



THIRD SUNDAY AFTER EPIPHANY

"BOLD" indicates congregational response.



Follow Me

We follow the Light of Christ, even through the shadows.

Prelude "Here I Am, Lord" Ashley Clasen
by Ron Hamilton/arr. Susan White

Invitation to Worship Rev. Elizabeth Horton

Opening Prayer Cathy Browder

Holy One, hold us gently in this time of turmoil and uncertainty. Remind us of the everyday blessings of sunshine and rain, wind and clouds. Your presence is as sure as the ground beneath us. Help us to be rooted in You and to reach toward the sun, to stretch beyond what is in front of us to know Your warmth and grace are within us. May Your spirit move in us, reminding us that we are not alone, and we were created to be with one another. Grant us assurance in this season. Amen.

Hymn "Lord of the Dance" Ellen Peterson

Jonah 3: 1-10 From the Message Joe Browder

3 Next, God spoke to Jonah a second time: "Up on your feet and on your way to the big city of Nineveh! Preach to them. They're in a bad way and I can't ignore it any longer."

This time Jonah started off straight for Nineveh, obeying God's orders to the letter.

Nineveh was a big city, very big—it took three days to walk across it. Jonah entered the city, went one day's walk and preached, "In forty days Nineveh will be smashed."

The people of Nineveh listened, and trusted God. They proclaimed a citywide fast and dressed in burlap to show their repentance. Everyone did it—rich and poor, famous and obscure, leaders and followers.

When the message reached the king of Nineveh, he got up off his throne, threw down his royal robes, dressed in burlap, and sat down in the dirt. Then he issued a public proclamation throughout Nineveh, authorized by him and his leaders: "Not one drop of

water, not one bite of food for man, woman, or animal, including your herds and flocks! Dress them all, both people and animals, in burlap, and send up a cry for help to God. Everyone must turn around, turn back from an evil life and the violent ways that stain their hands. Who knows? Maybe God will turn around and change his mind about us, quit being angry with us and let us live!"

God saw what they had done, that they had turned away from their evil lives. He *did* change his mind about them. What he said he would do to them he didn't do.

Prayer of Confession

Dave Fulton

Almighty God, as the church, we are part of your redeeming work in history. Yet we know that often we seek our own success and salvation.

We fear to follow Christ in the commitment to a vision of wholeness for the world and all its peoples.

God...you call us...and sometimes...we duck under the table...hoping you didn't notice us when you walked into the room.

You call us...and sometimes...we grab a stapler and a stack of papers...trying to look too busy to be bothered at the moment.

You call us...and sometimes we just say, "No!"

We know that we aren't expected to do everything...but we often forget that you call us to be ourselves in the places where our very self is what is most needed.

So, forgive us we pray, and give us the grace to say "Yes" to your call...even as we offer our silent confessions...

Assurance of Pardon

Rev. Horton

Now, after we confess, we hear the good news proclaimed: God hears our words, God sees our changed hearts, God's steadfast love is poured out upon us! We will trust in God, in whom our salvation rests. Thanks be to God, we are forgiven! Amen.

Prayers of the People

You are invited to share your prayer concerns in the comments.

The 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

Scripture Reading

Mark 1:14-20

Now after John was arrested, Jesus came to Galilee, proclaiming the good news of God, and saying, 'The time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God has come near; repent, and believe in the good news.'

As Jesus passed along the Sea of Galilee, he saw Simon and his brother Andrew casting a net into the lake—for they were fishermen. And Jesus said to them, 'Follow me and I will make you fish for people.' And immediately they left their nets and followed him. As he went a little farther, he saw James son of Zebedee and his brother John, who were in their boat mending the nets. Immediately he called them; and they left their father Zebedee in the boat with the hired men and followed him.

Sermon

"Follow Me"

Hymn

"Softly and Tenderly"

Ellen Peterson &
Carolyn Robbins

Benediction

Rev. Horton

Postlude

"How Deep the Father's Love for Us"
By Stuart Townsend/arr. Mark Hayes

Ashley Clasen

Join our **Fellowship & Prayer Concerns** after worship from 12-12:30PM and catch up with your church friends! **Join Zoom Meeting [HERE](#) (Meeting ID: 207 685 007 Passcode: 3n7IX8 Dial in: +1 301 715 8592)**

CHURCH ALTARSCAPES

Special thanks go to Rev. June Grubb and Lynn Brown for sharing their talents through our sanctuary Altarscapes. The themes vary and coordinate with the church seasons and special occasions. Below is a picture of the current display of their creativity.



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FIRST REFORMED UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST

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Ministers: The Congregation

Pastor: Rev. Elizabeth Horton (elizabeth@frucc.org, cell/text #336-972-8895)

Minister of Pastoral Care: Rev. June Grubb (jgrubb3@triad.rr.com #336-248-5668)

Choir Director: Ellen Peterson (ellenpeterson@gmail.com) Pianist: Ashley Clasen

Admin. Asst.: Carolyn Robbins (carolyn@frucc.org) Financial Secretary: Paula Lopp (paula@frucc.org)

JANUARY CELEBRATIONS

BIRTHDAYS

24th ...Lucas Bustamante-Cruz

...Denise Durham

25th ...Eddie Yates

30th ...Lauren Gregg

OUR CHURCH AT PRAYER

OUR MEMBERS:

*Alisa Johnson (recovering from knee surgery at home), Merle and Jerry Hodges, Susan Odom (at home), Ellen Bouchard, Kelly Greathouse, Lisa Price, Deanna Michael

OUR MEMBERS AT HOME AND IN CARE FACILITIES:

Peggy Bates, Janelle Bunn, Marzell Crotts, Ruth Essick, Pattie Everhart, Vogen Everhart, Lib & Jimbo Hinkle, Marguerite Leonard, Bob Shaak, Lib Sink, Katherine Skipper, Carolyn Spivey, Adena Wall

OUR FRIENDS:

The Family of Mary Berrier, The family of Jack Frank, Patricia Roberts (Stacey Potts' mother), Bob Sheehan (Eddie Yates' brother-in-law), Clarke Ward (father of Jay & Cathy Whitley's son-in-law), Miriam Logan (Sarah Potts' grandmother), Wendi Greene (Bill Robbins' sister), Ashley Thomason Hutcheson (Ron & Heidi Hutcheson's daughter-in-law), Barbara Miller (Eddie Yates' mother), Angie Bouchard (Lee and Ellen Bouchard's youngest daughter)

**Indicates newly added. Names will remain on the list for 4 weeks. To add a name to the prayer list please call the church office (336-248-2617).*

CALENDAR

SUNDAY, January 24: Third Sunday after Epiphany

8:00AM Clothes Closet Sorting and Set-up

9:45AM Adult Sunday School: FOLLOW ME

[Mark 1:14-20](#)

"Follow Me" (Eulene Shepherd, Facilitator)

10:45AM Worship online via YouTube [HERE](#) or Facebook [HERE](#).

12:00PM Fellowship & Prayer Concerns

Zoom Meeting [HERE](#) (Meeting ID: 207 685 007 Passcode: 3n7IX8 Dial in: +1 301 715 8592)

1-2:30PM Consistory Retreat via Zoom

MONDAY, January 25:

DEADLINE FOR FEBRUARY NEWSLETTER CONTRIBUTIONS

TUESDAY, January 26:

12:00PM 2CFAR meeting via ZOOM: Voices of the 2CFar People of Color

Join Zoom Meeting [HERE](#). (Meeting ID: 873 4191 8684 Passcode: 222495)

7:00PM Adult Book Study Group

"Who Will Be A Witness? Integrating Activism for God's Justice" by Drew G. I. Hart

Join the meeting [HERE](#). (Meeting ID: 846 9163 5471 Passcode: 524570)

WEDNESDAY, January 26:

5:00PM Worship Meeting via Zoom

SUNDAY, January 31: Fourth Sunday after Epiphany

9:45AM Adult Sunday School: FOLLOW ME

Fourth Sunday after the Epiphany

[Mark 1:21-28](#)

"What Have You to Do with Us?" (Eddie Yates, Facilitator)

10:45AM Worship online via YouTube [HERE](#) or Facebook [HERE](#).

12:00PM Fellowship & Prayer Concerns

Zoom Meeting [HERE](#) (Meeting ID: 207 685 007 Passcode: 3n7IX8 Dial in: +1 301 715 8592)

UPCOMING EVENTS

SATURDAY, February 6:

10:00AM-2:00PM

Girl Scouts Drive-Through Cookie Booth **IN THE CHURCH PARKING LOT**

FIRST REFORMED UCC ANNOUNCEMENTS

LOOKING TOWARD SUNDAY: A MESSAGE FROM REV. HORTON

Dear Friends,

Like much of the nation, I sat in utter amazement of the US Youth Poet Laureate, Amanda Gorman, as she read her poem, *The Hill We Climb* - the depth of her words, the strength of her presence, the wisdom at (what I think of as) such a young age!

I was also struck by the number of Biblical images painted throughout her words.

The poem starts....

*When day comes we ask ourselves,
where can we find light in this never-ending shade?
The loss we carry,
a sea we must wade.
We've braved the belly of the beast,
We've learned that quiet isn't always peace...*

Do you see Jonah? Her poem reminds us that our faith shapes the very essence of who we are and our vision for this world. The words we hear, speak, and read in the Scripture become written upon our hearts.

This Sunday in our series, **Follow Me**, we will read from the book of Jonah, as he returns from the "belly of the beast." We also read **Mark 1:14-20**, as Jesus calls the disciples by the Sea of Galilee. May we never forget who it is that we Follow, the One who leads us into the places where love, justice, and peace are needed the most.

Seeking to Follow the Light with you,
Elizabeth

***The Hill We Climb*, by Amanda Gorman, in its entirety:**

*When day comes we ask ourselves,
where can we find light in this never-ending shade?
The loss we carry,
a sea we must wade.
We've braved the belly of the beast,
We've learned that quiet isn't always peace,
and the norms and notions
of what just is
isn't always just-ice.
And yet the dawn is ours
before we knew it.
Somehow we do it.
Somehow we've weathered and witnessed
a nation that isn't broken,
but simply unfinished.
We the successors of a country and a time
where a skinny Black girl
descended from slaves and raised by a single mother
can dream of becoming president
only to find herself reciting for one.
And yes, we are far from polished.
Far from pristine.
But that doesn't mean we are
striving to form a union that is perfect.
We are striving to forge a union with purpose,*

to compose a country committed to all cultures, colors, characters and
conditions of man.

And so, we lift our gazes not to what stands between us,
but what stands before us.

We close the divide because we know, to put our future first,
we must first put our differences aside.

We lay down our arms
so, we can reach out our arms
to one another.

We seek harm to none and harmony for all.

Let the globe, if nothing else, say this is true,
that even as we grieved, we grew,
that even as we hurt, we hoped,
that even as we tired, we tried,

that we'll forever be tied together, victorious.
Not because we will never again know defeat,
but because we will never again sow division.

Scripture tells us to envision
that everyone shall sit under their own vine and fig tree
and no one shall make them afraid.

If we're to live up to our own time,
then victory won't lie in the blade.
But in all the bridges we've made,
that is the promise to glade,
the hill we climb.

If only we dare.

It's because being American is more than a pride we inherit,
it's the past we step into
and how we repair it.

We've seen a force that would shatter our nation
rather than share it.

Would destroy our country if it meant delaying democracy.

And this effort very nearly succeeded.

But while democracy can be periodically delayed,
it can never be permanently defeated.

In this truth,

in this faith we trust.

For while we have our eyes on the future,
history has its eyes on us.

This is the era of just redemption
we feared at its inception.

We did not feel prepared to be the heirs
of such a terrifying hour
but within it we found the power
to author a new chapter.

To offer hope and laughter to ourselves.

So, while once we asked,

how could we possibly prevail over catastrophe?

Now we assert,

How could catastrophe possibly prevail over us?

We will not march back to what was,
but move to what shall be.

A country that is bruised but whole,
benevolent but bold,
fierce and free.

We will not be turned around
or interrupted by intimidation,
because we know our inaction and inertia

will be the inheritance of the next generation.
Our blunders become their burdens.
But one thing is certain,
If we merge mercy with might,
and might with right,
then love becomes our legacy,
and change our children's birthright.
So, let us leave behind a country
better than the one we were left with.
Every breath from my bronze-pounded chest,
we will raise this wounded world into a wondrous one.
We will rise from the gold-limbed hills of the west.
We will rise from the windswept northeast,
where our forefathers first realized revolution.
We will rise from the lake-rimmed cities of the midwestern states.
We will rise from the sunbaked south.
We will rebuild, reconcile and recover.
And every known nook of our nation and
every corner called our country,
our people diverse and beautiful will emerge,
battered and beautiful.
When day comes we step out of the shade,
afame and unafraid,
the new dawn blooms as we free it.
For there is always light,
if only we're brave enough to see it.
If only we're brave enough to be it.

CLOTHES CLOSET SORTING & SET UP

Plans for sorting and set-up of the church's Clothes Closet have changed to this coming Sunday, January 17th at 8:00AM Jerry Lovell and Robert Danze will Sort and Set up the FRUCC Clothes Closet. To keep within the "10 and under Covid guidelines", **please contact Jerry Lovell (336-309-9302)** if you would like to come and help.

2CFAR - CRUCIAL CONVERSATIONS ON FAITH AND RACE MEETINGS

You are invited at **noon each Tuesday through February beginning January 26** as we listen to the **Voices of the 2CFar People of Color**. During the Zoom call, folks who are part of our Crucial Conversations on Faith and Race will share their experiences and stories around race. The mission of these listening sessions is to learn about the past and the present so that we may work toward a future of reconciliation in Lexington and Davidson County.

Time: Tuesdays @ noon

Link to Zoom Meeting:

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/87341918684?pwd=N1pCSno2Tlp4bDdOREtoVGIsLzdGUT09>

Meeting ID: 873 4191 8684 Passcode: 222495

DRIVE THROUGH GIRL SCOUT COOKIE BOOTH

Our Girl Scouts will hold another Drive-Through Cookie Booth at the church on **Saturday, February 6, from 11:00AM-2:00PM IN THE CHURCH PARKING LOT**. If you want to pre-order and pay in advance to make your pickup smooth and fast, you can pre-order here: <http://bit.ly/lexingtoncookiebooth>. The troop is saving for its trip to Belize in June 2022.

VERNON GASTON (V.G.) PRICE MEMORIAL SCHOLARSHIP

Vernon Price was a man with accomplishments in many fields of endeavor, yet the things most dear to him were very simple – his family, his faith, his students and his town. For this reason, his family has requested that a scholarship be established in his name and that the recipients of the award encompass the ideals held most dear by V.G.

Criteria:

The scholarship is open to any member of First Reformed United Church of Christ, or student from the Lexington City or Davidson County School Systems. **The application and attachments are due MARCH 31ST.** The recipient will be chosen by May 1st of his/her senior year in high school. Presentation will be made at the student's Senior Award's Day. The recipient must maintain at least a 2.5 GPA throughout his/her junior and senior years in high school, demonstrate good citizenship, and be an active member of a church.

The selection committee will consist of three members of the Price/Bowie family, the minister, and a member of the Board of Trustees from First Reformed United Church of Christ.

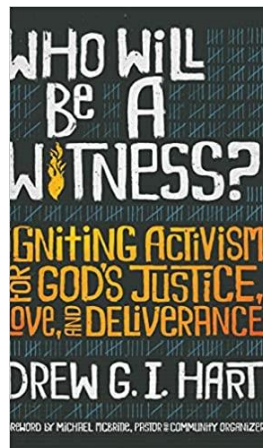
To obtain an application, you may stop by the church office to pick up a hard copy, email the church office for a copy to be emailed to you, look for a copy in the February 2021 copy of the church newsletter, or click [HERE](#) for a copy.

INVITATION TO TAKE PART IN WORSHIP SERVICES

We invite you to take part in our worship service by reading Scripture or saying a prayer. We will provide the Scripture text and easy instructions for recording yourself with your device at home. If you would like to read in worship service, please click on this Sign-Up Genius link to sign up for a Sunday: [Worship Reader](#).

ADULT BOOK STUDY

The Adult Book Study group is reading "Who Will Be A Witness? Integrating Activism for God's Justice" by Drew G. I. Hart. The goal of the book is to help identify how Christendom, white supremacy and religious nationalism has affected the witness of the church. The study began last week, but all are still welcome to join on Tuesdays at 7:00PM. Join via Zoom [HERE](#). (Meeting ID: 846 9163 5471 Passcode: 524570)



ADULT SUNDAY SCHOOL & WORSHIP SERIES: Follow Me

Our Worship Series and Adult Sunday School continues coordinate, using the same scripture for the series, **Follow Me**. This series helps us renew our commitment on the path of discipleship in this new year. We will challenge ourselves to grow deeper in faith and open up to new possibilities in this new year. Let us embrace the call to follow. You may join the meeting [HERE](#).
(Meeting ID: 890 2652 8333 Passcode: 634119)

LECTIONARY READINGS AND THEMES

January 24th: Third Sunday after the Epiphany

[Mark 1:14-20](#)

"Follow Me" (Eulene Shepherd, Facilitator)

January 31st: Fourth Sunday after the Epiphany

[Mark 1:21-28](#)

"What Have You to Do with Us?" (Eddie Yates, Facilitator)

February 7th: Fifth Sunday after the Epiphany

[Mark 1:29-39](#)

"She Began to Serve" (Rev. June Grubb, Facilitator)

February 14th: Transformation Sunday

[Mark 9:2-29](#)

"But Only Jesus" (Rev. Mike Hooper, Facilitator)

IN CASE YOU MISSED IT!

If you happen to miss a week of our worship services and other events that are shared on our Facebook and YouTube pages, they will remain on [Facebook](#) and [YouTube](#)'s history, so you may go back to watch any time.