

First Congregational United Church of Christ
“Where No One Is a Stranger”
315 S. Moore Street – Algona, IA 50511
515-295-2845
Fourth Sunday in Lent
March 27, 2022

PRELUDE

RINGING OF THE BELL

GREETINGS, GOOD NEWS, ANNOUNCEMENTS, JESUS ENCOUNTERS

*CALL TO WORSHIP (read responsively)

One: Like a loving Father, God offers us freedom to choose our own path.

Many: In God’s freedom, we are new creation.

One: Like a merciful mother, God offers us compassion when we lose our way.

Many: In God’s mercy, we are a new creation.

One: Like a forgiving Parent, God welcomes us home with open arms.

Many: In God’s embrace, we are a new creation.

One: Come! Let’s worship the one who makes all things new.

*OPENING SONG “God of Creation” #27

*OPENING PRAYER (prayed together)

Merciful God, you seek the lost sheep of your pasture, you call out all who have strayed. As the father welcomed the prodigal son home, receive us back into your loving arms. Your steadfast love knows no bounds. Your loving embrace is always there for us. Be with us in our time of worship, that we may feel your presence and know that you are our true home. Amen.

TIME FOR THE CHILDREN AND YOUNG AT HEART

CALL TO CONFESSION

PRAYER OF CONFESSION (prayed together)

On this very day, Waiting God, we admit all the lengths to which we go so we might avoid you. You offer us a place of joy and wonder, yet we would hide in places where temptation waits. You invite us to feast on your grace and peace, but we stubbornly refuse, because you also welcome those we call 'outsiders.' We are quick to see all the mistakes that those around us make, but hope you will ignore our foolish choices. Celebrating God, before we come to our senses, we find you running towards us,

sweeping us up in your arms, tears of grace mingling with our cries of confession, a mighty river washing away our sinful ways to restore us to new life. In Jesus Christ, our Lord and Savior, we find no limitations on your grace, no reservations about your love, but a feast that overflows with wonder, a place we can finally call home. Amen.

SILENCE FOR PERSONAL REFLECTION AND CONFESSION

WORDS OF ASSURANCE (read responsively)

One: God rolls away everything that stands in our way - our past, our sin, our pain, our hesitation, and reshapes us into new people living in the new creation. What wonderful grace. We are forgiven!

Many: Broken, we are made whole; lost, we are brought home; empty, we are filled with songs of gladness. We rejoice and give thanks to God who has graced us with mercy. Amen.

SHARING THE FIRST SCRIPTURE READING Psalm 32

*AN AFFIRMATION OF FAITH (read together)

We belong to God, creator of all that is and all that is to come, abundant provider of the gifts in this life and the gifts in our own hearts. It is God alone who gives life, who is generous beyond measure with grace and blessing.

We follow Jesus, whom God sent to teach and heal, to show us a new way of living, with love and trust and courage, with joy and generosity. In this faith he gave of himself, even his very life. He was crucified and buried; yet God raised him from death, and he lives among us, and grants his spirit to us.

We live by that Holy Spirit, and entrust ourselves to its guidance and empowerment. As members of the church, the Body of Christ, we devote ourselves to lives of love, rejoicing in the power of forgiveness, the reality of resurrection, and the mystery of eternal life. Amen.

*GLORIA PATRI #734

FOCUS SCRIPTURE Luke 15:1-3, 11b-32 shared from the *Good News Bible*

MESSAGE “Right Where We Left It” Pastor Chris

PRAYERS OF THE PEOPLE/THE LORD’S PRAYER PRESENTING OUR GIFTS

OFFERTORY

*DOXOLOGY Words #44

***PRAYER OF DEDICATION**

(prayed together)

God of overflowing abundance, you have given us so much. We rejoice in our ability to present our gifts that they may reach those who need it most. May we continue to give freely of our worldly riches, just as Jesus gave freely of heavenly riches. Amen.

***CLOSING SONG**

“Love Divine, All Loves Excelling”

#358

GOING FORTH WITH THE PEACE OF CHRIST

POSTLUDE

*Indicates all who are able please stand

The Call to Worship, Opening Prayer, and Offering Prayer of Dedication (adapted) are by B.J. Beu from *The Abingdon Worship Annual 2022* edited by Mary J. Scifres and B.J. Beu. The Call to Confession, Prayer of Confession, and Words of Assurance, are from *Lectionary Liturgies* by Thom M. Shuman. The Affirmation of Faith (adapted) by Steve Garnaas-Holmes.

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Organist:	Liz Reynolds
Lector:	David Burrows
Worship Leader:	Pastor Chris

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March Radio Sponsor: Ginny Buchanan

Birthdays: April: 1-Jan Woodyard; 2-Harold Reynolds

Today, March 27: 10:00 am. – Worship
 Sunday School
 Coffee
 One Great Hour of Sharing offering

Tuesday, March 29: 9:30 – 11:30 am.- Pastor Chris at Feed Mill
 2:30 – Good Sam Bible Study
 April/May Newsletter deadline

Sunday, April 3: 10:00 am. – Worship with Sacrament of communion
 Sunday School
 Coffee
 Food Pantry

On Sunday, April 10th Palm Sunday Worship
 Congregational Meeting worship to approve our WISE Church Covenant
 Palm Sunday Brunch following Congregational Meeting

“Our Daily Bread” devotion for March, April and May is here. It may be picked up in the Fellowship entry.



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