



Lake Toxaway United Methodist Church
Sunday, March 14th 2021

Dear Lake Toxaway Church family and friends,

The Gospel lesson has Jesus predicting his death and compares the healing He will bring to the account of Moses following God's directions to lift up a bronze snake and have the people look at it. For those Israelites bitten by the poisonous serpent (Remember this is a metaphor for the Evil One, Satan), they would look at the bronze snake and be healed. Physicians have used this image of a bronze serpent on a staff as a symbol of the healing ministry to which they enter. Unfortunately, this image loses its meaning among many physicians. The one we look to on the staff is no longer a serpent; it is Jesus lifted high on a cross. He takes the sins of the world upon himself to bring salvation to all people.

John 3:14-17: "And just as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, so must the Son of Man be lifted up, that whoever believes in him may have eternal life. For God so loved the world that He gave his only Son, so that everyone who believes in him may not perish but may have eternal life. Indeed, God did not send the Son into the world to condemn the world, but in order that the world might be saved through him."

I think we Protestants lose something when we avoid the crucifix of Jesus. We have preferred the empty cross and an empty tomb as signs of our faith in a Living God. When we lose sight of the crucifix, we forget the costliness of our salvation and our beloved-ness of God. God loved us so much... that he offered his only begotten son... to take our sins upon himself so we too might become the daughters and sons of God.

Our worship this week is centered around the offering that Christ Jesus makes to all! We sing songs in praise of Jesus and His sacrifice. Our prayers give thanks for the gift of eternal life, of forgiveness, mercy, and grace.

And underneath it all is a call to commitment. That is what "look up and Live" means. "look up" does not sound like much of a commitment... at first glance; however, it is a call of ourselves to allow someone else to take the lead, to take the center of our beings. "Look up" means seeing the hope for your own life and the lives of those you love and indeed the whole world not in yourself, but in the person of Jesus Christ and his redeeming grace.

Cathie Fussell's devotional of Friday, March 12 speaks to this idea but in a different voice. Her prayer begins with the words, "Thank you, God, for caring so much for me. Lord, teach me to offer You a heart of thanksgiving and praise in all my daily experiences of life." Truly this prayer is a prayer of hearing the call to "Look up and Live," to follow Christ in all we do and to celebrate his gift of salvation for all people!

I hope you are reading the Lenten Devotionals written by your fellow sisters and brothers of Christ in our community. Truly, all of them give witness to the call to look up to Christ lifted up as our once and all sufficient healer and our subsequent opportunity to live in this light no matter what challenges we face in this life.

I love you and celebrate God's redeeming work among us!

Marcus

**Lake Toxaway United Methodist Church
Community Worship Service
Fourth Sunday of Lent, March 14th**

9:30 A.M. Livestream link: https://youtu.be/zY7tEym4_Q4

GREETING

*Too often, too easily, our eyes are drawn down, God,
to the suffering of victims
and the pain of perpetrators,
to the wounds we inflict on others
and the wounds we inflict on ourselves.
We need to see these things and pray,
But, we also need our eyes to be lifted, God,
to the signs of your life among us,
to the touch of your healing on our souls,
to the cross that casts its liberating shadow
across all human affairs.
We need our eyes to be lifted, God,
so our hearts may be filled with faith
and hope
and love
Amen.*

PRELUDE

Savior, Like a Shepherd Lead Us arr. Dale Wood

CALL TO WORSHIP (*Please stand*)

*God loves us with a steadfast love.
Let the redeemed of the Lord say so!
God loves us so much he gave us his Son.
Let us believe and have eternal life!
God loves us with a great love, rich in mercy.
Let us have faith to receive this grace!
Give thanks to the Lord, for God is good.*

HYMN #98

To God be the Glory

Located in the back of the bulletin - (Printed w/ permission)

OPENING PRAYER *(Please be seated)*

Gracious God, so often we have missed your presence because we are looking for you clothed in a particular way. Let this time of worship be an encounter with you that will enable us to behold you in all the people we meet and all the situations we greet. You are from everlasting to everlasting, so we are confident that you are here; help us to be aware of your holy presence. O Lord, enrich this act of worship with the power of the Holy Spirit, we pray in Jesus' name. Amen.

SCRIPTURE READINGS

Numbers 21:4-9

- 21:4 From Mount Hor they set out by the way to the Red Sea, to go around the land of Edom; but the people became impatient on the way.
- 21:5 The people spoke against God and against Moses, "Why have you brought us up out of Egypt to die in the wilderness? For there is no food and no water, and we detest this miserable food."
- 21:6 Then the LORD sent poisonous serpents among the people, and they bit the people, so that many Israelites died.
- 21:7 The people came to Moses and said, "We have sinned by speaking against the LORD and against you; pray to the LORD to take away the serpents from us." So Moses prayed for the people.
- 21:8 And the LORD said to Moses, "Make a poisonous serpent, and set it on a pole; and everyone who is bitten shall look at it and live."
- 21:9 So, Moses made a serpent of bronze, and put it upon a pole; and whenever a serpent bit someone, that person would look at the serpent of bronze and live.

Psalm 107:1-3, 17-22 *(Please read responsively the bold text)*

- 107:1 O give thanks to the LORD, for he is good; for his steadfast love endures forever.
- 107:2 Let the redeemed of the LORD say so, those he redeemed from trouble**
- 107:3 and gathered in from the lands, from the east and from the west, from the north and from the south.
- 107:17 Some were sick through their sinful ways, and because of their iniquities endured affliction;
- 107:18 they loathed any kind of food, and they drew near to the gates of death.**

107:19 Then they cried to the LORD in their trouble, and he saved them from their distress;

107:20 he sent out his word and healed them, and delivered them from destruction.

107:21 Let them thank the LORD for his steadfast love, for his wonderful works to humankind.

107:22 And let them offer thanksgiving sacrifices, and tell of his deeds with songs of joy.

Ephesians 2:1-10

2:1 You were dead through the trespasses and sins

2:2 in which you once lived, following the course of this world, following the ruler of the power of the air, the spirit that is now at work among those who are disobedient.

2:3 All of us once lived among them in the passions of our flesh, following the desires of flesh and senses, and we were by nature children of wrath, like everyone else.

2:4 But God, who is rich in mercy, out of the great love with which he loved us

2:5 even when we were dead through our trespasses, made us alive together with Christ--by grace you have been saved--

2:6 and raised us up with him and seated us with him in the heavenly places in Christ Jesus,

2:7 so that in the ages to come he might show the immeasurable riches of his grace in kindness toward us in Christ Jesus.

2:8 For by grace, you have been saved through faith, and this is not your own doing; it is the gift of God--

2:9 not the result of works, so that no one may boast.

2:10 For we are what he has made us, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand to be our way of life.

John 3:14-21 (Please stand for the Gospel)

3:14 And just as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, so must the Son of Man be lifted up,

3:15 that whoever believes in him may have eternal life.

3:16 "For God so loved the world that he gave his only Son, so that everyone who believes in him may not perish but may have eternal life.

3:17 "Indeed, God did not send the Son into the world to condemn the world, but in order that the world might be saved through him.

- 3:18 Those who believe in him are not condemned; but those who do not believe are condemned already, because they have not believed in the name of the only Son of God.
- 3:19 And this is the judgment, that the light has come into the world, and people loved darkness rather than light because their deeds were evil.
- 3:20 For all who do evil hate the light and do not come to the light, so that their deeds may not be exposed.
- 3:21 But those who do what is true come to the light, so that it may be clearly seen that their deeds have been done in God."

L: This is the word of the Lord for the people of Christ.

P: Thanks be to God.

SOLO: God So Loved the World John Stainer

CALL TO RECONCILIATION

In becoming one of us, God became poor so we could receive the riches of mercy. In coming to us, God took on our death, so we could be made alive together with Christ. Come, offer your confessions, knowing that by grace you have been saved.

PRAYER OF CONFESSION

Let us confess our sins against God and our neighbor.

(Let us offer our silent confessions.)

The words we speak all too often do not show you in our lives, God of our pilgrimage. We spend so much time boasting to others, they imagine we have no need for you. We grumble impatiently when you don't respond immediately to our requests but are slow to sing your praises. We mutter under our breath about the behavior of those around us, when we could be asking them if there is some way we could serve them.

It is on our journey to the cross and the tomb that you fill us with the riches of your mercy, Steadfast Love! You do so, not because of anything we have done, but because of the compassion which flows from your heart wounded by our failings. As we open our lives to receive your forgiveness, may we turn to the Light which brings us life, following Jesus Christ, our Lord and Savior, every step of the way. Amen.

WORDS OF ASSURANCE

How much does God love us?

*Enough to send the divine heart, hope, and spirit to us,
not to condemn us, but to save us.*

***Not by our speaking or doing,
but by God's good and precious grace are we saved.
Thanks be to God! Amen.***

HOMILY

STATEMENT OF FAITH *(Please stand for the Nicene Creed)*

***We believe in one God,
the Father, the Almighty, maker of heaven and earth,
of all that is seen and unseen.***

***We believe in one Lord, Jesus Christ, the only Son of God,
eternally begotten of the Father, God from God, Light from Light,
true God from true God, begotten, not made,
of one Being with the Father.***

Through him all things were made.

***For us and for our salvation he came down from heaven:
by the power of the Holy Spirit, he became incarnate from the Virgin Mary,
and was made man.***

***For our sake he was crucified under Pontius Pilate;
he suffered death and was buried.***

***On the third day he rose again in accordance with the Scriptures;
he ascended into heaven and is seated at the right hand of the Father.
He will come again in glory to judge the living and the dead,
and his kingdom will have no end.***

***We believe in the Holy Spirit, the Lord, the giver of life,
who proceeds from the Father and the Son.***

***With the Father and the Son, he is worshiped and glorified.
He has spoken through the Prophets.***

We believe in one holy catholic and apostolic Church.

***We acknowledge one baptism for the forgiveness of sins.
We look for the resurrection of the dead,
and the life of the world to come. Amen.***

GLORIA PATRI (UMH #70)

***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.

OFFERING

<https://www.wnccumc.org/online-donations-to-churches>

OFFERTORY

I Will Arise and Go to Jesus arr. Robert J. Powell
(Early American hymn tune)

DOXOLOGY

PRAYER OF THANKSGIVING

Great and generous God, our lives are surrounded by things that steal our lives, inflict and destroy us. The tithes and offering we share with you this day are a way of keeping us focused not on the things that would take life away but will renew our lives: hope, love, compassion, empathy. As the Israelites looked to a serpent on a pole for healing, we look to a Savior on a cross to be brought back to life. In that holy name, Jesus the Messiah, we pray. Amen.

PASTORAL PRAYER AND PRAYERS OF THE PEOPLE WITH THE LORD'S PRAYER

Our Father, who art in heaven, hallowed be thy Name, thy kingdom 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 kingdom, and the power, and the glory, forever. Amen.

CLOSING HYMN #381

Savior, Like a Shepherd Lead Us
Located in the back of the bulletin - (Printed with permission)

BENEDICTION

POSTLUDE

A Solemn Postlude Robert J. Powell

STAFF & LAY VOLUNTEERS

Pastor: Marcus Dodson: 828-553-0282, marcus61dodson@gmail.com

Organist: Charlie Steele: cwsorgan@comporium.net

Church Administrator: Saunders Grommesh, 469-569-2314, administrator@laketoxawayumc.org

Lay Leaders: Barbara Kline: 828-862-5585 and Paula Markert: 828-553-9434

Audio/Visual for Livestream Chair: Andy Harvill

Soloist/Vocalist: Jacolyn Campbell

Liturgist: Scott Walter

ANNOUNCEMENTS

No reservations needed for Sunday services

Our Worship committee decided we may safely increase our attendance capacity and reservations are no longer needed to attend services. Masks and social distancing will still be in effect. However, if some folks have been gathering with others socially and feel comfortable, they may sit together in church.

DAILY LENTEN DEVOTIONAL

*We pray you are enjoying the daily Lenten devotionals on our website:
[https://www.laketoxawayumc.org/index.php/communications/lenten- ?](https://www.laketoxawayumc.org/index.php/communications/lenten-?)*

We are grateful for the positive responses to those who have written a devotional. We need just 5 more volunteers to write one. If you are interested in writing a Lenten devotional please email **Nancee Salyer and Scott Walter** nsalyer331@aol.com and Scott at scotlaw@aol.com.

Scholarship Committee needs volunteers to interview students

Are you excited about education and helping future student scholars? Volunteer interviewers are needed to help identify LTUMC student scholars for 2021-2022. Please reach out to Cathie Fussell at linguafrog@gmail.com or 910-572-2167 to learn more.

PRAYER CONCERNS OF THE COMMUNITY

Please pray for Marcus' nephew Steven Hudson, Katherine Jeter, Thos Blackstock, Marty Young, Chad & Anne Zimmerman, Madison Coleman & the Jeter family, Frank Hardin and Cathie Fussell's family members: Jeff Tilley & Ellen Gause, and Kitty Neff.

Please pray for our student scholars in their Spring semester.

Please continue to pray for those who have had the death of a loved one in the recent weeks and months; especially the family of Dell Rearden.

Please pray for those with illness, upcoming surgery and recovery.

THE GLORY OF THE TRIUNE GOD

98 To God Be the Glory

1. To God be the glo - ry, great things He hath done; So loved He the
 2. O per - fect re - demp - tion, the pur - chase of blood, To ev - 'ry be -
 3. Great things He hath taught us, great things He hath done, And great our re -

world that He gave us His Son, Who yield - ed His life an a -
 liev - er the prom - ise of God; The vil - est of - fend - er who
 joic - ing thro' Je - sus the Son; But pur - er, and high - er, and

tone - ment for sin, And o - pened the life - gate that all may go in.
 tru - ly be - lies, That mo - ment from Je - sus a par - don re - ceives.
 great - er will be Our won - der, our vic - t'ry, when Je - sus we see.

Praise the Lord, praise the Lord, Let the earth hear His voice! Praise the Lord,

praise the Lord, Let the peo - ple re - joice! O come to the Fa - ther, thro'

Je - sus the Son, And give Him the glo - ry, great things He hath done.

WORDS: Fanny J. Crosby, 1820-1915
 MUSIC: William H. Doane, 1832-1915

TO GOD BE THE GLORY
 11.11.11.11. with Refrain

381 Savior, Like a Shepherd Lead Us

1. Sav - ior, like a shep-herd lead us, much we
 2. We are thine, thou dost be - friend us, be the
 3. Thou hast prom-ised to re - ceive us, poor and
 4. Ear - ly let us seek thy fa - vor, ear - ly

need thy ten - der care; in thy pleas - ant pas - tures
 guard - ian of our way; keep thy flock, from sin de -
 sin - ful though we be; thou hast mer - cy to re -
 let us do thy will; bless - ed Lord and on - ly

feed us, for our use thy folds pre - pare.
 fend us, seek us when we go a - stray.
 lieve us, grace to cleanse and power to free.
 Sav - ior, with thy love our bos - oms fill.

Bless - ed Je - sus, bless - ed Je - sus! Thou hast
 Bless - ed Je - sus, bless - ed Je - sus! Hear, O
 Bless - ed Je - sus, bless - ed Je - sus! We will
 Bless - ed Je - sus, bless - ed Je - sus! Thou hast

bought us, thine we are. Bless - ed Je - sus,
 hear us when we pray. Bless - ed Je - sus,
 ear - ly turn to thee. Bless - ed Je - sus,
 loved us, love us still. Bless - ed Je - sus,

bless - ed Je - sus! Thou hast bought us, thine we are.
 bless - ed Je - sus! Hear, O hear us when we pray.
 bless - ed Je - sus! We will ear - ly turn to thee.
 bless - ed Je - sus! Thou hast loved us, love us still.