

LISBON UNITED METHODIST CHURCH
February 28, 2021 The Second Sunday of Lent
“At Home Worship”

Call to Worship

From generation to generation, God calls to us.

Christ names us as God’s own people.

In hope and faith, God walks before us.

Christ calls us to take up our cross and follow.

In covenant and love, God promises us grace.

Christ carries us forward into life anew.

Opening Prayer Faithful God, you call to us across the span of time. As we worship today, open our minds, we pray, that we may discern your call, even as you name us anew. Grant us hope against hope, that we may trust your guidance and walk in your ways. Raise us up to newness of life, that we may be children of your promise, people of your covenant, and disciples who follow wherever you lead. Amen.

Scripture Reading “*I am God Almighty; walk before me, and be blameless.*” Read Genesis 17.1-7, 15-16

Prayer of Confession *Based on Psalm 102*

Hear my prayer, O Lord; let my cry come to you.

Do not hide your face from me in the day of my distress.

The nations will fear the name of the Lord.

The Lord will regard the prayer of the destitute.

The Lord looked down from his holy height, from the heaven the Lord looked at the earth,

In our distress we cry to you; come, Lord, and set us free!

Time of Silent Confession In this season of reflection and repentance, let us bring to God the confessions of our hearts.

Words of Assurance As we come before God with contrite

hearts in this Lenten season, we remember that through Christ, our faith has been reckoned as righteousness. In Christ, we are forgiven and raised to new life. Thanks be to God who loves and forgives us.

Scripture Reading “*...he grew strong in his faith as he gave glory to God.*” Read Romans 4.13-25

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.*

A Lenten Prayer and The Lord’s Prayer

Scripture Reading “*For those who want to save their life will lose it, and those who lose their life for my sake, and for the sake of the gospel, will save it.*” Read Mark 8.31-38

Meditation We are all familiar with the marketing techniques of advertisers. Whatever it is they are selling, it’s always the biggest, brightest, and best. Companies don’t sell trucks by saying, “You’ll love this one. It’s a pretty good truck, sort of middle of the road.” We usually don’t buy products which are promoted with the words, “Well, two out of ten people liked it so it can’t be that bad.” We listen for the right words to be sold on something, to make a decision that it’s worth our investment of money or taste or use. “Lead with your strengths,” is what one of my seminary professors told our class often and, indeed, what else would any of us do if we are committed to being effective and making a difference with our gifts and abilities?

Simon Peter could have been a great marketing executive. He understood the importance of putting one’s best foot forward and saying the words that appeal to people. “He recognized,” one commentator writes, “that entertainment is always in style and sacrifice is always out.” Peter and the other disciples as well

understood that talking about “taking up crosses” is really no way to sell “Jesus,” if you will.

So, as we hear in the words of Mark’s gospel this week, when Jesus starts preaching about suffering, rejection, and death, the disciples wanted no part of it. They had already given up so much, leaving behind thriving fishing businesses as well as their homes, families, and friends. Up to this point, they must have been thinking that this decision was a good one. After all, here they were with this new teacher who was healing the sick, feeding the hungry, and telling them all about God’s love.

And then Jesus had to go and say, *“If any want to become my followers, let them deny themselves and take up their cross and follow me.”* What?? No wonder Peter took Jesus aside to rebuke him. That’s no way to get others to follow their cause; it would have been far easier to go back home to the lives they knew and the people they loved.

But the fact was, there had been (and continues to be) no one else who even comes close to being Jesus. So, even if he doesn’t promise us riches or fame or perfect health, just like the disciples, we feel compelled to follow him. We sacrifice those things however the situations turn out for us because Jesus promises us something better: a peace and joy in this life and the hope of life eternal in God’s Kingdom which is to come. It is also the knowledge for both our heads and our hearts that we are using the gifts that God bestows upon us “for such a time as this.” It means aligning ourselves with God against injustice and oppression, exploitation and violence. It means going the second mile for those we know and those we don’t and expecting absolutely nothing in return. That’s what Jesus means when he asks us to take up our crosses and follow him and that sounds like the biggest, brightest, and best we can be. Thanks be to God!

Words of Benediction Hope in the Lord as your Lenten journey continues for God is our refuge and our strength. Trust in our God in the week ahead for God is our companion and our protector. Blessed be the name of our God.



The Second Sunday of Lent

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