



Rangeley Congregational Church
United Church of Christ
Rangeley, Maine

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An Open and Affirming Church
Third Sunday of Lent

March 3, 2024

10:00 AM

Meditation:

*"We were ensnared by the wisdom of the serpent;
we are set free by the foolishness of God."*

– Augustine of Hippo

ORDER OF WORSHIP

OUR GATHERING AND PRAISE

RINGING OF THE BELL

PRELUDE Nocturne on *"My Jesus, I Love Thee"*

Tune: GORDON, and Chopin's Nocturne in Eb/Arr.

Thygerson

WELCOME AND ANNOUNCEMENTS

Liturgist

CALL TO WORSHIP

Leader & People

Leader: Lenten travelers, why are you here?

People: We gather to do the work of worship.

Leader: Lenten travelers, what happens when we gather to worship?

People: **We listen and proclaim. We sing and pray. We repent and encourage.**

Leader: Lenten travelers, how do we do the work of worship?

People: **We bring all that we are to be present to God and one another.**

Leader: Lenten travelers, what work does God do in worship?

People: **God raises us up so that we can delight in life together with God and one another.**

Leader: Lenten travelers, come, let us worship God together!

People: **Come, let us worship God together! Amen.**

INVOCATION

*GATHERING HYMN #20 (NCH)

"God of Abraham and Sarah"

Sung to the Tune: NETTLETON/Words: James Gertmenian

CALL TO CONFESSION

Leader: The word of the cross is the wisdom of God to those who are saved. Merciful God, we confess our bewilderment over the presence of any wisdom at all in such a dreadful act as the crucifixion of Jesus, your Son, our Lord.

Each year as we hear the story again, we wonder — why did it have to happen?

People: **It seems as though evil triumphed in this wretched deed.**

Leader: Yet, when we know the outcome of the crucifixion, we realize that it was an act of powerful and sacrificial love, and that in the end, good did triumph over evil, life defeated death.

People: **And so, forgive us, O God, when we become so influenced by the wisdom of the world that we demand signs and seek intellectual certainty.**

Leader: Forgive us when we get caught up in the quest for achievement and power, forgetting that Jesus' power was made perfect in weakness. Forgive our reluctance, O God, to proclaim with our lips and our lives that the crucified Christ is Lord of our lives. Help us to empty ourselves of all that hinders such proclamation of our faith.

Silent reflection on these words

WORDS OF GRACE AND ASSURANCE

THE WORD OF GOD

SCRIPTURE

John 2:13-22

1 Corinthians 1:18-25

Liturgist

Leader

SERMON The Power of God

*HYMN OF RESPONSE (Insert)

"How Great Thou Art"

SERVICE OF PRAYER

PRAYER FOR ALL GOD'S PEOPLE

(As you name a joy or concern later in the prayer, please finish by saying "This is my prayer." The church family responds by saying "This is our prayer.")

***We pray for:** Donald Knowles, Priscilla St. Louis, Kit & Linda Caspar, Forrest Stephens, Kris Nozal, Anne Crump, Jeff & Carol Ellinwood, Bobby & Leanna Wilbur, Tim & Sarah Johnson, Erin Smith's parents Carol & Dan Perkins, Patrick Egan, and we pray for all those who guide and lead us in worship.*

PASTORAL PRAYER

OUR 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 (debts, sins, trespasses) as we forgive those who (sin,
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 and ever. AMEN.**

CHORAL AMEN #812 (NCH)

"Threefold Amen"

OFFERTORY

OFFERTORY MUSIC *“Just a Closer Walk with Thee”*

Tune: Anonymous/Arr. Robert Thygerson

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. Amen.

THE SACRAMENT OF HOLY COMMUNION

Invitation

May the God of holy words be with you.

May the Meditation of our hearts be with you.

People of God, open yourselves to the One who is your rock.

God fills us with foolishness, so we may be wise.

Children of God, sing songs of thanksgiving with all creation.

Our voices are lifted to the One who makes all things.

Preface

You spoke those words of creation, God of faithfulness, and set the sun to run its daily course, planted fruits and vegetables in the earth.

All that is good and generous was intended for your children shaped in your image, but we bore false witness against you, honoring sin and death more than you.

The prophets came to warn against our foolishness, but we did not find their words acceptable, and continued to covet everything which did not belong to us.

So you sent your Child to us, so we might find strength in his weakness, we might find glory through his humiliation.

With those who have great faith, with those who have very little, we sing our thanksgiving to you:

Sanctus

**Holy, holy, holy are you, God of mountaintops.
The heavens join all creation to tell of your glory.
Hosanna in the highest!**

**Blessed is the One who is foolish for our sake.
Hosanna in the highest!**

Eucharistic Prayer

Day to day, you are holy, our God, and Jesus Christ declares your wisdom to us.

The Word of your mouth, he came, to tell us of your work of grace and hope.

The Meditation of your heart, he came, to quiet our frantic spirits so we might rest in you.

Your foolishness, he was wise enough to take our sins to the cross.

Your weakness, he was strong enough to endure death for us, until you brought him out of the grave.

Christ died, the rock which broke sin's power;

Christ was raised, death conquered by our redeemer;

Christ will return, desiring us more than anything in all creation.

The Consecration

We remember that on the night of betrayal and desertion, Jesus took bread, gave thanks, broke the bread, and gave it to his disciples, saying: "This is my body which is broken for you. Do this in remembrance of me"

In the same way, Jesus took the cup, after supper saying: "This cup is the new covenant in my blood. Do this, as often as you drink it, in remembrance of me."

Here at this Table, God of love, we set aside our power to feast on the weakness found in the broken bread; we let go of our wisdom, to drink from the cup of your foolish grace. Your Spirit blesses these gifts, as well as us, so when we have feasted, we will look at the world and reject its injustices, oppressions, wars, and fears.

And when the sun has finished its course, when the moon and stars shine no more, we will be given the

words from your mouth so we can sing from the
deeps of our hearts to you, God in Community, Holy
in One.

Sharing The Bread and the Cup

The body of Christ, the living bread.
The blood of Christ, the saving cup.

COMMUNION MUSIC #343 (NCH)

"Jesus Took the Bread"
(Verses 3 & 4)

Prayer of Thanksgiving

God speaks, and sends us forth.

We will go to proclaim God's grace and glory.

Jesus speaks, and lives are changed.

**We will go to set free the oppressed, to be the voice
for those never heard.**

The Spirit speaks, and the world is turned inside out.

**We will become as foolish as a trusting child, as
powerless as those overlooked by everyone around
them.**

*CLOSING HYMN #314 (NCH)

"Community of Christ"

*THE BENEDICTION

POSTLUDE AND EXTINGUISHING OF THE CANDLES

“Wabash Blues”

Fred Meinken (1882-1958)

*Portions adapted from: Dr. Lisa Hancock, Discipleship Ministries;
Thom M. Shuman.*

**~Special thanks to all who contributed their time, talents
and gifts for today’s service:**

- Pastor Scott Hatfield, **Leading Worship Service**
- Nancy Zambraski, **Liturgist**
- Zenna Inness, **Deacon of the Week**
- Claire Chase, **Zoomigo**
- Sarah Johnson, **providing bread for Communion**
- Sarah & Tim Johnson, **Coffee Hour**

~This Week:

- Piano Lessons with Erin, Mar 4, 5, 6 & 8 Sanctuary,
Mar 6, E. Room, 3-5pm
- Women’s Winter Social, Mar 8, 10a-12p, Barn

~Next Week:

- Tony MacNaughton, Leading Worship, March 10
- DAYLIGHT SAVINGS TIME BEGINS, Mar 10,
Spring ahead an hour.
- Finance Committee Meeting, Mar 11, 2:45pm, East
Room & Zoom
- Council Meeting, Mar 11, 4:00pm, East Room &
Zoom
- Piano Lessons with Erin, Mar 11, 12, 13, 16
Sanctuary, Mar 14, E. Room, 3-5pm

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