

IMMANUEL UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST

Organist: Karen Cain

Pastor: Rev. Dana Schindler

March 21, 2021

Fifth Sunday in Lent

“Extending God’s love with the work of our hands and hearts...”

WELCOME

Welcome to worship today at Immanuel United Church of Christ in Hamel, IL. We are pleased that you have chosen to worship with us today. No matter who you are or where you are on life’s journey, you are welcome here!

Please leave a comment to let us know you are here. Also note any joys and concerns you may have and feel free to greet each other in Christian love.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

Music used is covered under our CCLI livestreaming license # 4012842.

Today for our service, you will need your worship guide.

CONFIRMATION There will be no confirmation today.

BOOK STUDY Join us on Zoom Thursday @ 7 pm as we continue our discussion on Autopsy of a Deceased Church: 12 ways to keep yours alive by Thom Rainer. Join us as we consider how to help our church survive and thrive through difficult times. If you haven’t gotten a book yet, you can order through Amazon, either hard cover or Kindle versions. We will be discussing chapters 13 & 14.

DEACONESS NURSE MINISTRY OFFERING We will be doing a Noisy Coin Collection for Deaconess Ministries during Lent. Please save up your coins to contribute to this wonderful group that provides mental, physical, and spiritual health related services, education, and advocacy to create communities of wholistic wellness.

CHICKEN DINNER will be held today, March 21st. Serving will begin at 11:30 and end at 4 pm or when all food is sold.

CONNECTION POINT will be hosting an Easter themed scavenger hunt March 28th starting at 1pm! Details are outlined in the newsletter sent out last week. Please RSVP by March 21st!

EASTER LILY ORDERS Cost is \$9.00 Make checks payable to Immanuel UCC. Contact Barb to order or a sign up sheet will be at church.

WHY I LOVE MY CHURCH FAMILY We have had several volunteers who have filmed a clip for our worship service to talk about this. We need more volunteers. This is a great way to let visitors know our best qualities and to remind those of us who have

been here for a while of things we may have overlooked or taken for granted. Please let Pastor Dana know if you are willing to do this.

PICTURES PLEASE! We request that all members send in a picture of you and your family for our 150th directory. Just take one with your phone if you don't have one to send in. Please also send your most current contact information. It will take time to assemble, so please send as soon as possible (no later than June 1st) to the office e-mail, officeiucc@gomadison.com, or rrklenke@schuetzfarms.com, or text it to 618-910-8999.

THE BREAD OF LIFE FOOD PANTRY in Hamel is open on Mondays from 9:00am till 10:30am. All who need assistance are welcome.

FOOD PANTRY NEEDS

Canned Fruits	Coffee	Pancake mix
Syrup	Laundry detergent	Sugar
Flour	Raman Noodles	Cooking Oil
Hamburger helper	BBQ Sauce	Salad Dressing
Cake Mix	Mashed Potatoes	Toilet paper
Baked beans	Chili	Rice

VOLUNTEERS NEEDED

to help with youth activities—see Barb
to help with FaithQuest—see Andrea or Jamie

NEW E-MAIL ADDRESSES

Ruth: officeiucc@gomadison.com
Pastor Dana: pastoriucc@gomadison.com

CONCERNS

Maria S.	Harry S.	Lillie H.
Kathie R.	Hope S.	Carole G.
Tomiko J.	Wayne S.	Sherri R.
Rose O.	Roger W.	Kathleen L.
Michelle L.	Kristy K.	Dorothy D.
Jane B.	Mary Ann C.	Jake G.
Diane B.	Frank H.	Diane O.
Luella L.	Students/School Personnel	
Hitz Home workers and residents	Those affected by storms	
Our country as we deal with pandemic		
Our Church Council	Pastor Dana, as she leads	

MISSION MOMENT**Letting Love Flow Through Springs of Clean Water**

The COVID-19 pandemic has taught us many things about what it means to be a global community. One of the most basic things we've been constantly reminded of is the importance of washing our hands in the battle to prevent infectious disease.

Hanh and her mom live in a poor rural village about 135 miles northwest of Vietnam's capital, Hanoi. Hanh had no idea what a toilet was. Where she lives, people still use fields, bushes, and streams as their bathrooms. This situation is all too common in many places in rural Vietnam and across southeast Asia.

In September of 2018, latrine and water supply improvements were brought to Hanh's school. Since then, Hanh and her friends have had an exciting time experiencing modern latrines and clean water taps, and how these conveniences lead to better hygiene and ultimately, better health.

When you give to One Great Hour of Sharing, you are providing clean water for drinking and sanitation to children like Hanh and her schoolmates. As God's compassion flows through you, your gifts will bring the promise of better health to children. Please give generously to support this important work.

PRELUDE

Karen Cain

POINT TO PONDER

"The seat of gratitude is the heart." — Diana Butler Bass

CALL TO WORSHIP

We come this day to worship the Lord, our Maker. Our hearts and ears are ready to hear God's words of love and grace, as we continue our Lenten journey. Amen.

PRAYER OF INVOCATION

God of Covenant, we open our hearts to Your will. We pray that you will write your words of love, grace, justice, and peace on our hearts, that we may seek to do Your will. Lead us in the paths of righteousness as we listen with joy. Amen.

OPENING HYMN

Open My Eyes that I May See

#586 (Chalice)

**Open my eyes that I may see
glimpses of truth thou hast for me.
Place in my hands the wonderful key
that shall unclasp and set me free.
Silently now I wait for thee,
ready, my God, thy will to see.
Open my eyes, illumine me,
Spirit divine!**

**Open my ears that I may hear
 voices of truth thou sendest clear,
 and while the wave notes fall on my ear,
 ev'rything false will disappear.
 Silently now I wait for thee,
 ready, my God, thy will to see.
 Open my ears, illumine me,
 Spirit divine!**

**Open my mouth and let me bear
 gladly the warm truth ev'rywhere.
 Open my heart and let me prepare
 love with thy children thus to share.
 Silently now I wait for thee,
 ready, my God, thy will to see.
 Open my mouth, illumine me,
 Spirit divine!**

FOR THE YOUNG AT HEART

Last month we celebrated Valentine's Day. Did you have any of those candy hearts that have sayings on them? Sayings like "Be Mine" and "I Love You"? Today our scripture talks about God saying that the Word of God will be written on our hearts. So, I wanted to make a heart and write on it. If you would like to do this too, just take out a piece of paper, fold it in half and hold it so the folded side is in the middle, like this.

Now, take your scissors and cut like this.

Now, open up your paper, and hopefully, it looks like a heart.

Flatten it out and take a pen, pencil, crayon, or marker and write.

What should we write?

Well, the scripture talks about Covenant. Covenant is a big word that means rules or agreement. What did Jesus tell us were the most important two rules? Do you remember? One was "Love God with all your heart, soul, mind, and strength" and the second was "Love one another as I have loved you."

So, let's write "Love God" on one side. Then let's turn it over and on the other side, let's write "Love each other."

Now, we have written God's words on a paper heart that we can keep and look at to help us remember. But even more important, let's put these words in our hearts, so we never forget.

PRAYER:

Loving God, thank you for helping us to remember to love you and to love each other. Please keep reminding us until it really is written on our hearts, so we do it every day. Amen.

SPECIAL MUSIC*Karen Cain***SCRIPTURE READINGS**

Jeremiah 31:27-34

The days are surely coming, says the LORD, when I will sow the house of Israel and the house of Judah with the seed of humans and the seed of animals. And just as I have watched over them to pluck up and break down, to overthrow, destroy, and bring evil, so I will watch over them to build and to plant, says the LORD. In those days they shall no longer say: "The parents have eaten sour grapes, and the children's teeth are set on edge." But all shall die for their own sins; the teeth of everyone who eats sour grapes shall be set on edge. The days are surely coming, says the LORD, when I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel and the house of Judah. It will not be like the covenant that I made with their ancestors when I took them by the hand to bring them out of the land of Egypt—a covenant that they broke, though I was their husband, says the LORD. But this is the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel after those days, says the LORD: I will put my law within them, and I will write it on their hearts; and I will be their God, and they shall be my people. No longer shall they teach one another, or say to each other, "Know the LORD," for they shall all know me, from the least of them to the greatest, says the LORD; for I will forgive their iniquity, and remember their sin no more.

Psalm 51

Have mercy on me, O God, according to your steadfast love; according to your abundant mercy blot out my transgressions. Wash me thoroughly from my iniquity, and cleanse me from my sin. For I know my transgressions, and my sin is ever before me. Against you, you alone, have I sinned, and done what is evil in your sight, so that you are justified in your sentence and blameless when you pass judgment. Indeed, I was born guilty, a sinner when my mother conceived me. You desire truth in the inward being; therefore teach me wisdom in my secret heart. Purge me with hyssop, and I shall be clean; wash me, and I shall be whiter than snow. Let me hear joy and gladness; let the bones that you have crushed rejoice. Hide your face from my sins, and blot out all my iniquities. Create in me a clean heart, O God, and put a new and right spirit within me. Do not cast me away from your presence, and do not take your holy spirit from me. Restore to me the joy of your salvation, and sustain in me a willing spirit. Then I will teach transgressors your ways, and sinners will return to you. Deliver me from bloodshed, O God, O God of my salvation, and my tongue will sing aloud of your deliverance. O Lord, open my lips, and my mouth will declare your praise. For you have no delight in sacrifice; if I were to give a burnt offering, you would not be pleased. The sacrifice acceptable to God is a broken spirit; a broken and contrite heart, O God, you will not despise. Do good to Zion in your good pleasure; rebuild the walls of

Jerusalem, then you will delight in right sacrifices, in burnt offerings and whole burnt offerings; then bulls will be offered on your altar.

SERMON

Rev. Dana Schindler

In our Lenten journey we have talked about covenants. God made a covenant with Noah to never again destroy the earth by flood and sealed it with a rainbow.

God made a covenant with Moses with the 10 commandments.

God made a covenant with Abraham and Sarah, to give them more descendants than stars in the sky. And now, God makes another covenant, delivered by the prophecy of Jeremiah.

Each of the preceding covenants were different, made for different reasons to different people. But this covenant is through a prophecy.

Why?

If we look at what was going on with the people of Israel, I think it will become clearer to us.

Jeremiah had been telling the people that they needed to change their ways, that they were headed for punishment for their evil ways.

They chose to ignore him.

This was a poor choice.

Now, the punishment has come. They have been defeated in war by Babylonia and many have been forced into exile there. The temple in Jerusalem was destroyed. The people are hopeless, and it is absolutely their own fault. They brought all of this on themselves. But Jeremiah does NOT say
"Told you so!" or "You reap what you sow!"

Instead of heaping on well-deserved shame, Jeremiah offers hope. I suspect the people were surprised, but when people are at their lowest, hope is the thing they need.

I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel and the house of Judah. It will not be like the covenant that I made with their ancestors when I took them by the hand to bring them out of the land of Egypt—a covenant that they broke, though I was their husband, says the LORD. But this is the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel after those days, says the LORD: I will put my law within them, and I will write it on their hearts; and I will be their God, and they shall be my people. No longer shall they teach one another, or say to each other, "Know the LORD," for they shall all know me, from the least of them to the greatest, says the LORD; for I will forgive their iniquity, and remember their sin no more.

The people had broken their covenants with God even though God remained faithful.

God still wants a relationship with them, despite their continued failures.

Notice the use of the future tense: The days *are* coming. I *will* make a new covenant. I *will* write it on their hearts.

The people were in the midst of a terrible time: defeat in war, exile to Babylonia, destruction of God's Temple. But Jeremiah told them "God will make life better." God has a plan for your welfare. Even though you have not been faithful to this marriage

with God, God remains faithful and will make it possible for you to not even have to *think* about being faithful to uphold the covenant. God will put this new covenant on their hearts, so they don't even have to think about it.

This covenant is not yet complete, but it will be. That is God's covenant with us. And it won't just be a covenant with the Jewish people who lived during the Babylonian exile, it will be a covenant with ALL people. God has promised to pour out the Holy Spirit on ALL flesh: Jews, Gentiles, Male, Female, Old, Young, from every place. ALL flesh. This covenant that will be written in our hearts will enable us to act in ways consistent with the Holy Spirit. We will just know what God wants us to do and then we would do it. We will finally truly love God and love our neighbors. Then we will not have to confess our sinfulness because we will do what is right in God's eyes. Let us pray that this covenant is completed soon. Amen.

PRAYER OF CONFESSION

God of Love, we do love you. But we find it so hard to remember to love each other. We want everyone to be just like us: to look like us, to think like us, to agree with us, to like us. The problem is they want us to be just like them: to look like them, to think like them, to agree with them, and to like them. And we fail. So, do they. Help us to remember that isn't the way love works. Remind us that when we love someone, we respect their differences and accept them as your beloved children. Write these words on our hearts so that we may truly be like You. Amen.

PRAYER RESPONSE

Change My Heart, O God
Change my heart O God
Make it ever true
Change my heart O God
May I be like You
You are the potter
I am the clay
Mold me and make me
This is what I pray
Change my heart O God
Make it ever true
Change my heart O God
May I be like You

2152 (TFWS)

GIVING OUR GIFTS

With thankful, loving hearts let us give of our time, talent, and treasure for God's glory and the work of God's kingdom of peace, hope, love, and joy. Offerings may be placed in the offering plates outside the sanctuary or mailed to Immanuel United Church of Christ at 5838 Staunton Road, Edwardsville, IL 62025. Please help us to meet our financial responsibilities and continue our ministries in this community.

DOXOLOGY

God is So Good

2056 (TFWS)

**God is so good, God is so good,
God is so good, he's so good to me.**

**I praise God's name, I praise God's name,
I praise God's name, he's so good to me.**

PASTORAL PRAYER

Loving God, we anticipate the day when we can be the people you have created us to be: people filled with love for you and for one another. We long for the day when we don't have to think about our actions, but instead will follow what you have placed in our hearts to do. We give thanks for the faithfulness of your promises. Please help us to be faithful to ours as well.

We offer special prayers for those we have named on our prayer list and for others whose names are in our hearts. Meet their needs as only you can and help us to meet the needs we can. Help our leaders to do what is right in your eyes, that we may live in peace. Make us uncomfortable enough to answer your call to work for justice for all people. All these things we pray in the name of your son, Jesus Christ, 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 debts as we forgive our debtors. And lead us not into temptation but deliver us from evil. For thine is the kingdom, the power, the glory forever Amen.**

CLOSING HYMN

Here I Am, Lord

452 (Chalice)

**I, the Lord of sea and sky
I have heard my people cry
All who dwell in dark and sin
My hand will save**

**I, who made the stars of night
I will make their darkness bright
Who will bear my light to them?
Whom shall I send?**

**Here I am, Lord. Is it I, Lord?
I have heard you calling in the night
I will go, Lord, if you lead me
I will hold your people in my heart**

**I, the Lord of snow and rain
I have borne my people's pain**

I have wept for love of them
They turn away

I will break their hearts of stone
Give them hearts for love alone
Who will speak my word to them
Whom shall I send?

Here I am, Lord. Is it I, Lord?
I have heard you calling in the night
I will go, Lord, if you lead me
I will hold your people in my heart

I, the Lord of wind and flame
I will tend the poor and lame
I will set a feast for them
My hand will save

Finest bread I will provide
'Til their hearts be satisfied
I will give my life to them
Whom shall I send?

Here I am, Lord. Is it I, Lord?
I have heard you calling in the night
I will go, Lord, if you lead me
I will hold your people in my heart

BENEDICTION

May God's word of peace, hope, joy, and love be written in our hearts that we may spread them liberally in a hurting world.

And now, until we meet again, may each one be held safely
in the palm of God's hand.

POSTLUDE



