

Gifts of Good News

Acts 17:16-31

In a time of intentional focus on stewardship, the story of Paul in Athens may strike us as an odd biblical story for today. Isn't this the time when we normally hear the parable of the talents; or about the foolish barn-builder; or the rich man who was shocked to hear Jesus' answer that to see the Realm of God you have to sell it all and give the proceeds to the poor?

Stewardship is about money; but not only about money. Its many facets include, among other things, the sharing of our faith. This is precisely what Paul is engaged in with the Athenians. Noting their many idols as he has toured their great city, he calls attention to one particular worship space dedicated to an unknown god. The Athenians are scrupulous in not wanting to offend the deities by leaving any divinity unacknowledged. Paul seizes the opportunity to introduce them to the God made known in Jesus Christ. The One True God. This God, once unknown, has now been revealed!

In I Corinthians, Paul writes that we are "stewards of the mysteries of God." As people who know the nature of our God and the love that God has for all of creation, a love that is more powerful even than death itself, we are called to share this story. We are stewards of the Gospel and as such we do not hoard this good news, but we offer it to others.

Paul was radically devoted to God and the mission to tell the world of God's loving intentions toward creation. His priority was to love and serve the God who could not be contained in any idol of wood, stone, silver, or gold. When you know this to be true, it puts everything else in its proper place.

As we reflect on what it means to be a steward, we are invited to think both about our priorities and how well we have shared with others the real treasure we have in the story of our faith. How are you practicing this kind of stewardship? Who can you tell about God's unconditional love?...

**With what shall I come before the Lord, and bow myself before God on high?
Shall I come before him with burnt offerings, with calves a year old?**

- Micah 6:6



WHAT SHALL WE BRING?

Church of the Palms United Church of Christ

Where faith happens and love abounds

1960 N. Swinton Avenue
Delray Beach, Florida 33444
561.276.6347 + www.churchofthepalms.net



Sunday, November 11, 2018 + 10:00 am
Twenty-fifth Sunday after Pentecost

*No matter who you are or where you are on life's journey,
No matter who you love, you are welcome here!*



Visitors are a special blessing! Please sign our Guest Book, located in the back of the sanctuary. If you would like to receive our newsletters and weekly emails, include your email address. And join us after worship for conversation and refreshments in the Friendship Center.



To enhance your worship experience...

- Kindly silence your cell phone in the sanctuary
- Back cushions are available in the back pew or ask an usher
- A hearing loop encircles the sanctuary for those with hearing aids
- There are no assigned seats – sit where you feel most comfortable
- If you do not wish to keep your bulletin, please place it in the recycle box as you exit to Friendship Center
- Let us know what we can do for you!

Nursery Care is available for infants and toddlers in the education building. Ask an usher for assistance. Sunday School classes meet in the Education Building following the Children's Conversation.

Prayer Requests may be submitted using a form in the pew rack and placing it on the offering plate. Requests are at Prayer Ministry Gatherings on the 1st & 3rd Thursdays of the month, 10:30am. Requests may also be called in to the Church Office during the week.

THE LIFE OF THE CHURCH

Today is Stewardship Sunday. All pledges should be returned today. If you need an extra Pledge Card, they are in the back of the church. If you are not prepared to return your pledge today, please do so as soon as possible and mail it to the church office.

Office Hours this week are Tuesday-Friday, 9AM-1PM.

Pastor Brad will be in on Tuesday and Thursday.

Super Sunday is today for all Ministry Teams, 11:30 am-12:45 pm

Welcome Back Elaine Reinhardt, Pianist.

Prayer Ministry meets this Thursday, 10:30 AM, in the Sanctuary.

Choir Rehearsal meets Thursday at 6:00 PM in the Music Room.

Volunteers are needed to serve as liturgists, ushers, greeters, and Communion servers. Sign up at the back of the church.

Next Sunday

New Beginnings Small Group Session for everyone.

11:30 AM = 1:00 PM, Friendship Center



Your Participation is vital as we discuss the future of our Church.

***Offertory Response #785**

We give You but Your own, whate'er the gift may be;
All that we have is Yours alone, we give it gratefully.

Prayer of Dedication

O God, we come this day bearing our gifts. May these gifts do justice.
May they bring kindness. May they bring us closer to the world.
In Jesus' name, we pray. Amen.

***Hymn #562**

Take My Gifts

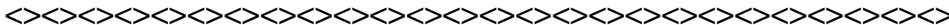
***Sending and Blessing**

*You are invited to exit quietly or remain seated during the
postlude to enjoy a last moment of worship.*

Postlude

Fantasia on America, the Beautiful

arr. Koury



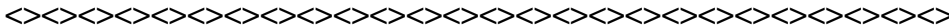
PARTICIPATING IN TODAY'S SERVICE

Rev. Brad S. Lutz, M.Div., Designated Term Pastor

Ed Krynicki, Director of Music

Elaine Reinhardt, Pianist

Beverly Drolette and Barbara Small, Greeters



SERVICE OF THE WORD

**please stand in body or spirit*

Welcome and Life of the Church

Prelude

Andante Tranquillo

Handel

Call to Worship

One: With what shall we come before our God?

Many: With humble hearts bent toward the arc of justice.

One: With what shall we come before our God?

Many: With arms of loving-kindness for all in need.

One: With what shall we come before our God?

Many: With lives earnestly seeking after God.

All: We come with justice, kindness, and hope. Thanks be to God!

*Gathering Hymn #565

God, Whose Giving Knows No Ending

Gathering Prayer

One: Christ is with us!

Many: Christ is in our midst!

One: Let us pray:

All: Gathering God, we pause this morning as we bring our praise and prayers to you. Your prophets speak to us about expansive love, about gifting the world generous compassion. Inspire us that we might find ways to live a life worthy of your calling as justice-bringers. Reach us with your Spirit of Peace and understanding during our worship, we pray. Amen.

Prayer for Jesus (*trepases*)

Choral Introit

What Does the Lord Require of You?

Strathdee

Children's Conversation

Song: To be like Jesus, to be like Jesus! My desire to be like Jesus!

All through life's journey from earth to glory, My desire to be like Jesus.

Prayer for Understanding

Scripture Reading

Old Testament Micah 6:6-8
Epistle 1 Timothy 6:2b-10
Gospel Matthew 6:19-21

Response (Tune: Austrian Hymn, #565)

**Treasure, God, you have entrusted, gain through powers your grace
Conferred. Ours to use for home and kindred, and to spread the gospel
Word. Open wide our hands in sharing as we heed Christ's ageless call,
Healing, teaching, and reclaiming, honoring you by loving all.**

Reflections on Scripture

The "M" Word

Anthem

Song for the Unsung Hero

Martin

Let us sing for unsung heroes, those who lay their dreams aside. Choosing honor more than glory. Pledging faith with quiet pride. Those whose uniform is courage, yet are unashamed of tears. Finding in their love of freedom power stronger than their fears. Sing a song for unsung heroes, sing from sea to shining sea. As the faithful sang before you, sing the song of liberty. Let us sing for unsung heroes, those who answer freedom's call. Those united by one purpose, all for one and one for all. We will sing and not be silenced, we will keep our voices strong, for as long as we keeping singing, freedom's cry will still live on! Sing a song for unsung heroes, sing from sea to shining sea. As the faithful sang before you, sing the song of liberty. Sing the song of liberty. My country 'tis of thee, sweet land of liberty. Of thee I sing. Land where my fathers died, land of the pilgrims' pride, from every mountainside, let freedom ring. Let us sing the song of freedom, sing the song of liberty, America.

A Litany for Veterans Day

One: Loving God, the framers of our Declaration of Independence claimed that you have endowed us with inalienable rights to life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness. Yet there are those who would take these from us. Today we remember all those who have served in our country's armed forces to preserve the freedoms you have granted us, to make it impossible for those who would take away our freedoms from prevailing. For the men and women who serve in the Air Force, Army, Navy, Marine Corps, and Coast Guard,

***Many:* We ask your blessing.**

One: For the family members who have made great sacrifices in order to make it possible for their service members to be on watch at home or around the world or to go into harm's way,

Many: We ask your blessing.

One: For the families who grieve the death of a member who went in harm's way, never to return,

Many: We ask your blessing.

One: Jesus tells us that no one has greater love than to lay down one's life for one's friends. For all those veterans who have been willing to lay down their lives for us,

Many: We ask your blessing.

One: For the veterans of past wars who bear scars in their bodies and spirits,

Many: We ask your blessing.

One: For veterans who came home but couldn't "fit in" with their families or communities anymore,

Many: We ask your blessing.

One: Keep all our veterans in your care today. Grant them the peace they sought to preserve for others. As we honor our veterans, we also pray for peace. Teach all your people the ways of peace that those who have sacrificed so much for peace and freedom will not have done so in vain. We pray all these things in the name of your son, our savior, Jesus Christ.

All: Amen.

This litany was prepared by Eileen Norrington, a 22-year veteran of the U.S. Navy Chaplain Corps, and member of the UCC National Staff. ©2003 Parish Life and Leadership Ministry Team, Local Church Ministries, United Church of Christ, Cleveland. Used with permission.

Response (Tune *Hesperus*, #571)

Whom shall we trust, O God, but you? For you are constant, strong, and true.

None ever called on you in vain: Give peace, O God give peace again! Amen.

Invitation to the Offering

Offertory Anthem

Offertory

Ness Beck

During the Offertory, please bring your offering and pledge card forward. Place your offering in the offering plate and your pledge for 2019 in the basket.

With what shall I come before the Lord, and bow myself before God on high? Shall I come before Him with burnt offerings, shall I come before Him with yearling calves? Will the Lord be pleased with thousands of rams, with ten thousand rivers of oil? Shall I give Him my first born for my transgressions, the fruit of my body for the sin of my soul? He has shown you, O man; He has shown you what is good. And what does the Lord require of you but to do justice and to love kindness, and to walk humbly, walk humbly with your God? (Micah 6: 6-8)