

03.19.23 | COURT STREET UNITED METHODIST CHURCH



seeking:
Who sinned?

10:45 A.M. | WORSHIP IN-PERSON & YOUTUBE LIVESTREAM

GATHERING

Gathering Song

We Come with Questions

WORDS: © Anna Strickland, 2021. Commissioned by A Sanctified Art, LLC. Free for congregational use.

MUSIC: Erneueren Gesangbuch; harm. by William Sterndale Bennett
All rights reserved. Reprinted under OneLicense # A-730966

*We come with questions assuming that there will be answers
Setting the world in an order that obeys our grammar
We want to know where Spirit's river will flow
Frustrated by her meanders*

*Here is the mystery we claim as the followers of Jesus:
Christ has died, Christ is raised, Christ daily comes to redeem us
Grace free, not earned, whether or not we deserve
God works beyond rules and boundaries*

*God help us live into mystery beyond comprehension
Quiet our minds always clamoring for some direction
Give us your peace with all that we can't perceive
Holding us within the tension*

Gathering

One: Scripture is full of questions...

All: Where are you?

One: Am I my brother's keeper?

All: Whom shall I send?

One: Who do you say that I am?

All: Who sinned?

One: How many times shall I forgive?

All: If God is for us, who can be against us?

One: Scripture is full of questions, so just like those in our scriptures, may we bring our full curiosity and wonder into this space.

All: Let us ask and seek after our merciful God.

Entering the *Land of the Seeking*

WORDS & MUSIC: © 2023 Spencer LaJoye
All rights reserved. Reprinted under OneLicense # A-730966

*There's a place you can get to without any sound
It's a place where the wick has burned out
There's a place at the point that's past turning around
There is a place to be lost long after you're found
There's a land you can reach if you follow yourself
It's a land beyond hoarding your fears so to quell
There's a land where the bottom falls out of the well
There is a land where your worry and wonder can dwell*

*Coax your quiet questionings
Speak your soft uncertainties
There is room for these
In the land of seeking*

Call to Confession

*Draw a map without borders and see where you go
In the cover of night, call a question a home
Past the edge of defenses you're never alone
There is a place where your worries and wonder are known*

*Coax your quiet questionings
Speak your soft uncertainties
There is room for these
In the land of seeking*

Prayer of Confession & Words of Forgiveness

One: Let us pray:

Who here has sinned?

All: We have sinned. We put our heads in the sand. We ignored people in need. We make false assumptions and fail to be kind. We are in need of forgiveness.

One: Good news! Our God is a merciful God. God does not punish, hold grudges, or keep score. When you suffer, God weeps. When you sin, God forgives. When you lose your way, God comes running.

All: Thanks be to God for a love like that.

All: Have you sinned?

One: I have sinned. I put my head in the sand. I ignore people in need. I make false assumptions and fail to be kind. I, too, am in need of forgiveness.

All: Good news! Our God is a merciful God. God does not punish, hold grudges, or keep score. When you suffer, God weeps. When you sin, God forgives. When you lose your way, God comes running.

One: Thanks be to God for a love like that. Amen.

The compass points straight to the heart of a shadow of a doubt
The key is the most honest thing that you can't speak aloud
There is no wrong way to be unsure of things
There is no wrong way to the land of the seeking

Coax your quiet questionings
Speak your soft uncertainties
There is room for these
In the land of seeking

Song of Faith

Open My Eyes

#454

WORDS & MUSIC: [Clara H. Scott, 1841-1897](#)

All rights reserved. Reprinted under OneLicense # A-730966

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.

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

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.

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

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

ENGAGING

Prayer for Illumination

The Word of God

John 9:1-7 | John 9:8-41

The Word in Music

We Are

Rev. Jim West

Message

seeking: Who sinned?

Rev. Rebecca Dunger Peak

Affirmation of Faith

One: We believe in a merciful God,

**All: a God who does not keep score,
a God who wants good for us.**

One: We believe in a creative God,

**All: a God who would heal with mud,
a God capable of seeing what we cannot.**

One: We believe in a saving God,

**All: a God who heals,
a God who greets our questions with patience,
a God who sends us out with hope in our step.**

One: What wondrous love is this. Amen.

THANKSGIVING

Prayers of the People

Turn Your Eyes Upon Jesus; WORDS & MUSIC: Helen H. Lemmel, 1922
All rights reserved. Reprinted under OneLicense # A-730966

*Turn your eyes upon Jesus,
look full in his wonderful face,
and the things of earth*

*will grow strangely dim
in the light of his glory and grace.
(repeat)*

The Lord's Prayer

Our Father, who art in heaven, hallowed be thy name. Thy kin-dom come, thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread. And forgive us our trespasses, as we forgive those who trespass against us. And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil. For thine is the kin-dom, and the power, and the glory, forever. Amen.

*Turn your eyes upon Jesus,
look full in his wonderful face,
and the things of earth
will grow strangely dim
in the light of his glory and grace.*

Offering

719 Court St.
Fulton, MO 65251
Courtumc.org/give

Prayer of Dedication

One: Let us pray...

All: O God of Boundless Abundance, whose grace is greater than our rebellious nature, whose love is higher and wider and deeper than our imagining, don't just take the gifts we offer today but bless and utilize both the gifts and the givers to fuel ministry that enables the whole world to hear your voice and, in hearing, to follow. Amen.

Doxology

Maker in Whom We Live

#88 Vs 4

WORDS: Charles Wesley, 1707-1788

MUSIC: George J. Elvey

All rights reserved. Reprinted under OneLicense # A-730966

*Eternal, Triune God,
let all the hosts above,
let all on earth below record
and dwell upon thy love.
When heaven and earth are fled*

*before thy glorious face,
sing all the saints
thy love hath made
thine everlasting praise.
Amen.*

SENDING

Upcoming

WORDS: Copyright © 2011 by Carolyn Winfrey Gillette. All rights reserved.
MUSIC: Hebrew Melody, Sacred Harmony; harm. from Hymns Ancient and Modern
All rights reserved. Reprinted under OneLicense # A-730966

*A man who could not see received the gift of sight;
O Lord, you spoke and he believed and saw the light.
His joy was greater still than sight that was restored;
He saw, when you had made him well, that you are Lord.*

*Some leaders were distressed and said it was a sin,
For it was on the day of rest that you healed him.
They could not see the grace or know how much God cares;
The lack of vision in that place was truly theirs.*

*O Christ, you are the light to all who follow you;
You give to us the gift of sight — a new world-view.
When culture hems us in with values that destroy,
Lord, help your church to see again your kingdom's joy.*

Blessing

Postlude

O For a Thousand Tongues to Sing

Rev. Jim West

MUSIC: Carl G. Glaser; arr. by Lowell Mason; arr. Jim West
All rights reserved. Reprinted under OneLicense # A-730966

Worship Credits

Permission to podcast/stream the music in this service obtained from One License with license #A-730966. All rights reserved.

Liturgy written by and adapted from Rev. Sarah A. Speed | A Sanctified Art LLC | sanctifiedart.org

Logo by A Sanctified Art LLC | sanctifiedart.org



seeking:

honest questions for deeper faith

daily devotional prompts & prayers

Beginning with Ash Wednesday and continuing through the beginning of Easter, use these daily devotional prompts and prayers to expand and deepen your spiritual walk through Lent. You might read them first thing in the morning or incorporate them into your bedtime routine. Perhaps use the questions as prompts to journal and reflect. Day by day, may these prayers remind you that, as you seek God, God is always seeking you.

sunday

03.19.23

prompt: How do you describe God?

prayer: Holy God, there are so many names for you. How could I use just one? I could call you Friend, Healer, Creator, Teacher. The list goes on. As I move through Lent and continue to read your stories, remind me that you are bigger than my imagination. For that, I give thanks. Amen.

monday

03.20.23

prompt: In John 9, the disciples make assumptions about the reason for a man's blindness. When have you made an assumption? How have you changed your mind?

prayer: God of patience, changing one's mind can be like a slow and painful journey of dismantling and reassembling furniture in your mind. It does not come easily, and yet, scripture reminds us that holiness can be found in changing our minds. Help me see where I may need to dismantle and reassemble. Guide me in that faithful work. Amen.

tuesday

03.21.23

prompt: Connecting sin with disease was something the disciples had to unlearn (John 9). What are you trying to unlearn?

prayer: God, I have stereotypes to unlearn. I have negative self-talk to unlearn. I have to unlearn the societal message that my worth comes from my productivity. There are so many messages floating around in my head that do not come from you. Unravel those messages, and pull me back toward your embrace. Amen.

wednesday

03.22.23

prompt: Where in your life do you need healing?

prayer: Healing God, I could use your help today. There are things that I carry, things that I wrestle with, things that bring a heaviness to my life. If you can, offer healing. Bind yourself to the broken parts of me. Smear mud on my eyes. Call me by name. Heal what hurts. With hope I wait, amen.

thursday

03.23.23

prompt: The disciples seek answers and clarity from Jesus. What answers do you seek?

prayer: Omnipotent God, I have dozens of questions bubbling up inside me—how, and why, and for how long? I know your love is not a Magic 8 Ball, spitting out pithy answers to the world's wonderings, so I will keep bringing my questions to you. I will keep asking. I will keep seeking, and I trust that you will meet me in the middle. With hope for your promised day I pray, amen.

friday

03.24.23

prompt: Jesus heals a blind man who then professes his faith saying "Lord, I believe" (John 9). What do you believe—about yourself, and about God?

prayer: Gracious God, I am always inspired when I hear other people say, "Lord, I believe." It makes me ask myself—what do I believe—about you, about community, about myself? I believe that you are a gracious and loving God. I believe that I am held in your embrace. Give me faith, like the man born blind, to carry that conviction and believe for all of my days. Amen.

saturday

03.25.23

prompt: The healed man is isolated from his community due to his faith in Jesus (John 9). Where and when has your faith felt like somethings that isolates you? When has it connected you?

prayer: Jesus of Nazareth, you never said that being a person of faith would be easy. In today's world, being a person of faith can feel isolating. However, it also ties me to community. Help me remember that in the ups and downs and help me always remember that you are with me. I am never alone. Amen.