

**First United Church of Christ
An Open and Affirming
Just Peace Congregation**

Fifth Sunday in Lent

Welcome and Announcements

One: Peace be with you.

All: And also with you.

We invite you to share a sign of peace.

Prelude

Adagio

Francis Poulenc (1899-1963)

Lighting of the Candle

Gathering Music



It's a long, long jour-ney, it's a long, long jour-ney, it's a
long, long — jour-ney: bet-ter walk the jour-ney with God.

2. It's a world of trouble: better share your trouble with God.
3. Got to feel the spirit: 'cause you know the spirit is God.
4. It's a long, long journey: better walk the journey with God.

Call to Worship

adapted from John Birch

All: This is love.

One: That you spoke words of comfort,
walked with the unclean and unloved,
shared wisdom, bread and wine,
brought healing into lives
and challenged the status quo.

All: This is love.

One: That you spoke the word of God,
shared living water, bread of life,
and walked a painful road to the cross.

All: This is love.

Opening Hymn

I Want Jesus to Walk with Me

#490

I want Jesus to walk with me. *(repeat)*
All along my pilgrim journey
Oh, I want Jesus to walk with me.

In my trials, oh comfort me. *(repeat)*
When my heart is almost breaking
Oh, I want Jesus to comfort me.

When I'm in trouble, oh stay with me. *(repeat)*
When my head is bowed in sorrow,
Oh, I want Jesus to stay with me.

Sung Call to Confession

#544
Camacua

If I have been the source of pain, O God;
If to the weak I have refused my strength;
If, in rebellion, I have strayed away;
Forgive me, God.

Prayer of Confession

adapted from Christine Longhurst

*The congregation is invited to speak the words in **bold**.*

One: God, you love this world so that all may have abundant life.

All: Forgive us when we keep that abundant life to ourselves, store up your generous gifts, or choose self-interest over compassion and justice. Teach us what it means to live as your children, generously sharing your abundance with our siblings in need. Amen.

Silent Confession

Words of Assurance

based on Romans 8:31-38, Matthew 19:26

There is nothing on earth or beyond death
That can separate us from the love of God.
All shall be reconciled with God,
for nothing is impossible with God.

Sung Response

Receive, O God, this ardent word of prayer,
And free me from temptation's subtle snare,
With tender patience, lead me to your care.
Amen, Amen.

Time With Children

God's word is for all God's children;
Come gather, come gather.
You're never too old for stories;
Come listen, come listen.

Scripture John 3:14-21 Jane McWilliams

Sermon Claiming Jesus Rev. Wendy Vander Hart

Hymn *O Jesus I Have Promised* #493
Munich

**O Jesus, I have promised to serve you to the end;
Remain forever near me, my savior and my friend.
I shall not fear life's struggles if you are by my side,
Nor wander from the pathway if you will be my guide.**

**O let me hear you speaking in accents clear and still,
Above the storms of passion, the murmurs of self-will!
O speak to reassure me, to hasten or control!
O speak, and make me listen, o guardian of my soul!**

**O Jesus, you have promised to all who follow you
That where you are in glory your servant shall be too;
And, Jesus, I have promised to serve you to the end;
O give me grace to follow my savior and my friend.**

Prayers

Kyrie eleison is Greek for 'Lord, have mercy'.

All sing: Kyrie, Kyrie, Kyrie eleison. Kyrie, Kyrie, Kyrie eleison.

Pastoral Prayer

All sing: Kyrie, Kyrie, Kyrie eleison. Kyrie, Kyrie, Kyrie eleison.

Prayer of Jesus

You are invited to unmute yourselves and speak the words most meaningful to you, or follow the version here:

Our God, 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.

Sharing our Gifts and Music

Offertory *In Christ There Is No East or West* Ned Rorem (1923-)

In Christ there is no East or West,
In him no South or North,
But one great family of love

Throughout the whole wide earth.
In him shall true hearts everywhere
Their high communion find;

His service is the golden cord
Close binding all our kind.
Join hands then, ye folk of the faith,
Whate'er your race may be;
Who serves my father as a child
Is surely kin to me.

In Christ now meet both East and West,
In him meet South and North;
All Christly souls are one with him
Throughout the whole wide earth.
Amen. --John Oxenham (1913)

Prayer of Thanks

God of every good gift, your love is overflowing and never ending. Bless these gifts and the gifts of our hearts, that love and life may be abundant for all. Amen.

Hymn of Sending

The Fallow Heart Is God's Own Field

O Waly Waly

**The fallow heart is God's own field,
A later season's fruit to yield.
The heart at rest is God's delight,
God's brooding pleasure day and night.**

**The fallow earth is God's own soul,
In its good time becoming whole,
When heaven shares soft healing rain
And ev'ry field gives wholesome grain.**

**May we with grace and patience wait,
Though promised gifts seem often late,
And lying fallow may we be
God's womb and soul, God's treasured field.**

Benediction

Postlude

Gigue in B Flat Major

J.S. Bach (1685-1750)

We are so glad you joined us for worship today!

If you would like to remain on Zoom to briefly check in, please stay in the meeting.

News to Note

Welcoming Interim Minister Wendy Vander Hart

We are thrilled that our Interim Senior Minister, Wendy Vander Hart, is joining us and preaching in our 10:30 a.m. Zoom worship this Sunday. In an effort to help Wendy get to know our congregation during this time of physical distancing, we invite you to send her a card at church or [email](#) a word of welcome to her at pastorwendy@firstucc.org so that she can get to know our congregation despite the necessary distancing of this time. If you like, feel free to send her a photo of yourself along with your card or email so she can begin to place faces with names. Thank you!

ISAIAH is Moving Forward!

First UCC members have been in online meetings this week with ISAIAH organizers and leaders from across the state. The meetings have been both grounding and visionary, recognizing the political, economic, and public health crises we are in, but also the possibilities for real change as we are forced to recognize our interconnectedness in profoundly new ways. As the ISAIAH website says, "Regardless of race, religion, or income, our fates are tied together. We will have to show radical, public love in order to survive this together. We will create a new social contract – one of a robust multi-racial democracy and a caring economy where every family and person can thrive." ISAIAH is working to address this immediate crisis, as well as lay the groundwork for longer term change. We recently enlisted help in asking state leaders to fund daycare workers required to keep working even as their normal sources of funding dried up. We will be sending information in the weeks ahead about ways to be engaged. If you would like to be part of local and regional meetings and aren't already on the ISAIAH email lists, please contact Carolyn c.fureslocum@gmail.com, Leota leotagoodney@hotmail.com, or Matt rohn@stolaf.edu. If you would like to be part of statewide virtual meetings, please go to the ISAIAH website at <https://isaiahmn.org>. For Faith in Minnesota trainings, such as the Race and Class Narrative Training, the link to register is <https://faithinmn.org/rcntrainings/>

Giving to the Church

In an effort to keep everyone healthy, and as a temporary measure to help prevent the spread of the virus, we are worshiping and connecting in small groups virtually. We still need your gifts! You may give electronically by completing the [electronic giving authorization form](#) and mailing it to Finance Manager Andrea Pegram at church. Gifts may be mailed to First UCC, 300 Union Street, Northfield, MN 55057. Thank you so much for your continued generosity and support of First UCC's ministries!

CAC Food Shelf Challenge

March is Minnesota Food Share Month. Due to extra anticipated needs, the [Community Action Center \(CAC\) Food Shelf](#) could use any financial help you can offer. Member Scott Richardson proposes a First UCC Food Shelf Challenge. He writes: "The Northfield Community Action Center (CAC) Food Shelf needs help. The pandemic has increased the number of local families who are challenged with food insecurity. The food shelf needs resources to keep its shelves stocked. I am suggesting that members of the

congregation, as they are able, take the money they would have spent in coffee houses or restaurants this past week and donate it to the CAC for food security. Northfield Rotary is doing that with money it is not spending on its noon lunches. This is one way we can make a difference while most of us are home." You may contribute directly to the CAC, or if you would like to contribute through the church, you may mail a check to the church, with "CAC Food Shelf" on the memo line. The CAC is also looking for volunteers to make phone calls to check in with people in the community who may be experiencing additional need. If you are willing and able to make phone calls, please contact Pastor Lauren. Together, we can make a big difference in the lives of our neighbors.

Meals on Wheels Seeking Volunteers

Even though we have finished our two-week volunteering event with Meals on Wheels (MOW), drivers are still needed to deliver meals in our community. If you are able to volunteer, even for one shift, please contact the community liaison, Jean Callister-Benson, at jcallisterbenson@gmail.com. If you have any questions or concerns, please feel free to contact me. Thanks so much for being willing to consider this volunteering opportunity. ~Annie Kramer

Rice County Emergency Food Volunteers Needed

Emergency food assistance volunteers are needed in Rice County, particularly in areas surrounding Northfield. In particular, emergency food assistance locations in Lonsdale and Faribault could use volunteer help. Please contact Statewide Health Improvement Partnership (SHIP) Coordinator Josh Ramaker to sign up. Contact Josh at [Rice County Public Health](#), 320 3rd St NW; Suite 1, Faribault MN, 55021 or by phone at 507-332-5911. If you or someone you know in Rice County needs emergency food resources, you may find help [here](#).

Care Ministry Team

A note from the UCC Care Ministry Team: WE ARE HERE FOR YOU! Please know that the Care Ministry Team wants to know if you have any needs that can be met by us or members of our congregation. We serve as the extra eyes and ears of the church, so please speak with any member of our Care Team if you or someone you know is in need of extra support--anything from meals, to crisis help or weekly check-ins. We can connect you with congregational support. You can also continue to check in with the pastors. Our team is: Barb Altstaetter 507-645-9786, Barbara Crouter, Amanda Pettis Eastvold, Linda Larson 612-709-6795, Elizabeth O'Sullivan, Bill Poehlmann 507-645-5422, Katharine Powers, Claire Rafferty, Kathy Sandberg, Jan Shoger 507-645-5236, Kellee Tussing, Gina Washburn, and Bonnie and Larry Fowler 507-645-6930.