

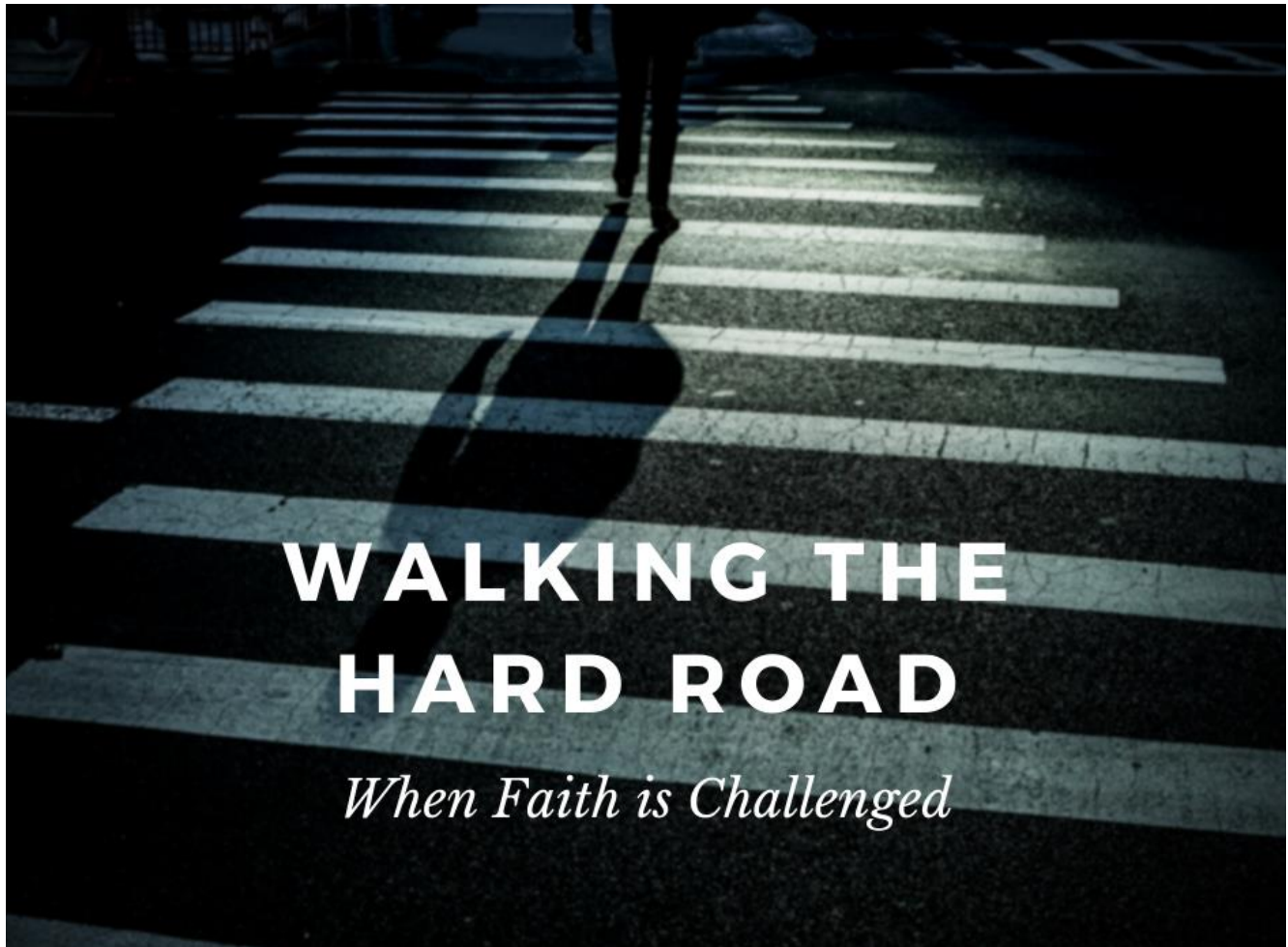
Lake Merritt **United Methodist Church**



An Inclusive Christian Community of Oakland

Sustaining a vibrant and growing congregation through Christian spiritual transformation, making our work and the church relevant and visible.

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WALKING THE HARD ROAD

When Faith is Challenged

When Bad Things Happen

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March 23, 2025
Third Sunday in Lent
CELEBRATION OF WORSHIP

Prelude

I Need Thee Every Hour

Robert Lowry
arr. Mark Hayes

Welcome

Rev. Sunae Cho, *Pastor*

Opening Prayer (responsive)

Kathleen Bell

Leader: The season of Lent can be barren and lonely,

People: But God goes with us through the wild wilderness.

Leader: Our lives are lived in seasons of transitions and transformations.

People: Lent is a time to ponder God's providence and persistence.

Leader: Together, we seek fruitfulness, for it has been promised to us.

People: The barrenness of Lent will give way to the fruitfulness of Easter.

Leader: In this season of penitence and pondering, let us gather before God.

People: We come, as a family, to wait for the Lord with strength and courage.

All: Come, let us worship God! Amen.

saintandy.org

Opening Song (organ)

(Please stand if able)

When We Are Called to Sing Your Praise

TFWS 2216

- 1. When we are called to sing your praise
with hearts so filled with pain
that we would rather sit and weep
or stand up to complain,
remind us, God, you understand
the burdens that we bear;
you, too, have walked the shadowed way
and known our deep despair.**
- 2. When we are called to sing your praise
and cannot find our voice,
because our losses leave us now
no reason to rejoice,
remind us, God, that you accept
our sad laments in prayer;
you, too, have walked the shadowed way
and known our deep despair.**
- 3. When we are called to sing your praise
and life ahead looks grim,
still give us faith and hope enough
to break forth in a hymn,
a thankful hymn, great God of Love,
that you are everywhere;
you walk the shadowed way with us
and keep us in your care.**

Children's Moment

Margaret LeWright

Scripture

Luke 13:1-9 (NIV)

Kathleen Bell

Some who were present on that occasion told Jesus about the Galileans whom Pilate had killed while they were offering sacrifices. He replied, "Do you think the suffering of these Galileans proves that they were more sinful than all the other Galileans? No, I tell you, but unless you change your hearts and lives, you will die just as they did. What about those eighteen people who were killed when the tower of Siloam fell on them? Do you think that they were more guilty of wrongdoing than everyone else who lives in Jerusalem? No, I tell you, but unless you change your hearts and lives, you will die just as they did."

Jesus told this parable: "A man owned a fig tree planted in his vineyard. He came looking for fruit on it and found none. He said to his gardener, 'Look, I've come looking for fruit on this fig tree for the past three years, and I've never found any. Cut it down! Why should it continue depleting the soil's nutrients?' The gardener responded, 'Lord, give it one more year, and I will dig around it and give it fertilizer. Maybe it will produce fruit next year; if not, then you can cut it down.'"

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

All: Thanks be to God. Amen.

Sermon

When Bad Things Happen

Chris Logan

Response

Canticle of Peace
LMUMC Choir

Joseph Clokey

Prayers & Gratitudes

***Nothing can trouble, nothing can frighten,
those who seek God shall never go wanting.
Nothing can trouble, nothing can frighten,
God alone fills us.***

The Lord's Prayer

Ecumenical Version (UMH 894)

*Please feel free to use the name of your choice for God that speaks to your soul.

Our *Creator in heaven, hallowed be your name, your kingdom come, your will be done, on earth as in heaven. Give us today our daily bread. Forgive us our sins as we forgive those who sin against us. Save us from the time of trial and deliver us from evil. For the kingdom, the power, and the glory are yours now and forever. Amen.

Passing the Peace of Christ

Living as the Church

Offering & Thanksgiving Song

How Shall I Come Before the Lord

W&S 3124

1. How shall I come before the Lord
and bow myself with heart outpoured?
And shall I come with offering?
What shall I give? What shall I bring?

2. Will finest gifts bring God's delight?
Will wealth bring favor in God's sight?
What must we be? What must we do?
What does the Lord require of you?

3. Let Justice shine in all your ways.
Let loving kindness rule you days,
that, as this earthly path you trod,
you shall walk humbly with your God.

Closing Song (organ)

(Please stand if able)

My Life Flows On

TFWS 2212

1. My life flows on in endless song,
above earth's lamentation.
I hear the clear, though far off hymn
that hails a new creation.

No storm can shake my inmost calm
while to that Rock I'm clinging.
Since love is Lord of heaven and earth,
how can I keep from singing?

2. Through all the tumult and the strife,
I hear that music ringing.
It finds an echo in my soul.
How can I keep from singing?

No storm can shake my inmost calm
while to that Rock I'm clinging.
Since love is Lord of heaven and earth,
how can I keep from singing?

3. What though my joys and comforts die?
I know my Savior liveth.
What though the darkness gather round?
Songs in the night he giveth.

No storm can shake my inmost calm
while to that Rock I'm clinging.
Since love is Lord of heaven and earth,
how can I keep from singing?

4. The peace of Christ makes fresh my heart,
a fountain ever springing!
All things are mine since I am his!
How can I keep from singing?

No storm can shake my inmost calm
while to that Rock I'm clinging.
Since love is Lord of heaven and earth,
how can I keep from singing?

Closing Prayer (responsive)

Kathleen Bell

Leader: May we trust that the God of the cosmos is at work here,

**People: That God is fertilizing the soil,
That God is planting roots,
That God is growing fruit yet to be tasted.**

Leader: And until that promised day,
when the fig tree stands tall and swords are beaten into plowshares,
even when our work does not bear fruit,
even when the soil grows dry and cracked,
when all seems hopeless on earth,

All: May we trust that the God of the cosmos is still at work here. Amen.

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Postlude

My Father Watches Over Me

Charles Gabriel
arr. Calvin Taylor