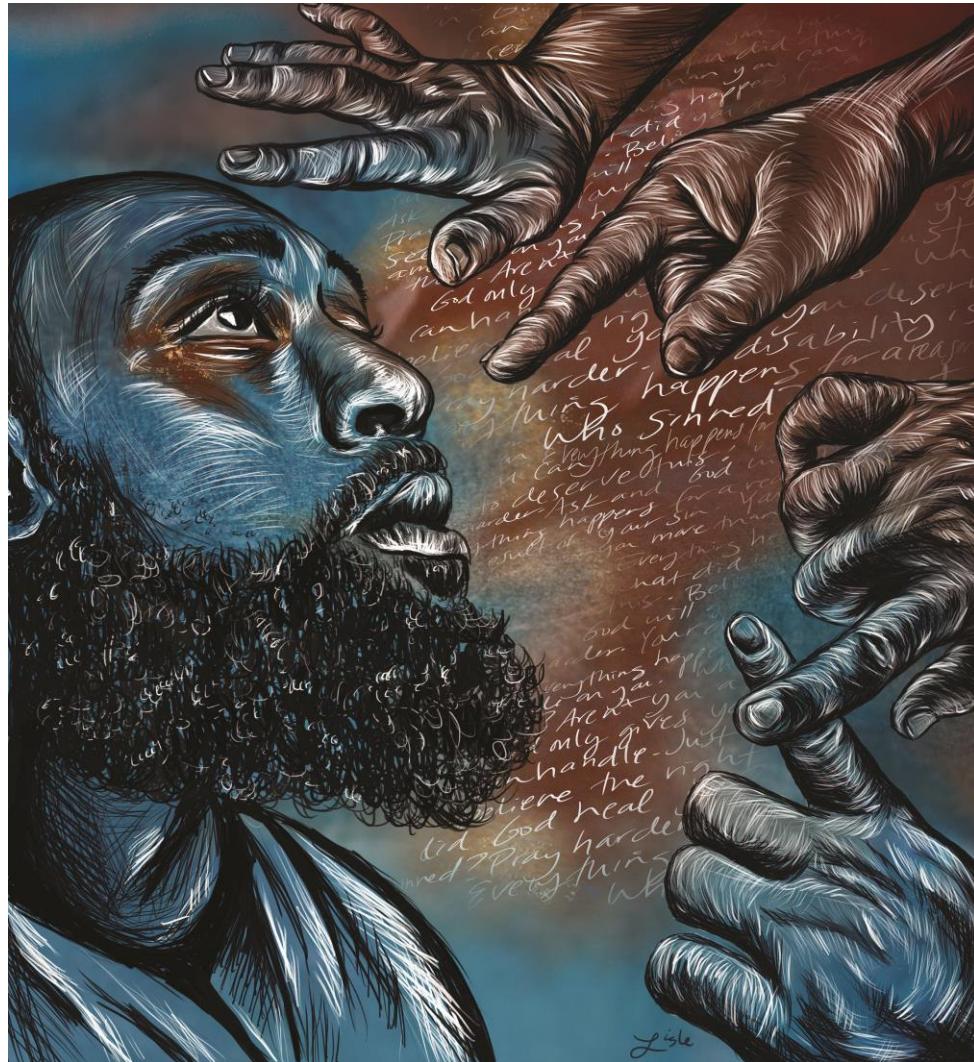


# FAITH

## 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: Erneuerten Gasangbuch (1665); harm. W. Sterndale Bennett (19<sup>th</sup> cent.)

The musical score consists of four systems of music, each with two staves: treble and bass. The key signature is B-flat major (two flats), and the time signature is common time (indicated by '4'). The vocal parts are arranged in four staves, with the piano accompaniment providing harmonic support.

**System 1:**

- Treble Staff:** We come with  
Here is the  
God help us
- Bass Staff:** ques - tions as  
mys - t'ry we  
live in - to
- Treble Staff:** sum - ing that  
claim as the  
mys-t'ry be
- Bass Staff:** there will be  
fol-lowers of  
yond com - pre
- Treble Staff:** an - Je - hen -

**System 2:**

- Treble Staff:** - swers  
- sus:  
- sion
- Bass Staff:** Set - ting the  
Christ has died,  
Qui - et our
- Treble Staff:** world Christ  
minds in an  
is raised,  
al - ways
- Bass Staff:** or - der that  
Christ dai - ly  
clam - or - ing
- Treble Staff:** o - beys our  
comes to re -  
for some di -

**System 3:**

- Treble Staff:** gram  
- deem  
- rec
- Bass Staff:** mar  
us  
tion
- Treble Staff:** We want to  
Grace free, not  
Give us your
- Bass Staff:** know  
earned,  
peace
- Treble Staff:** where Spir - it's  
whe - ther or  
with all that

**System 4:**

- Treble Staff:** riv - er will  
not we de  
we can't per
- Bass Staff:** flow  
serve  
ceive
- Treble Staff:** Frus - trat - ed  
God works be  
Hold - ing us
- Bass Staff:** by her me  
yond rules and  
with - in the
- Treble Staff:** 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

### PRAAYER 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: Shepherding 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 50<sup>th</sup> Wedding Anniversary!**

**Consistory meets this Thursday at 7 pm.**

**Pastor Bruce will hold a New Member Orientation on Sunday, March 26<sup>th</sup> 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 2<sup>nd</sup>.**

**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](mailto: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:***

	<b>March 19th</b>	<b>March 26th</b>
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](mailto:pastorbruce@faithchurchucc.org)

**Director of Music:** 215-361-8641; [ddduda@verizon.net](mailto:ddduda@verizon.net)