

LISBON UNITED METHODIST CHURCH

September 27, 2020 Kingdomtide
"At Home Worship"

Call to Worship

We stand before you, God, with ready arms reaching for you.

We bow before you, God, with humbled hearts seeking you.

We keep silence before you, God, with hearts open to hear you.

We kneel before you, God, with open souls lifted to greet you.

God, in your glory, you have graciously reached for us.

We worship this day, reaching for you.

Opening Prayer O God of all power and majesty, the world is full of your wonders and your grace. Draw near to us, we pray, and grant us the clearness of heart and mind to worship you today and the strength of body and spirit to serve you in the week to come. In faithfulness to the covenant we share with you, we pray and worship. Amen.

Scripture Reading "Why do you test the Lord?"
Read Exodus 17.1-7

Prayer of Confession Transcendent God, there is so much of life we simply do not know. In our arrogance, we utter what we do not understand. Rescue us, O Lord, from our afflictions. Restore us, O God, from our wounds. Have mercy on us, Son of David, Son of God, and save us by your unending intercession, we pray. Amen.

Time of Silent Confession *Our loving God invites us to share the confessions of our hearts that we may know the comfort and peace of forgiveness.*

Words of Assurance God offers us these words of assurance: "I will never leave you or forsake you." God is faithful, even when we are not. Thanks be to God.

Scripture Reading "...every tongue should confess that Jesus is Lord."
Read Philippians 2.1-13

Remembering our Joys and Concerns in Prayer *We come to worship with many concerns upon our hearts but also joys in our lives. You are invited to share them with God in this time of silence.*

Prayer God of Light, be our vision, we pray to you. Help us see the world through your eyes – eyes that see the world as it can be, even in times of deepest despair; eyes that perceive your light, even in the darkest valleys; and eyes that observe your grace and mercy, even amidst suffering and death. Help us to reflect your glory and not our own. We are grateful that you hear the joys and concerns of all those who call upon your holy name; hear us now as we pray as Christ our Savior has taught us, saying.....

The Lord's Prayer

Scripture Reading "...in the way of righteousness"
Read Matthew 21.23-32

Meditation It's not often, I would guess, that any of us open a book in the middle and begin reading. To do so would cause us to miss the setting that is so important to understanding what is being read. That said, our gospel reading for this week needs to be set into context. Previous to verse 23, which is where our reading begins in Chapter 21, Jesus entered the city of Jerusalem – the celebration we know as Palm Sunday – on a lowly donkey rather than as a strong military leader, as the Roman authorities expected. In addition, instead of honoring the traditions that had gone on for decades, he turned over the tables of the money-

changers outside the temple in a display of anger that shocked the people. So, it's safe to say that Jesus didn't get off to a great start. In fact when he entered the temple, the gospel tells us, the chief priests and the elders of the people came to him as he was teaching, and said, "By what authority are you doing these things, and who gave you this authority?" No doubt they were already feeling threatened by this new, dynamic teacher whom they certainly hadn't invited into their midst. Being wise, Jesus asked them a question in turn, wanting to know about the authority of John the Baptist to offer baptism; totally thrown by his question, the chief priests and elders said lamely, "We do not know." Wrong answer!

What Jesus was trying to do in this conversation with those who considered themselves the most learned, faithful individuals around was get them to "think outside the box," as we hear so often. Jesus wanted them to move beyond their assumptions and conjecture to consider new possibilities that he knew would deepen their faith and shed further light onto their faith journeys. Simply put, Jesus wanted the chief priests and elders to change their minds! He wanted them to reconsider what they thought to be true – in their eyes, of course – and to begin to believe that God was working for the repentance and renewal of the world. Paul's words to the Philippians apply not only to these learned ones but to us as well: "Do nothing from selfish ambition or conceit, but in humility regard others as better than yourselves. Let each of you look not to your own interests, but to the interests of others." In other words, don't hold onto a particular belief without considering other possibilities, without considering that someone else might have more knowledge or understanding or even authority than you. So, as we read this Scripture story, might we reflect on what is it that God may want you to change your mind about?

Words of Benediction As you have been blessed by God, go forth to be a blessing to others. May the One who has strengthened you grant you the power to do all that love requires. Go forth in peace as faithful disciples of Jesus Christ.



Lisbon United Methodist Church
welcomes, nurtures, and serves
all people
with the love of Christ.