

Grace

UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST

## Grace United Church of Christ

March 19, 2023

Rev. Dr. Michael H. Bone, Minister

**Fourth Sunday in Lent**

\* When a portion of the service is preceded with an \*, you are invited to stand in body and/or spirit.

**Words printed in bold are an invitation for you to join in the spoken or sung response.**

**PRELUDE**

Beneath the Cross of Jesus

**\*WORDS OF WELCOME** (Pastor and **People**)

No matter who you are or where you are on life's journey, you are welcome here.

**In this safe space, may God grant us the vision to see the Holy in each other and the Holy in ourselves.**

**\*CALL TO WORSHIP** (Liturgist and **People**)

The Lord is our shepherd, our leader and provider.

**God leads us in the right path, showing how to live centered on God.**

The Lord is our shepherd, guiding us even in darkness.

**Surely goodness and mercy will pursue us as we follow God's way.**

**\*GATHERING PRAYER (People)**

**Mighty God, to you belong the mysteries of the universe. You transform shepherds into kings, the smallest seeds into magnificent trees, and hardened hearts into loving ones. Bless us with your life-giving Spirit, re-create us in your image, and shape us to your purposes, through Jesus Christ. Amen.**

**\*GATHERING HYMN**

**My Shepherd Is the Living God**

**INVITATION TO CONFESSION (Liturgist)**

**PRAYER OF CONFESSION (Liturgist and People)**

**Holy Jesus, we confess that we fail to question our own sightlessness. Being so sure that we “see,” we miss the truths you would teach us. With the poultice of your love, cure this blindness. Open our eyes to our own misunderstandings, our own failures and our own faults. Make our “shadow side” known to us and help us to diminish it with the light of your grace. For it is only when we see ourselves clearly that we can worship you truly. In the name of Jesus, we pray. Amen.**

**ASSURANCE OF PARDON (Pastor)**

**PASSING THE PEACE (Pastor)**

**A GIFT OF MUSIC**

**Jesus Lord of Miracles - DeFrange**

**SACRED TEXT**

**I Samuel 16:1-5, 11-13a NRSVUE**

**CENTERING HYMN**

**Praise the One Who Breaks the Darkness**

**SACRED TEXT**

**John 9:13-25, 35-38 NRSVUE**

**SERMON**

**Blind Canyon**

**\*SUNG RESPONSE**

**God of rainbow, fiery pillar,  
leading where the eagles soar,  
We your people, ours the journey  
now and ever, now and ever, Now and evermore.**

**\*INVITATION TO GENEROSITY** (Liturgist)  
One Great Hour of Sharing Video

**\*DOXOLOGY**

**Praise God, from whom all blessings flow,  
Praise God, all creatures here below.  
Praise God, above, ye heavenly host.  
Creator, Christ, and Holy Ghost!**

**\*DEDICATION OF GIFTS** (Pastor and **People**)

Who do we give to?

**We give to God.**

Why do we give?

**So our possessions won't possess us.**

What do we give?

**Our whole lives, surrendered to God's will.**

God of love, you abide with us; you provide for all our needs and guide us in your ways. Out of gratitude for your care, we bring our gifts before you. Use them for your work of caring, that all may feast at the table of abundance, walk without fear, and drink deeply from the cup of compassion. In Jesus' name we pray.

**Amen.**

**MORNING PRAYER**

**THE PRAYER OF JESUS**

**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 debts,  
As we forgive our debtors.  
And lead us not into temptation,  
But deliver us from evil.  
For thine is the kingdom,  
And the power, and the glory,  
Forever. Amen.**

**CHURCH FAMILY UPDATES**

**\*SENDING HYMN**

**Blessed Assurance**

**\*WORDS OF SENDING AND PEACE**

**\*SENDING RESPONSE**            **Sent Forth by God's Blessing**  
**Sent forth by God's blessing, our true faith confessing,**  
**The people of God from this dwelling take leave.**  
**The service is ended, O now be extended**  
**The fruits of our worship in all who believe.**  
**The seed of the teaching, receptive hearts reaching,**  
**Shall blossom in action for God and for all.**  
**God's grace did invite us, and love shall unite us**  
**To work for God's realm and to answer the call.**

**POSTLUDE**

Fugue in Cm - DeFrange

Attributions:

[Our Call to Worship was written by Rev. Teri Peterson and posted on the **LiturgyLink** website. Our Gathering Prayer comes from *Revised Common Lectionary Prayers*, © 2002 Consultation on Common Texts (admin. Augsburg Fortress), posted on the Vanderbilt Divinity Library website, **Thematic, Intercessory and Scripture Prayers for the RCL**. Our Prayer of Confession was written by Rev. Marilyn Kennedy Levine and posted on the United Church of Christ's **Worship Ways** website. Our Words of Sending are from *In the Sanctuary of Women*, copyright © Jan L. Richardson.]

**Live stream can be found at:**

<https://www.facebook.com/graceatown/live>

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## THIS WEEK'S CALENDAR

Monday	4:30-6 pm 7pm	Grace Kids Church School Catching Our Spiritual Breath (A time of prayer) on Zoom
Tuesday	9am-noon	Tuesday Crew meets here to do work on our building and grounds. You are welcome to join in!
	9am-noon	Office Hours
Wednesday	9am-noon	Office Hours
	10am	Yoga in the Family Activity Center
	6pm	"A Welcome You Can Trust" Lenten Soup and Study
Thursday	1:30pm	Card Club in HeBrews Café - No experience necessary!
Sunday	9:15am	Adult Sunday School in HeBrews Café

## WORSHIP LEADERS

**Dan Skeggs** is helping lead worship as our liturgist.

Altar flowers are presented by **Steve and Kay Mitchell** to the Glory of God.

Our greeters this morning are **Rick and Michelle Hutcherson**.

**Dave Forman, Mike Pirogowicz, Paul Sodergren, and Jim Lynn** serve as our Livestream and Sanctuary Technicians and **Tom DeFrance** serves as musician and accompanist.



Lent  
2023  
at  
Grace UCC



A welcome you  
can trust.

Lenten Wednesdays  
Soup and Study  
March 1-29 at 6 pm

### **“A Welcome You Can Trust” Lenten Soup and Study**

Here at Grace, we're **actively working** to be a community that lives out extending **a welcome that everyone can trust**. This Lent, we're spending time each week looking more deeply at just what this means, especially for those who may not always have felt welcome by church.

Topics will include a combination of story, Scripture, and take home points to ponder, with these upcoming focuses:

**March 22** - UCC Refugee and Migration Ministries: Caring for those in need of welcoming homes

**March 29** – Taking the Welcome Outside Our Walls

Plan to join us on **Wednesday nights from March 1-29 at 6 pm** for these valuable discussions together over a meal.

Come as you are! Vegetarian and gluten-free options will be available.

Several slots are still available to provide soup in the latter weeks of the series, please sign up in the narthex to help with this or email [\*\*info@gracetown.com\*\*](mailto:info@gracetown.com)