

LISBON UNITED METHODIST CHURCH
January 17, 2021 Second Sunday after the Epiphany
“At Home Worship”

Call to Worship

God's steadfast love extends to the heavens.

God's faithfulness reaches to the clouds.

God's righteousness is as strong as the mountains.

God's judgments are as deep as the sea.

In God's light, we see light.

God's steadfast love surrounds us as we worship.

Opening Prayer Spirit of God, your name is revered from mountaintop to the sea; your glory is praised in the east and in the west, in the north and in the south. As we delight in you, O God, delight in us once again, we pray, so that the joy of your salvation may spill over into our lives and make us one with you and with one another. Guide our hearts and our minds into the fullness of your grace, that we may truly be your faithful people. Amen.

Scripture Reading *“I will give thanks to the Lord with my whole heart.”* Read Psalm 111

Prayer of Confession Gracious God, the gifts of your Spirit give us everything we need to build up your kingdom. Yet, we have not always recognized or valued your gifts. We have acted as if they were ours to use for our own purposes. Forgive our failure of vision and our hardness of heart. May the One who turned water into wine turn our hearts of stone into hearts of love and appreciation that we may do your will. Amen.

Time of Silent Confession *Our loving God invites us to share the confessions of our hearts.*

Words of Assurance God's love is big enough to gather the fragments of our broken lives and transform them into abundance. In the name of Christ Jesus, we are forgiven. In the love of God, we are made whole. Thanks be to God.

Scripture Reading *“Now there are varieties of gifts, but the same Spirit.”* Read 1 Corinthians 12.1-11

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.*

Prayers of the People (insert) and **The Lord's Prayer**

Scripture Reading *“Jesus did this, the first of his signs, in Cana of Galilee, and revealed his glory; and his disciples believed in him.”*
Read John 2.1-11

Meditation As I look back over the calendar, it's hard to believe that this is our **forty-third** “at home” service of worship. The one-year mark will soon be upon us! I've been so grateful to use this format in order to keep us connected and in worship with one another. Certainly, it is not perfect; there's nothing like being together in our beautiful sanctuary to praise and worship our God. However, we all know the importance of being safe and healthy as the pandemic continues. And, we know it won't be forever so we continue to bide our time with patience and gratitude, knowing that we are together in God's love.

I began to look back at the services I had planned because, this week, it seems I am having a very hard time focusing in on the meditation, on what I have gleaned from the Scripture readings to share with you. I believe that's due in large part to the continued concern and anxiety produced by the devastation and disrespect in our nation's capitol last week. Just when we thought that dealing with a pandemic was more than enough,

now this. We simply can't deal with it on our own so how grateful we can be that we can turn these worries over to God and find even a small measure of peace.

Mary, the mother of Jesus, found herself at an anxious place. She was at a wedding in Cana and Jesus was there with her; perhaps it was the wedding of a family member. As the guests ate, drank, and were merry, the wine ran out. Knowing in her heart that her very own son could help the situation, she turned immediately to Jesus. And, just as she could have predicted, Jesus did, indeed, take care of the dilemma by turning six stone jars of water into jars that contained wine! This was, John's gospel tells us, the first of Jesus' signs with, we know, many more to come.

My faith, and I hope yours as well, tells me that this was truly a miracle. Jesus was using his gifts, as described by Paul in his letter to the Corinthians today, to remedy this situation, to help his mother and the other guests be less anxious, to help the merriment of this holy occasion continue. But what if those empty stone jars are symbolic of our lives at times? Perhaps those are times when we are very anxious, when the circumstances around us make us fearful, or when we can't fully appreciate God's presence with us. We recall the words of the psalmist for this week: *"the LORD is gracious and merciful. He provides food (perhaps spiritual food?) for those who fear him; he is ever mindful of his covenant."* Those are words I need to remember when it's hard to focus and the cares of the world make me anxious. That's when we all need to spend a few quiet moments sharing with God the prayers of our hearts and listen for God's assurance that we are not alone. These are challenging days for all of us. May we find peace in God's loving and comforting presence.

Words of Benediction We have different spiritual gifts, but the same Spirit. We have different ministries, but the same Lord. We go forth to use our gifts with joy, knowing that the One who is Spirit, Lord, and God, goes with us.



The Wedding at Cana

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