

Rutherford Congregational Church, UCC

Virtual Sunday Gathering

February 21, 2021

First Sunday in Lent



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

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## WELCOME

Welcome to Rutherford Congregational Church. We are happy that you have joined us this morning. During this season of Lent, we are reminded of our mortality and human suffering. This year, in particular, due to multiple pandemics of COVID-19, racism, Christian Nationalism, and political division and chaos, some may say that we've been in a season of lent that never ended. Rev. Freeman L. Palmer of the UCC reminds us that while these things are true, God has been with us every step of the way. So, we invite you today, to leave the cares and worries of the world outside, and join with us in prayer, reflection, musings and music as we focus on our God, through Jesus Christ. And we invite God's presence, Gods grace and mercy into our gathering today.

Given the virtual space of Zoom, our worship team has tried to create our services to be EPIC. That is, Experiential, Participatory, Image Rich, and Connective. As worship is not a spectator sport, we encourage you to sing aloud, clap your hands, or do whatever is comfortable for you. We encourage you to make your home surroundings a sacred space. You can do this by lighting candles, placing special items on your living room coffee table or wherever you are located at home.

At RCC, we are a community of Christian believers who seek fellowship with our neighbors and strangers and seek to be of service to all of God's children. We pray that this morning is meaningful, your faith renewed and that you are inspired to continue on this Lenten Journey with us.

For your benefit, a link to the PDF of this morning's order of worship is posted on the church's home page, [www.rccucc.com](http://www.rccucc.com).

Throughout this pandemic, a reminder, that here in this local congregation of the United Church of Christ, now more than ever, *'No matter who you are, or where you are on life's journey, you are welcome here.'*

Some of the words of welcome come from a Lenten reflection of Rev. Freeman L. Palmer, published in the Central Atlantic Conference UCC newsletter, February, 2021.

Music included in this morning's service is reproduced under  
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## CALL TO WORSHIP

(Spoken by Pastor & Liturgist, alternating)

L: Welcome this day to the beginning of a journey.

**P: Where will this journey take us?**

L: It will take you to the Cross of Christ and beyond.

**P. Are you sure that's a good idea? The road to Calvary is long and hard.**

L: We won't travel alone and there is much to discover.

**P. I heard that Lent is a lonely season.**

L: Not true, for God is always with us. And we have each other as well.

**P: How much time do we have to get ready?**

L: The time is now, Jesus awaits.

**P. What is the first step on this Lenten Journey?'**

L: Our first step is Prayer. It is where Jesus will meet us.

**P: With God's help, we will pray. And seek Jesus to accompany us on the journey ahead.**

**AMEN.**

## INVOCATION / OPENING PRAYER

**Pastor Annie**

God our Father, God our Mother, the season of Lent is here again and, as with so many times before, we find that we are not ready for this journey of discipleship. A journey toward the cross sounds challenging. And we have suffered so much already. Help us lord, to remember that Christ is with us every step of the journey. We are not alone; we never were and we never will be. Remind us that Christ is but a breath away. Always near to lift our hearts and spirit and direct our path. Help us lord, to learn to pray, for Christ is but a prayer away. Enable us, loving Savior, to take this journey of faith to new life with you. AMEN.

## OPENING HYMN

*Forty Days and Forty Nights vv 1-4*

George Hunt Smyttan

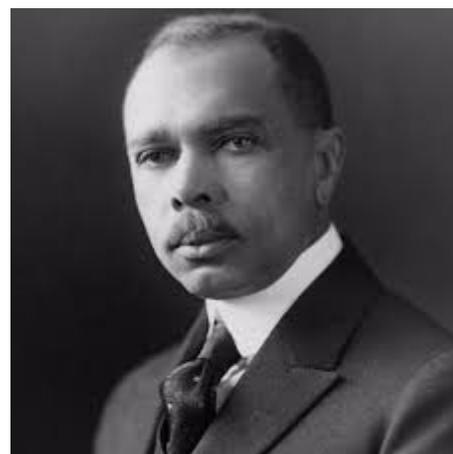
## READINGS FROM THE SCRIPTURES

(Spoken by the Liturgist)

## Contemporary Reading

*James Weldon Johnson*  
*“Listen Lord – A Prayer”*  
*God’s Trombones, 1927*

O Lord, we come this morning  
Knee-bowed and body-bent  
Before Thy throne of grace.  
O Lord—this morning—  
Bow our hearts beneath our knees,  
And our knees in some lonesome valley.  
We come this morning—  
Like empty pitchers to a full fountain,  
With no merits of our own.  
O Lord—open up a window of heaven,  
And lean out far over the battlements of glory,



And listen this morning.

Lord, have mercy on proud and dying sinners—  
Sinners hanging over the mouth of hell,  
Who seem to love their distance well.  
Lord—ride by this morning—  
Mount Your milk-white horse,  
And ride-a this morning—  
And in Your ride, ride by old hell,  
Ride by the dingy gates of hell,  
And stop poor sinners in their headlong plunge.

And now, O Lord, this man of God,  
Who breaks the bread of life this morning—  
Shadow him in the hollow of Thy hand,  
And keep him out of the gunshot of the devil.  
Take him, Lord—this morning—  
Wash him with hyssop inside and out,  
Hang him up and drain him dry of sin.  
Pin his ear to the wisdom-post,  
And make his words sledgehammers of truth—  
Beating on the iron heart of sin.  
Lord God, this morning—  
Put his eye to the telescope of eternity,  
And let him look upon the paper walls of time.  
Lord, turpentine his imagination,  
Put perpetual motion in his arms,  
Fill him full of the dynamite of Thy power,  
Anoint him all over with the oil of Thy salvation,  
And set his tongue on fire.

And now, O Lord—  
When I've done drunk my last cup of sorrow—  
When I've been called everything but a child of God—  
When I'm done traveling up the rough side of the mountain—

O—Mary's Baby—

When I start down the steep and slippery steps of death—

When this old world begins to rock beneath my feet—

Lower me to my dusty grave in peace.

To wait for that great gittin'-up morning—Amen.

## **Gospel Lesson: Matthew 6: 5- 15**

<sup>5</sup>“And whenever you pray, do not be like the hypocrites; for they love to stand and pray in the synagogues and at the street corners, so that they may be seen by others. Truly I tell you, they have received their reward. <sup>6</sup>But whenever you pray, go into your room and shut the door and pray to your Father who is in secret; and your Father who sees in secret will reward you.

<sup>7</sup>“When you are praying, do not heap up empty phrases as the Gentiles do; for they think that they will be heard because of their many words. <sup>8</sup>Do not be like them, for your Father knows what you need before you ask him.

<sup>9</sup>“Pray then in this way:

Our Father in heaven,

hallowed be your name.

<sup>10</sup> Your kingdom come.

Your will be done,

on earth as it is in heaven.

<sup>11</sup> Give us this day our daily bread.

<sup>12</sup> And forgive us our debts,

as we also have forgiven our debtors.

<sup>13</sup> And do not bring us to the time of trial,

but rescue us from the evil one.

<sup>14</sup> For if you forgive others their trespasses, your heavenly Father will also forgive you; <sup>15</sup> but if you do not forgive others, neither will your Father forgive your trespasses.

[This is the word of God for the People of God](#)

[Thanks be to God](#)

**SERMON**

Teach us to Pray

Pastor Annie

**HYMN**

*Lord Jesus, Who through Forty Days*

Claudia F.I. Hernaman



## **PRAYERS OF THE PEOPLE**

Joys & Concerns

Pastoral Prayer ([Pastor Annie](#))

Prayer of our Savior

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 sins as we forgive those who sin against us. Lead us not into temptation but deliver us from evil. For thine is the kingdom, the power, and the glory forever and ever. AMEN



## TIME OF OFFERING

Invitation (Liturgist)

Please take time now to log onto [www.rccucc.com](http://www.rccucc.com) our website and click on the donate link to make your offering or mail your check to RCC 251 Union Ave, Rutherford, NJ 07070 Attention: Financial Secretary.

## OFFERTORY

*Beatitudo*

Charles Callahan

## PRAYER OF DEDICATION

Holy One, accept these gifts that we return to you with thanksgiving. Increase these gifts Oh Lord, that they be used this Lenten Season, for the relief of the poor, the spreading of your word and the building of your kingdom here on earth. In Jesus Christ we pray, Amen.

## CLOSING HYMN

*Peace I Leave With You*

Gerard DeMan

**ANNOUNCEMENTS** ([Open for announcements from the congregation.](#))

## BENEDICTION / BLESSING / CLOSING PRAYER

Pastor Annie

As you take the first steps on this Lentin Journey, know that you do not walk alone. The Lord is always with us. Always has been and always will be. May you pray in full connection to the One who loves us the most. Walk in his love and shine forth the light to others. In Jesus Name, Go in Peace. AMEN.

## POSTLUDE

*Jesus Loves Me!*

Charles Callahan



## **Joys & Concerns**

**Sunday, February 14, 2021**

### **Prayer Concerns-**

- Ellen Dammers advised that Wendy Wesp, who grew up in our church, passed away.
- Pastor Annie asked for prayers for the MacPhail family as Carol MacPhail passed away after a long illness.
- Carol Anderson asked for continued prayers for Martin's family as it has been 3 months since he passed away. Also, prayers for the MacPhails.
- Suzanne Reynolds asked for prayers on this Valentine's Day for those who may not have a Valentine especially their daughter Julianne who broke up with her longtime boyfriend.
- Carol Marshall asked for continued prayers for Alex Partyka and her sister Barbara who both have medical issues.
- Elizabeth Jimenez asked for continued prayers for her 2 clients who are still ill.
- Please pray for the Pifer family. Maryellen Pifer Sobers' brother, Lewis Pifer Jr., passed away on Monday, February 15 in Conway, South Carolina.

## **Thanksgiving**

- Carol Anderson shared the joy of surviving her first Family Promise Meal and thanked Derek Correa for taking the lead and seeing it all come together. Thanks also to Meredith Mullane for posting pictures of all the food prepared and ready to bring to Hackensack.
- Pastor Annie thanked Meredith Mullane for her expertise in getting us onto social media.
- Alycia Desmond wishes everyone a Happy Valentine's Day to all.
- Pastor Annie was delighted to receive a homemade Valentine's card from Perri and Violet Desmond.
- Ellen Dammers also received cards from Perri and Violet and was finally able to hug her granddaughters.
- Merry Burke also was grateful to receive a Valentine card from Perri and Violet.
- Bernard Johnson thanks God for the blessings of another year of life and was glad to celebrate with his family and he feels the love and warmth from our Congregation as well.
- Pastor Annie states the beauty of ZOOM allows us to worship all over the world.
- Elizabeth Jimenez was celebrating Valentine's Day with her 97 year old great aunt in Florida.

May we remember and pray for the health and concerns of:

Ellen Dammers

Ruth Simpson

Nora Esposito

Chuck & Eileen Eastham

Catherine (Cat) Desmond

The DiNapoli Family

Carin Fougner

**God, in your mercy, hear our prayers.**



**ANNUAL MEETING NOTICE**

**SUNDAY, FEBRUARY 28, 2021**

**VIA ZOOM**

**IMMEDIATELY FOLLOWING THE WORSHIP SERVICE**