



Central Square Congregational Church, UCC

71 Central Square, Bridgewater MA 02324 – (508) 697-6016 – cscucc.org

*“We are a Christian community of people who are reaching out to our neighbors,
at home and abroad, sharing our faith and our resources.”*

*We are delighted to
have you in Worship today!*

*In our church, no matter who you are or where you
are on life’s journey, you are welcome here!*

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CSCC Staff

Ministers:

All the People!

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Rich Sullivan

February 21, 2021 – 10:00AM

Prelude

Welcome & Announcements

Introit

Call to Worship (based on Mark 1:9-15, Luke 4:1-13)

After he was baptized by John,

Jesus went by himself to the wilderness

where he was tempted.

Forty days in the desert, Jesus was tempted

to become relevant, spectacular, and powerful.

Today, we begin to journey with Jesus through the season of Lent,

which brings us to face some of our own weaknesses and temptations.

Let us worship God and walk the journey together,

seeking the spirit as our guide and companion along the way.

Prayer of Invocation

God of All Things, you know our hearts.

You have knitted our inmost being

and you know our deepest desires, fears, and worries.

Help us to journey during this Lenten season

into a new awareness of your presence in our lives.

Save us from our own temptations, so that we may more freely follow you.

Through our worship today,

remind us of our place in the nature of all things.

In Christ we pray,

Amen.

Opening Hymn: "O God, How We Have Wandered"

LENT

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Kevin Nichols, 1980; alt. *Luke 15:11-32; 2 Cor. 5:16-20*

1 O God, how we have wan - dered and hid - den from your face;
2 And now at length dis - cern - ing the e - vil that we do,
3 O God of all the liv - ing, both ban - ished and re - stored,

In fool - ish-ness have squan - dered your leg - a - cy of grace.
By faith we are re - turn - ing with hope and trust in you.
Com - pas - sion-ate, for - giv - ing, our peace and hope as - sured.

But how, in ex - ile dwell - ing, we turn with fear and shame,
In haste you come to meet us, and home re - joic - ing bring,
Grant now that our trans - gress - ing, our faith-less-ness may cease.

As dis - tant but com - pell - ing, you call us each by name.
In glad-ness there to greet us with calf and robe and ring.
Stretch out your hand in bless - ing, in par - don, and in peace.

The tune for this contemporary text appears five times in J. S. Bach's St. Matthew Passion, and first appeared as a hymn setting in the early 1800s. It has an ecumenical history reaching back many centuries. Originally it was a German love song.

Tune: PASSION CHORALE 7.6.7.6.D.
(HERZLICH TUT MICH VERLANGEN)
Melody by Hans Leo Hassler, 1601
Harm. J. S. Bach, 1729
For another harmonization, see 179

Epistle Reading: 1 Peter 3:13-22

Now who will harm you if you are eager to do what is good? But even if you do suffer for doing what is right, you are blessed. Do not fear what they fear, and do not be intimidated, but in your hearts sanctify Christ as Lord. Always be ready to make your defense to anyone who demands from you an accounting for the hope that is in you; yet do it with gentleness and reverence.

Keep your conscience clear, so that, when you are maligned, those who abuse you for your good conduct in Christ may be put to shame. For it is better to suffer for doing good, if suffering should be God's will, than to suffer for doing evil. For Christ also suffered for sins once for all, the righteous for the unrighteous, in order to bring you to God. He was put to death in the flesh, but made alive in the spirit, in which also he went and made a proclamation to the spirits in prison, who in former times did not obey, when God waited patiently in the days of Noah, during the building of the ark, in which a few, that is, eight persons, were saved through water. And baptism, which this prefigured, now saves you—not as a removal of dirt from the body, but as an appeal to God for a good conscience, through the resurrection of Jesus Christ, who has gone into heaven and is at the right hand of God, with angels, authorities, and powers made subject to him.

Musical Meditation

Gospel Reading: Mark 1:9-15

⁹In those days Jesus came from Nazareth of Galilee and was baptized by John in the Jordan. ¹⁰And just as he was coming up out of the water, he saw the heavens torn apart and the Spirit descending like a dove on him. ¹¹And a voice came from heaven, "You are my Son, the Beloved; with you I am well pleased." ¹²And the Spirit immediately drove him out into the wilderness. ¹³He was in the wilderness forty days, tempted by Satan; and he was with the wild beasts; and the angels waited on him. ¹⁴Now after John was arrested, Jesus came to Galilee, proclaiming the good news of God, ¹⁵and saying, "The time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God has come near; repent, and believe in the good news."

Message

Prayer for the First Sunday of Lent

Holy God, on this first Sunday of Lent, we journey together into a season of repentance, of self-examination, of silence and waiting for the leading of your Holy Spirit. Through your Spirit you lead us into the temptations of Jesus, forty days in the wilderness, where our lives are laid bare, and we come face to face with our desires for power—power over our lives and the lives of our friends and enemies and maybe even power over you.

Open us to your grace and mercy, your love and provision, as we confront temptations and the demons that try to run our world and our lives. Give us the power of your Son that we may also throw off the insidious forces of selfishness and pride, the forces that keep us from confronting the truth about our lives and the world.

During this season of Lent, shatter our illusions, save us from ourselves, and open us to the new life of your Holy Spirit—a life of faith, hope, and love. As we let your Spirit lead us into repentance, may we discover the goodness and fullness of life in your kingdom of peace. In the words of the Psalmist, may we find in your presence a refuge, a dwelling place, a place of rest (Ps. 91).

May we also resist the temptation to find our rest in places that muffle the cries of injustice—the desperation of the needy, the anger of the wronged, and the despair of the hopeless. May those voices echo in our Lenten silence, for the call of your Spirit also speaks through those voices. As the apostle Paul says, your word is near us, on our lips and in our hearts (Romans 10). May we use this season of Lent to empty ourselves of all that separates us from God. All of this we pray in the name of Jesus who taught us to pray saying...

The Lord's Prayer

(Please use the wording that is most meaningful for you.)

*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 sins,
as we forgive those who sin against us.
And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil.
For thine is the kingdom, the power and the glory forever. Amen.*

Musical Meditation

Benediction

Postlude



• Rev. Beth has prepared a **LENTEN STUDY GUIDE** which is available on the church website.

Lent

• The **LENTEN BOOK STUDY** is "Lent in Plain Sight". See cscucc.org/events for more details and how to sign up!

*Do you need a meal, a call, spiritual care, or even just a prayer?
Contact the Office, a Deacon, or a member of our Care Team by emailing
office@cscucc.com*



CSCC Deacons

Deb Sorgman – debsorgman@gmail.com
Lynn Pietras – lsypie@aol.com

CSCC Care Team

Carol Chaffee
Phoebe Hogg
Bev Mitchell
John Scott
Rev. Beth Stotts

To contact Rev. Beth, call the church office at 508-697-6016 or email her at csccpastor@hotmail.com.

Contributions Welcomed!

During this time, we encourage you to continue your support of CSCC, to the degree you are able. We know this may be a trying time for you financially as well as emotionally, so please know that we understand if you are not able to meet your usual giving goals. But for those who can, remember the church has ongoing expenses that need to be attended to.

Offerings can be made in any of the following ways: * Checks can be mailed to the church (71 Central Square, Bridgewater, MA 02324) * Bill-pay through your bank can be set up for one-time or recurring payments * Payments can be made via the Paypal link at the top of our website home page (www.cscucc.org).

If you have any questions, you can email the Treasurer directly and confidentially at treasurer@cscucc.com or call the church office at 508-697-6016.