

FAITH

UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST



**5992 Route 378
Center Valley, Pennsylvania 18034
610.282.3939**

**Rev. Dr. Bruce C. Stevenson, Lead Pastor
Mr. Dennis J. Duda, Organist-Director of Music**

**SERVICE OF WORSHIP
FOURTH SUNDAY IN LENT
MARCH 19, 2023**

ASSEMBLE IN GOD'S NAME

PRELUDE

A PRAYER UPON ENTERING GOD'S HOUSE

Loving God, walk beside us in this place and invite us to see what you see. May we find more love in our gaze and more grace in our presence as we worship you today. Amen.

WORDS OF WELCOME

CENTERING OUR HEARTS ON WORSHIP

* **OPENING HYMN: WE COME WITH QUESTIONS**

* **CALL TO WORSHIP:**

Pastor: Scripture is full of questions...

People: Where are you?

Pastor: Am I my brother's keeper?

People: Whom shall I send?

Pastor: Who do you say that I am?

People: Who sinned?

Pastor: How many times shall I forgive?

People: If God is for us, who can be against us?

Pastor: Scripture is full of questions, so just like those in our scriptures, may we bring our full curiosity and wonder into this space.

People: Let us ask and seek after our merciful God.

REJOICING IN GOD'S GRACE

* **CALL TO AND CONFESSION OF SIN:**

Pastor: Who here has sinned?

People: We have sinned. We put our heads in the sand. We ignored people in need. We make false assumptions

WE COME WITH QUESTIONS

LOBE DEN HERREN ("Praise to the Lord, the Almighty")

Text: Anna Strickland (2022)

Music: Erneuereten Gasangbuch (1665); harm. W. Sterndale Bennett (19th cent.)

We come with
Here is the
God help us

ques - tions as
mys - t'ry we
live in - to

sum - ing that
claim as the
mys - t'ry be -

there will be
fol - lowers of
yond com - pre

an -
Je -
hen -

- swers
- sus:
- sion

Set - ting the
Christ has died,
Qui - et our

world
Christ
minds

in an
is raised,
al - ways

or - der that
Christ dai - ly
clam - or - ing

o - beys our
comes to re -
for some di -

gram
- deem
- rec -

mar
us
tion

We want to
Grace free, not
Give us your

know
earned,
peace

where Spir - it's
whe - ther or
with all that

riv - er will
not we de -
we can't per -

flow
serve
ceive

Frus - trat - ed
God works be -
Hold - ing us

by her me
yond rules and
with - in the

an -
boun -
ten -

ders
d'ries
sion

and fail to be kind. We are in need of forgiveness.

Pastor: Good news! Our God is a merciful God. God does not punish, hold grudges, or keep score. When you suffer, God weeps. When you sin, God forgives. When you lose your way, God comes running.

People: Thanks be to God for a love like that. Have you sinned?

Pastor: I have sinned. I put my head in the sand. I ignore people in need. I make false assumptions and fail to be kind. I, too, am in need of forgiveness.

People: Good news! Our God is a merciful God. God does not punish, hold grudges, or keep score. When you suffer, God weeps. When you sin, God forgives. When you lose your way, God comes running.

Pastor: Thanks be to God for a love like that. Amen.

*** THE KYRIE**

750

Leader: Lord, have mercy upon us.

Congregation: Lord, have mercy upon us.

Leader: Christ, have mercy upon us.

Congregation: Christ, have mercy upon us.

Leader: Lord, have mercy upon us.

Congregation: Lord, have mercy upon us.

*** ASSURANCE OF PARDON**

Pastor: O Lord, open our lips.

People: And our mouths shall show forth your praise.

*** THE GLORIA PATRI**

759

Glory to the Creator, the Christ, the Holy Spirit, Three-in-One; as it was in the beginning, is now and ever shall be, world without end. Amen. Amen.

*** WE SHARE PEACE: I'VE GOT PEACE LIKE A RIVER**

478

I've got peace like a river, I've got peace like a river,
I've got peace like a river, in my soul.
I've got peace like a river, I've got peace like a river,
I've got peace like a river, in my soul.

LEARNING ABOUT GOD

PRAYER OF ILLUMINATION

THE SCRIPTURE LESSON:

Brenda Hovis

Gospel: John 9:1 – 41

THE CHILDREN'S SERMON

HYMN: SAVIOR, AGAIN TO YOUR DEAR NAME

80

SERMON: *Ask, Don't Assume*

DEDICATING OURSELVES TO GOD'S WILL

*** AFFIRMATION OF FAITH:**

**We believe in a merciful God,
a God who does not keep score,
a God who wants good for us.
We believe in a creative God,
a God who would heal with mud,
a God capable of seeing what we cannot.
We believe in a saving God,
a God who heals,
a God who greets our questions with patience,
a God who sends us out with hope in our step.
What wondrous love is this. Amen.**

THE PRAYERS OF THE PEOPLE AND INTERCESSION

Pastor: Shepherd God, we are painfully aware of how imperfectly love is expressed within our world. So, in trust, we turn once more to you. In your goodness and mercy, hear the prayers of our hearts:

People: We are alive to your imaginings for a new world and ready to make a creative difference.

(pause)

Pastor: Although we do see good and hopeful change, we also witness violence and dysfunction whereby the most innocent and vulnerable continue to be forgotten, abused, or treated as of no account. In your goodness and mercy, hear the prayers of our hearts:

People: We are alive to your imaginings for a new world and ready to make a creative difference.

(pause)

People: Daily we see and read of the failures of those in principal positions of care whose treatment of patients, parishioners, clients, spouses, and children leave us feeling ashamed, yet also mindful of our own shortcomings. In your goodness and mercy hear the prayers of our hearts:

People: We are alive to your imaginings for a new world and ready to make a creative difference.

(pause)

People: Change us, O God. Create within us the desire and capacity for a love that can gently hold yet let go; a love that encounters all others with deep respect, and is concerned with others' well-being above personal interest. In your goodness and mercy, hear the prayers of our hearts:

Pastor: We are alive to your imaginings for a new world and ready to make a creative difference. Amen.

(The names of specific people, places, and circumstances may be lifted up at this time)

Pastor: In the faith, hope, and love of Christ, we pray,

**Unison: Eternal Spirit,
Earth – maker, Pain – bearer, Life – giver,
Source of all that is and that shall be,**

**Father and Mother of us all,
Loving God, in whom is heaven:**

**The hallowing of your name echo through the universe!
The way of your justice be followed by the peoples of the
World!**

**Your heavenly will be done by all created beings!
Your commonwealth of peace and freedom
Sustains our hope and come on earth.**

**With the bread we need for today, feed us.
In the hurts we absorb from one another, forgive us.
In times of temptations and testing, strengthen us.
From trials too great to endure, spare us.
From the grip of all that is evil, free us.**

**For your reign in the glory of the power that is love,
now and forever. Amen**

- The Lord's Prayer from the New Zealand Prayer Book

GIVE THANKS TO GOD

THE FELLOWSHIP OF SHARING

OFFERTORY

CHOIR ANTHEM: *O WORSHIP THE LORD*

*** OFFERTORY RESPONSE – THE DOXOLOGY 780**

*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.*

*** PRAYER OF THANKSGIVING:**

**Loving God, giver of all things, as people alive to your
goodness, we offer these gifts and the talents of this
community to the service of all our children within our
neighborhood and beyond, throughout our nation and our
world. Amen.**

GO IN GOD'S NAME

- * **CLOSING HYMN: AMAZING GRACE**
- * **BENEDICTION AND THREEFOLD AMEN**
- * **MEDITATION**

547

Almighty God, grant that the words we have heard this day with our ears may be grafted into our hearts through your grace, that they may produce in us the fruits of a good life, to the praise and honor of your name; through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

* **POSTLUDE**

*Would those who are able please stand.

CHOIR ANTHEM: O WORSHIP THE LORD – L. Larson

Worship the Lord in the splendor of holiness. Worship the Lord in spirit and truth. Lift your voice in praise; come and kneel in devotion. Worship the Lord; come and worship the Lord. Worship the Lord in the splendor of holiness. Worship the Lord in spirit and truth. Lift your voice in praise; come and kneel in devotion.

Worship the Lord; come and worship the Lord. O worship the King, all glorious above; O gratefully sing His power and His love; our Shield and Defender, the Ancient of Days, pavilioned in splendor and girded with praise! Worship the Lord in the splendor of holiness. Worship the Lord in spirit and truth. Lift your voice in praise; come and kneel in devotion. Worship the Lord: come and worship the Lord. Worship the Lord; come and worship the Lord.

Welcome to Faith Church this Fourth Sunday in Lent. We are glad to have you worshiping with us. May our time together serve as an inspiration for the days and weeks ahead. Please sign and pass the Friendship Pads provided for you in the pews.

The Altar flowers this morning are presented by Russell & Iris Shelly in honor of their 50th Wedding Anniversary!

Consistory meets this Thursday at 7 pm.

Pastor Bruce will hold a New Member Orientation on Sunday, March 26th at 3 pm in the Memorial Room. Anyone interested in joining Faith is welcome. We will receive the new members during worship on Palm Sunday, April 2nd.

March is ONE GREAT HOUR OF SHARING MONTH! One Great Hour of Sharing® is one of four special mission offerings of the United Church of Christ. This Lenten Offering supports the disaster, refugee, and development ministries of the United Church of Christ within Wider Church Ministries. Please prayerfully consider how you help. Special Offering Envelopes are available in the narthex.

Our Lenten theme this year is SEEKING: honest questions for deeper faith. Printed materials for the program are available in the Narthex. For those who prefer reading the materials online, links to the **Daily Devotional Cards** and the **Lenten Devotional Booklet** are included in the weekly email.

If you are not receiving our weekly email and would like to, please email Sandy at faithchurchcv@gmail.com and she will sign you up.

A LOOK AHEAD TO EASTER WEEK....

Maundy Thursday, April 6
7:30 Service

Friday Vigil, April 7
6 pm – 12 am
(details to follow)

Easter Sunday, April 9
Outdoor Service - 8 am *(weather permitting)*
Traditional Service – 10:15 am
Communion will be served at both services.

WEEKLY CALENDAR

Office Hours are Monday – Thursday from 9 am to 4 pm
CLOSED Fridays

Sandy David, Parish Administrator, works away from the office on Mondays but checks voice mail hourly. Please be sure to leave a message. If you are in urgent need of something you can reach her at 610-967-6232.

TODAY	-9:00 Sunday School -10:15 Worship
MONDAY	-Sandy Works Away From Office
THURSDAY	-7:00 Consistory Meeting
FRIDAY	-Office Closed; Pastor's Day Off
SUNDAY	-9 am Sunday School -10:15 Worship -3 pm New Member Orientation

Special Thanks To Those Who Will Serve:

	March 19th	March 26th
Head Usher:	Kim Ritter	Kim Ritter
Usher(s):	Tim & Sarah Hovis	Diane Neidermeier Faye Tirpak
Lay Reader:	Brenda Hovis	Karen Talboo
Fin. Sec.	Tony DiSanto	Bruce Torrence
Altar Flowers	Iris Shelly	Horwath

Faith United Church of Christ

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Sandy on Mondays: Please leave a message on Office phone;
if urgent call 610-967-6232.

Pastor: 484-893-0698; pastorbruce@faithchurchucc.org

Director of Music: 215-361-8641; ddduda@verizon.net