



Traditional  
February 4

Beloved  
Taken  
Blessed  
Broken  
GIVEN

Prayer Concerns: Joe Bush; the family of Keith Combs in his passing; the family of Betty Haynes in her passing

Today's Sanctuary flowers provided by Don & Susan Travis to the glory of God in honor of their new grandson, Elijah Michael Hoffmann.

Today's choral selections are provided by the Temple Choir under the direction of Joan Nevill. Organist: Barbara Waite. Communion Music provided by Temple Choir; Flutist Lisa McCarty

Ushers February 4: Kathy Zelle, captain; Chuck Taylor, Warren Heinsohn, Jack Buttrum, Ed Ancona, Thornton Patberg (balcony), Margo Borre (balcony)

Ushers February 11: Greg & Linda Stilwell, captains; Chuck Taylor, Jacque Hardin, Dick Osmon, Nelson & Joyce Rivers

Greeters February 4: Patricia Helm, Nancy Hughes, Janet Kissel, Sue Anderson

Greeters February 11: Marty Van Stone, Betty Schofield, Carla Bolin

## ORDER OF WORSHIP

### PRE-SERVICE MUSIC

Luke Rausch

### WELCOME

### PRELUDE

"My Shepherd, You Supply My Need" by E. Childs

### CALL TO WORSHIP

Leader: Be still and know that God is.  
People: God was, also, in the beginning.  
Leader: And when all human striving has ceased,  
People: God will still be.  
Leader: From everlasting to everlasting, the Lord is God.  
People: God alone is worthy to be worshipped.

### CHORAL INTROIT

"This Is My Commandment." by Anonymous

### \*CHIMES & SERVICES OF LIGHT

### \*HYMN #384

"Love Divine, All Loves Excelling"

### \*PASSING OF THE PEACE

Leader: May the peace of Christ be with you.  
**People: And also with you.**  
Leader: Please turn to those around you and pass the peace of Christ.

### CALL TO PRAYER

Leader: The Lord be with you.  
**People: And also with you.**  
Leader: Let us pray as one.

### PASTORAL PRAYER

All: Risen Lord, You are the true Vine and we are the branches. By Your Spirit, produce the fruit of love, patience, and peace in us. Prune all selfishness from us and fill us with Your mercy. And now, O God, hear us as we pray, each in our own hearts and our own ways...

### LORD'S PRAYER

Matthew 6:9-13 "Pray then like this: '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 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.'"

### GIVING TITHES & OFFERING

"My Song Is Love Unknown" by B. Culli

### \*DOXOLOGY *The congregation stands as the Ushers return the offering to the Altar.*

#95 in Hymnal

### ANTHEM

"One at the Feast" by Craig Courtney/Pamela Martin

### KIDZ MOMENT

### SCRIPTURE READINGS

John 3:17-21

12 "This is my commandment, that you love one another as I have loved you. 13 No one has greater love than this, to lay down one's life for one's friends. 14 You are my friends if you do what I command you. 15 I do not call you servants any longer, because the servant does not know what the master is doing; but I have called you friends, because I have made known to you everything that I have heard from my Father. 16 You did not choose me but I chose you. And I appointed you to go and bear fruit, fruit that will last, so that the Father will give you whatever you ask him in my name. 17 I am giving you these commands so that you may love one another.

### FAITH WE SING #2086

"Open Our Eyes"

### MESSAGE by Pastor Andy Payton

"Given"

And now what we find is that Jesus has just informed his companions that soon he is going to be betrayed, crucified, and no longer is he going to be able to be with his disciples, his friends. In so many words and so many ways, what Jesus has done is let the wind out of the disciples' cells. By the time we get to John Chapter 15, our text for this morning, what we find Jesus doing is really in some ways giving his friends his last will and testament. This is what he hopes that they would become. This is the sort of behavior that he hopes they will exhibit after he is gone. Its into this, Jesus says I give you a new commandment that you would love one another. There's no greater love than this that we would lay down one's life for one's friends. And this is fruit that will last. To be clear when it says New Commandment I think a better way to say it is a renewed commandment. This command to love has been echoed throughout the entirety of scripture. Even in the Old Testament, we find this command to love one's neighbor as oneself being repeated again and again and again. In fact 36 times it appears in the Old Testament. It says that in some sometimes different ways sometimes yes love your stranger as yourself sometimes love the alien as it's as yourself. But love is certainly a commandment throughout all scripture. What makes this particular moment for me unique when Jesus says this to disciples, though, is who he says it to. He tells the one that would betray him Judas to love. He extends love to Peter the one who would deny him, and in doing so he teaches us that the love that we're called to share as Christians is a love that knows no boundaries. It has given even to our enemies. To say it's simply, we are called as Christians to give ourselves with no strings attached.

Now, when I use the word given, there might be some things that come to your mind. Many times when we hear that we're given we think of something we do. I think of time, talents, and treasures; we even encourage you to give your time, talents, and treasures as the church. And it's good to carve out time within our schedules and it's good to pledge some of our treasures and it's good to share our talents with one another. It's good to give these things, but yet what I would suggest to you this day is this: to be given truly given is more about an attitude of the heart. To get what it means to exhibit this sort of life that Jesus echoes for us is to understand, it really starts with who we are. The attitude of ourselves in our inner most parts. I think of a moment I had a couple of months ago when I was asked to do a charge conference at a local United Methodist Church. A charge conference as kind of a churchy name I know but what we do at a charge conference as United Methodists is elect our church officers, set the pastor salaries, and so the pastor was asked to give a commencement speech at his son's 9th grade graduation. He got up and everyone was kind of ready for the typical speech, if you will, but he did something kind of unexpected. He looked at the kids and he said, "I wish you all bad luck." And then he went on to explain, I hope you experience loneliness in your life so that you appreciate friendship. I hope you're betrayed within your life so that you understand the importance of loyalty. I hope that you experience pain, therefore you can learn to appreciate the many blessings. For it is in reading our misfortunes he said we began to find a true attitude of joy for our lives.

And as we share ourselves with one another from within, our humanity does come to full bloom. So the question is then how do we cultivate this givenness from within? How do we cultivate givenness of the heart? And that's I thought about that this week it seems to me that to cultivate this change of heart within ourselves is tied to our brokenness and the pain within our lives. For some reason it's the brokenness and the pain in our lives that teaches us the joy of living. Think about it this way: Chief Justice John Roberts once was asked to give a commencement speech at his son's 9th grade graduation. He got up and everyone was kind of ready for the typical speech, if you will, but he did something kind of unexpected. He looked at the kids and he said, "I wish you all bad luck." And then he went on to explain, I hope you experience loneliness in your life so that you appreciate friendship. I hope you're betrayed within your life so that you understand the importance of loyalty. I hope that you experience pain, therefore you can learn to appreciate the many blessings. For it is in reading our misfortunes he said we began to find a true attitude of joy for our lives.

I know that's a tough truth to think about and to wrestle with. These days we run from our pain and our brokenness. We certainly don't think of it as a means to teach us the joy of living. But dare I say, as we think about our own lives, it's true. It's true. We don't become truly grateful for where we are at because life is going great up to that point. We become grateful for that, we celebrate where we're at, because we've experienced the opposite. And yet, the question remains: what do we do with the pain and brokenness that seems to have no end? Right? I mean I think about my friends throughout the years who have died of cancer-good people who have gone through horrible things. I think about people that have endured abuse or think about the young girl just a few weeks ago that was sledding down the hill in Newburgh and was hit by a car and died. What's the lesson in this sort of pain? What's the lesson in this sort of brokenness? What in the world does this teach us right? That's the question too. And the only answer I can give you is this: when the pain and the brokenness of a life has no end in sight, we must look at it through the lens of eternity. We must read it through the lens of eternity.

I know I don't talk much about eternal life and life after death. In fact, I thought about it this week as I was preparing my sermon, and it came to me that I don't think in four and a half to five years I've talked about life after death. The reason is because I think it's a mystery beyond words. And when I'm asked to preach, I'm asked to use words. And how do put words to something that's beyond me? And yet even then as I say this, I have to also confess that part of the Christian journey is that we do believe that this love and this life that God gives us transcends even the grave. It's larger than death, and we believe as Christians when we die we enter into full communion with God. I have to also say that I think that full communion with God for some of us will be Heaven. But for others of us my hunch is it will be Hell. The seeds of Heaven and Hell are being planted within our lives right here right now.

Thomas Merton probably said it best when he was asked once. He was asked by some people at one of his retreats; they said, "Thomas tell us about Heaven. What's Heaven going to be like?" His response was, "Well I don't think much of us will be there." I don't think that was the answer they were looking for. My hunch is the people at that retreat were looking for the answer where heaven is like an extended vacation where we can just continue to be ourselves that we started with on this earth. But entering into full communion with God is a complete transformation friends. And for those of us who have learned to let go of the many things that we hold onto in this life, we'll be ready to enter into the full presence of God; and for those of us who have not learned to let go, well it will be hard when we enter into that presence. I had a mentor who probably said it best. He said the entire spiritual journey is the process of learning to let go in order to fully embrace God. To be given is to give ourselves with no strings attached, and to be joyful in doing so. And so we end the series today. Beloved. That's what you and I are. We've been taken. We've been blessed. We've been broken. All in order that we might be given to the world.

My prayer and my hope for you is this day and always that you would allow the misfortunes of your lives and the pain of your lives to be seen through the lens of the love of God and eternity and that you would allow that pain and brokenness to teach you the joy of living and of giving as we prepare for a Holy Communion. May we be in full communion with God this day. Amen.

### \*HYMN #378

"There Is A Balm In Gilead"

### \*CHIMES & SERVICE OF LIGHT

### BENEDICTION

### POSTLUDE

"Hispanic Praise" by D. Janzer