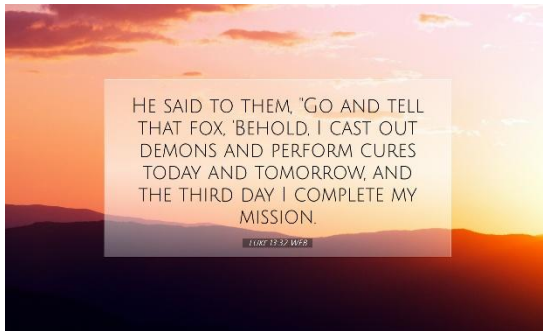


MARCH 16, 2025
SECOND SUNDAY IN LENT
LUKE 13:31-35 | "WARNING"



ST. JOHN
UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST

Rev. Rosemary Captain

Organist: Sharon Banjavcic

Liturgy - Rev. Ruth Garwood

Ushers –

(NCH) New Century Hymnal - CCLI LICENSE #11164431

*Please stand if comfortably able.

Respond with words in bold print

ANNOUNCEMENTS AND PRAYER CONCERNS:

THE BELL IS RUNG:

PRELUDE: "Give Me Jesus" Tom Fettke

PENNIES FOR MISSION:

***RESPONSIVE CALL TO WORSHIP:**

One: When the world around me is disturbing, where do I turn?

Many: A psalmist says, "The Lord is my light and my salvation."

One: When I am afraid, what can I count on?

Many: "The Lord is a fortress protecting my life."

One: We gather in the light of God's protection.

Many: We come to pray, praise and sing.

All: Let us worship God together!

***INVOCATION:**

Gracious God, prepare us to receive you. May our eyes behold you in those around us. May our ears receive your word. May our hearts be open to your teaching and leading. In this precious moment, may we know you in new ways.

***OPENING HYMN: 423 "Great is Your Faithfulness"**

***UNISON PRAYER FOR TRANSFORMATION AND NEW LIFE:**

Loving Protector, in times of chaos, we can be startled by sudden declarations, distracted by claims of solutions to problems. Forgive us, God, for our wandering from you. Forgive us, when our own fears draw other people's attention away from you. Help us to act, not from anxiety, but from faith in your certain presence. Help us to slow down and recognize you within and around us. Amen.

***WORDS OF GRACE:**

No matter how far from God our resistance takes us, God wishes to draw us back, as deliberately as a hen gathers her brood under her wings. Receive God's embrace and this good news: you are forgiven.

***GLORIA: Glory to the Creator, and the Christ and the Spirit so near. As it was from the start so it shall be forever, One God always here. (repeat twice)
(end) One God always here. One God always here.**

SCRIPTURE LESSONS: Genesis 15:1-12, 17-18

God's covenant with Abram

15 After these events, the Lord's word came to Abram in a vision, "Don't be afraid, Abram. I am your protector. Your reward will be very great."

² But Abram said, "Lord God, what can you possibly give me, since I still have no children? The head of my household is Eliezer, a man from Damascus."^[b] ³ He continued, "Since you haven't given me any children, the head of my household will be my heir."

⁴ The Lord's word came immediately to him, "This man will not be your heir. Your heir will definitely be your very own biological child." ⁵ Then he brought Abram outside and said, "Look up at the sky and count the stars if you think you can count them." He continued, "This is how many children you will have." ⁶ Abram trusted the Lord, and the Lord recognized Abram's high moral character.

⁷ He said to Abram, "I am the Lord, who brought you out of Ur of the Chaldeans to give you this land as your possession."

⁸ But Abram said, "Lord God, how do I know that I will actually possess it?"

⁹ He said, "Bring me a three-year-old female calf, a three-year-old female goat, a three-year-old ram, a dove, and a young pigeon." ¹⁰ He took all of these animals, split them in half, and laid the halves facing each other, but he didn't split the birds. ¹¹ When vultures swooped down on the carcasses, Abram waved them off. ¹² After the sun set, Abram slept deeply. A terrifying and deep darkness settled over him.

¹⁷ After the sun had set and darkness had deepened, a smoking vessel with a fiery flame passed between the

split-open animals. ¹⁸ That day the Lord cut a covenant with Abram: “To your descendants I give this land, from Egypt’s river to the great Euphrates,

PSALM: Psalm 27

Of David.

27 The Lord is my light and my salvation.

Should I fear anyone?

The Lord is a fortress protecting my life.

Should I be frightened of anything?

² When evildoers come at me trying to eat me up—
it’s they, my foes and my enemies,
who stumble and fall!

³ If an army camps against me,
my heart won’t be afraid.

If war comes up against me,
I will continue to trust in this:

⁴ I have asked one thing from the Lord—
it’s all I seek:

to live in the Lord’s house all the days of my life,
seeing the Lord’s beauty
and constantly adoring his temple.

⁵ Because he will shelter me in his own dwelling
during troubling times;
he will hide me in a secret place in his own tent;
he will set me up high, safe on a rock.

⁶ Now my head is higher than the enemies surrounding me,

and I will offer sacrifices in God’s tent—
sacrifices with shouts of joy!

I will sing and praise the Lord.

⁷ Lord, listen to my voice when I cry out—
have mercy on me and answer me!

⁸ Come, my heart says, seek God’s face. ^[a]
Lord, I do seek your face!

⁹ Please don’t hide it from me!
Don’t push your servant aside angrily—
you have been my help!

God who saves me,
don’t neglect me!

Don’t leave me all alone!

¹⁰ Even if my father and mother left me all alone,
the Lord would take me in.

¹¹ Lord, teach me your way;
because of my opponents, lead me on a good path.

¹² Don’t give me over to the desires of my enemies,
because false witnesses and violent accusers
have taken their stand against me.

¹³ But I have sure faith
that I will experience the Lord’s goodness
in the land of the living!

¹⁴ Hope in the Lord!

Be strong! Let your heart take courage!

Hope in the Lord!

EPISTLE LESSON: Philippians 3:17-4:1

Imitate Paul

¹⁷ Brothers and sisters, become imitators of me and watch those who live this way—you can use us as models. ¹⁸ As I have told you many times and now say with deep sadness, many people live as enemies of the cross. ¹⁹ Their lives end with destruction. Their god is their stomach, and they take pride in their disgrace because their thoughts focus on earthly things. ²⁰ Our citizenship is in heaven. We look forward to a savior that comes from there—the Lord Jesus Christ. ²¹ He will transform our humble bodies so that they are like his glorious body, by the power that also makes him able to subject all things to himself.

Stand firm in the Lord

4 Therefore, my brothers and sisters whom I love and miss, who are my joy and crown, stand firm in the Lord. Loved ones,

***GOSPEL LESSON: Luke 13:31-35**

Sorrow for Jerusalem³¹ At that time, some Pharisees approached Jesus and said, “Go! Get away from here, because Herod wants to kill you.”

³² Jesus said to them, “Go, tell that fox, ‘Look, I’m throwing out demons and healing people today and tomorrow, and on the third day I will complete my work. ³³ However, it’s necessary for me to travel today, tomorrow, and the next day because it’s impossible for a prophet to be killed outside of Jerusalem.’

³⁴ “Jerusalem, Jerusalem, you who kill the prophets and stone those who were sent to you! How often I have wanted to gather your people just as a hen gathers her chicks under her wings. But you didn’t want that. ³⁵ Look, your house is abandoned. I tell you, you won’t see me until the time comes when you say, *Blessings on the one who comes in the Lord’s name.*”

These are the ancient words revealed to us anew.

Thanks be to God.

MESSAGE:

The readings for this, the Second Sunday in Lent, stresses promise and expectation – promise and expectation. In the First Testament reading we heard the account of the covenant with Abraham in Genesis 15 which contains God’s promise of a child to the childless, and Abraham responds with faithful trust in the God who makes the promise. The Psalm is filled with assurance and confident trust in God. The Epistolary reading calls attention to the cross and reminds the church that it awaits its savior. The words of Jesus to Herod in our text

spark anticipation of the events commemorated during Holy Week. Promise and expectation. Our theme this morning.

Another reason that our reading of Luke 13:31-35 is especially appropriate for the Lenten season is because it looks toward Jerusalem and the passion of Jesus. In Luke 9:51 we will read “he set his face to go to Jerusalem.” If Lent is understood as a pilgrimage to Good Friday and Easter, this passage is definitely appropriate for it comes within Luke’s lengthy “journey narrative.” The image of Jesus that we can imagine is of a man going through one town and village after another as he made his way to Jerusalem.

When the Pharisees approach Jesus to warn him of the dangers ahead, Jesus almost sounds favorable to them. But if Jesus had anything nice to say to them, we didn’t hear it. Herod Antipas, was the son of Herod the great, known as a bully and a butcher. The present Herod had beheaded John the Baptist and now was probably planning on treating Jesus the same way.

Were you surprised when you heard how Jesus answered the Pharisees? I always pictured Jesus as mild mannered, yet his response sounded a little heated. Plus do you think it was a good idea for Jesus to tell Herod where he was going to be the next couple of days? But even so, the author of the gospel of Luke wants us to understand that both friends (some

Pharisees) and foes (Herod) could not alter Jesus’ sure obedience to the will of God.

As the Lenten season begins, we can look forward to reading more about Jesus’ journey to the great city of Jerusalem where the prophets are killed. Plus we should be alert as to how many times Jesus walks away from danger and continues to obey the will of God. Jesus showed courage not often seen today. Amen.

ANTHEM: CHANCEL CHOIR “God So Loved the World”
John Stainer

PASTORAL PRAYER:

Most Holy One, creator of all good things, we thank you. We thank you for the opportunity to worship together here in St. John UCC in Fairview Heights. We need each other. We care for each other. We pray for each other. Without our congregation, we would be lost. We pray for all those who do not have this opportunity and we pray for all those who don’t realize that they need a community like ours. God did not create us to be alone. We need each other. We need those people who take care of our church building. We need those people to pay the bills. We need people who put together the worship service each Sunday; those who play musical instruments and those

who lead the choir. Every person is important for the good of all of us.

We pray for those who are sick, ill, have had surgery, and those who are recovering. Be sure they know that your loving arms are wrapped tightly around them.

We pray for all countries who have up-rest, where innocent people are oppressed because they get in the way of those who sick power. God bless them all.

Let our prayers, songs, and praises to you be shared as we pray together . . .

THE LORD'S PRAYER:

PRAYER RESPONSE: Three-fold Amen

INVITATION TO GENEROSITY:

In gratitude for what we have received, and for the joy of giving and sharing, let us offer our gifts to God's work through this church.

OFFERTORY: "Above the Hills of Time"

(Londonderry) Thomas Tiplady

DOXOLOGY: 785 "We Give You but your Own"

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 THANKSGIVING AND DEDICATION:**

Dear God, use our offerings of our resources and of our

lives. Bless them, multiply them for your purposes in the world.

***CLOSING HYMN: 573 "Lead on Eternal Sovereign"**

BENEDICTION:

Friends, nourished by your presence here, go boldly in the way of Jesus. Receive the blessings of God, and be sustained by the Holy Spirit, today and always.

BENEDICTION RESPONSE: "Let There Be Peace on Earth"

POSTLUDE: "Festal Postlude" Chester Nordman