

First Congregational United Church of Christ
"Where No One Is a Stranger"
First Sunday in Lent
February 26, 2023

PRELUDE

RINGING OF THE BELL

GREETINGS, GOOD NEWS, ANNOUNCEMENTS, JESUS ENCOUNTERS

*CALL TO WORSHIP (read responsively)

One: Temptation surrounds us every day.

Many: Happy are those whose transgressions are forgiven.

One: Opportunities to stray litter our path.

Many: Happy are those whose sin is covered.

One: Though we stumble and fall, God's mercy picks us up.

Many: God's grace brushes us off.

One: Be glad in God and rejoice.

Many: God's love meets us here.

*OPENING SONG "Lord, Who Throughout These Forty Days" #252

*OPENING PRAYER (prayed together)

Divine One, we are thankful for the restoration that can be found in you. Your presence is welcomed here. We delight in knowing that you want to be wherever we are. Because you are love, you show up for us. In this space, may we delight in your assurance that all you made is good. Amen.

TIME FOR THE CHILDREN AND YOUNG AT HEART

CALL TO CONFESSION

PRAYER OF CONFESSION (prayed together)

God of Eden's morning, we know that Lent is a hard time for us. In a culture which showcases success, you call us to sacrifice ourselves for others. In a world which promotes power, you invite us to deny ourselves. In a society which encourages us to 'feel good,' you point us to the struggles of siblings, the burdens others bear. By your mercy, forgive us, Hope of our lives. Remind us that as we journey with Jesus, we learn the steps of discipleship. As we listen to his call to obedience, may we learn how to say 'no' to all that tempts us. As we see his suffering, may we live out the good news which has come to us through our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ. Amen.

A MOMENT FOR SILENT REFLECTION AND CONFESSION

WORDS OF ASSURANCE (read responsively)

One: By ourselves, we would be easily controlled by sin and temptation. But God has given us the free gift of grace, and so we are set free to live as disciples.

Many: This is the gift which brings us hope; this is the gift which brings us joy; this is the gift which brings us life. Thanks be to God, we are forgiven! Amen.

FIRST SCRIPTURE READING Psalm 32

*AN AFFIRMATION OF FAITH (read together)

We believe that our lives are held within the encircling love of God, who knows our names and recognizes our deepest needs.

We believe that Jesus is the divine Child of the living God, and that his grace is like living waters that can never be exhausted.

We believe in the birthing, renewing, enabling Spirit of God who yearns over our welfare as a mother yearns for her child.

We believe that God is in the arid desert as well as in green pastures, and that hard times and disciplines are also loving gifts.

We believe that our journey has a purpose and a destination, and that our path leads to a human glory we cannot yet imagine.

We believe that in the church we are fellow pilgrims on the road, and that we are called to love one another as God loves us.

This is our faith and we are humbled to profess in Jesus the Christ. Amen.

*GLORIA PATRI #734

Glory be to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Ghost: as it was in the beginning, is now, and ever shall be, world with-out end. A-men, A-men.

FOCUS SCRIPTURE Matthew 4:1-11 read from the *Good News Bible*

MESSAGE "Easier Said Than Done" Pastor Chris

PRAYERS OF THE PEOPLE/THE LORD'S PRAYER

PRESENTING OUR GIFTS

OFFERTORY

*DOXOLOGY Words #44

Praise God from whom all blessings flow; praise God, all creatures here below;
Praise God above, you heavenly host; praise Father, Son and Holy Ghost. Amen.

***PRAYER OF DEDICATION** (prayed together)

Divine One, receive our gifts from the open hearts from which we give them. Thank you for blessing us with gifts to share, so that good works can abound. We offer our gifts gladly. May what we give be used to meet the needs of all. Amen.

***CLOSING SONG** “Amazing Grace” #422

GOING FORTH WITH THE PEACE OF CHRIST

POSTLUDE

The Call to Worship is by B.J. Beu from *The Abingdon Worship Annual, 2023* edited by Mary Scifres and B.J. Beu. The Opening Prayer and Offering Prayer of Dedication are from *Worship Ways: Worship Resources for the United Church of Christ*. The Call to Confession, Prayer of Confession and Words of Assurance are from *Lectioary Liturgies* by Thom M. Shuman. The Affirmation of Faith is from *Traveling to Easter with Jesus as our Guide*, posted on the website of Patmos Abbey—The Order of Saint Columba. <http://www.patmosabbey.org/>

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Worship Leader: Pastor Chris Burtnett

Lector: David Burrow

Organist: Vicki Merchlewitz

February Radio Sponsor: David Burrow in memory of George & Betty Burrow

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Birthdays: February 28- Charlie Hines; March 1-Scott Buchanan

Today, February 26: 10 am.- Worship
Sunday School
Coffee

Tuesday, February 28: 9:30-11am. -Pastor at Feed Mill

Wednesday 1: Meals on Wheels

Thursday, March 2: Meals on Wheels

Friday, March 3: Meals on Wheels

Sunday, March 5: 10:00 am. – Worship with Communion
Sunday School
Coffee
Food Pantry
Indoor Clean-up after worship, with lunch

The monthly radio sponsor sign-up sheet for 2023 is posted on the bulletin board in the parlor. The months that are open are: May, July, September, October and November.

The March, April, May issue of “Our Daily Bread” is here and may be picked up in the Fellowship entry.

Meals on Wheels: The first two weeks in March our church is scheduled for all 3 routes. A sign-up sheet is posted in the parlor.



*First Congregational
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