St. Paul's

United Church of Christ Evansville, Indiana

March 7, 2021 Online Worship Third Sunday in Lent

WELCOME Rev. Mary Hurley

PRELUDE Beneath the Cross of Jesus

(Frederick Charles Maker)

Rick Hobbs

CALL TO WORSHIP (Congregational response is offset and in **bold** print)

The message of the cross sounds foolish to the world:

But to us it is the power of God!

We proclaim the scandal of Christ crucified.

The foolishness of God is wiser than human wisdom, and the weakness of God is stronger than our strength.

INVOCATION (in unison)

Gracious God, whose power is made perfect in weakness, whose wisdom appears as foolishness in this world, we thank you for the scandal of the cross. In Jesus Christ, you overturn all our usual ways of behaving and believing. You scatter our false notions of discipleship as easily as coins are spilled from a box. You correct our notions of piety and order fierce passion. Do not let your church become content or contained as an institution. Raze to ruins what is distorted in us, and raise us to new life as a community so that we may be the body of Christ in and for the world. With fear and joy we ask this in Christ's name. Amen.

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SPECIAL MUSIC Lead Me to the Cross (Brooke Fraser)

Katie Maurer

PRAYER OF CONFESSION (in unison)

Merciful God, how fickle we are; we sin against you without ever knowing it. Clear us, we pray, of any unknown sin, and save us from willfully ignoring your way. Let your commandments rule and guide us. Forgive us for worshiping anyone or anything except you: keep us faithful. Forgive us for failing to honor all our relationships-with those closest to us and those who are distant neighbors. Help us to speak words of blessing and kindness, rather than words that belittle or destroy. Turn us away from violence, falsehood, and selfishness. Forgive us for thinking everything depends on our efforts and power, for you are the One who made us, led us out of slavery, and has brought us into the community of faith. Help us to depend on you alone and to rest in your peace. In Christ's name we pray. Amen.

INVITATION TO GIVE OFFERING and OFFERING PRAYER (in unison)

O Lord our God, we want to follow all your commandments—to love only you, not worshiping the things of this world; to love our neighbor freely, not desiring for ourselves something they possess. Accept these offerings we pray, and teach us to be generous, giving fully of ourselves that we may truly be the body of Christ in this world. Amen.

SCRIPTURE I Corinthians 1: 18-25

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SERMON "When You Can't Make Anyone Happy" Rev. Mary Hurley

HOLY COMMUNION

Prayer of Thanksgiving

Bountiful God, we give you thanks that you have refreshed us at your table by granting us the presence of Christ. Strengthen our faith, increase our love for one another, and send us forth into the world in courage and peace, rejoicing in the power of the Holy Spirit. Amen.

concluding with The Lord's Prayer

CLOSING PRAYER

BENEDICTION

POSTLUDE It Is Well With My Soul (Philip Paul Bliss)

Rick Hobbs

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