

Grace Devotion

Week of March 9th 2025

Fred Young

All those days you felt like dust,
like dirt, as if all you had to do was turn your face
toward the wind and be scattered to the four corners
or swept away by the smallest breath as insubstantial—
Did you not know what the Holy One can do with dust?
This is the day we freely say we are scorched.
This is the hour we are marked by
what has made it through the burning.
This is the moment we ask for the
blessing that lives within the ancient ashes,
that makes its home inside the soil of this sacred earth.
So let us be marked not for sorrow.
And let us be marked not for shame.
Let us be marked not for false humility
or for thinking we are less
than we are but for claiming what
God can do within the dust,
within the dirt, within the stuff of
which the world is made,
and the stars that blaze in our bones,
and the galaxies that spiral
inside the smudge we bear.

—Jan Richardson

Circle of Grace: A Book of Blessings for the Seasons

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“Create in me a clean heart, O God, and put a new and right spirit within me.”

Psalm 51:10

Ash Wednesday, March 5th, will open the liturgical season of Lent. For the next 40 days, Christians around the world will prepare themselves; emotionally, physically and spiritually for the celebration of our highest Holy Day, Easter. Lent is a time of repentance and contemplation. When we are invited to look deep within ourselves to see what God already knows about us.

A few lines of the poet's words made me pause. *"Did you not know what the Holy One can do with dust?"* There have been many moments in my life when I have felt like a gust of wind could take me away. And yet, in those moments, I have felt the warmth of an unknown but familiar touch on my face. I'd like to think it is the presence of a loved one, or the Spirit's gentle nudge. On really bad days, there's room enough for both because a lot can be done with dust.

The other line which brings a smile to my face, *"This is the hour we are marked by what has made it through the burning."* These words serve as a reminder that, like a phoenix rising from the ashes, God remains! No matter who you are or where you are or what is happening on your journey, God remains! Comfort we might need as we discover, like the psalmist suggests, what truly lies within our hearts.

Happy Lenten journey!



Things to Consider:

1. What speaks to you in the poem?
2. What is the smudge you bear this day?

PRAYER: Forgiving and life giving God, wash our hearts and give us the courage needed to share our love with others. Amen.

Grace United Church of Christ

March 9, 2025

10AM Worship

Brunch Around the Cross (Take 2)

Town Hall #6

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GATHERING MUSIC

WELCOME AND ANNOUNCEMENTS

PRELUDE

****OPENING SONG #4 "Soul on Fire"**

****Lighting of the Christ Candle**

"We light this candle inviting the Holy Spirit into our lives and into this room!"

****CALL TO WORSHIP**

This is the day that God has made;

Let us rejoice and be glad in it.

O come, let us worship and bow down;

Let us kneel before God, our Maker.

PRAYER OF REFLECTION AND GROWTH

God of the Road, we journey together into the wilderness again. In this time filled with new spiritual practices and studies, our minds will be "tested." Doubts will creep in as we seek your presence.

At times, we will slide away from our responsibilities to care for our neighbors.

"Keep awake," you call to us. And so we ask ourselves:

Will hurtful words from others taunt us, and inhibit our growth with you?

Will negative images in our minds draw us away from our practices?

Will we snooze to the needs of this world

and ignore the pain in our communities?

Deliver us from the temptations of this world

and the tests that we impose upon ourselves. Amen.

MOMENT FOR SILENT REFLECTION

ASSURANCE OF GOD'S GRACE

GRACE CHOIR: *“Not My Will, But Yours Be Done”*

VIDEO ON COMMUNION
Sharing of the Bread

**HYMN #281 *“The Bond of Love”*

**PASSING OF THE PEACE OF CHRIST
“May the Peace of Christ be with you!”

JOYS AND CONCERNS
PRAYER/LORD’S PRAYER

**HYMN #190 *“You are Washed in the Blood”*

SCRIPTURES Psalm 91:1-3, 9-16 (Responsive)

You who live in the shelter of the Most High,
who abide in the shadow of the Almighty,
²will say to the Lord, “My refuge and my fortress;
my God, in whom I trust.”

**³For he will deliver you from the snare
of the fowler and from the deadly pestilence;
⁹Because you have made the Lord your refuge,
the Most High your dwelling place,
¹⁰no evil shall befall you, no scourge come near your tent.**

¹¹For he will command his angels concerning
you to guard you in all your ways.

**¹²On their hands they will bear you up,
so that you will not dash your foot against a stone.**

¹³You will tread on the lion and the adder,
the young lion and the serpent you will trample under foot.

¹⁴Those who love me, I will deliver; I will protect those who know my name.

¹⁵When they call to me, I will answer them; I will be with them in trouble, I will rescue
them and honor them.

¹⁶With long life I will satisfy them, and show them my salvation.

Luke 4:1-13

CHURCH PROFILE ACTIVITY

(Grace's Life of Faith!)

1. What would excite you about hearing, seeing and sharing God's love?
2. How are you fed and nourished at Grace?
3. How does Grace share God's love or fear?
4. Talk about the difference between being Christian and being Christ like.

****THANK YOU FOR YOUR GIFTS AND OFFERINGS**

****OFFERTORY RESPONSE #625 Doxology**

****PRAYER OF DEDICATION (Unison)**

**As people who have passed through the waters of baptism,
let us make our grateful offering to God our Redeemer. Amen.**

SHARING OF THE CUP OF BLESSING

****SONG #2 *"Your Grace is Enough"***

****FINAL BLESSING**

****CHORAL BENEDICTION**

****POSTLUDE**

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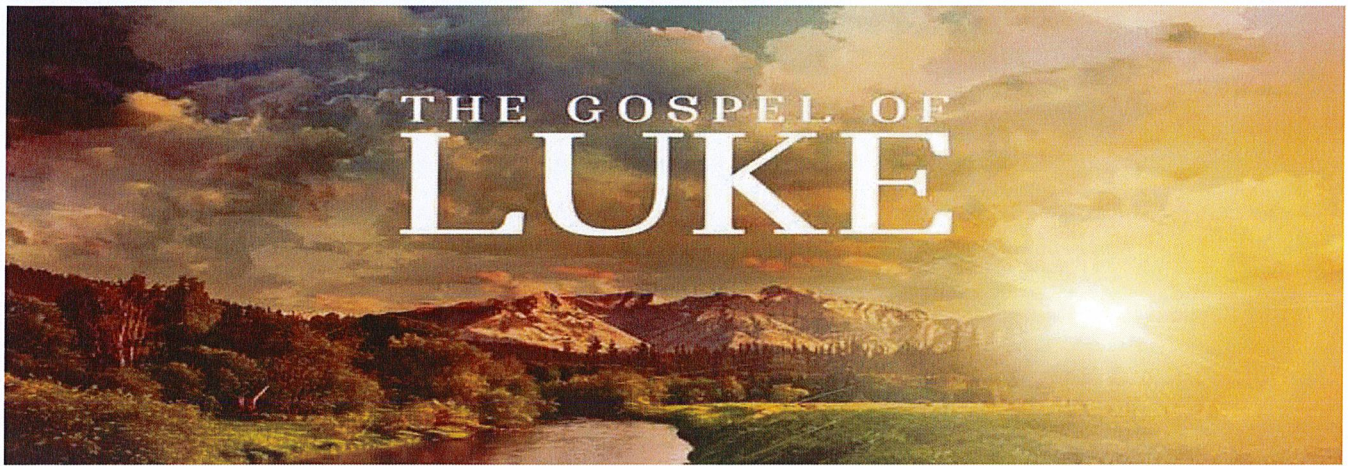
PSALM 91

GOD'S PROMISE OF PROTECTION

- SHADOW
- WILL
- DELIVER
- FEATHERS
- NIGHT
- DESTRUCTION
- THOUSAND
- REWARD
- HABITATION

- EVIL
- ANGELS
- AGAINST
- SHALT
- THEREFORE
- SHALL
- SALVATION

Y Z V E P D J U X Y R P S Z D S K N
A U V G R Y Y T V C X A B R L W N X
I I A A L S E E L J L A F J T W O C
L Y W L H M J D E V U G C I W C I
R E J A P N H D A N B A R Z A B T A
R C D N I G H T O L G I E L M C C T
C O T N A C I I K D T N V N M T U S
W L U L W N A E C O T L O L O T F
N P L W N A E S U H E B X E C W Z S G
W I R W I F U R R O I Z E S J B G T W N L D I
W R B R O I H O X S M H L Z F I R W H Z C
O A I H O C B K Q H J T E A V P I S Z C
H S T D C C Y D U L Y A G T L A H S N
U D D I T H E R E F O O Z Z F A D O I G
A Q S E W T T X O O Z Z F A D O I G
Y K W V P I F L S H A L L K G O Y N



Luke 4

A I C M A U L I B G D C Q E Y D N I L B D K M Y
 H E W I E W O D I W C O T M P J B Y D P X M W E
 D M A X C G S B J K K U I A V O N I U O H K P Y
 B C T T Y W A N N E C J R F A W S P H U N I U I
 Q Q J V K P R H Z I O S Z T J H X X A E L B N I
 S H I X H L K Q Q R N O N H D M T M U U G R Q P
 B S Z Z T U C P D H A V Z E Z O A O L G T N S O
 T F M E A F M A R M A C T U U Z E G J O E R D S
 N N V Y R A N H B C M R N J E P U B T G M V M S
 O V J W W S G O G Q A I D D C S Q O Z A P V X E
 T C I R M T Z B Z E N J B L A B K Z F N T G E N
 F A M R A H J W H T B D E B X A C Q V Y E W K R
 H P J V V M P N O D E G Y F B A Q E C S D W S E
 E E B M K P E V G H O O K A P M C H U N G R Y D
 T R B O V K U M C Y M W R T D H N C S G D Y W L
 D N X C O W L A Y H P V I F Y H T E R A Z A N I
 V A Y R J P E P L D Q V A W E Y B N S W F L U W
 D U B I C R T E W P E T P G L V Z A Q D Y N O W
 N M Z K P Z O S I S T O D X D C E N X P C U A R
 L M F Z R K P N F O W W S C Q I B R E L P O W K
 K P F X K R W J L E A I G O K Y R G E Y N P D J
 C Q U H D U Z A R S U F H Q Z C B A O E U B M K
 I Q V R C O O M I Z Z Z R A Y P N Z M D Z Y H G
 A A S Q Q C H H V K V D B B R U I S E D F M X O

brokenhearted	wilderness	synagogue	capernaum	preached
nazareth	captives	unclean	tempted	bruised
naaman	jordan	hungry	amazed	wrath
widow	power	fever	blind	fast
fame				