



Lent

RETURN TO THE LORD
your God,

FOR HE IS
gracious and
MERCIFUL.

JOEL 2:13

**United Church of Christ
Norwich, New York**



**THE UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST
FIRST CONGREGATIONAL
Norwich, New York 13815**



An Open and Affirming Church

February 18, 2024

10:00 a.m

First Sunday in Lent

PREPARING TO WORSHIP GOD

CHIMING OF THE HOUR

THOUGHT FOR MEDITATION

“Lent is a time of going very deeply into ourselves... What is it that stands between us and God? Between us and our brothers and sisters? Between us and life, the life of the Spirit? Whatever it is, let us relentlessly tear it out, without a moment’s hesitation.”

— Catherine Doherty

PRELUDE *Alleluia, Lord Most High* by Paul Taylor

WELCOME

(Please sign the attendance pad in the pew.)

ANNOUNCEMENTS

*Please stand in body or in spirit.

Large Print Bulletins are available from the ushers.

Bulletin Notes:

Call to worship, Pastoral Prayer from Worship Ways <https://www.ucc.org/worship-way/lent-1b-february-18/>

Lenton Affirmation of Faith from Patmos Abbey—The Order of Saint Columba

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GATHERING

CALL TO WORSHIP

ONE: The voice of God proclaims of Jesus, "You are my beloved, and I love you."

ALL: We, too, are God's beloved children, loved and embraced.

ONE: With all the voices reminding us that we are not enough or don't belong, it is tempting to forget our place in God's Kingdom.

ALL: With the waters of baptism and the voice of God's promises, we can face the temptations of any wilderness or desert that would draw us away from the Source of our hope.

ONE: Embrace your belovedness.

ALL: We rejoice in God's unending love for us!

UNISON PRAYER OF INVOCATION

God of waters and deserts, God of hope and horizons, we celebrate your presence among us and among all your people. You have proclaimed that Jesus was beloved and, tenderly, you have claimed us as your own. Open the skies. Break through the clouds. Fall softly upon our shoulders and say our names with joy. For this day and each day, no matter what the other voices may say, we are your beloved and we rejoice in your inbreaking Kingdom. Amen and Amen!

***OPENING HYMN** *In the Midst of New Dimensions* #391
(Tune: NEW DIMENSIONS)

TIME OF SHARING

SCRIPTURE READING Psalm 25:1-10

ONE: To you, O Lord, I lift up my soul.

ALL: O my God, in you I trust; do not let me be put to shame; do not let my enemies exult over me.

ONE: Do not let those who wait for you be put to shame; let them be ashamed who are wantonly treacherous.

ALL: Make me to know your ways, O LORD; teach me your paths.

ONE: Lead me in your truth and teach me, for you are the God of my salvation; for you I wait all day long.

ALL: Be mindful of your mercy, O LORD, and of your steadfast love, for they have been from of old.

ONE: Do not remember the sins of my youth or my transgressions; according to your steadfast love remember me, for the sake of your goodness, O LORD!

ALL: Good and upright is the LORD; therefore he instructs sinners in the way.

ONE: He leads the humble in what is right and teaches the humble his way.

ALL: All the paths of the LORD are steadfast love and faithfulness, for those who keep his covenant and his decrees.

BLESSING OF PEACE

ONE: May the Peace of Jesus Christ be with you.

ALL: And also with you.

SUNG RESPONSE *Peace* by Judy A. Rose

Peace be the song that we will sing.

Peace be the joy, our spirits ring.

Peace be the love that sets us free,
peace for all, peace for you and me.

Peace, peace, peace, peace. Peace live in you in all you do.

Peace, peace, peace, peace. Peace live in you in all you do.

CHILDREN'S MOMENT Michael Moren

Children grades 3-8 are invited upstairs for Sunday School at this time.

LENTEN INVITATION TO GENEROSITY

ONE: O gracious God, we hear your voice calling us ...

ALL: To share whatever gift it is that you have given to us to do your work on Earth.

ONE: Gracious God, give us generous hearts ...

ALL: To acknowledge you as the giver of all good gifts, and to give without counting the cost.

ONE: Gracious God, give us generous hearts ...
ALL: To give without counting the cost, and to share without expecting something in return.

ONE: Gracious God, give us generous hearts ...
ALL: To share without expecting something in return.

ONE: Gracious God, give us generous hearts ...
ALL: To be wise in the way of caring for ourselves and others, and to hold all of our treasures and values with open hands.

ONE: Gracious God, give us generous hearts ...
ALL: To be gracious and unbegrudging in our giving, and to recognize the abundance of blessings in each passing day.

ONE: Gracious God, give us generous hearts ...
ALL: To grow in giving thanks for everything, to be happy with having what we need, and to be wise enough to know what it is that we want and do not need. . .

ONE: Give us generous hearts, and let us pray together....
ALL: O gracious God, who so generously lavishes our lives with goodness, create in our hearts a deep center of gratitude, a center that grows so strong in its thanksgiving that sharing freely of our treasures becomes the norm and the pattern of our existence. Remind us often of how much you cherish us, of how abundantly you have offered gifts to us, especially in the hours of our greatest need. May we always be grateful for your reaching into our lives with surprises of joy, growth, and unearned love. Amen.

Offering plates are located at both Nave doors for your convenience. Give online at www.uccnorwichny.org/give

WE LISTEN FOR GOD'S WORD

SCRIPTURE READING

Genesis 9:8-17

Pew Bible OT p.8

SPECIAL MUSIC *Spirit Song*
 Michael Moren, soloist

by John Wimber

SCRIPTURE READING

Mark 1:9-15

Pew Bible NT p. 35

* **HYMN** *Lord Jesus, Who through Forty Days* #211
(Tune: ST. FLAVIAN)

MESSAGE *Jerusalem* Elinor Beebe

INTERLUDE *The Faithful* by R. Kevin Boesiger

RESPONDING TO GOD'S WORD

LENTEN AFFIRMATION OF FAITH

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 Christ 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.

A TIME OF PRAYER AND REFLECTION

LENTEN SERVICE OF DIMINISHING LIGHTS

UNISON PRAYER

Loving God, as we journey through this holy season of Lent, give us strength and courage to make the changes that are needed in our lives. Open our hearts and minds to your steadfast presence and help us to put our trust in you. Amen.

SHARING OF JOYS/CONCERNS

PASTORAL PRAYER

THE LORDS PRAYER

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.

WORDS OF GRACE

COMMISSION AND BLESSING

***CLOSING HYMN**

Be Not Dismayed (God Will Take Care of You) #460
(Tune: MARTIN)

BENEDICTION

POSTLUDE

Voluntary on an Old English Carol by John S. Dixon

February 18, 2024

TODAY'S PARTICIPANTS:

Lay Leader: Grace Burke

Liturgist/Reflection: Elinor Beebe

Special Music: Michael Moren

Organist: David Burch

Director of Children and Youth Ministries: Ericka Tyler

Children's Moment: Michael Moren

Live Stream: Chris McSweeney, Jessica Strough, Liam Hunter

Sunday Sexton: Mya Yantz

Nursery: Fiora Breese

Fellowship Coffee Hour: Pat Burke

UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST FIRST CONGREGATIONAL

11 West Main St., Norwich NY 13815

607-334-3434 - office@uccnorwichny.org - www.uccnorwichny.org

MINISTERS: All the People

MODERATOR: Pete Williams

CHAIR OF DEACONS: Pat Burke

DIRECTOR OF MUSIC MINISTRIES: Mary Williams

DIRECTOR OF CHILDREN AND YOUTH MINISTRIES: Ericka Tyler

PARISH COORDINATOR: Cheri Oakley

FINANCIAL ASSISTANT: Jennifer Mallozzi

CHURCH OFFICE HOURS

Monday-Tuesday-Thursday-Friday

8:00 a.m. - 3:00 p.m.

(closed for lunch 1:00 - 2:00 p.m.)



ANNOUNCEMENTS

NURSERY IS AVAILABLE for children up to age 5, upstairs at the front of the church.

MIRACLES IN MARCH - Have you experienced a miracle or a miraculous moment? Have you been surprised when difficult or impossible situations have been resolved in unexpected ways? If you are willing to share your story with others, either in writing or speaking, please contact the church office. We all could use a bit of inspiration at this time, and sharing our stories of miracles will speak to God's presence in our lives.

COMMUNION NEXT WEEK - Rev. J.K. Boodley will return to celebrate communion with us on Sunday, February 25.

DEADLINE TO SUBMIT ARTICLES OR NEWS FOR THE MARCH NEWSLETTER IS FEBRUARY 19.

COMMUNITY LENTEN STUDY of the book *Simon Peter: Flawed but Faithful Disciple*, Tuesdays Feb 13 - Mar 26. Lite Lunch 11:30 a.m., Study 12:00 - 1:00 p.m. at Broad St. United Methodist Church.

SCHOLARSHIP APPLICATIONS are available from the church office or website. **APPLICATIONS ARE DUE MARCH 30.**

LAY LEADERS NEEDED - During this time when we are without a member of clergy to lead a service, we are relying on lay leadership from the congregation. We are in need of folks who are willing to lead the worship service in pairs. Please check the bulletin board - many dates are open in March. And if you feel called to offer a message in the form of a mini sermon, please contact the church office.

PLEASE DON'T TAKE ANY RISKS to get to church on a Sunday morning if the weather is bad, especially since you can tune in to the livestream. If we cancel church all together, we will send an email to our weekly worship information list, post on Facebook and Instagram, and also announce it with message on the church phone (607-334-3434).

CALENDAR

*The Chenango Muslim Community meets upstairs daily at 9:30pm
& Fridays at 1:30pm*

SUNDAY, FEBRUARY 18 - First Sunday in Lent

9:00am Nursery, upstairs

10:00am Worship, Nave (Sunday School grades 3-8)

11:00am Fellowship coffee hour, Founders Rm.

MONDAY, FEBRUARY 19 - PRESIDENTS' DAY

Church Office Closed

9:00am AARP Tax Preparation, Founders Rm./Kitchen

10:00am Prayer Circle, Zoom

10:00am Knitting Group, Mayflower Room

3:00pm Tai Chi, Mayflower Rm.

TUESDAY, FEBRUARY 20

11:30am Community Lenten Study with lunch at Broad St. UMC
(see announcements)

1:00pm Piecemakers, Kitchen

WEDNESDAY, FEBRUARY 21

9:00am AARP Tax Preparation, Founders Room/Kitchen

10:00am Prayer Circle, Zoom

4:00pm Laundry Love at Byrne Dairy

6:10pm Democratic Committee, Founders Room

7:00pm Choir Rehearsal, Nave

THURSDAY, FEBRUARY 22

9:00am AARP Tax Preparation, Founders Room/Kitchen

5:00pm Free Hot Meal at Emmanuel Episcopal (takeout at
5:30pm)

6:00pm Helping Hands Give-away at the YMCA

FRIDAY, FEBRUARY 23

10:00am Prayer Circle, Zoom

SATURDAY, FEBRUARY 24

4:00pm Youth Group, upstairs

SUNDAY, FEBRUARY 25 - Second Sunday in Lent

9:00am Nursery, upstairs

10:00am Worship/Communion Nave (Sunday School grades 3-8)

11:00am Fellowship Coffee Hour, Founders Rm.

11:30am Hand Bell Choir Rehearsal, upstairs