorn thy Christ, assail his ways!
 From the fears that long have bound us,
 free our hearts to love and praise.
 Grant us wisdom, grant us courage,
 for the living of these days,
 for the living of these days.**

3. Cure thy children's warring madness,
 bend our pride to thy control;
 shame our wanton, selfish gladness,
 rich in things and poor in soul.
 Grant us wisdom, grant us courage,
 lest we miss thy kingdom's goal,
 lest we miss thy kingdom's goal.

4. Set our feet on lofty places;
 gird our lives that they may be
 armoured with all Christlike graces,
 pledged to set all captives free.
 Grant us wisdom, grant us courage,
 that we fail not them nor thee,
 that we fail not them nor thee!

PRAYER OF CONFESSION

This is the season of turning. We are called on this journey to turn our lives to the Lord, to turn away from all those things which have harmed us and others; to separate ourselves from actions and attitudes that demean and destroy. It is far too easy for us to sink into the mire of self-pity and self-serving attitudes, wondering why everything isn't coming our way. We want comfort, contentment, no stress, no struggle. Yet our lives are filled with stress and discontent. We hurt, Lord. We hurt in our bodies and our souls. We hurt in our relationships with others. How we must try your patience! We don't want to be like this - we want to feel the warmth of your love, the freedom of your spirit, the joy of serving you. Forgive us for our selfishness and stupidity. Heal us. *A time for silent confession.*

You are given another chance! God has heard your cries. Turn again to the Lord. Find comfort and strength in God's eternal love for you. Be healed. **Amen.**

SCRIPTURE

Luke 13: 1-9

Joan Olszewski, Reader

13 At that very time there were some present who told him about the Galileans whose blood Pilate had mingled with their sacrifices. 2 He asked them, "Do you think that because these Galileans suffered in this way they were worse sinners than all other Galileans? 3 No, I tell you; but unless you repent, you will all perish as they did. 4 Or those eighteen who were killed when the tower of Siloam fell on them—do you think that they were worse offenders than all the others living in Jerusalem? 5 No, I tell you; but unless you repent, you will all perish just as they did"

The Parable of the Barren Fig Tree

6 Then he told this parable: "A man had a fig tree planted in his vineyard; and he came looking for fruit on it and found none. 7 So he said to the gardener, 'See here! For three years I have come looking for fruit on this fig tree, and still I find none. Cut it down! Why should it be wasting the soil?' 8 He replied, 'Sir, let it alone for one more year, until I dig around it and put manure on it. 9 If it bears fruit next year, well and good; but if not, you can cut it down.'"

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

CHOIR

"O Lamb of God (Agnus dei)"

Dean B. McIntyre

THE MESSAGE

THE KINGDOM OF GOD: Like A Fig Tree

"If it bears fruit next year, well and good; but if not, you can cut it down." v. 9

DEDICATION OF OURSELVES AND OUR GIFTS TO THE LORD

***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!

THE 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.

HYMN #121*"There's A Wideness in God's Mercy"**

1 There's a wideness in God's mercy,
 like the wideness of the sea;
 there's a kindness in his justice
 which is more than liberty.

3 For the love of God is broader
 than the measure of our mind;
 and the heart of the eternal
 is most wonderfully kind.

2 There is plentiful redemption
 through the blood that Christ has shed;
 there is joy for all the members
 in the sorrows of the head.

4 If our love were but more simple,
 we should take him at his word;
 and our lives would be illumined,
 by the glory of the Lord.

***BENEDICTION**

Be strong in the Lord. You can walk in God's ways, for God is with you, offering you peace, hope, courage, and joy. God's love abides with you always. Go in peace. **Amen.**

CALENDAR**Monday, March 21**

10 AM Zoom Prayer/Discussion Group
7 PM Church Council (as needed)

Tuesday, March 22

4 PM Bell Choir Practice
7 PM LENTEN ZOOM DEVOTIONS: Rev. Boyle

Wednesday, March 23 **7 PM** **Adv. Lay Speaker Class, Pastor teaches**

Thursday, March 24 **7 PM** **Choir Rehearsal**

Friday, March 25 **DEADLINE FOR VOICE ARTICLES**

Sunday, March 27 **10 AM** **WORSHIP**

Tuesday Evening Lenten Devotions are being shared by Rev. Frederick Boyle this Tuesday night at 7 PM on zoom. Use the same zoom invite as Sunday worship.

VOICE ARTICLES are due this Friday to Ellen in the church office.

SAVE THE DATE! Fish & Chips Dinner on May 14th. More information to follow.