

First United Methodist Church
Sunday, March 10, 2024
Fourth Sunday of Lent



Please be aware that our services are livestreamed, and any adults and/or children participating in musical groups, children's messages and liturgist roles will appear on camera.

A nursery for children age 5 and under is on the lower level and includes a Bible lesson. Sunday School for children K-5th grade will be held in the upper-level Children's Lounge following the Children's Message. Please pick up your kids in the Lounge after worship.

Prelude *Prelude in F Major* Fanny Mendelssohn
Velda Graham Bell, organ

Welcome and Announcements Pastor Jeanine Alexander

* **Hymn** *Cry of My Heart* UM Hymnal #2165

Extinguishing of the Fifth Lenten Candle Mark Harvey

One: In the season of Advent, as we prepare for Christmas, we *light* a new candle each Sunday. In this season of Lent, as we prepare for Good Friday, we *extinguish* a candle each Sunday to remind us of the approaching darkness of betrayal and death.

All: **Jesus came into the world to be the light that guides us to God. During this time of Lenten preparation, we think of those who turned away from the light of Jesus. Throughout the life of Jesus, it is clear that the disciples never really "get it." They are unable to hear with their hearts the radical message of love Jesus brings. We, like the disciples of long ago, often close our hearts to the radical message of love that Jesus teaches. We lazily hate and offend. We purposefully hold on to our prejudices and anger. Darkness engulfs us. We extinguish the fifth candle, admitting our own lack of love and our closed hearts.**

One: Let us sing our Lenten song of prayer as we call upon God's presence.

Prayer Song *Lord, Listen to Your Children Praying* The Faith We Sing #2193
Lord, listen to your children praying, Lord, send your Spirit in this place;
Lord, listen to your children praying, send us love, send us power, send us grace.

Children's Message

Children may leave for Sunday School following the Children's Message.

Morning Prayer Rev. MaryAnne Korsch
Prayers of the Congregation

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.

Anthem *Open the Eyes of My Heart, Lord* Paul Baloche
Tapestry; Leah and Corey Hulst, directors

Offering Our Gifts

Scripture Reading

Mark Harvey

James 3: 13-4:10

- One: Who is wise and understanding among you? Let them show it by their good life, by deeds done in the humility that comes from wisdom.
- All: **But if you harbor bitter envy and selfish ambition in your hearts, do not boast about it or deny the truth. Such “wisdom” does not come down from heaven but is earthly, unspiritual, of the devil. For where you have envy and selfish ambition, there you find disorder and every evil practice.**
- One: But the wisdom that comes from heaven is first of all pure, then peace-loving, considerate, submissive, full of mercy and good fruit, impartial and sincere.
- All: **What causes fights and quarrels among you? Don't they come from your desires that battle within you? You want something but don't get it. You kill and covet, but you cannot have what you want. You quarrel and fight.**
- One: You do not have, because you do not ask God. When you ask, you do not receive, because you ask with wrong motives, that you may spend what you get on your pleasures.
- All: **Submit yourselves, then, to God. Resist the devil, and he will flee from you. Draw near to God and God will draw near to you. Humble yourselves before the Lord, and God will lift you up.**

- * Hymn *Just a Closer Walk with Thee* The Faith We Sing #2158
- Sermon *Putting Feet to Our Faith #5: Smart Living* Pastor Jeanine Alexander
- * Hymn *All People that on Earth Do Dwell* UM Hymnal #75

Benediction

- Benediction Response *Father, Give Thy Benediction* arr. Frances Callahan
Ringtones and Vocal Quartet (Mary Lee, Alix Craft, Henry Mattson, Tom Wiig)
Bill Alexander, director

- Postlude *March on Old Hundredth Psalm Tune* Brenda Portman
Velda Graham Bell, organ

* Please stand as you are comfortable



Announcements

Please remember to fill out the Connect Cards each week. Keeping attendance and making sure the church has your current contact information is an important part of church records. On the back of the card, is a list of ministry opportunities, where your help can make a difference! These will change often, so check them each week and please sign up where you can.

Guests: Welcome to First United Methodist Church. We are so glad you are worshipping with us today! Please stop by the Welcome Desk in the Narthex; we have a packet and small gift for first-time visitors.

Please join us for coffee and doughnuts in Lakeview Social Hall following the worship service.

A gift to light the church for the week of March 10 was made by the 2x2 group, in memory of Carol Norling. Carol's birthday would have been March 14. The gift will also support the Memorial Gardens.

Today is Woman Composer Sunday. For centuries, women were excluded or discouraged from contributing music for the church. Woman Composer Sunday raises awareness of the contributions of these composers during Women's History Month. Today's organ prelude and postlude were chosen to honor the many contributions that women composers have made in the past and continue to make today.

Sustainability News:

- Small kitchen compost bags will be for sale in the Narthex before and after today's service.
- The Sustainability Team will meet in the library shortly after the service today.

Faith Forum is held Sunday mornings from 9-9:45am in the Fireside Lounge. Next week, **March 17**, guest speaker Shawna Weaver discusses her book "Climate Grief: From Copying to Resilience and Action." The following week, **March 24**, Alex Flinner will talk about his year of driving an electric car. Faith Forum will not be held on Easter Sunday.

Holy Week Services:

Palm/Passion Sunday, March 24, will feature a palm processional.

Maundy Thursday Last Supper and Service of the Shadows, Thursday, March 28, at 7pm will include Holy Communion and journeying all the way to Jesus' death.

Good Friday Service, Friday, March 29, at noon in the Three Brothers Chapel, will walk us through Jesus' death and the events of the last hours of his life.

Easter Sunrise Service, Sunday, March 31 at 7am, will be a short service in the Sanctuary featuring Tapestry.

Easter Morning Coffee Hour will take place between the two services, from 9-9:45 in Lakeview Social Hall.

Easter Worship, Sunday, March 31 at 10am, will be our traditional worship service with choir and bells.

Our Lenten/Easter giving: half of our financial giving will go to the church's operating budget, which makes everything we do possible. The other half will be split between Harbor House Crisis Shelter in Superior and the Duluth NAACP Ignite Empower Transform Foundation. We will also be collecting food for the Food Shelf every week in March, as part of the Minnesota FoodShare March Campaign.

Guest WIFI Network: FirstUnitedPublic. Password: Public2022.

Thank you to Alex Flinner, Tommy Kishida, and the Livestream Team for making the online service possible.

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Ways You Can Help Your Church



Volunteers are needed to bring a dozen muffins on Easter morning, for the coffee hour before the 10am worship service.

Ways to give to support your church: give online at fumcduluth.com OR text COPPERTOP to 73256 OR mail to FUMC, 230 E. Skyline Parkway, Duluth, MN 55811.

Putting FEET To Our Faith – A Study of the Book of JAMES

James 3:13-4:12

(chapter 3) ¹³Who is wise and understanding among you? Let them show it by their good life, by deeds done in the humility that comes from wisdom. ¹⁴But if you harbor bitter envy and selfish ambition in your hearts, do not boast about it or deny the truth. ¹⁵Such "wisdom" does not come down from heaven but is earthly, unspiritual, of the devil. ¹⁶For where you have envy and selfish ambition, there you find disorder and every evil practice. ¹⁷But the wisdom that comes from heaven is first of all pure; then peace-loving, considerate, submissive, full of mercy and good fruit, impartial and sincere. ¹⁸Peacemakers who sow in peace raise a harvest of righteousness.

(chapter 4) ¹What causes fights and quarrels among you? Don't they come from your desires that battle within you? ²You want something but don't get it. You kill and covet, but you cannot have what you want. You quarrel and fight. You do not have, because you do not ask God. ³When you ask, you do not receive, because you ask with wrong motives, that you may spend what you get on your pleasures.

⁴You adulterous people, don't you know that friendship with the world is hatred toward God? Anyone who chooses to be a friend of the world becomes an enemy of God. ⁵Or do you think Scripture says without reason that the spirit he caused to live in us envies intensely? ⁶But he gives us more grace. That is why Scripture says:

"God opposes the proud but gives grace to the humble."

⁷Submit yourselves, then, to God. Resist the devil, and it will flee from you. ⁸Draw near to God and God will draw near to you. Wash your hands, you sinners, and purify your hearts, you double-minded. ⁹Grieve, mourn and wail. Change your laughter to mourning and your joy to gloom. ¹⁰Humble yourselves before the Lord, and God will lift you up.

¹¹Friends, do not slander one another. Anyone who speaks against others or judges them speaks against the law and judges it. When you judge the law, you are not keeping it, but sitting in judgment on it. ¹²There is only one Lawgiver and Judge, the one who is able to save and destroy. But you—who are you to judge your neighbor?

SERMON NOTES

-----over please--→

REFLECTIONS ON THE TEXT

In this section of James' letter, he explores the difference between a life of self-oriented autonomy and a life of humble dependence on God. According to James, someone with the devil's wisdom harbors envy and selfish ambition, and this tends to lead to disorder and evil deeds. The wisdom of the world without God is dominated by self. Its themes are, "I'll do it my way" and "Take good care of yourself and your needs- first." It sees the self as competing with others, so it leads to envious behavior and competitive spirits.

In James 4:1-3 James suggests that interpersonal quarrels stem from unsatisfied desires. James offers two reasons why we have unsatisfied desires: The first is that we don't ask God because we are too busy going after the things we want, through our own power. This is the self-oriented worldly wisdom of 3:15-16. The second reason for unsatisfied desires is that we do ask God, but we do so with selfish motives.

The problem is that we approach God as a means to our ends rather than one to worship and from whom to seek wisdom. Praying for God to simply meet our desires, and help our plans succeed, is really just worldly wisdom under the guise of religion. We are praying, but not with the humility that James describes in 4:6-10. We are praying for our will rather than for "God's will to be done!"

God is described in James as intensely envious, even though James 3:14-16 has just described envy as an aspect of worldly wisdom. This indicates that there are times when jealousy is appropriate. God's envy echoes many Old Testament passages that proclaim God's jealous love for his people. When we place our love for God in competition with our love for other things and people we are denying God's place in our life. God is appropriately jealous for the love of God's people. A similar situation might be between spouses, where there is an appropriate kind of jealousy when one partner is unfaithful to the other.

Living in humility is an important topic for James. He reminds us that when God lifts us up (rather than us trying to lift ourselves up), God does it by transforming us. Joy, peace, and satisfaction often come in a way that we never expected or even wanted. For instance, we may find ourselves very joyful and at peace serving in a humble capacity rather than one which brings attention and recognition.

NOTES FROM SCRIPTURE READINGS

Sermon # 6: James 4:13 – 5:20 (Sunday, March 17)

Hot down key concepts that catch you attention. What are the main themes? How will you apply what you are reading to your everyday life?