

Macon United Methodist Church
190 W Bell Street, Macon, IL 62544; (217) 764-5133
Pastor Terry McDorman; 630-390-0414; accesstogodshouse@gmail.com
March 10, 2024 **Fourth Sunday in Lent**

THOUGHT FOR THE DAY

“God never promises to remove us from our struggles. He does promise, however, to change the way we look at them.” Max Lucado

RINGING OF THE CHURCH BELL:

PRELUDE

GATHERING Words of welcome and announcements

***SHARING THE PEACE OF CHRIST**



***CALL TO WORSHIP (responsive)**

Heavenly Father, when we feel that we have lost direction as a people, or even as a person, help us remember your presence in our wilderness journeys.

The day of the Lord is coming: **He abounds in steadfast love.**

Great Deliverer, your steadfast love and wonderful works have spared us of troubles known and unknown, for you are in love with us.

The day of the Lord is coming: **He abounds in steadfast love.**

Holy Spirit, help us remember the great work that Christ accomplished for us, which no other person could perform. Help us confess with gladness, “by grace we have been saved.”

The day of the Lord is coming: **He abounds in steadfast love.**

Lord Jesus Christ, gift of mercy from God the Father, you love us even when we are most unlovable, lost, and afraid. Thank you for your grace.

The day of the Lord is coming: **He abounds in steadfast love.**

Lord Jesus Christ, lifted up on the cross like the serpent in the wilderness, lift up our eyes to see you as the Lord and Savior, loving God's whole world.

The day of the Lord is coming: **He abounds in steadfast love.**

***OPENING HYMN** **“For the Healing of the Nations”** **(UMH # 428)**

1. For the healing of the nations, Lord, we pray with one accord;
for a just and equal sharing of the things that earth affords.
To a life of love in action help us rise and pledge our word.

2. Lead your people into freedom, from despair your world release,
that, redeemed from war and hatred, all may come and go in peace.
Show us how, through care and goodness, fear will die and hope increase.

3. All that kills abundant living, let it from the earth be banned:
pride of status, race or schooling, dogmas that obscure your plan.
In our common quest for justice may we hallow life's brief span.

4. You, Creator-God, have written your great name on humankind;
for our growing in your likeness, bring the life of Christ to mind;
that by our response and service earth its destiny may find.

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OPENING PRAYER (unison)

Gracious God, so often we have missed your presence because we are looking for you clothed in a particular way. Let this time of worship be an encounter with you that will enable us to behold you in all the people we meet and all the situations we greet. You are from everlasting to everlasting, so we are confident that you are here; help us to be aware of your holy presence. O Lord, enrich this act of worship with the power of the Holy Spirit, we pray in Jesus' name. Amen.

PRAYERS OF THE PEOPLE

SILENT PRAYER

THE LORD'S PRAYER

FIRST SCRIPTURE READING

Ephesians 2:1-10 (CEB)

At one time you were like a dead person because of the things you did wrong and your offenses against God. You used to live like people of this world. You followed the rule of a destructive spiritual power. This is the spirit of disobedience to God's will that is now at work in persons whose lives are characterized by disobedience. At one time you were like those persons. All of you used to do whatever felt good and whatever you thought you wanted so that you were children headed for punishment just like everyone else.

However, God is rich in mercy. He brought us to life with Christ while we were dead as a result of those things that we did wrong. He did this because of the great love that he has for us. You are saved by God's grace! And God raised us up and seated us in the heavens with Christ Jesus. God did this to show future generations the greatness of his grace by the goodness that God has shown us in Christ Jesus.

You are saved by God's grace because of your faith. This salvation is God's gift. It's not something you possessed. It's not something you did that you can be proud of. Instead, we are God's accomplishment, created in Christ Jesus to do good things. God planned for these good things to be the way that we live our lives.

PRAYER OF CONFESSION (unison)

The words we speak all too often do not show you in our lives, God of our pilgrimage. We spend so much time boasting to others, they imagine we have no need for you. We grumble impatiently when you don't respond immediately to our requests, but are slow to sing your praises. We mutter under our breath about the behavior of those around us, when we could be asking them if there is some way we could serve them.

It is on our journey to the cross and the tomb that you fill us with the riches of your mercy, Steadfast Love! You do so, not because of anything we have done, but because of the compassion which flows from your heart wounded by our failings. As we open our lives to receive your forgiveness, may we turn to the Light which brings us life, following Jesus Christ, our Lord and Savior, every step of the way.

SECOND SCRIPTURE READING

John 3:14-21(CEB)

Just as Moses lifted up the snake in the wilderness, so must the Human One be lifted up so that everyone who believes in him will have eternal life. God so loved the world that he gave his only Son, so that everyone who believes in him won't perish but will have eternal life. God didn't send his Son into the world to judge the world, but that the world might be saved through him. Whoever believes in him isn't judged; whoever doesn't believe in him is already judged, because they don't believe in the name of God's only Son.

"This is the basis for judgment: The light came into the world, and people loved darkness more than the light, for their actions are evil. All who do wicked things hate the light and don't come to the light for fear that their actions will be exposed to the light. Whoever does the truth comes to the light so that it can be seen that their actions were done in God."

A MOMENT WITH OUR CHILDREN

MESSAGE

"Totally Awesome Light!"

Rev. Terry McDorman

HYMN

“I Want to Walk as a Child of the Light”

(UMH # 206)

1. I want to walk as a child of the light. I want to follow Jesus.
God sent the stars to give light to the world. The star of my life is Jesus.
In Him, there is no darkness at all. The night and the day are both alike.
The Lamb is the light of the city of God. Shine in my heart, Lord Jesus.
2. I want to see the brightness of God. I want to look at Jesus.
Clear sun of righteousness, shine on my path, and show me the way to the Father.
In Him, there is no darkness at all. The night and the day are both alike.
The Lamb is the light of the city of God. Shine in my heart, Lord Jesus.
3. I'm looking for the coming of Christ. I want to be with Jesus.
When we have run with patience the race, we shall know the joy of Jesus
In Him, there is no darkness at all. The night and the day are both alike.
The Lamb is the light of the city of God. Shine in my heart, Lord Jesus.

INVITATION TO SHARE

Let us take this time to give all that we can to all that we can.

PRESENTATION OF OUR TITHES AND OFFERINGS

***DOXOLOGY**

(UMH # 94)

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!

***PRAYER OF DEDICATION (unison)**

God of unwavering love, you have held nothing back in your love for us, not even your Son. How we marvel at that kind of love, and how we long to reflect a portion of that devotion back to you. As we dedicate our offerings to you, lead us away from our tendency to hold back and worry that there will not be enough. Help us to live as the people of love and abundance you have called us to be. In Christ, we pray. Amen.

MUSICAL REFLECTION

CLOSING PRAYER (unison)

Sweet and precious God, Almighty and awesome in glory, yet so near and so concerned about our hearts, thank you for knowing and loving us with an everlasting love. Time and time again, we have messed up and relived the oh-so-

common "if you get me out of this, I will never do it again." We have attempted to bargain a favor on a promissory note that we make void daily. But thank you God, that even though you know we are headed to sin again, you not only still love us unconditionally, but you offer us forgiveness, the opportunity to have a clean record, a "get out of jail free" card that bears the title: *new grace AND mercy every morning*.

So, allow us, Oh God, to not become complacent in our daily journey. Forgive us for not moving as fast as we should have in the past, and for not helping someone in need when we could have. You have given us the spirit of discernment, but please give us the wisdom to see beyond the transitory things of life and find you and your sustaining presence, that we may be a blessing to others. You know the silent cries in our hearts, we know that you have already met the need, now God tap into our hearts' true desires.

Touch families, friends, and most importantly our neighbors because when you are blessing our neighbors, we know you are in the neighborhood and you are headed to our house.

So, thank you, for being sovereign in our lives, giving us the power to speak over our own lives, the lives around us, and to love one another with the love of Christ. We will continue to give you glory, honor, and praise, believing that your grace is sufficient enough for us, and your love endures forever. It is in the matchless name of Jesus that we pray. Amen.

***CLOSING HYMN**

"We Walk By Faith"

(FWS #2196)

1. We walk by faith, and not by sight, no gracious words we hear from him who spoke as none e'er spoke, but we believe him near.
2. We may not touch his hands and side, nor follow where he trod; but in his promise we rejoice and cry, "My Lord and God!"
3. Help then, O Lord, our unbelief; and may our faith abound to call on you when you are near, and seek where you are found.
4. For you, O resurrected Lord, are found in means divine: beneath the water and the Word, beneath the bread and wine.
5. We walk by faith, and not by sight, no gracious words we hear from him who spoke as none e'er spoke, but we believe him near.

***BENEDICTION**

POSTLUDE

All are invited to sit and reflect during the Postlude

**Please rise as you are able*

Special thankyou to all those that assisted with worship today.

ATTENDANCE LAST WEEK: 57

ATTENDANCE GOAL: 70

Be certain to check the church website, <https://maconilumc.net/> for updated information about the church, events and news. Please use webmaster.maconumc@gmail.com to submit updates or additions to the church website.

LENTEN STUDY OPPORTUNITIES

Adult Sunday School: (Sunday mornings at 9:00am in Fellowship Hall) the class will be exploring “Jesus and the Outsiders and Outcasts” by Adam Hamilton. Starts February 18, 2024.

PASTRY WITH THE PASTOR

Held on Tuesday mornings from 9:30-10:30 starting February 20, 2024, and concluding on March 26, 2024. This group will explore "Seven Words, Listening to Christ from the Cross" by Susan Robb

CELEBRATION 165 SUNDAY, MARCH 24, 2024

Be certain to mark your calendars and spread the word, as it will be a special day indeed. Worship will be led by Bishop Frank Beard. It is also Palm Sunday and there will be a catered celebration meal and fellowship immediately following worship. Please plan on attending and bringing anyone you know that has been a part of this church through the years.

VOLUNTEERS NEEDED

Please contact Brad Roush to volunteer There are tasks big and small to choose from. Many hands are needed. to help with the 165th anniversary celebration. We need all hands-on deck to make it a rousing success.

165TH ANNIVERSARY SLIDE SHOW

If you have photos, newspaper clippings etc. that you would like to share for a slide presentation during the banquet, please send to Leo at leobilyeu@gmail.com.

OPPORTUNITIES FOR PRESENCE AND SERVICE

Sun Mar 17 7:00 am UMM Breakfast; Fellowship Hall

Sun Mar 17 9:00 am Sunday School

Sun. Mar 17 10:00 am Worship and Zoom Service

Sun Mar 24 9:00 am Sunday School

Sun. Mar 24 10:00 am Worship and Zoom Service—165th Anniversary Celebration

Sun. Mar 24 11:00 am 165th Anniversary Celebration Luncheon; Fellowship Hall

Wed Mar 27 6:30 pm Finance Committee Meeting, Pastor's office

Wed Mar 27 7:00 pm Administrative Council Meeting, Pastor's office

BIRTHDAYS AND ANNIVERSARIES

Mar 12 Rebekah Miller

Mar 16 Cheryl Laskowski

MISSIONS



Items requested by the food pantry are: Any kind of cereal and/or oatmeal, canned fruit, macaroni and cheese; toilet paper and shampoo. Cash donations are always welcome.

MACON SERVES AT THE PANTRY IN MARCH.

CHURCH BENCH

Great news! We have collected enough lids and our new bench, made from recycled caps, will be arriving soon. Thank you to everyone that has made this gift to the community possible.