

Macon United Methodist Church
190 W Bell Street, Macon, IL 62544; (217) 764-5133
Pastor Terry McDorman; 630-390-0414; accesstogodshouse@gmail.com
February 23, 2025 **Seventh Sunday after Epiphany**

THOUGHT FOR THE DAY

"I believed that there was a God because I was told it by my grandmother and later by other adults. But when I found that I knew not only that there was God but that I was a child of God, when I understood that, when I comprehended that, more than that, when I internalized that, ingested that, I became courageous." Maya Angelou

RINGING OF THE CHURCH BELL

calling all that hear to experience knowing Christ

PRELUDE

GATHERING **Words of welcome and announcements**

***SHARING THE PEACE OF CHRIST**

***CALL TO WORSHIP (responsively)**

Jesus teaches us, "Do to others as you would have them do to you." But who are the others?

Our enemies and friends, family and strangers.

Jesus teaches us, "Be merciful as your Father is merciful." But what is mercy?

To act with compassion, to help without expecting anything in return.

Jesus teaches us, "Forgive, and you will be forgiven." But how do we forgive?

By recognizing enemies, friends, family, strangers, and ourselves as people in need of compassion.

Let us worship God, who loves us and empowers us to love one another with mercy and compassion.

Come, let us worship! Thanks be to God! Amen.

***OPENING HYMN** *"Where Charity and Love Prevail"* **(UMH # 549)**

OPENING PRAYER (unison)

Holy Jesus, you call us into a life that others have told us is easy, but it is not. You challenge us to forgive, to love our enemies, to bless those who curse us. We want the easy way, but you have given us the hard path. Grant us the patience and



endurance to journey with you, to allow ourselves at times to stumble, to live into the hard way so that we might fully experience your love, grace, and peace in this world, by becoming a people full of love and grace and forgiving others. In Your name, we pray. Amen.

COMMUNITY PRAYERS

Let us lift our prayers in thoughts of praise.

SILENT PRAYER

Let us share our doubts with God.

THE LORD’S PRAYER (all)

FIRST SCRIPTURE READING

Psalm 37:1-11 (CEB)

Don’t get upset over evildoers; don’t be jealous of those who do wrong, because they will fade fast, like grass; they will wither like green vegetables. Trust the LORD and do good; live in the land, and farm faithfulness. Enjoy the LORD, and he will give what your heart asks. Commit your way to the LORD! Trust him! He will act and will make your righteousness shine like the dawn, your justice like high noon. Be still before the LORD, and wait for him. Don’t get upset when someone gets ahead—someone who invents evil schemes.

Let go of anger and leave rage behind! Don’t get upset—it will only lead to evil. Because evildoers will be eliminated, but those who hope in the LORD—they will possess the land. In just a little while the wicked won’t exist! If you go looking around their place, they won’t be there. But the weak will inherit the land; they will enjoy a surplus of peace.



PRAYER OF CONFESSION (unison)

God, we are so conditioned to respond in kind. We are so worried that when the reckoning comes, we will find ourselves left with the short end of the stick. And not without reason. The powerful take and take and lie and lie and oppress and oppress, seemingly without consequence.

Teach us to love with skill. Teach us to love with precision. Teach us to love with abandon, trusting that when we step into the ocean of your abundant love, we will receive the blessings of your abundant life. Amen.

SECOND SCRIPTURE READING

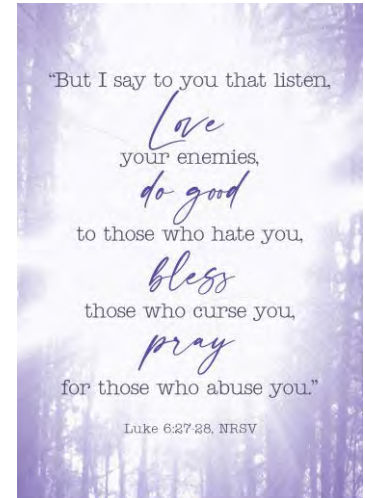
Luke 6:27-38 (CEB)

“But I say to you who are willing to hear: Love your enemies. Do good to those who hate you. Bless those who curse you. Pray for those who mistreat you. If someone

slaps you on the cheek, offer the other one as well. If someone takes your coat, don't withhold your shirt either. Give to everyone who asks and don't demand your things back from those who take them. Treat people in the same way that you want them to treat you.

"If you love those who love you, why should you be commended? Even sinners love those who love them. If you do good to those who do good to you, why should you be commended? Even sinners do that. If you lend to those from whom you expect repayment, why should you be commended? Even sinners lend to sinners expecting to be paid back in full. Instead, love your enemies, do good, and lend expecting nothing in return. If you do, you will have a great reward. You will be acting the way children of the Most High act, for he is kind to ungrateful and wicked people. Be compassionate just as your Father is compassionate.

"Don't judge, and you won't be judged. Don't condemn, and you won't be condemned. Forgive, and you will be forgiven. Give, and it will be given to you. A good portion—packed down, firmly shaken, and overflowing—will fall into your lap. The portion you give will determine the portion you receive in return."



MESSAGE

"Live the Hard Way or Be on the Bright Side"

Rev. Terry McDorman

HYMN

"The Gift of Love"

(UMH # 408)

INVITATION TO SHARE

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)**

Merciful God, who calls us to love beyond measure, we offer these gifts as a sign of our commitment to your teachings. Help us love our enemies, do good to those who hate us, and bless those who curse us. May our offerings bring healing and hope, reflecting your boundless grace in our community. In Jesus' name, we pray.

Amen.

MUSICAL REFLECTION

CLOSING PRAYER (unison)

Your Word is truth for victims of injustice, light for all who cannot see, love where there is hatred, freedom for the oppressed. Your Word is healing where there is sickness, comfort in times of sorrow, mercy where there is humility, hope for eternity. Amen.

***CLOSING HYMN** *“Now Thank We All Our God”* **(UMH # 102)**

BENEDICTION

POSTLUDE **(Please be seated and silent during the Postlude)**

ATTENDANCE LAST WEEK: 28

ATTENDANCE GOAL: 70

Our sincere appreciation to all those that contributed to this worship experience!

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.

CALIFORNIA WILDFIRE RELIEF

If you wish to contribute to the United Methodist Committee on Relief (UMCOR) efforts to assist those affected by the fires, you may simply write out a check to the church and put UMCORUSDR in the memo line. We will consolidate the funds and send them in.

DVD BIBLE STUDY

The Adult Sunday School will be starting a DVD Bible study on March 9. The study explores how the Old Testament Psalms predict Christ’s ministry.

DISTRIBUTION OF ASHES

Wednesday, March 5, 2025 at 6:30 pm in the sanctuary ash will be distributed.

OPPORTUNITIES FOR PRESENCE AND SERVICE

Sun. Mar.02 9:00 am Sunday School
Sun. Mar.02 10:00 am Worship and Zoom Service
Wed. Mar.05 Ash Wednesday (Beginning of Lent)
Sun. Mar.09 Daylight Saving Time Begins
Sun. Mar.09 9:00 am Sunday School
Sun. Mar.09 10:00 am Worship and Zoom Service
Sun. Mar.09 11:00 am Worship Committee Meeting
Sun. Mar.16 8:00 am Men's Breakfast; Fellowship Hall
Sun. Mar.16 9:00 am Sunday School
Sun. Mar.16 10:00 am Worship and Zoom Service
Sun. Mar.23 9:00 am Sunday School
Sun. Mar.23 10:00 am Worship and Zoom Service

BIRTHDAYS AND ANNIVERSARIES

Feb 25 Eric and Lori Nixon Feb 26 Cole Rappe`
Feb 28 Imy Bengé

MISSIONS



Items requested by the food pantry are: Items requested by the food pantry are: Any kind of cereal, cereal bars and/or oatmeal, canned fruit, canned soup, canned pasta, shampoo, bar soap and toothpaste. Cash donations are always welcome.