

TULLY UNITED COMMUNITY CHURCH

March 10, 2024, 9:30 AM

The Rev. Richard G. Reed, Pastor



FOURTH SUNDAY IN LENT



-WE GATHER IN THIS SACRED SPACE-

STATEMENT OF ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

The Tully United Community Church would like to acknowledge with respect the Onondaga Nation, Fire-keepers of the Haudenosaunee, the indigenous peoples on whose ancestral lands our buildings now stand.

WELCOME AND ANNOUNCEMENTS

We welcome, in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, all who have gathered to worship God together – those who are here in person, and those joining us on Facebook Live.

PRELUDE

“What Wonderful Love Is This?”

Arr. Larry Shackley

GREETING

Celebrant: Let us keep our eyes on Jesus, the pioneer and perfecter of our faith, who for the joy that was waiting endured the cross, despising the shame, and is seated at the right hand of the throne of God.

MOMENT OF SILENT MEDITATION

CALL TO LENTEN DISCIPLINE AND PRAYER OF CONFESSION

Liturgist: When darkness clouds our vision and uncertainty shakes our confidence, where do we reach for help?

People: We look to friends, we cling to loved ones, we grope for answers in familiar, sacred places.

L: How do we find a light to move forward with hope when all seems lost?

P: Our hope is in God alone, and the light has come to shine among us in Jesus, who meets us and guides us on our way.

Officiant: My siblings in Christ, as we prepare to encounter God anew today in the gathering of this community, in the hearing of the Word, and in acts of kindness and caring, it is good that we should call to mind our sins, and seek God's promised forgiveness together.

Together let us pray:

Forgive the poverty of our worship, our unbelief and hesitating witness, our blindness to what you would have us to be and to do, O God. Forgive us for imagining ourselves to be the center of the world, and for seeking security in the works of our own hands and minds. Forgive us for the waste of our time and talents and gifts, and for our abuse of the earth, your creation, O God. Forgive us that so little of your love is passed through us to others, and that we have cared so little about the sufferings and injustices that they endure. Forgive us by your mercy, O God, for the sins held secret in our hearts, as we open them to you in silence... (silent confession)

CHORAL RESPONSE

"Lord, Have Mercy"

H. Gregory

WORDS OF PARDON AND ASSURANCE

Officiant: God does not keep score of our wrongs, or measure how far we have wandered. God welcomes us, like a mother scooping up her lost children, like a father embracing his prodigal offspring. We are forgiven. We are welcomed home, encouraged to learn from that forgiveness, to claim it for ourselves and to offer it to others again and again, as God offers it to us in Jesus Christ, our hope and our home.

**HYMN

"Come, Ye Sinners, Poor And Needy"

#340

**1. Come, ye sinners, poor and needy,
Weak and wounded, sick and sore;
Jesus ready stands to save you,
Full of pity, love, and pow'r. (Refrain)**

Refrain:

**I will arise and go to Jesus, He will embrace me in His arms;
In the arms of my dear Savior, O there are ten thousand charms.**

**2. Come, ye thirsty, come, and welcome,
God's free bounty glorify;
True belief and true repentance,
Ev'ry grace that brings you nigh.
(Refrain)**

**3. Come, ye weary, heavy laden,
Lost and ruined by the fall;
If you tarry till you're better,
You will never come at all.
(Refrain)**

**4. Let not conscience make you linger,
Nor of fitness fondly dream;
All the fitness He requireth
Is to feel your need of Him.
(Refrain)**

****PASSING THE PEACE**

Celebrant: The peace of Christ be with you.

People: And also with you.

- WE ARE INSTRUCTED IN THE WORD -

FIRST LESSON

Numbers 21:4-9

Liturgist: A reading from the book of Numbers. The Bronze Snake.

From Mount Hor they set out by the way to the Red Sea, to go around the land of Edom, but the people became discouraged on the way. The people spoke against God and against Moses, "Why have you brought us up out of Egypt to die in the wilderness? For there is no food and no water, and we detest this miserable food." Then the LORD sent poisonous serpents among the people, and they bit the people, so that many Israelites died. The people came to Moses and said, "We have sinned by speaking against the LORD and against you; pray to the LORD to take away the serpents from us." So Moses prayed for the people. And the LORD said to Moses, "Make a poisonous serpent, and set it on a pole, and everyone who is bitten shall

look at it and live." So Moses made a serpent of bronze and put it upon a pole, and whenever a serpent bit someone, that person would look at the serpent of bronze and live.

Here ends the reading.

THE PSALTER

Psalm 137

#852

R *♪ Now, O Lord, for what do I wait? For my hope is in you alone. ♪*

Liturgist: By the rivers of Babylon
there we sat down, and wept
when we remembered Zion.

**People: On the willows there
we hung up our lyres.**

L: For there our captors
required of us songs,
and our tormentors, mirth, saying,
"Sing us one of the songs of Zion!"

**P: How shall we sing the LORD's song
in a foreign land?**

L: If I forget you, O Jerusalem,
let my right hand wither!

**P: Let my tongue cleave to the roof of my mouth,
if I do not remember you,
if I do not set Jerusalem
above my highest joy! R**

THE SECOND LESSON

Ephesians 2:1-10

Liturgist: A reading from the Apostle Paul's letter to the church at Ephesus.

You were dead through the trespasses and sins in which you once walked, following the course of this world, following the ruler of the power of the air, the spirit that is now at work among those who are disobedient. All of us once lived among them in the passions of our flesh, doing the will of flesh and senses, and we were by nature children of wrath, like everyone else, but God, who is rich in mercy, out of the great love with which he loved us even when we were dead through our trespasses, made us alive together with Christ—by grace you have been saved— and raised us up

with him and seated us with him in the heavenly places in Christ Jesus, so that in the ages to come he might show the immeasurable riches of his grace in kindness toward us in Christ Jesus. For by grace you have been saved through faith, and this is not your own doing; it is the gift of God— not the result of works, so that no one may boast. For we are what he has made us, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand so that we may walk in them.

Here ends the reading.

****THE GLORIA PATRI**

#70

**Glory be to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Ghost;
As it was in the beginning, is now, and ever shall be,
World without end. Amen. Amen.**

****THE GOSPEL**

+ John 3:14-21 +

And just as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, so must the Son of Man be lifted up, that whoever believes in him may have eternal life.

For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life.

For God sent not his Son into the world to condemn the world; but that the world through him might be saved.

Those who believe in him are not condemned, but those who do not believe are condemned already because they have not believed in the name of the only Son of God. And this is the judgment, that the light has come into the world, and people loved darkness rather than light because their deeds were evil. For all who do evil hate the light and do not come to the light, so that their deeds may not be exposed. But those who do what is true come to the light, so that it may be clearly seen that their deeds have been done in God."

Celebrant: This is the Word of God. All: Thanks be to God!

SERMON

The Rev. Richard G. Reed

CHORAL ANTHEM

**"God So Loved The World"
Laura Currie Chancel Choir**

Stainer

**-WE BOW BEFORE THE LORD IN PRAYER-
SHARING JOYS, AND CONCERNS**

Bidding: *O God we cry out to you;*

Response: ***Heal and deliver us, O Lord.***

*Celebrant: Compassionate and Ever-Loving God, receive with gladness the prayers of your people as we come to you in confident hope, saying: O God we cry out to you; **Heal and deliver us, O Lord.***

Everything has become new in Christ, and you have entrusted to your church the ministry of reconciliation: Endue with the power of your forgiving love all who serve in Christ's Name, that we may share in your work of reunion and celebration.

*O God we cry out to you; **Heal and deliver us, O Lord.***

In Christ you have proclaimed the Kingdom of God among us and showed us your model of loving compassion as the true path of leadership: Guide our nation and all in authority, that we may work in harmony with you to create a world of feasting and reconciliation.

*O God we cry out to you; **Heal and deliver us, O Lord.***

You welcome sinners and feast with them, restoring the prodigal and embracing the elder: Find all who are lost and return them home; protect those who work in dangerous, dirty, and disreputable jobs; give security and joy to all who labor yet are poor and hungry; expand the hearts of those who are dutiful and proud; that the whole human race may celebrate together with music and dancing.

*O God we cry out to you; **Heal and deliver us, O Lord.***

Unite all of us in this community and bind our divisions with your compassionate love, that we may welcome all as our own siblings and feast with them on the goodness of our inheritance. Bless our Muslim brothers and sisters, and especially bless our Kurdish brothers, as they enter this month of Ramadan; that they may be faithful to you, generous to those in need, and diligent in prayer.

*O God we cry out to you; **Heal and deliver us, O Lord.***

We pray for those who are in need; especially those whom we have named aloud and those who we share with you in silence.

Celebrant: Protect us from presumption and judgment, O God, and lead us into the joyful celebration of your new creation on earth, that we may share in the generous banquet of your victory and enjoy the reconciliation of all people

within your forgiving compassion by the power of your Spirit, through Jesus Christ our Savior, who taught us to pray, saying:

**“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 sins,
as we forgive those who sin against us.
And lead us not into temptation; but deliver us from evil.
For thine is the kingdom, the power and the glory, for ever.
Amen.”**

-WE OFFER OUR GIFTS TO GOD-

OFFERTORY INVITATION

Celebrant: As people who are given great hope in the midst of life's desert places, we are called to offer our lives anew. Let us bring the offerings of our lives and of our daily labors, that God might bless them and increase them in the ministry of hope to the world.

****DOXOLOGY, PRESENTATION, AND OFFERTORY PRAYER**

#95

Praise God, from whom all blessings flow, Praise God, all creatures here below; Praise God, above, ye heavenly host; Creator, Word, and Holy Ghost. Amen.

Celebrant: Christ has taught the way of life to us, the Church, and we have the responsibility of bringing life through our ministries and the outreach of mission in our community and throughout the world. In the gifts we bring, O God, we acclaim you as our Lord. Bless them and use them to bring your kingdom into full flower, through Jesus Christ our Lord we pray. Amen.

- WE ARE SENT TO SHARE THE LOVE OF JESUS -

****HYMN**

“O God In Heaven”

#119

**1. O God in heaven, grant to thy children
mercy and blessing, songs never-ceasing;
love to unite us, grace to redeem us,
O God in heaven, Dear Lord, our God.**

**2. Jesus, Redeemer, may we remember
thy gracious passion, thy resurrection:
Worship we bring thee, praise we shall sing thee,
Jesus, Redeemer, Jesus, our Lord.**

**3. Spirit descending, whose is the blessing:
strength for the weary, help for the needy;
sealed in our kinship, thine be our worship,
Spirit descending, Spirit adored.**

BLESSING

Celebrant: Whatever cross Christ has called you to carry:
walk in boldness, as a beloved child of God,
walk in peace, under the sheltering care of the angels,
walk in faith, knowing Christ walks with you.

And the blessing of God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Spirit,
go with you both now and for ever.

P: Amen. Thanks be to God!

POSTLUDE

“If Thou But Trust God To Guide You”

arr. Bradley Sowash

****All who are able, please stand.**

Thoughts to Ponder After Worship

- *How does this curious story of the serpent on a pole speak to you of God's salvation?*
- *In what ways are you reminded of God's faithfulness and love and of how God is deliverer and provider?*
- *Ignoring our own best interests, what are ways that we gratify our selfish cravings, follow dark desires, and relish irrational thoughts?*
- *Have you ever been in the 'dark' about something? What happened when a 'light' was thrown on the subject?*