



# Order of Worship

## Third Sunday of Epiphany, January 24, 2021

Church of the Isles, Indian Rocks Beach/ Trinity UCC ,  
St. Petersburg, FL

To view the entire service, click on:

<https://www.youtube.com/playlist?list=PLr2IwlWThmmSDr4PUsouzarDFIxpikdwv>

**WELCOME, ANNOUNCEMENTS & PRAYERS**  
Shelly Wilson <https://youtu.be/88d5B6WOCeA>



## CALL TO WORSHIP “Come, Healing” (Leonard Cohen)

[https://youtu.be/AAgVExCEV\\_k](https://youtu.be/AAgVExCEV_k)

O gather up the brokenness and bring it to me now  
The fragrance of those promises you never dared to vow  
The splinters that you carry, the cross you left behind,  
    Come healing of the body  
    Come healing of the mind  
And let the heavens hear it, the penitential hymn,  
    Come healing of the spirit  
    Come healing of the limb

Behold, the gates of mercy in arbitrary space,  
And none of us deserving, the cruelty or the grace  
O solitude of longing where love has been confined  
    Come healing of the body  
    Come healing of the mind

O see the darkness yielding, that tore the light apart  
    Come healing of the reason  
    Come healing of the heart

O troubled dust concealing an undivided love  
The Heart beneath is teaching to the broken Heart above  
    O let the heavens falter and let the earth proclaim:  
    Come healing of the Altar, Come healing of the Name.



## OPENING PRAYER

Spirit of Love, Spirit of healing, we gather up the brokenness and bring it to you now. Here, in this time, we offer not our power, but our need--the fragrances, the promises, the fragments, the longings. We pray, as did the prophets of old, that you would break open the heavens with the Light of your Love. And we long for Love to help us heal. Help us heal ourselves. Help us heal one another. Come, healing of the body. Come, healing of the mind. Amen.

## CHILDREN'S TIME

**Mindy Picardo** <https://youtu.be/yDGeUnSflr8>

**READING** (from *The Wounded Healer* by Henri Nouwen)

**Tom Fauquet** [https://youtu.be/D5DEoJv\\_Jvw](https://youtu.be/D5DEoJv_Jvw)

The great illusion of leadership is to think that we can be led out of the desert by someone who has never been there. Through compassion it is possible to recognize that the craving for love that people feel resides also in our own hearts, that the cruelty the world knows all too well is also rooted in our own impulses. Through compassion we also sense our hope for forgiveness in our friends' eyes and our hatred in their bitter mouths. When they kill, we know that we could have done it; when they give life, we know that we can do the same. For a compassionate person nothing human is alien: no joy and no sorrow, no way of living and no way of dying. Who can listen to a story of loneliness and despair without taking the risk of experiencing similar pains in our own hearts and even losing our own precious peace of mind? In short: Who can help relieve suffering without entering it?



## MUSIC “My Lighthouse”

**Winston Culler**

In my wrestling and in my doubts in my failures You won't walk out  
Your great love will lead me through You are the peace in my troubled sea  
You are the peace in my troubled sea In the silence, You won't let go  
In the questions, Your truth will hold Your great love will lead me through  
You are the peace in my troubled sea You are the peace in my troubled sea  
My lighthouse, my lighthouse Shining in the darkness, I will follow You  
My Lighthouse, my Lighthouse I will trust the promise  
You will carry me safe to shore... Safe to shore...  
I won't fear what tomorrow brings with each morning I'll rise and sing  
My God's love will lead me through You are the peace in my troubled sea  
Fire before us, You're the brightest You will lead us through the storms

**Offering** Financial support for our churches is essential, now more than ever. Thank you for your faithful giving that keeps our ministries going! Please mail in your offerings to your church:

**Church of the Isles**  
**Att. Barb Templin**  
200 24<sup>th</sup> Ave.

Indian Rocks Beach, FL 33785  
33759

**Trinity UCC**  
**Att. Marty Seyler**  
3155 Featherwood Court  
Clearwater, FL

or give online via Pay Pal—

[www.churchoftheisles.org](http://www.churchoftheisles.org)   [www.trinityuccstpete.org](http://www.trinityuccstpete.org)



## SCRIPTURE READING

*John 20:19-27*

**Rebecca Bacon** <https://youtu.be/jBydhHZd39Y>

On the evening of that first day of the week, when the disciples were together, with the doors locked for fear, Jesus came and stood among them and said, "Peace be with you!" <sup>20</sup>After he said this, he showed them his hands and side. The disciples were overjoyed when they saw the LORD. <sup>21</sup>Again Jesus said, "Peace be with you! As God has sent me, I am sending you." <sup>22</sup>And with that he breathed on them and said, "Receive the Holy Spirit." Now Thomas (also known as "the twin"), one of the Twelve, was not with the disciples when Jesus came. <sup>25</sup>So the other disciples told him, "We have seen the LORD!" But he said to them, "Unless I see the nail marks in his hands and put my finger where the nails were, and put my hand into his side, I will not believe." <sup>26</sup>A week later his disciples were in the house again, and Thomas was with them. Though the doors were locked, Jesus came and stood among them and said, "Peace be with you!" <sup>27</sup>Then he said to Thomas, "Put your finger here; see my hands. Reach out your hand and put it into my side. Stop doubting and believe."

## SERMON "Wound Care"

**Shelly Wilson** <https://youtu.be/gsx2qIYIN3I>

Here is what J.K. Rowling says about Harry Potter's iconic scar on his forehead: "I wanted him to be physically marked by what he has been through inside. I gave him a scar and in a prominent place so other people



would recognize him. Someone tried to kill him; that's how he got it. I chose the lightning bolt because it was the most plausible shape for a distinctive scar. As you know, the scar has certain powers, and it gives Harry warnings. I can't say more than that, but there is more to say." There is more to say and one of the things everyone says in the books, and often in a whisper, as they point to him in awe is that Harry Potter is "the boy who lived," scarred up though he may have been.

In our family, we have the girls-who-lived--all of the oldest of the granddaughters. They gave me permission with joy to share their stories. All three are in their 20's, strong and confident women, scarred for life. One of them, at the site where the suctioning tube was placed in her side when she was in the hospital, is left with what looks like a dimpled gash, most visible when she inhales deeply. Another is missing a finger, the only outward evidence of a horrific car crash when she was still in high school. It turned out that crumpled heap which had been a Ford Escape, really did make possible what its name implied, an escape. And another, when she was only 11, experienced a strangulated intestine resulting in a life-threatening spill of poison into her peritoneal cavity. She hovered near death for days, requiring months and months for recovery, and still wears a prominent



scar, splitting her entire torso, from stem to stern, saying to all that something tried to kill her, but that she is the girl who lived. In the books, when Harry Potter is vexed by the presence of the one who has taken so much from him, his scarred forehead throbs. I wonder if our girls' scars must not pain them sometimes, but they say it is important for other girls to see them, to have joy and pride in their bodies, unashamed. Once Khalil Gibran wrote, "Out of suffering have emerged the strongest souls; the most massive characters are seared with scars."

There are many biblical stories of massive characters, seared with scars, but perhaps none so clearly marked by what he has suffered as Jesus in this story Rebecca read for us today. Apparently, the disciple Thomas has missed the previous post-death Jesus sightings, and so he becomes the exemplar of all of us who need some tangible evidence for our practice of faith, as he declares forthrightly, "Unless I see the prints of the nails and put my hand in the scar in his side, I will not believe." All through the post-crucifixion appearances, folks who encounter Jesus, seem only able to recognize him by the marks of his suffering, the phrase is repeated: "he showed them his hands and his side." It was their experience of the wounds that helped people believe.



John J. Thatamanil, associate professor of theology and world religions at Union Theological Seminary in New York writes, “to take this feature of John’s Gospel seriously is to suggest that even God incarnate does not survive this world unscathed. Life in time and history, life as a finite and vulnerable creature, leaves its marks. Tragically, those marks are unevenly distributed. As we are learning from the exorbitant Covid death rates among African Americans, systematic racism continues to crucify some while others shelter in relative safety. To use the language of the liberation theologian Ignacio Ellacuría, some among us are “the crucified peoples of history” while others profit from crucifying structures. A resurrected Christ who still bears his wounds is the only credible savior for our times. A Jesus who is not broken open to the world is a trivializing vision that fails to acknowledge the cost of life in a world replete with inequality. For those on the underside of this crisis, a Christ without the marks of his crucifixion would be unrecognizable. Resurrection gives us strength to bear our wounds, not erase them.”

I do wonder about the power of wounding, physical and soulful in all our lives. Harry Potter's scar is a mark of what he has suffered and survived—and serves in the story, as Jesus’ scars do in his, as an inescapable





connection to past trauma, a portal into the depths of the paradoxes that make up human existence: good and evil, shadow and light, pleasure and pain. Harry's arch-enemy, Voldemort, whose name, some fans believe, means "way of death," dwells within Harry as well as without. This enemy is obsessed with blood purity, annihilation of all he deems unworthy, and he is, according to Rowling, a "self-hating bully." Harry Potter's highest self struggles mightily as time after time, Voldemort proves to be stronger than wizardry, spells, weapons, anger, and revenge. Harry only grows into the ways of life and the power of love over time and through many dangers, toils, and snares, and in the company of courageous companions who offer him the power of their own scarred selves.

What about our magical life stories with their adventures and losses and cracked places of the soul? What if it is that the best version of ourselves is not demonstrated most clearly in perfection and strength—what if all have fallen short, what if there is a crack in everything, what if the Sunday face is not what we need to wear to church, but our scars? What if we help to heal each other by grace, through faith, and that not of ourselves, lest anyone of us should boast, as the old scripture puts it. Maybe we are joined on life's journey by those who are also moving as best



they can, inhaling tentatively because it still hurts to breathe, and picking up the tools to rebuild their best new life, but gently as the holes in the palms and the heart are still new and quicky. Wounded healers--that's what Carl Jung and Henri Nouwen called us.

Scars still mean that wounding has happened. Brokenness and loss are death-dealing and abound in this life and can separate us from each other as we withdraw to care for our own woundedness. I think that wounding and withdrawal are at the heart of at least some of what we are seeing in our world today. It is a spiritual and physical truth that being in this world and seeking to act in loving ways will expose us to wounding, to the giving and to the receiving of pain, just as they did in Jesus's life, in Harry Potter's life, in the life of all those who love. But the mysterious and paradoxical invitation inherent in wounds that break us and then grow in us new strengths is that they invite us out of our own vulnerabilities, wearing our wounds, and into new life. We are not being invited to seek out wounding...no, that will come readily enough when we live fully human lives in this world. Rather, the challenge is to allow our woundedness, endured for the sake of life and love and compassion to move us out beyond ourselves. How may our wounds serve as birth canals so that we are born



and reborn to new life, scarred though we may be, living authentic lives of love?

Wound care textbooks say, “Wounds heal by primary intention or secondary intention, depending upon whether the wound may be closed with sutures or left to repair, damage restored by the formation of connective tissue and the re-growth of skin.” Sometimes we have body or soul wounds that will close up by secondary intention--all on their own, like Hogwarts magic, but sometimes that healing takes a long, long time, bit by bit, filling in, smoothing out. It gives me hope when the cuts are raw to remember that in God's great wisdom, creation itself is bent toward healing, homeostasis, recovery after devastation. Sometimes, we get to participate with primary intention—actively helping one another heal through intent and actions of love, compassion, peace, forgiveness, equity, justice, and reparation, scarred up though we may be—able to help one another to live and to live again after grave injury, and even after death. In all the best of our stories, it is the experience and power of love that brings healing. Sometimes the scarring is deep and the wound healing may look like something else entirely--even like death itself. But the old stories of



Scripture and the Harry Potter books, too, include the important reminder, even in our woundedness: "The last enemy to be destroyed is death."

Finally, at the end of the Harry Potter saga, he finds a measure of healing. Before the release of the last book, *Deathly Hallows*, Rowling said on numerous occasions that the last word of the book would be "scar." But, if you have read it, you know that is not how it ends. The last words are "All was well." Similar to words uttered centuries before by the great Christian visionary, Julian of Norwich who said, "All shall be well, and all shall be well and all manner of thing shall be well." Why did Rowling change her plan? Here's what she says in a 2007 interview:

"For a long time the last line was something like: "Only those he loved could see the lightning scar." so they were the only ones who were really near enough to see it, even though other people were looking. And it also had a kind of ambiguity. Is the scar still really there? I changed it because I wanted a very concrete statement that Harry won. And that the scar, although it's still there, it's now just a scar."

I both regret and revere our scars. I regret the wounds and I revere the courage. I don't know the answer to this question, but I think about it a lot: our scars...could we have become ourselves without them? Amen.



**Prayer:** Spirit of the ones who lived, we are grateful for life and pray for strength to live in ways that are authentic, scarred and sacred. **Amen.**

## **CLOSING MUSIC “Standing in the Need of Prayer”**

**Shirley Hand** [https://youtu.be/hMbCKT\\_BTE8](https://youtu.be/hMbCKT_BTE8)

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### **Prayer concerns**

- ❖ Leslee V-R., recovering from recent hospitalization
- ❖ Mel Lee recovering from surgery
- ❖ Eleanor R-B.’s brother-in-law, Martin and nieces, Kristine and Samantha, ongoing health concerns
- ❖ Guy & Melody H., ongoing health concerns
- ❖ Charlotte H., hospice care
- ❖ David P., esophageal cancer - undergoing chemo
- ❖ Don K., treatments for cancer
- ❖ Doug R., treatments for cancer
- ❖ Diane B., health concerns
- ❖ Steve, Susan’s cousin, cancer recurrence
- ❖ Larry, Marty K.’s brother, cancer recurrence
- ❖ Ron S., health concerns
- ❖ Jan K., health concerns
- ❖ Jamila, Jan & Mark’s friend, recurrence of cancer
- ❖ Church members having scans, tests, awaiting surgeries
- ❖ All those grieving losses of loved ones from COVID, other illnesses, accidents, and violence
- ❖ Students, parents, teachers, and administrators



- ❖ Healthcare and other essential workers
- ❖ Those living with mental illness, domestic violence, and addiction challenges
- ❖ Those who have lost loved ones, possessions, homes, and hope
- ❖ Those exhausted and endangered by systemic violence and racism
- ❖ The nations of the world
- ❖ Those affected by food insecurity, war, and oppression
- ❖ The Earth, effects of global climate change.

## **Announcements**

- ❖ Annual Meetings for our Churches will be happening as we look back on the challenging church year, 2020! Look for the yearly reports and proposed budgets to be sent to you in advance.
  - Church of the Isles: TODAY, January 24, 2021 at 3:00 PM. We will meet via Zoom and in person, outside the doors to the sanctuary, socially distanced and masked.
  - Trinity: January 31, 2021 at 12:00 PM. We will meet via Zoom and in person, outside at Trinity's courtyard, socially distanced and masked.

**COTI BOOK GROUP's** January read is *Pushing the Bear: A Novel of the Trail of Tears* by Diane Glancy. There are copies of the book in the church library, and also available via Kindle and Audible. "In a novel that retains the complexity, immediacy, and indirection of a poem, Glancy brings to life the Cherokees' 900-mile forced removal to Oklahoma in 1838 and give us a powerful witness to one of the most shameful episodes in



American history.” Join us **January 31 at 4:00 PM via Zoom**. Email Marty to sign up: [martysynnott@yahoo.com](mailto:martysynnott@yahoo.com)