

Third Sunday in Lent

March 23, 2025



We Gather in Response to God's Invitation

THE GIFT OF MUSIC TO GATHER US

WELCOME, ANNOUNCEMENTS AND AFFIRMATION OF MISSION

We declare ourselves to be a Christ-centered Open and Affirming Congregation, welcoming persons into full membership and participation in the Body of Christ regardless of race, age, gender, sexual orientation, gender identities and expressions, ability, culture, economic status, ethnicity, or family composition.

We recognize that there are differences among us, but believe that we can love alike even though we may not think alike. We proclaim this covenant of welcome to all who have known the pain of exclusion or discrimination in church and society. We invite all people to join us in our faith journey toward greater love, understanding, and mutual respect.

*CALL TO WORSHIP (*RESPONSIVE*)

**An asterisk indicates when the people stand in body or spirit.*

One: You who are thirsty:

All: **Come to receive living water.**

You who are hungry:

Taste the bread that satisfies.

You who long for connection:

Receive the fellowship of this community, and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit.

You who search for love:

Experience the love of Jesus expressed in music, prayer, community, word and action.

May this time of worship fill and refresh you.

Let us worship God together!

Because of who YOU are and where YOU are on life's journey, YOU ARE WELCOME HERE!

2173 Stoverstown Rd. / Spring Grove, PA 17362 / 717-225-6357

*OPENING PRAYER (TOGETHER)

Holy One, draw us into community and connection. Let us receive you and our companions in worship. Keep us open to the unexpected, so that we may perceive your work in the world, and your work in us. Amen.

*SINGING TOGETHER:

“Leaning on the Everlasting Arms” Brown #87

**What a fellowship, what a joy divine,
Leaning on the everlasting arms;
What a blessedness, what a peace is mine,
Leaning on the everlasting arms.**

*Refrain: Leaning, leaning, Safe and secure from all alarms;
Leaning, leaning, Leaning on the everlasting arms.*

**O how sweet to walk in this pilgrim way,
Leaning on the everlasting arms;
O how bright the path grows from day to day,
Leaning on the everlasting arms. [Refrain]**

**What have I to dread, what have I to fear,
Leaning on the everlasting arms?
I have blessed peace with my Lord so near,
Leaning on the everlasting arms. [Refrain]**

We Pray for Transformation and New Life

INTRODUCTION

Knowing that we have not always brought forth the good fruit of kindness and mercy, let us remember that with our gracious God there is always another opportunity to bear that good fruit.

PRAYER FOR TRANSFORMATION AND NEW LIFE (TOGETHER)

Gracious God, sometimes we are disappointed by other people, too ready to dismiss or discard them. Help us to see in others what you see in them: their growth, the fruits that they offer. Forgive us when we too quickly judge others. Forgive us also, when we doubt that we can be worthy followers of you. May we be inspired to nurture your people and ourselves. Amen.

Time of silent reflection...

WORDS OF GRACE:

God’s ways are not our ways. Where we would condemn ourselves or others, God forgives. In the name of Jesus Christ you are forgiven.

Because of who YOU are and where YOU are on life’s journey, YOU ARE WELCOME HERE!

*PASSING OF THE PEACE

This Lent we're reminded that Jesus tells the story of a child who demands half his father's wealth, leaves him for dead, and squanders this wealth. Hungry, the child returns home hoping that his father will hire him on so he can eat. But when his father sees him, he is filled with compassion, compassion that makes for peace and celebration. This is God's love and peace. This is Christ's love and peace. The peace of Christ be with you.

And also with you!

(As a sign of our deep fellowship and communion with God and with one another, let us greet one another with a handshake or peace sign and bless one another with the peace that comes from being in Christ.)

SUNG RESPONSE

“Don't Be Afraid”

Don't be afraid, My love is stronger, My love is stronger than your fear

Don't be afraid, My love is stronger,

And I have promised, promised to be always near.

Graham Maule, John L. Bell © Words: 1995 WGRG, c/o Iona Community, Glasgow, Scotland; Music: 1995 WGRG, c/o Iona Community, Glasgow, Scotland; CCLI Song #1531247

We Listen for God's Word

MINISTRY THROUGH MUSIC

“With All My Heart”

PLAIN AND SIMPLE

“An Embodied Psalm”

Pastor Dave

PRAYER FOR ILLUMINATION

Holy God, reveal your presence to us this day as we journey this path with your Son. Through all of life's trials and tribulations your Word sustains us for the journey ahead. Send your Spirit upon us that we might listen, discern, and take heart. Be near us this day and may your Word with us stay and dwell with us forevermore. Amen.

RESPONSIVE PSALTER READING

PSALM 63:1-8

Comfort and assurance in God's presence. Our responsive reading begins.

¹O God, you are my God,

I seek you, my soul thirsts for you;

Put hands around your throat then raise them toward God

my flesh faints for you,

as in a dry and weary land where there is no water.

Clench your hands into fists turned up, then open wide and vibrate

²So I have looked upon you in the sanctuary,

beholding your power and glory.

Touch your eyes then spread your hands out and up

Because of who YOU are and where YOU are on life's journey, YOU ARE WELCOME HERE!

³Because your steadfast love is better than life,
my lips will praise you.

Touch your lips then spread your hands out and up

⁴So I will bless you as long as I live;

I will lift up my hands and call on your name.

Open your hands out to your sides palms up then raise them out and up

⁵My soul is satisfied as with a rich feast,

and my mouth praises you with joyful lips

Put your hands to your throat and mouth then out and up

⁶when I think of you on my bed, and meditate on you in the watches of the night;

⁷for you have been my help, and in the shadow of your wings I sing for joy.

Put hands together beside your head as if laying your head on them

⁸My soul clings to you;

Hands out palms up

Your right hand upholds me.

Fold hands in lap

GOSPEL READING

LUKE 13:1-9

Jesus calls on his listeners to repent or perish, and then tells a parable of mercy. Hear the Good News.

At that very time there were some present who told Jesus about the Galileans whose blood Pilate had mingled with their sacrifices. ²He asked them, “Do you think that because these Galileans suffered in this way they were worse sinners than all other Galileans? ³No, I tell you, but unless you repent you will all perish as they did. ⁴Or those eighteen who were killed when the tower of Siloam fell on them—do you think that they were worse offenders than all the other people living in Jerusalem? ⁵No, I tell you, but unless you repent you will all perish just as they did.”

⁶Then he told this parable: “A man had a fig tree planted in his vineyard, and he came looking for fruit on it and found none. ⁷So he said to the man working the vineyard, ‘See here! For three years I have come looking for fruit on this fig tree, and still I find none. Cut it down! Why should it be wasting the soil?’ ⁸He replied, ‘Sir, let it alone for one more year, until I dig around it and put manure on it. ⁹If it bears fruit next year, well and good, but if not, you can cut it down.’”

God’s Good News for the people of God.

Thanks be to God.

MEDITATION:

“Longing for God”

Pastor Dave

Because of who YOU are and where YOU are on life’s journey, YOU ARE WELCOME HERE!

SINGING TOGETHER

“As The Deer”

As the deer panteth for the water,
So my soul longeth after You.
You alone are my heart's desire
And I long to worship You.

Chorus: You alone are my strength, my shield,
To You alone may my spirit yield.
You alone are my heart's desire,
And I long to worship You.

You're my friend and You are my brother,
Even though You are a King.
I love You more than any other,
So much more than anything. (*Chorus*)

I want You more than gold or silver,
Only You can satisfy.
You alone are the real joy-giver
And the apple of my eye.

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We Respond to God's Word

AFFIRMATION OF FAITH: UNITED CHURCH OF CANADA STATEMENT OF FAITH

We are not alone, we live in God's world.

We believe in God:
who has created and is creating,
who has come in Jesus, the Word made flesh,
to reconcile and make new,
who works in us and others by the Spirit.

We trust in God.

We are called to be the church:
to celebrate God's presence,
to live with respect in Creation,
to love and serve others,
to seek justice and resist evil,
to proclaim Jesus, crucified and risen,
our judge and our hope.

Because of who YOU are and where YOU are on life's journey, YOU ARE WELCOME HERE!

**In life, in death, in life beyond death,
God is with us.**

**We are not alone.
Thanks be to God. Amen.**

A TIME FOR PRAYER

SHARING OF JOYS AND CONCERNS

You are invited to share joys and concerns we can pray for together. Let our sharing itself be an act of prayer.

ENTERING INTO PRAYER

“Nothing Can Trouble” Black #772

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

PRAYERS ON BEHALF OF THE PEOPLE

THE PRAYER OF OUR SAVIOR

**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, and the power, and the glory, forever. Amen.**

ENCOURAGEMENT TO SHARING OUR TITHES AND OFFERINGS

*You are invited to place your gifts in the offering basket as you arrive or depart from our worship together.
From the abundance that God has given us, let us return a portion to be used for God’s
work through this church.*

DEDICATING OUR OFFERING (TOGETHER)

**Dear God, take these offerings of treasure, and our lives, to use for your
purposes in the world. Amen**

We Go Out to Serve

*SINGING TOGETHER

“Be Thou My Vision” Brown #468

**Be Thou my Vision, O Lord of my heart;
Nought be all else to me, save that Thou art-
Thou my best thought, by day or by night,
Waking or sleeping, Thy presence my light.**

**Be Thou my Wisdom, and Thou my true Word;
I ever with Thee, and Thou with me, Lord;
Thou my great Father, I thy true son;
Thou in me dwelling, and I with Thee one.**

Because of who YOU are and where YOU are on life’s journey, YOU ARE WELCOME HERE!

Riches I heed not, nor man's empty praise,
Thou mine inheritance, now and always:
Thou and Thou only, first in my heart,
High King of heaven, my Treasure Thou art.

High King of heaven, my victory won,
May I reach heaven's joys, O bright heaven's Sun!
Heart of my own heart, whatever befall,
Still be thou my Vision, O Ruler of all.

*GOOD WORDS FOR GOING FORTH

Seek God, who is near in the highs and lows, the joys and the sorrows, the known and unknown of this life. Be ready to hear God's word and live, May you trust in the love of God, the mercy of God, and the blessings of God, today and always. God's love never fails.

Thanks be to God! Amen.

*BENEDICTION RESPONSE

"Every Step of the Way" Sing! #66
Help me do the justice to be done today. ---
Help me love kindness--- in all I do and say.--
Help me walk humbly with you,-- O God I pray--
ev-'ry step of the way,-- ev-'ry step of the way.--- (repeat)

TAKE WITH YOU GOD'S GIFT OF MUSIC

WE RETURN TO THE WORLD

RENEWED AND EMPOWERED BY GOD'S SPIRIT

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Cut Down: Service Prayers for the Third Sunday in Lent was written by the Rev. Ruth Garwood, a transitional pastor in the Heartland Conference, a certified facilitator of Sacred Conversations to End Racism, and a certified InterPlay leader.

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