

**First Parish Church, Congregational
United Church of Christ
Worship Celebration
Fourth Sunday in Lent
Sunday, March 14, 2021
10:00 am**

Prelude

"Jesus Christ, My Life, My Light"

J.S. Bach

Welcome

Hymn

"O Love, How Vast, How Flowing Free"

O Love, how vast, how flowing free
O Love, how filled with ecstasy
That God a human form should take
And mortal be for mortals' sake

Not as an angel visiting
Nor form celestial orbiting
But born in flesh God chose to be
Robed in our own humanity

For us baptized, and fasting long
For us was tempted by the wrong
For us the pangs of hunger knew
For us the Tempter overthrew

For us was beaten, whipped and tried
And taken to be crucified
So Love, all this for us endured
And dying, life for us procured

Opening Prayer (Franciscan Blessing, adapted)

Holy One, bless us this and every day with sacred discomfort.

Bless us with sacred discomfort over easy answers, half-truths and superficial relationships, so that You may live deep within our hearts.

Bless us with sacred discomfort over injustice, oppression and exploitation of Your people wherever they may be, so that we might work for justice, freedom and peace.

Bless us with sacred discomfort over the tears of those who suffer illness, hunger, rejection and war, so that we may reach out and offer them Your comfort.

And bless us with sacred discomfort over our lack of confidence and trust in Your power to help us, so that we might believe we can make a difference in the world – and then make it.

We pray all this in the name of the One - Jesus - who calls us during this sacred season to go with him and make that difference. We offer You now the words that He gave us, 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 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.

Solo *"At Saint Patrick's Purgatory" (from "Hermit Songs")* Barber
Paul Knox, soloist

Pity me on my pilgrimage to Loch Derg! O King of the churches and the bells bewailing your sores and your wounds, but not a tear can I squeeze from my eyes!

Not moisten an eye after so much sin! Pity me, O King! What shall I do with a heart that seeks only its own ease?

O only begotten Son by whom all men were made, who shunned not the death by three wounds, pity me on my pilgrimage to Loch Derg; and I with a heart not softer than a stone!

Prayer Intentions

Time of Silent and Spoken Prayer

Music Meditation *"Serenity"* Ives (poem by Whittier)
Rebecca Shrimpton and Paul Knox, vocalists

O, Sabbath rest of Galilee! O, calm of hills above, where Jesus knelt to share with Thee, the silence of eternity interpreted by love.

Drop Thy still dews of quietness, till all our strivings cease; take from our souls the strain and stress, and let our ordered lives confess, the beauty of thy peace.

The Gospels

Matthew 13:31-33, 44-50

(New Revised Standard Version Bible Translation)

³¹ He put before them another parable: "The kingdom of heaven is like a mustard seed that someone took and sowed in his field; ³² it is the smallest of all the seeds, but when it has grown it is the greatest of shrubs and becomes a tree, so that the birds of the air come and make nests in its branches."

³³ He told them another parable: "The kingdom of heaven is like yeast that a woman took and mixed in with three measures of flour until all of it was leavened."

⁴⁴ "The kingdom of heaven is like treasure hidden in a field, which someone found and hid; then in his joy he goes and sells all that he has and buys that field.

⁴⁵ "Again, the kingdom of heaven is like a merchant in search of fine pearls; ⁴⁶ on finding one pearl of great value, he went and sold all that he had and bought it.

⁴⁷ "Again, the kingdom of heaven is like a net that was thrown into the sea and caught fish of every kind; ⁴⁸ when it was full, they drew it ashore, sat down, and put the good into baskets but threw out the bad. ⁴⁹ So it will be at the end of the age. The angels will come out and separate the evil from the righteous ⁵⁰ and throw them into the furnace of fire, where there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth.

Message

Solo

"Ain't No Grave"

Skaggs

Rebecca Shrimpton, soloist

Oh, shame is a prison as cruel as a grave. Shame is a robber, and he's come to take my name. Oh, love is my redeemer, lifting me up from the ground. Love is the power where my freedom song is found.

There ain't no grave gonna hold my body down. There ain't no grave gonna hold my body down. When I hear that trumpet sound, I'm gonna rise up outta the ground. There ain't no grave gonna hold my body down. Oh, oh, oh, oh, oh. Oh, oh, oh, oh, oh.

Oh, fear is a liar with a smooth and velvet tongue. Fear is a tyrant; he's always telling me to run. Oh, love is a resurrection, and love is a trumpet sound. Love is my weapon; I'm gonna take my giants down.

There ain't no grave gonna hold my body down. There ain't no grave gonna hold my body down. When I hear that trumpet sound, I'm gonna rise up outta the ground. There ain't no grave gonna hold my body down. Oh, oh, oh, oh, oh.

Oh, there was a battle, a war between death and life. And there on a tree, the Lamb of God was crucified. And He went on down to hell; He took back every key. He rose up as a lion, and He set all captives free.

There ain't no grave could hold His body down. There ain't no grave could hold His body down. When He heard the trumpet sound, He rose

up outta the ground. There ain't no grave could hold His body down.
There ain't no grave could hold His body down. There ain't no grave
could hold His body down. There ain't no grave Could hold His body
down.

Oh if you walked out of the grave, I'm walking too. If you walked out of
the grave, I'm walking too.

There ain't no grave gonna hold my body down. There ain't no grave
gonna hold my body down. When I hear the trumpet sound, gonna rise
up outta the ground. There ain't no grave gonna hold my body down.
There ain't no grave gonna hold my body down.

Blessing

Closing

"God Be with You"

Williams

- We encourage all members and friends of First Parish to remain with us immediately after the conclusion of our Worship this morning for our Virtual Friendship Time on Zoom. You can join the meeting by computer, tablet, iPad, or smart phone by clicking this link <https://zoom.us/j/720983063> Password- 244108
- Dial in with your phone and join using just audio at this number 1-301-715-8592 (Meeting ID- 720 983 063, Password- 244108). We welcome you for this time of additional community connection.
- "Deacon Fund" Support and Assistance – the "Deacon Fund" remains a vital means of assistance to FPC members in need, especially in this

