

April 6 Worship

5th Week in Lent

Greeters- Chris Kenney, Nancy Rogers

Readers- Keri Battersby, Molly Battersby

Announcements/Joys-

Time Of Quiet Meditation- *“Having gifts that differ according to the grace given to us, let us use them: if prophecy, in proportion to our faith; if service, in our serving; he who teaches, in his teaching; he who exhorts, in his exhortation; he who contributes, in liberality; he who gives aid, with zeal; he who does acts of mercy, with cheerfulness.”* Romans 12:6-8

Opening Scripture- Isaiah 43:16-21(page 624)

Opening Chorus- 197- What A Friend We Have In Jesus(vs 1)

Responsive Call To Worship-

Leader: Though we could be resentful,

People: We come to give thanks.

Leader: Though we could be complaining,

People: We come to offer appreciation.

Leader: Though we could be upset about what we lack,

People: We come in gratitude for what we have.

Leader: We enter now into this time of worship

People: Carrying seed to sow, singing songs of joy, rejoicing together.

Hymn- 36- Joyful, Joyful, We Adore Thee

Unison Prayer- Giver of the most expensive gift of all, help us to learn from you. May we who are so adept at catering for our own wants, make ourselves more vulnerable to the needs of others. Let us live unselfishly and more sensitively, that we may spread love's fragrance wherever cynicism and despair hangs in the air. Through Jesus Christ, our Savior, the one who taught us to pray, saying...*Lord's Prayer*...

Gloria Patri- Glory be to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Ghost.

As it was in the beginning, is now and ever shall be,

World without end. Amen, Amen.

Old Testament Scripture- Psalm 126(page 537)

Special Music-

Gospel Scripture- John 12:1-8(page 936)

Children's Time/Echo Prayer/Passing of the Peace

Hymn- 41- Ye Servants Of God, Your Master Proclaim

New Testament Scripture- Philippians 3:4-14(page 1023-1024)

Message

“Extravagant Love”

Have you ever given someone a gift that could be called extravagant or over-priced? Perhaps you were the recipient of an extravagant gift. Either way, what do you think the reason was for this gift? Perhaps the reason was to impress or to show just how good you can be. Maybe it was a bribe to make someone see you in a different way. Or could it be that the giver just wanted to please the recipient and didn't care about the extravagance? Either way, when someone gets a gift that is over the top, they may feel a bit awkward. Why would someone give a gift that is way more valuable than what I would give them? When Mary, the sister of Lazarus, used a very expensive ointment to anoint the feet of Jesus, Judas the treasurer was offended. He thought the cost of the oil should have been used for other purposes but Jesus admonished Him and excused Mary's extravagance because she gave it in pure love.

What is a gift, anyway? There are two definitions for the word gift. One is, a talent or calling that makes you better at something than most people. Second, a gift is something given to you with no payback expected. We all know people who are gifted at fixing things or making them. There are those who are gifted musicians or actors, artists, and performers. Where did these gifts come from? We do know that God has a lot to do with it. When we find a gifted person we wonder just how they came to recognize their gifts. Many people have gifts, given by God, that they ignore and allow to go by the wayside. Those whose gifts are developed should recognize God's involvement.

All of us benefit from God's physical gifts to us. The benefits of life are everywhere we look in this world. Things we take for granted such as the food we eat, the homes we inhabit, the people who love us and even those who don't are all given by God. There is nothing we have or use that is not provided by God. What does God want for all these gifts? Doesn't God deserve a simple thank you or an acknowledgement of what He has given? Is that too much to ask?

We are also the beneficiaries of what are called “Spiritual Gifts” or “Gifts of the Holy Spirit.” These gifts are; Prophecy, serving, teaching, encouraging, giving, leadership, mercy, words of wisdom, word of knowledge, faith healing, miraculous powers, distinguishing or discerning of spirits, speaking in tongues, interpretation of tongues, and helping. Let's take a look at some of them. Prophecy does not simply mean foretelling the future. It means to speak forth those words that come to us from divine inspiration and declaring the purposes of God. To prophesy is to declare the divine will, to interpret the purposes of God, or to make known in any way the truth of God that is designed to influence people.

Serving is also referred to as ministering or providing service of any kind. Serving is a translation of the Greek word “diakonian” from which we get the English word, Deacon.

Teaching involves the analysis and proclamation of the Word of God, explaining the meaning, context, and application to the hearers life.

Encouraging, or exhortation is evident in those who always seem to be calling on others to pay attention to what God is saying. About following the truth.

Giving is found in those people who joyfully share what they have, no matter how little or much, with others. True giving does not depend on whether or not we agree with others or even if we like them.

Leadership means to guide from the front when things need to be done especially when it comes to sharing the Word.

Mercy along with encouragement shows up in people's compassion toward others who are in distress, showing sympathy and sensitivity while lessening suffering. True mercy only works when given in a kind and cheerful manner.

Word of wisdom, not words of wisdom, is a speaking gift. This gift applies to someone who can understand and speak biblical truth in such a way as to skilfully apply God's Word to life situations with discernment.

Word of knowledge is another speaking gift that allows someone to understand truth with an insight that only comes through revelation from God.

There are other “gifts of the Spirit” that are given to different people for different reasons. The gifts of faith, healing, miraculous powers, discerning of spirits, speaking in tongues, interpretation of tongues and the gift of helping are more of what people are given in God's plan. Not everyone has access to multiple gifts but it is possible. Each of us has a special role to play in God's plan. Using your particular gift for God's glory is your individual mission.

We have all been the recipients or givers of gifts that could be considered extravagant. There are so many things that we have been blessed with in this life, it would be impossible to number them. There is one gift that is so far beyond extravagant that most people cannot conceive of its value; the gift of Jesus Christ, given by God to each and every person who has ever existed or ever will exist. We do not value this gift as we should, most of us acknowledge it but refuse to give it the prominence it deserves. Just think about it. God gave humanity the gift of His Son, to suffer and die on a cross for what? Do you think, perhaps, that He was simply showing us how great He was and expecting us to get all excited because, after going through the pain and death, Jesus was able to walk out of the tomb alive? Jesus' rising is not the gift. The gift is our redemption through Jesus taking our sin in our place. We have the ability to live forever with God because Jesus suffered for us. He died and rose for every individual on this planet if, and only if, we accept His extravagant gift.

During this season of Lent, reflect on the gifts of God, both spiritual and physical, and give God thanks and praise. Let us show our appreciation for the greatest gift by accepting Jesus as Savior and worshipping our living God. Praise Be to God. Amen.

Prayers of People/Prayer- We came here today offering praise and glory to our great and glorious God who has breathed new life into our dry and dusty souls, giving us fresh hope and new enthusiasms for life and living, both individually and as a community of faith. We have each experienced times of loss and disappointment, yet our trustworthy God has turned these sorrows and pains into times of hope and expectation, breathing new life and joy into all our actions; as we seek to live in and through God. Holy God, we pray that we may be good representatives and stewards of our roles and responsibilities, as we daily seek to live a faithful witness to you. We hope that others may see and know, that you are a God who is worthy of all honor and worship, and that your faithfulness and mercy is available to all who respond, and offer their love and commitment to you. Renewing and restoring God, we rejoice in the new

beginnings that you have made possible for us through your generous and forgiving love; and that past tears and regrets can stay in the past; and that with your inspiration and encouragement, we may reap a harvest of joy and peace, as your name is honored and praised forever. Amen.

Communion Hymn- 370- Come Celebrate Jesus

Thanksgiving Prayer- Faithful, generous, abiding God, we give you thanks for the Bread of Heaven and the Cup of Salvation. May the taste of this meal linger so that we will be strengthened in our Lenten journey. Give us courage to hear what may seem harsh so that we can find a deeper relationship with you. To your glory, Amen.

Closing Hymn- 331- The Church's One Foundation

Benediction- Go now in the righteousness of faith and live by God's just demands. Let nothing claim your devotion above the Lord, and count nothing of value above knowing Christ. Press on towards the ultimate prize, of being one with him. And may God's perfect word revive your soul; May Christ Jesus be your saviour and your rock; And may the Holy Spirit strengthen you to press ever onward. We go in peace to love and serve the Lord, In the name of Christ. Amen.