

**First Parish Church, Congregational
United Church of Christ
Worship Celebration
Fifth Sunday in Lent
Sunday, March 21, 2021
10:00 am**

Prelude

"Jesus, I Will Ponder Now"

Walther

Welcome

Hymn

"Lord Jesus, Who through Forty Days"

Lord Jesus, who through forty days for us did fast and pray
Teach us with you to mourn our sins, and close by you to stay

As you with Satan did contend, and did the victory win
O give us strength to persevere, in you to conquer sin

And through these days of penitence, and through this Passion-tide
Yes, evermore, in life and death, O Christ, with us abide

Abide with us, till when this life of suffering shall be past
An Easter of unending joy we may attain at last

Opening Prayer (adapted from "Touch Holiness")

Reconciling God, compassionate Christ, we realize that we have too often resembled opposing agents more than ministers of reconciliation. With angry words and vindictive acts, we harm others. We dehumanize those we do not like or do not care to understand. We distance ourselves from those who disappoint us, remind us of our own failings, or do the same unfaithful things we do at times.

Forgive us for this, Holy One. Lift us toward higher, holier ways, Help us draw as close to each other as You drew to us in Jesus. Help us see others less from our limited human view, and more from the foot of the cross which hatred, violence and vindictiveness could not, in the end, overcome.

We pray all this in the name of the One - Jesus - who calls us during this sacred season to go with him on that path toward reconciliation. 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

"Take Me to the King"

Franklin

Rebecca Shrimpton, soloist

Take me to the King. I don't have much to bring. My heart is torn in pieces; it's my offering. Take me to the King.

Truth is, I'm tired, options are few. I'm trying to pray, but where are You? I'm all churched out, hurt and abused. I can't fake what's left to do. Truth is, I'm weak, no strength to fight. No tears to cry even if I tried. But still, my soul refuses to die. One touch will change my life.

Take me to the King. I don't have much to bring. My heart's torn in pieces; it's my offering. Lay me at the throne. Leave me there alone to gaze upon Your glory and sing to you this song. Please take me to the King.

Truth is, it's time to stop playing these games. We need a word for the people's pain. So Lord, speak right now. Let it fall like rain. We're desperate. We're chasing after You. No rules, no religion. I've made my decision to run to You, the Healer that I need.

Take me to the King. I don't have much to bring. My heart's torn to pieces; it's my offering. Lay me at the throne. Leave me there alone to gaze upon Your glory and sing to You this song. Take me to the Lord, we're in the way. We keep making mistakes. The glory's not for us; it's all for You.

Take me to the King. I don't have much to bring. My heart's torn to pieces; it's my offering. Lay me at the throne. Leave me there alone to gaze upon Your glory, sing to You this song.

Take me to the King. Take me to the King. Take me to the King.

Prayer Intentions

Time of Silent and Spoken Prayer

Music Meditation

"Solveig's Song" (from "Peer Gynt")

Grieg

Dr. Herman Weiss, piano

The Gospels

Luke 16:1-13

(New International Version Bible Translation)

¹ Jesus told his disciples: "There was a rich man whose manager was accused of wasting his possessions. ² So he called him in and asked him, 'What is this I hear about you? Give an account of your management, because you cannot be manager any longer.'

³ The manager said to himself, 'What shall I do now? My master is taking away my job. I'm not strong enough to dig, and I'm ashamed to beg— ⁴ I know what I'll do so that, when I lose my job here, people will welcome me into their houses.'

⁵ "So he called in each one of his master's debtors. He asked the first, 'How much do you owe my master?'

⁶ "'Nine hundred gallons of olive oil,' he replied.

"The manager told him, 'Take your bill, sit down quickly, and make it four hundred and fifty.'

⁷ "Then he asked the second, 'And how much do you owe?'

"'A thousand bushels of wheat,' he replied.

"He told him, 'Take your bill and make it eight hundred.'

⁸ "The master commended the dishonest manager because he had acted shrewdly. For the people of this world are more shrewd in dealing with their own kind than are the people of the light. ⁹ I tell you, use worldly

wealth to gain friends for yourselves, so that when it is gone, you will be welcomed into eternal dwellings.

¹⁰ "Whoever can be trusted with very little can also be trusted with much, and whoever is dishonest with very little will also be dishonest with much. ¹¹ So if you have not been trustworthy in handling worldly wealth, who will trust you with true riches? ¹² And if you have not been trustworthy with someone else's property, who will give you property of your own?

¹³ "No one can serve two masters. Either you will hate the one and love the other, or you will be devoted to the one and despise the other. You cannot serve both God and money."

Message

Solo

"There is a Redeemer"

Green

Paul Knox, soloist

There is a Redeemer – Jesus, God's own Son; precious Lamb of God, Messiah, Holy One.

Thank you, o my Father, for giving us your Son, and leaving your Spirit 'till the work on earth is done. Jesus, my Redeemer, name above all names; precious Lamb of God, Messiah, hope for sinners slain.

When I stand in glory, I will see His face; there I'll serve my King forever in that holy place.

Thank you, o my Father, for giving us your Son, and leaving your Spirit 'till the work on earth is done. When I stand in glory, I will see His face; there I'll serve my King forever in that holy place.

Thank you, o my Father, for giving us your Son, and leaving your Spirit 'till the work on earth is done.

There is a Redeemer – Jesus, God's own Son.

Blessing

Closing

"God Be with You"

Williams

- Our thanks to Mary Ellen Cook for the beautiful arrangement of pussy willows on the altar.
- 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 difficult and uncertain time. Contributions can be made "First Parish

Church” with “Deacon Fund” in the memo section, and mailed to First Parish Church P.O. Box 187 Manchester, MA 01944. In addition, if a member of our spiritual community is need, please contact Rev. Mark to discuss available support.

- You can contribute to the work of First Parish Church or pay your pledge @ [PayPal.Me/FPChurchManchester](https://www.paypal.com/donate/?url=https://www.firstparishchurchmanchester.org)
- Click to read [*The Church Bell Newsletter*](#) of First Parish Church Congregational
- Manchester Affordable Housing Trust Announces Emergency Rental Housing Payment Assistance - The Manchester Affordable Housing Trust (MAHT), in collaboration with Action, Inc., a Gloucester-based human and social services agency, is offering short-term rental housing payment assistance to income eligible Manchester residents in response to job and income loss related to the COVID-19 pandemic.

Consistent with its mission to support and promote community affordable housing, the MAHT is reaching out to income eligible residents who are experiencing housing rent payment issues.

The MAHT can and wants to help during this difficult and uncertain time. For further information please contact Action, Inc. at 978-282-1000 or live chat at www.actioninc.org <<http://www.actioninc.org>.