

Grace

UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST

Grace United Church of Christ

January 16, 2022

Rev. Joyce Wealand, Minister

Second Sunday After Epiphany

Martin Luther King, Jr., Weekend

“Our goal is to create a beloved community and this will require a qualitative change in our souls as well as a quantitative change in our lives.”

Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.

* When a portion of the service is preceded with an *, you are invited to stand in body and/or spirit.

Words printed in bold are an invitation for you to join in the spoken or sung response.

Phrases from the speeches of Martin Luther King, Jr. have been woven into the prayer texts. They are identified by italics.

PRELUDE

I Stand in Awe - Alrregge

CHURCH FAMILY UPDATES

***WORDS OF WELCOME**

Leader: No matter who you are or where you are on life's journey, you are welcome here.

People: **In this safe space, may God grant us the vision to see the Holy in each other and the Holy in ourselves.**

***CALL TO WORSHIP**

Leader: Our Mother-Father God has made us to be One Body with many members.

All: United and uniting. This is our calling.

Leader: God calls us to share our diverse gifts activated by the one and same Spirit.

All: United and uniting. This is our redemption.

Leader: God longs for us to be united in love and to manifest the Spirit in our different ways.

All: United and uniting. This is our worship.

Leader: Let us gather in this hour to offer praise and worship to our Holy God, who challenges us and calls us to *create the Beloved Community*.

***GATHERING PRAYER**

Leader: O God, all people are your Beloved, across races, nationalities, religions, sexual orientations and all the ways we are distinctive from one another.

We are all manifestations of your image.

We are bound together in an inescapable network of mutuality and tied to a single garment of destiny.

You call us into your unending work of justice, peace and love.

Let us know your presence among us now:

Let us delight in our diversity that offers glimpses of the mosaic of your beauty.

Strengthen us with your steadfast love and transform our despairing fatigue into hope-filled action.

Under the shadow of your wings in this hour may we find rest and strength, renewal and hope.

We ask this, inspired by the example of your disciple, Martin Luther King, Jr., and in Jesus' name.

People: Amen.

***GATHERING HYMN**

Come, O Fount of Every Blessing

PRAYER OF RECONCILIATION

Leader: O God, we long to co-create with you the Beloved Community which looks to the common good; privileges all equally, and creates societal systems which celebrate the humanity and the gifts of all. And yet we focus on our differences, envy each other's gifts, devalue manifestations of you, O God, that are not like our own.

Perhaps our sin is a slow wait for justice: We allow the voices of those who do not look like us, love like us, or worship like us to be silenced.

We have told them to wait for freedom, justice and equality. We foster in them *a denigrating sense of nobodiness*.

People: **Lord, have mercy.**

Leader: Or perhaps we have kept silence ourselves in the face of their struggle for full human life. *For it is not solely hateful words and actions, but also appalling silence that follows the path of oppression.*

People: **Christ, have mercy.**

Leader: Perhaps our sin is to give in to weariness, discouragement, bitterness: You have called us to be *drum majors for justice, peace and righteousness*, Yet the work of peace and justice overwhelms us at times, To build with God the Beloved Community seems impossible, and we grow weary. We cry, "Peace, peace," but there is no peace within us or around us. We find ourselves on the path of hatred and oppression, violence and war.

People: **Lord, have mercy.**

(Moment of silence and reflection)

ASSURANCE OF BLESSING

Leader: Children of God, God is at work in us and with us!

God has promised:

“I will not keep silent and I will not rest until the vindication of my beloved people shines out like the dawn and their salvation like a burning torch.

My people shall no more be termed ‘forsaken’ and their land shall no more be termed ‘desolate.’”

We remember that you have given your Beloved people a new name:

“My delight is in them.”

People: Thank you, God for delighting in us even now, for forgiving us our slow action, our silence and our weariness, for empowering our work and inviting us once again to create with you the Beloved Community you long for.

A GIFT OF MUSIC

Mary Our Mother, O Speak with Our Brother - DeFrangé

SACRED TEXT 1 Corinthians 12:1-11 NRSV

CENTERING HYMN **Forward Through the Ages**

SACRED TEXT John 2:1-11 NRSV

REFLECTION

***SUNG RESPONSE**

**God of rainbow, fiery pillar,
leading where the eagles soar,
We your people, ours the journey
now and ever, now and ever, Now and evermore.**

***INVITATION TO FAITHFUL SHARING**

Leader: Beloved, who we are, and who we are yet becoming as individuals shows God’s presence in the world.

That divine presence is reflected even more fully, powerfully, and transformatively as we unite in Beloved Community.
Let us bring ourselves, our gifts, and our resources together that God may be glorified.

***DOXOLOGY**

**Praise God, from whom all blessings flow,
Praise God, all creatures here below.
Praise God, above, ye heavenly host.
Creator, Christ, and Holy Ghost!**

***DEDICATION OF GIFTS**

**People: O God, we commit to use all our gifts
--wisdom, knowledge, faith, healing,
working of miracles, prophecy,
discernment, tongues, administration,
hospitality, and finances--
in the service of acting as co-workers
with you and each other
for *peace and justice to flow like a
mighty stream.***

MORNING PRAYER

THE PRAYER OF JESUS

**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 debts,
As we forgive our debtors.
And lead us not into temptation,
But deliver us from evil.
For thine is the kingdom,
And the power, and the glory,
Forever. Amen.**

***CLOSING HYMN**

Immortal, Invisible, God Only Wise

*WORDS OF SENDING AND PEACE

Leader: Let us go forth to celebrate and strengthen our *inescapable network of mutuality*, and become *the radiant hope* needed in the world. As we go forth in this mutuality, may we experience our God rejoicing over us and with us. Let us go forth confident that *unarmed truth and unconditional love will have the final word*.

People: **Amen!**

*SENDING RESPONSE

Sent Forth by God's Blessing

**Sent forth by God's blessing, our true faith confessing,
The people of God from this dwelling take leave.
The service is ended, O now be extended
The fruits of our worship in all who believe.
The seed of the teaching, receptive hearts reaching,
Shall blossom in action for God and for all.
God's grace did invite us, and love shall unite us
To work for God's realm and to answer the call.**

POSTLUDE

Isn't He Good? - Darnell

*Texts of King's work are available in **A Testament of Hope: The Essential Writings of Martin Luther King, Jr.**, edited by James M. Washington; © 1986 Coretta Scott King. A brief essay on King's understanding of the term "Beloved Community" is available at <http://www.wilpf.org/mlksbelovedcommunity>.*

Creating the Beloved Community: Service Prayers for the Second Sunday after Epiphany, Martin Luther King, Jr., Weekend was written by the Rev. Dr. Cari Jackson, Founder and Director of the Center for Spiritual Light, New York City.



Live stream can be found at:

<https://www.facebook.com/graceoutown/live>

Zoom gatherings can be found at:

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/2039358175?pwd=QVRKOUlIUUFjQnhGZWRRS1NKY1h2UT09>

THIS WEEK'S CALENDAR

Monday:	7pm	Catching Our Spiritual Breath on Zoom
Tuesday:	9am-noon	Tuesday Crew meets here to do work on our building and grounds. You are welcome to join in!
	9am-noon	Office Hours
Wednesday:	9am-noon	Office Hours
	10am	Yoga in the Family Activity Center
Friday:	9am-noon	Office Hours
Sunday:	9:15am	Adult Sunday School
		Café Conversations with Pastor Joyce via Zoom

WORSHIP LEADERS

Jim Lynn, Linda Skeggs, and Nancy Forman are helping lead worship this morning.

Altar flowers are given in memory of **Pam Wilson** by her brother, **Gary Wilson**.

Dave Forman, Mike Pirogowicz, Paul Sodergren, and Jim Lynn serve as our Livestream and Sanctuary Technicians and **Tom DeFrance** serves as musician and accompanist.