



March 7, 2021
Third Sunday in Lent

GATHERING MUSIC

Tantum ergo (Ancient chant; Charles Callahan, arr.)

Aaron Swestka

WORDS OF WELCOME

ANNOUNCEMENTS

CALL TO WORSHIP based on Psalm 19 (*responsively*)

One: The heavens themselves tell of the glory of God.

Many: Even though no words are spoken, God's wonder is expressed all around us.

One: The dawning of the day and the arrival of nightfall both declare God's presence and grace.

Many: And then there are a God's laws, God's decrees, God's precepts, and God's commandment;

One: Through these we are revived, made wise, enlightened, and can rejoice!

Many: These are more valuable to us than the finest gold or the sweetest honey;

One: Through them we are embraced and set free at once.

Many: In these we live and move and have our being.

All: Come, people of God, let us breathe deeply of the gifts in God's creation, and the blessings of God's designs, for in them we are released into new life. Let us worship.

HYMN

In Egypt Under Pharaoh

NCH #574

In Egypt under Pharaoh the Israelites were bound.

From plagues and tribulations no respite could be found.

Praise God who in surprising ways gave passage through the waves.

Our Liberator rescues, our Liberator saves.

From Africa to gang-planks, across a friendless sea,

Black captives harshly treated all struggled to be free.

Praise God who strengthened advocates with power that does and dares.

Our Liberator rescues, our Liberator cares.

Wherever hurting humans unjustly live in pain,

The hungry, homeless, helpless, cry out for growth and gain.

Praise God whose great redeeming love each servant freely gives.

Our Liberator rescues, our Liberator lives!

PRAYER OF CONFESSION (*in unison*)

Holy One, Liberator and Friend, we pray for unity this day. Help us to create it; to participate in its development; to get out of the way for it; to embrace the challenges it presents; to honor the histories of pain that have and will lead up to it; to give thanks for the efforts and energy that will be needed to form it; to understand the limitations and restriction required to continue it; to choose to return to it over and over; and to live with the humility of allowing it to be primary in our lives. We confess that we understand that we have a long way to go before your unity may be experienced, and we have been part of its failure in the past. Help us to return to the struggle again, with joy in knowing the glory it can embody. We pray in Christ's name. Amen.

ASSURANCE OF PARDON

MUSICAL OFFERING

Breathe on Me Breath of God (Robert Jackson)

Beth Donaldson, cello
Aaron Swestka, piano

SCRIPTURE READINGS

Exodus 20:1-17 (NRSV p. 58)
John 2:13-22 (p. 863)

Jan Truchan

A TIME WITH OUR CHILDREN

(We first sing a verse of *We Are Marching in the Light of God*, in English, then a verse in Zulu.)

SERMON

Unity, as We Live and Breathe

Beth Donaldson

HYMN

Let Us Break Bread Together (v. 3, 1, 2)

NCH #330

Let us praise God together on our knees.
Let us praise God together on our knees.
When I fall on my knees with my face to the rising sun,
O God have mercy on me.

Let us break bread together on our knees.
Let us break bread together on our knees.
When I fall on my knees with my face to the rising sun,
O God have mercy on me.

Let us drink wine together on our knees.
Let us drink wine together on our knees.
When I fall on my knees with my face to the rising sun,
O God have mercy on me.

COMMUNION

Pastoral Prayer and Lord's Prayer (with sins)
Sharing of the Bread and the Cup
Prayer of Dedication

AN INVITATION TO GIVE

(This month's special offering is the Ralph Reeder Food Shelf.)

CLOSING HYMN

We Shall Not Give Up the Fight

NCH #437

We shall not give up the fight, we have only started,
We have only started, we have only started.
We shall not give up the fight, we have only started,
We have only started, we have only started.

Together we'll have victory hand holding hand,
Hand holding hand, hand holding hand.
Together we'll have victory hand holding hand,
Hand holding hand, hand holding hand.

Never, ever put to flight, we're bound to win.
We're bound to win, we are bound to win.
Never, ever put to flight, we're bound to win.
We're bound to win, we are bound to win.

BENEDICTION

DEPARTING MUSIC

Every Time I Feel the Spirit (African-American spiritual; Michael Haskell, arr.)

The flowers on the altar today were given by **Fran Oberreit**.

Liturgy: Beth Donaldson

In Egypt Under Pharaoh

Dosia Carlson, 1989
Tune: AZMON, Carl G. Glaser, 1828

Let Us Break Bread Together

African American Spiritual
Harm. David Hurd, 1983

We Shall Not Give Up the Fight

South African Freedom Song

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THOUGHTS from our National Office

Third Sunday of Lent

March 7, 2021

Psalm 19

Beautiful Law

Amistad Sunday/UCC Women's Week, March 7 - 13

This week, we remember *La Amistad*. In 1839, the slave ship *La Amistad* traveled from one part of Cuba to another. The slaves on board were threatened by the cook, who said that he would kill and eat the captives. Led by Sengbe Pieh, a Mende man, the brave captives took control of the ship and demanded to be returned to Sierra Leone, their home country. Instead, they were taken further north, where the slavers hoped to encounter rescue in the form of an American ship. Another ship was indeed found, but those on board, with the help of anti-slavery activists including members of churches that preceded the United Church of Christ, were able to successfully sue for the freedom of all the people on board.

No wonder the Amistad, with the faith, courage and steadfastness shown by so many, has become a symbol of the UCC. It is fitting, too, that the Chapel at the United Church of Christ Church House at 700 Prospect Avenue in downtown Cleveland, Ohio is named for this ship and all that it represents.

Today, Amistad Chapel continues the legacy of the ship by being a place of sanctuary for all who worship there.

It is a place of marvelous beauty, inviting visitors in with delightful sounds of splashing water and the welcome of a table where all are fed. It is a place of prayer and quiet reflection in the midst of a busy downtown, and a community that gathers for worship to feed the soul. It is a place that tells a story in each design element and furnishing, which was carefully planned to tell the story of the Amistad and the captives it carried, whose struggle for freedom – “a story of faith and courage at sea” – inspired our Congregationalist forebears to stand with them in the fight against slavery.

You can find out more about Amistad Chapel by visiting in person or online at:
<http://amistadchapel.org/home/>.