

MUMC At-Home Worship: February 21, 2021

Easter is coming! Today is the first Sunday of Lent, a forty-day (not counting Sundays) season of preparation intended to ready our hearts and spirits to again celebrate Christ's resurrection and faithful promise of eternal life. While traditionally observed as a "fast" by abstaining from something, whether a food or something else, the intent is to create a space in our lives where we can intentionally connect with God – which can happen by giving something up *or* by taking up something new. This year, I'm spending 40 days reading through the Gospel of Mark and invite the church to join me! Enclosed here (and available online!) is the reading guide if you'd like to join me. May we encounter the presence of God anew that when it comes, we might celebrate Easter with renewed joy! ~ *Pastor Dillon*

If available, place a candle in the center of your gathering space and light it with this prayer:

Lord, help us use this Lenten season to draw near to you. Strip away all that distracts us and open our eyes to see you anew. Refresh our weary hearts to beat with your love and compassion. In the name of Christ, we pray. Amen.

Hymn: *All Hail the Power of Jesus' Name*, United Methodist Hymnal #154 [watch/listen here](#)

Scripture Reading: Mark 1:1-11 The word of God for the people of God. **Thanks be to God.**

Reflect:

1. Mark jumps right into the start of Jesus' ministry, in stark contrast to the Christmas story that opens Luke and Matthew as also the long poetic introduction of John. How does it change your experience of the story to start here? What might it mean that Mark is giving only "the beginning of the good news" instead of the whole thing?
2. John the Baptist prepared the way for Jesus' coming by calling people to repentance and baptism in the Jordan. Why might repentance be an important precursor to the start of Jesus' ministry? What might it look like for us to prepare ourselves for Jesus' arrival on Easter and every day?
3. Just as Jesus is called God's Son in the first verse, the voice from heaven during Jesus' baptism declares the same thing but there's no indication that the crowds there have been let in on the secret – just us! The crowds will learn who Jesus is as the gospel unfolds and, even though we've been let in on the secret, we might have some to learn too. How might we ready ourselves to be surprised by the Jesus we encounter throughout this gospel?

Hymn: *Open My Eyes, That I May See*, United Methodist Hymnal #454 [watch/listen here](#)

Prayer Requests: Share prayer requests and have a moment of silent prayer

Lord's Prayer

Hymn: *Nothing Between*, United Methodist Hymnal #373 [watch/listen here](#)

Closing Prayer: Holy God, like John the Baptist we stand in awe of Jesus, God's beloved Son. Draw us into your presence this week that we might discover the fullness of who Christ is and what it means to follow him. Amen. (*Blow out the candle*)

All Hail the Power of Jesus' Name
United Methodist Hymnal #154

1. All hail the power of Jesus' name!
Let angels prostrate fall;
bring forth the royal diadem,
and crown him Lord of all.
Bring forth the royal diadem,
and crown him Lord of all.
2. Ye chosen seed of Israel's race,
ye ransomed from the fall,
hail him who saves you by his grace,
and crown him Lord of all.
Hail him who saves you by his grace,
and crown him Lord of all.
3. Sinners, whose love can ne'er forget
the wormwood and the gall,
go spread your trophies at his feet,
and crown him Lord of all.
Go spread your trophies at his feet,
and crown him Lord of all.
4. Let every kindred, every tribe
on this terrestrial ball,
to him all majesty ascribe,
and crown him Lord of all.
To him all majesty ascribe,
and crown him Lord of all.
5. Crown him, ye martyrs of your God,
who from his altar call;
extol the Stem of Jesse's Rod,
and crown him Lord of all.
Extol the Stem of Jesse's Rod,
and crown him Lord of all.
6. O that with yonder sacred throng
we at his feet may fall!
We'll join the everlasting song
and crown him Lord of all.
We'll join the everlasting song
and crown him Lord of all.

"All Hail the Power of Jesus' Name" words are by Edward Perronet, 1779; music is by Oliver Holden, 1792 and both are in the public domain.

Mark 1:1-11 (CEB)

The beginning of the good news about Jesus Christ, God's Son, happened just as it was written about in the prophecy of Isaiah:

*Look, I am sending my messenger before you.
He will prepare your way,
a voice shouting in the wilderness:
"Prepare the way for the Lord;
make his paths straight."*

John the Baptist was in the wilderness calling for people to be baptized to show that they were changing their hearts and lives and wanted God to forgive their sins. Everyone in Judea and all the people of Jerusalem went out to the Jordan River and were being baptized by John as they confessed their sins. John wore clothes made of camel's hair, with a leather belt around his waist. He ate locusts and wild honey. He announced, "One stronger than I am is coming after me. I'm not even worthy to bend over and loosen the strap of his sandals. I baptize you with water, but he will baptize you with the Holy Spirit."

About that time, Jesus came from Nazareth of Galilee, and John baptized him in the Jordan River. While he was coming up out of the water, Jesus saw heaven splitting open and the Spirit, like a dove, coming down on him. And there was a voice from heaven: "You are my Son, whom I dearly love; in you I find happiness."

Scripture quotations noted CEB are taken from the Common English Bible, copyright 2011. Used by permission. All rights reserved.

Open My Eyes, That I May See
United Methodist Hymnal #454

1. Open my eyes, that I may see
glimpses of truth thou hast for me;
place in my hands the wonderful key
that shall unclasp and set me free.

Refrain:

Silently now I wait for thee,
ready, my God, thy will to see.
Open my eyes, illumine me,
Spirit divine!

2. Open my ears, that I may hear
voices of truth thou sendest clear;
and while the wave notes fall on my ear,
everything false will disappear.

[*Refrain*]

3. Open my mouth, and let me bear
gladly the warm truth everywhere;
open my heart and let me prepare
love with thy children thus to share.

[*Refrain*]

*“Open My Eyes, That I May See” words and music are
by Clara H. Scott, 1895, and both are in the public
domain.*

Nothing Between
United Methodist Hymnal #373

1. Nothing between my soul and the Savior,
naught of this world's delusive dream;
I have renounced all sinful pleasure;
Jesus is mine, there's nothing between.

Refrain:

Nothing between my soul and the Savior,
so that his blessed face may be seen;
nothing preventing the least of his favor;
keep the way clear! let nothing between.

2. Nothing between, like worldly pleasure:
habits of life, though harmless they seem,
must not my heart from him ever sever;
he is my all, there's nothing between.

[*Refrain*]

3. Nothing between, like pride or station:
self or friends shall not intervene;
though it may cost me much tribulation,
I am resolved, there's nothing between.

[*Refrain*]

4. Nothing between, e'en many hard trials,
though the whole world against me convene;
watching with prayer and much self denial,
I'll triumph at last, there's nothing between!

[*Refrain*]

*“Nothing Between” words and music by Charles
Albert Tindley, 1906, and both are in the public
domain.*