



First Central Congregational

UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST

LENT THEME: ASCENT

March 14, 2021

Fourth Sunday in Lent

Prelude

Elevation in D

Bouma

Welcome and Announcements

Rev. Katie Miller

***Greeting and Passing of the Peace**

"The Peace of God be with you."

In Unison: **Blest be the tie that binds our hearts in Christian love;
the fellowship of kindred minds is like to that above.**

** Let us rise in body or spirit.*

Call to Worship

Sam Pfeifer, liturgist

If only we will trust, Jesus leads us in the way of light and love.

We come to celebrate the light of God in Jesus, who offers love and acceptance, not exclusion and rejection.

This love reaches through the shadows of our lives to embrace us.

Our challenge is to trust the light of God's love in the midst of our struggles.

We come to celebrate the love of our God.

Let us rise up together in glory.

***Processional Hymn**

O God, Our Help in Ages Past

O God, Our Help in Ages Past

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Isaac Watts, 1719; alt.

Ps. 90:1-2, 4-5

1 O God, our help in a - ges past, our hope for years to come,
2 Un - der the shad-ow of your throne your saints have dwelt se - cure;
3 Be - fore the hills in or - der stood or earth re - ceived its frame,
4 A thou - sand a - ges in your sight are like an eve - ning gone,

Our shel - ter from the storm - y blast, and our e - ter - nal home:
Suf - fi - cient is your arm a - lone, and our de - fense is sure.
From ev - er - last - ing you are God, to end - less years the same.
Short as the watch that ends the night be - fore the ris - ing sun.

5 Time, like an ev-er-roll-ing stream,
soon bears us all away;
We fly for-got-ten, as a dream
fades at the o-pen-ing day.

6 O God, our help in a-ges past,
our hope for years to come,
Still be our God while trou-bles last,
and our e-ter-nal home!

Watts, minister of a Congregational church in London, wrote theological and philosophical works and hundreds of "hymns of human composure" (everyday language). He augmented the congregational singing of psalms with a new style of hymnody.

Tune: ST. ANNE C.M.
William Croft, 1708

*Invocation

Infinite God, meet us where we are. Help us to believe and trust. Show us the light of your revelation. May we be attentive to it. Guide us to witness daily to your ongoing work in the world, that fills our lives with purpose and joy. Amen.

*Gloria

Black Hymnal, No. 759

Glory to the Creator, the Christ, the Holy Spirit, Three in One; as it was in the beginning, is now and ever shall be, world without end. Amen. Amen.

Conversation with the Children

Psalm Lesson

Psalm 127

For the Word of God in scripture,
For the Word of God within us,
For the Word of God among us,
Thanks be to God.

Sermon

Unless

Rev. Dr. Scott Jones

Musical Interlude

*Prayer of Confession

Rev. Dr. Jim Harmon

God, you comfort us and challenge us. Today we are dissatisfied and have complaints. Yet, often we fail to recognize your blessing at work in our day to day lives. Forgive us when we fall short. Forgive us when we close our eyes for fear of what you might show us. We often avoid the oppression, injustice, and inequality around us. Open our eyes until we see what you see in our world. And empower us to work, not in vain, but with purpose, to achieve your goals for creation. Amen.

*Words of Assurance

You are blessed because God's image resides deep within each of you. So return God's blessing by the way you love others.

Prayers

Pastoral Prayer

Lord's Prayer

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 and the power
and the glory, forever. Amen.

Offertory

Elevation in E flat

Bouma

*Hymn of Dedication

LASST UNS ERFREUEN

Praise God, from whom all blessings flow; Praise God, all creatures here below: Alleluia! Alleluia!
Praise God, the source of all our gifts! Praise Jesus Christ, whose power uplifts! Praise the Spirit,

Holy Spirit! Alleluia! Alleluia! Alleluia!

***Offertory Prayer**

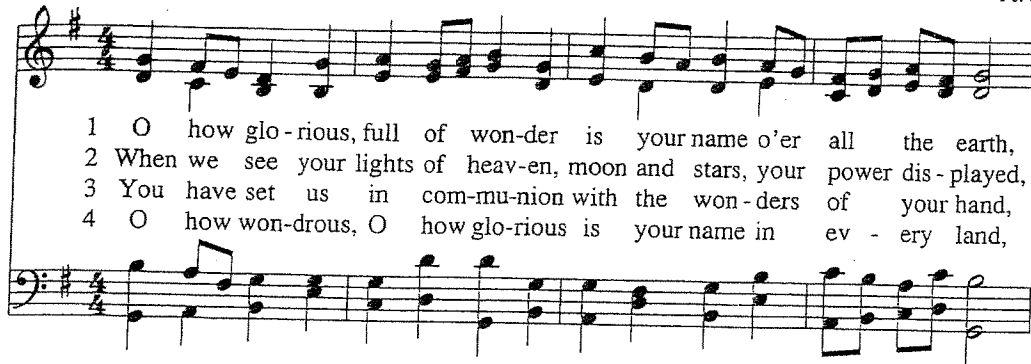
O Generous One, we give thanks to you, for your steadfast love endures forever. Take these gifts and use them, so they are not given in vain. May they address the anxious needs of humanity, especially those who are hungry. Amen.

***Recessional Hymn**

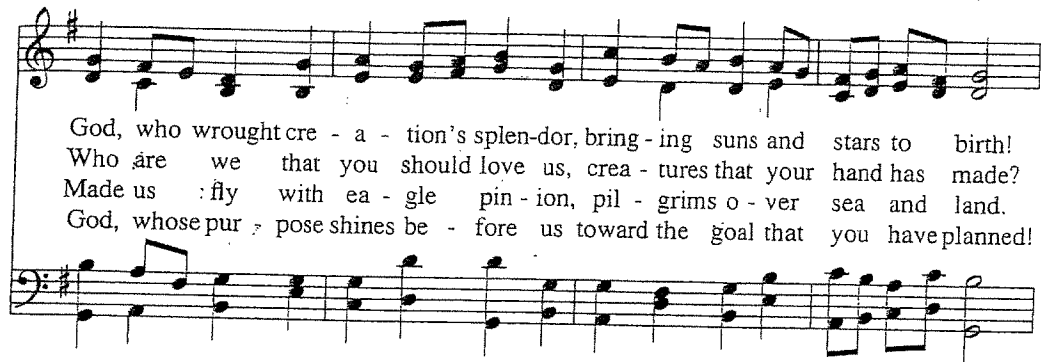
O How Glorious, Full of Wonder

O How Glorious, Full of Wonder

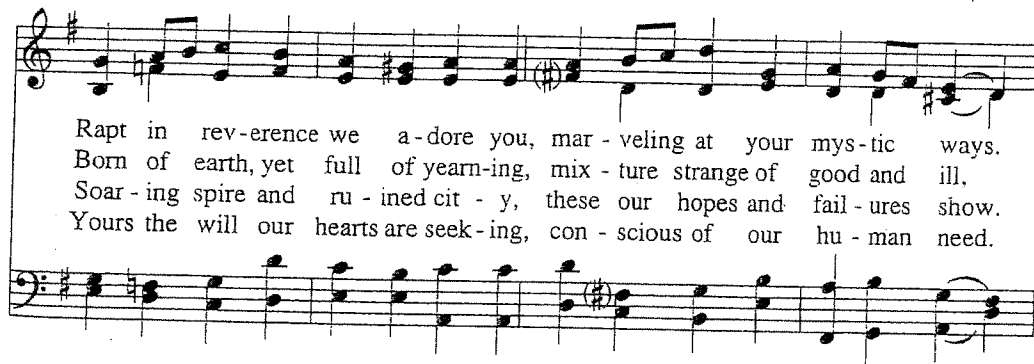
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*Curtis Beach, 1958, rev. 1980; alt.**Ps. 8*


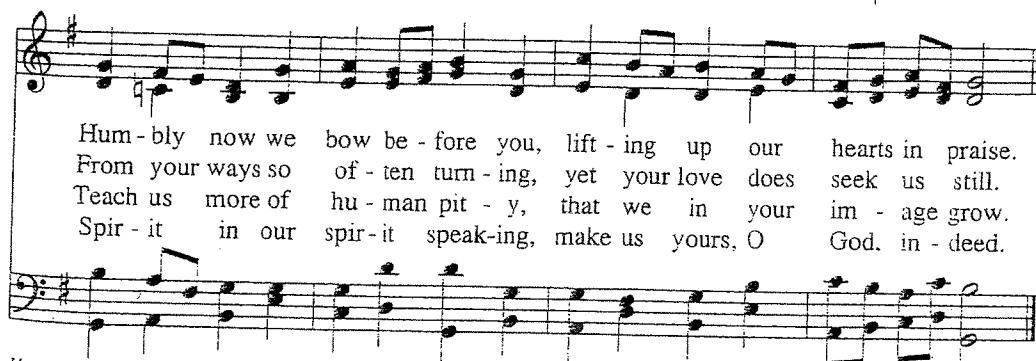
1 O how glo-rious, full of won-der is your name o'er all the earth,
 2 When we see your lights of heav-en, moon and stars, your power dis-played,
 3 You have set us in com-mu-nion with the won-ders of your hand,
 4 O how won-drous, O how glo-rious is your name in ev-ery land,



God, who wrought cre-a-tion's splen-dor, bring-ing suns and stars to birth!
 Who are we that you should love us, crea-tures that your hand has made?
 Made us fly with ea-gle pin-ion, pil-grims o-ver sea and land.
 God, whose pur-pose shines be-fore us toward the goal that you have planned!



Rapt in rev-erence we a-dore you, mar-veling at your mys-tic ways.
 Born of earth, yet full of yearn-ing, mix-ture strange of good and ill,
 Soar-ing spire and ru-ined cit-y, these our hopes and fail-ures show.
 Yours the will our hearts are seek-ing, con-scious of our hu-man need.



Hum-bly now we bow be-fore you, lift-ing up our hearts in praise.
 From your ways so of-ten turn-ing, yet your love does seek us still.
 Teach us more of hu-man pit-y, that we in your im-age grow.
 Spir-it in our spir-it speak-ing, make us yours, O God. in-deed.

*United Church of Christ minister Curtis Beach submitted this hymn to the editorial committee of the *Bible Echo* (1958).*

Tune: IN BABILONE 8.7.8.7.D.

Words Copyright 1958; renewed 1980, 1991 by the Estate of Curtis Beach.

***Benediction**

Benediction Response

Bouma

May you hear laughter in the wind. May you see hope in the light.
May you find courage in your faith. May you know joy in your God.

Postlude

Marche in D

Bouma

Open & Affirming Statement

In our ongoing quest for hearts that open, minds that understand,
and lives that serve, we welcome into our fellowship, membership, leadership, and employment,
all people, regardless of abilities, race, gender, sexual orientation, or any God-given characteristic.

Announcements

March 14, 2021

Prayers: *Mary Solberg*, recovering at home from knee surgery; *Stephen Bouma*, recovering from surgery.

Chancel decorations: thanks to *Andy Acker* for the beautiful painting.

Happy Birthday this week: to *Jim Harmon, John Schalles, Lucas Askew, Nancy Barbour, Sophia Rudd, Isabel Kratville*, and *Katy Young*.

FirstKids: in Memorial Hall following the Conversation with the Children. Masks required.

FirstYouth: 8 p.m., Zoom.

Activities for the Coming Week, March 15 – March 20

*Lectionary Readings: Jeremiah 31:31-34; Psalm 51:1-12;
Hebrews 5:5-10; John 12:20-33.*

- Monday:** Staff meeting, 1:30 p.m.
Eves, 7 p.m., Zoom
- Wednesday:** Choir, 7 p.m., Zoom
Vespers, 8 p.m., FaceBook Live
- Thursday:** Evergreen Thrift Shop 10 a.m. – 2 p.m.
Congregational Care Ministry, 7:30 p.m., Zoom
- Saturday:** Evergreen Thrift Shop 10 a.m. – 1 p.m.

Sunday, March 21

Worship: 10:30 a.m. on YouTube, FaceBook Live, or in person.

One Great Hour of Sharing: donations welcomed this morning. Thank you for your generosity.

Congregational Outreach Ministry: 11:30 a.m., Zoom

FirstYouth: 8 p.m., Zoom

Want to donate electronically? Please scan the QR code.

