



Congregational Church of Weston, UCC

130 Newton St., Weston, MA 02493

March 8, 2020, 10:30 a.m.
2nd Sunday in Lent

Chen Ting-Shih
NEW BIRTH #1, 1970

GATHERING FOR THE WORD

Meditation

The only God who seems to me worth believing in is impossible for mortals to understand, and therefore God teaches us through this impossible.

But we rebel against the impossible. I sense a wish in some professional religion-mongers to make God possible, to make God comprehensible to the naked intellect, domesticate God so that God is easy to believe in. Every century the Church makes a fresh attempt to make Christianity acceptable. But an acceptable Christianity is not Christian; a comprehensible God is no more than an idol.

-- Madeleine L'Engle, *The Irrational Season*

PRELUDE

Pianist: Dooseon Woo

WELCOME, ANNOUNCEMENTS & CONCERNS FOR PRAYER

INTROIT

O Lord, Increase My Faith

Orlando Gibbons
Choir directed by Zen Kuriyama

* Please stand as able.

Bold text is for congregational responses

The **PrayGround** is open in back for any child who wants to spend time there. Sharon Kuhn will be there to lead a quiet craft. There are also soft toys, puzzles and books for quiet reading.

* CALL TO WORSHIP AND PRAYER OF INVOCATION

Liturgist: Priscilla Claman

One: We lift up our eyes to the hills.

All: **Our help comes from the Creator of heaven and earth.**

One: We are sons and daughters of Abraham and Sarah.

All: **We trust in God who, through us, is blessing the families of earth.**

One: We are followers of Jesus, who proclaimed God's realm.

All: **We are born of the Spirit, born from above.**

One: Our lives are a gift from God, who loves us.

All: **By the grace of God, we are born anew each day.**

* HYMN 24

The God of Abraham Praise

LEONI

PRAYER OF CONFESSION AND ASSURANCE OF PARDON

Liturgist: Priscilla Claman

One: Let us bring to God our anxiety in making choices, our vulnerability in choosing and our gratitude or confession for choices made.

All: **O God, we confess that we have not always lived as if we belong to you. We have not always trusted your call to depart safety, as Abraham and Sarah, and journey, in faith, with you. Transform our reluctance into courage that we may be born from above and open to your Spirit.**

- Silent confession -

One: God's Child was not sent to point an accusing finger, telling the world how bad it was. Rather Jesus came to help, to put the world right again. So step forward with faith trusting that God goes with us and provides for us. Praise be to God! Amen.

ENGAGING THE WORD

LESSON

Reader: Priscilla Claman

Genesis 12:1-4a, *NRSV*

In this call and Abram's acceptance, God creates and covenants with a people, intervening in their lives to love them, to call them to ethical living, and to give them a purpose – "through you all the families of the earth will be blessed."

Now the Lord said to Abram, 'Go from your country and your kindred and your father's house to the land that I will show you. I will make of you a great nation, and I will bless you, and make your name great, so that you will be a blessing. I will bless those who bless you, and the one who curses you I will curse; and in you all the families of the earth shall be blessed.'

So Abram went, as the Lord had told him; and Lot went with him. Abram was seventy-five years old when he departed from Haran.

LESSON

If the distinct characteristic of God-followers in Paul's day is that they observe the Torah, how can those who do not observe the Torah (Gentiles, i.e. the Romans to whom he is writing) ever be God-followers? Paul argues that as God's promise and covenant was first extended to Abraham prior to the giving of the Torah, so others may be justified not by their Torah observance but, just as Abraham, by their faith.

What then are we to say was gained by Abraham, our ancestor according to the flesh? For if Abraham was justified by works, he has something to boast about, but not before God. For what does the scripture say? 'Abraham believed God, and it was reckoned to him as righteousness.' Now to one who works, wages are not reckoned as a gift but as something due. But to one who without works trusts him who justifies the ungodly, such faith is reckoned as righteousness.

For the promise that he would inherit the world did not come to Abraham or to his descendants through the law but through the righteousness of faith. If it is the adherents of the law who are to be the heirs, faith is null and the promise is void. For the law brings wrath; but where there is no law, neither is there violation.

For this reason it depends on faith, in order that the promise may rest on grace and be guaranteed to all his descendants, not only to the adherents of the law but also to those who share the faith of Abraham (for he is the father of all of us, as it is written, 'I have made you the father of many nations') — in the presence of the God in whom he believed, who gives life to the dead and calls into existence the things that do not exist.

Reader: Hear what the Spirit is saying to the Church.

People: Thanks be to God.

ANTHEM

God so loved the world

John Stainer

Choir directed by Zen Kuriyama

LESSON

John 3:1-17, NRSV

The tension between the literal and the metaphorical ideally opens access and deepens understanding. The writer of John uses this literary technique throughout his gospel. The reader is complemented as Nicodemus, the seeker, "literally" misunderstands that which the reader understands "metaphorically."

Now there was a Pharisee named Nicodemus, a leader of the Jews. He came to Jesus by night and said to him, 'Rabbi, we know that you are a teacher who has come from God; for no one can do these signs that you do apart from the presence of God.' Jesus answered him, 'Very truly, I tell you, no one can see the kingdom of God without being born from above.' Nicodemus said to him, 'How can anyone be born after having grown old? Can one enter a second time into the mother's womb and be born?' Jesus answered, 'Very truly, I tell you, no one can enter the kingdom of God without being born of water and Spirit. What is born of the flesh is flesh, and what is born of the Spirit is spirit. Do not be astonished that I said to you, "You must be born from above." The wind blows where it chooses, and you hear the sound of it, but you do not know where it comes from or where it goes. So, it is with everyone who is born of the Spirit.' Nicodemus said to him, 'How can these things be?' Jesus answered him, 'Are you a teacher of Israel, and yet you do not understand these things?

'Very truly, I tell you, we speak of what we know and testify to what we have seen; yet you do not receive our testimony. If I have told you about earthly things and you do not believe, how can you believe if I tell you about heavenly things? No one has ascended into heaven except the one who descended from heaven, the Son of Man. 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. >> continued >>>

‘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.’

Reader: For the Word of God in scripture, among us, and within us.

People: **Thanks be to God.**

MESSAGE

Bob Feeny

* HYMN 605

As Moses Raised the Serpent Up

MORNING SONG

PASTORAL PRAYER AND LORD’S PRAYER

The pastoral prayer concludes with the congregation joining in 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.

RESPONDING TO THE WORD

OFFERING OURSELVES TO GOD AND TO ONE ANOTHER

Invitation

Offertory

Pianist: Dooseon Woo

* Doxology

**Praise God from whom all blessings flow;
Praise God, all creatures here below;
Praise God above, you heavenly host:
Creator, Christ, and Holy Ghost. Amen.**

* Dedication of the Offering

Thank you, God, for “giving life to the dead and calling into existence things that did not exist.” Use all that we have and all that we are to move your world from death to life. Amen.

GOING WITH THE WORD

* HYMN 413

By Gracious Powers

BONHOEFFER

* BENEDECTION

POSTLUDE

Pianist: Dooseon Woo



Today



The **Table Arrangement** this morning is given by *Jessica Schendel* in anticipation of spring.

Our **greeter** and **usher** this morning is *Cathy Liddell*.

Priscilla Claman is the **Deacon, Liturgist** and **Reader** this morning.

Revs. Richard and Jill Edens are away this morning. They will be back in the office on Monday morning.

Faith Discovery Information:

Children of all ages are welcome in the PrayGround at the back of the sanctuary at any time. Cathy Liddell will be there to oversee activities which include drawing, coloring, puzzles, books, and soft toys. Parents are also welcome!

ECCLESIASTICAL COUNCIL CONVENING THIS AFTERNOON FOR BOB FEENY

After worship, Bob Feeny will be driving to New Hampshire, his home Conference, for one of the last steps towards being authorized for ordination. Once all the required forms, tests and papers have been successfully submitted to and received by the Committee on Ministry of one’s Conference and/or Association, there is a public examination – an Ecclesiastical Council. Keep Bob in your prayers as he takes this next step towards ministerial standing.

Begins on Wednesday, March 11, Noon

LENTEN STUDY - *Entering the Passion of Jesus*

In *Entering the Passion of Jesus: A Beginner’s Guide to Holy Week*, author, professor, and biblical scholar Amy-Jill Levine explores the biblical texts surrounding the Passion story. Gather over lunch (12- 1) at the Congregational Church of Weston for four Wednesdays in Lent – **March 11, 18, 25 and April 1** – with the Revs. Jill and Richard Edens. Bring a sack lunch and we will provide coffee or hot water for tea. For more information, contact the CCW Office, office@westonucc.org or 781-899-5417. Books will be available from the CCW Office for \$10.

COLLEGE BEHIND BARS, March 15, 11:30am, at WVC

A condensed version of the documentary, “*College Behind Bars*,” which focuses on the experience of men and women earning college degrees while incarnated through the Bard Prison Initiative, will be shown on March 15, 11:30, at WVC. Arthur Benbury of the Partakers Ministry, a graduate who earned his degree while incarcerated, and David and Christina Oliver, WVC members will speak and answer questions afterwards.

MARCH 10, 7:30 FIRST PARISH IN WAYLAND (225 BOSTON POST ROAD)

CARBON TAXES AS A CLIMATE CHANGE SOLUTION

Talk by Dr. Gilbert Metcalf, Professor of Economics, Tufts University. Dr. Metcalf is an expert on carbon taxes and former Deputy Assistant Secretary for Environment and Energy at the Department of Treasury.

March 24, 7:30 FIRST PARISH IN WAYLAND (225 BOSTON POST ROAD)

FORUM on MASS. CLIMATE LEGISLATION

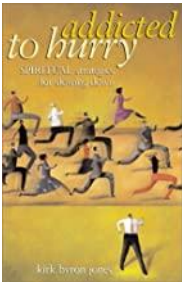
In this forum, Massachusetts state senators and representatives from local communities will discuss climate solutions bills that are likely to come to a vote in this legislative session. Our legislators will describe how you can get involved in turning pending bills into laws. Participants will include Senator Mike Barrett (3rd Middlesex district, including Lincoln and Weston); Senator James Eldridge (Middlesex and Worcester districts); Rep. Carmine Gentile (13th Middlesex district, including Wayland); Rep. Alice Peisch (14th Norfolk district, including Wayland, Wellesley and Weston); Senator Becca Rausch (Norfolk, Bristol and Middlesex districts including Wayland and Wellesley) and Rep. Tom Stanley (9th Middlesex district, including Lincoln and Waltham). Mass Audubon's Climate Change Program Director, Alexandra Vecchio, will moderate the discussion.

BRAVE CHANGE: Collaboration Retreat II, March 28

A second Saturday morning Collaboration Retreat between CCW and WVC will be on Saturday morning, March 28 at the **Congregational Church of Weston UCC**.

April 25, 1:30pm

ADDICTED TO HURRY with author and professor Dr. Kirk Jones



The Agape Spiritual Community (UCC new church start in Waltham) has invited us to join them for a portion of a retreat they are having in April here at the **Congregational Church of Weston UCC**.

Rev. Dr. Kirk Jones (long-time adjunct faculty at Andover Newton Theological School) will reflect on his book *Addicted to Hurry*. Part of what makes retreats special is the sacred, mindful pace. Kirk will help us reflect on and practice how we can go at a Sabbath pace (as we do in retreats) in our individual lives, and in our services/communal life.

The retreat will be at the **Congregational Church of Weston UCC** on Saturday, April 25th. Kirk will present for 90 minutes in the early afternoon on a Saturday around 1:30pm. *"We would love to welcome you and several people from your congregation to join us for Kirk's presentation."* If interested in attending, please speak with Rev. Richard Edens.

Save the Date – Saturday, September 19

"Let's Talk" Conversation with Rev. Mariama White-Hammond

The Rev. Mariama White-Hammond will be our conversational partner at a September 19th *"Let's Talk"* on the intersection of environment justice and racial justice. Last year *Sojourners* had an article about 11 women who are changing the church and Rev. Mariama White-Hammond was one of the named women (<https://sojo.net/articles/11-women-shaping-church>). In addition to being the daughter of the pastors, Rev. Dr. Ray Hammond and Rev. Dr. Gloria White-Hammond, of the Bethel AME in JP, she is the pastor of a new church start, New Roots AME. Rev. White-Hammond has also been on the advisory board of the Massachusetts Interfaith Power and Light and a speaker at Faith Science Alliance for Climate Leadership events. She has been an advocate for the concerns of marginalized people – i.e., the people living in flood plains, the people with the fewest adaptive options -- in a time of climate change hence our invitation.

We will be extending an invitation to surrounding congregations and organizations to include this event in their fall program planning. More later but, for now, hold the date.

CCW Calendar

March 11, 18, 25 & April 1 Lenten Book Study over lunch at CCW:

Entering the Passion of Jesus: A Beginner's Guide to Holy Week

Mar 15 Lent 3

Mar 21 – *Traveling with The Green Book in Boston*

Mar 22 Lent 4

Mar. 27, Fri, Women of the Passion in the Sanctuary

Mar 28 **BRAVE CHANGE II** – CCW-WVC Collaboration Planning Retreat

Mar 29 Lent 5 - Bob Feeny to preach

Apr 03 Cambridge Early Music Concert

Apr 05 **Palm Sunday**

Thu., Apr 09 Maundy Thursday at CCW

Fri., Apr 10 Good Friday Service

Apr 12 **EASTER Sunday**

Thu., Apr 16 – Sun., Apr 19 City Mission Trip to Nat. Memorial for Peace & Justice, Montgomery, AL

Sat., Apr 18 – Sat., Apr 25 Youth Service Trip to New Mexico

Apr 19 Easter 2 – Joint Earth Day Service with First Parish on the Weston Green

Apr 25 Agape Community Retreat – 1:30pm “*Addicted to Hurry*” with Dr. Kirk Jones

Apr 26 Easter 3

May 2 – *Slavery in Massachusetts, Royall House & Slave Quarters, Medford*

May 3 Easter 4

2:30 pm Interfaith Faith and Science Exchange (InterFASE) Townes Lecture (to be confirmed)

May 10 Easter 5 - Bob Feeny to preach

May 17 Easter 6

May 24 Easter 7 (Memorial Day Weekend)

May 29 Cambridge Early Music Concert

May 31 **PENTECOST** Sunday

June 7 TRINITY Sunday

June 14 Pentecost 2 - Bob Feeny to preach

June 21 Pentecost 3

June 28 Pentecost 4

Summer worship at Wellesley Village Congregational Church UCC

Sept 13 Pentecost 15 Worship resumes at CCW, Bob Feeny to preach

Sept 19 “**Let’s Talk**” with Rev. Mariama White-Hammond

Sept 20 Pentecost 16

Sept 27 Pentecost 17

Welcome to the worship of God at *The Congregational Church of Weston, UCC*. We are an Open and Affirming, Level 1 Green Congregation, welcoming all. If you are visiting, welcome and please join us for fellowship and refreshments after worship. Please sign our guest register or complete the **Welcome Card** at the back of the sanctuary.

An Invitation

We are a congregation that affirms each person as a child of God. We are open to all: all races, genders, sexual orientations, abilities, ages or economic circumstances. We welcome all those who wish to explore, develop and deepen their faith in response to God's call. All are invited to join fully in our church's common life, mission and worship through participation, leadership and service.

Concerns for Prayer? We invite you to write your request for prayer of petition or gratitude – anonymously if you wish – on a **Prayer Card**. Cards are available in the rear of the sanctuary. Place the completed card in the offering plate or in the Meditation Room. If you place it in the Meditation Room, please take a moment to reflect. Your prayers will be added to those already there.



Congregational Church of Weston, UCC

The Rev. Dr. Jill Edens, jedens@westonucc.org
Designated Term Minister,

The Rev. Richard Edens, redens@westonucc.org
Designated Term Minister,

Catherine Liddell Dertouzos,
Director of Christian Education

Sharon Kuhn, *First Steps Caregiver*

Zen Kuriyama, *Choir Director*

Dooseon Woo, *Pianist*

*Email for Church Office: office@westonucc.org
(781) 899-5417 www.westonucc.org*

Our Statement of Purpose

As a progressive, multi-generational Christian community, inspired and sustained by meaningful worship and practice, we are called by God to do our best to serve our neighbors and improve the world for all of God's children by

- *Providing an environment of hope and purpose, grounded in our Christian belief in God's grace and mercy.*
- *Supporting and nurturing our members of all ages.*
- *Equipping ourselves and neighbors with skills for constructive discourse.*
- *Engaging our community in authentic and respectful conversations about challenging situations in our families, communities, nation and world; and encouraging constructive responses to these exchanges.*
- *Assuring that future generations can flourish, by being good stewards of God's creation.*

Affirmed by the congregation, February 10, 2019



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Weston on Facebook.**