

First Congregational United Church of Christ

March 5, 2023



Painting by Lauren Wright Pittman

2nd Sunday in Lent

Ministers: All who are a part of this church

Pastor: Rev. Enno K. Limvere

Musician: Francie Beaster

Choir Director: Ann Russ

Peace Candle Lighter:

Liturgist: Carol Winter

Gathering Music

Words of Welcome

Prelude

Words to Enter Worship (based on 1 Corinthians 13)

People who believe in love: If I speak in tongues of mortals, and of angels, but do not have love, I am a noisy gong or a clanging cymbal. And I have prophetic powers, and understand all mysteries, and all knowledge, and if I have all faith, so as to remove mountains, but do not have love, I am nothing.

People who believe in others: If I give away all my possessions, and if I hand over my body so that I may boast, but do not have love, I gain nothing. Love is patient; love is kind; love is not envious or boastful or arrogant or rude.

People who believe in themselves: It does not insist on its own way; it is not irritable or resentful; it does not rejoice in wrongdoing, but rejoices in the truth. It bears all things, believes all things, hopes all things, endures all things.

People who believe in God: Love never ends. Now faith, hope, and love abide, these three, and the greatest of these is love.

Opening Hymn #8 Praise to the Living God

1. Praise to the Living God, the God of love and light,
Whose word brought forth the myriad suns and set the world in flight
Whose infinite design, which we but dimly see,
Pervades all nature making all the cosmic unity.
2. Praise to the living God, from whom all things derive,
Whose Spirit formed upon all sphere the first faint seeds of life
Who caused them to evolve, unwitting, toward God's goal,
Till human-kind stood on the earth, as living, thinking souls.
3. Praise to the living God, who knows our joy and pain,
Who shares with us our common life, the sacred and profane.
God toils where'er we toil, in home and mart and mill;
And deep within the human heart God leads us forward still.
4. Praise to the living God, around, within, above,
Beyond the grasp of human mind, but whom we know as love.
In these tumultuous days, so full of hope and strife,
May we bear witness to the Way, O source of God and life.

Words of Lament

Merciful God, this war has gone on now for over a year and there are no winners. Besides the soldiers being killed and their families losing their loved ones, innocents are also being maimed and slaughtered. The land is being poisoned and destroyed, homes and businesses are being demolished, and communities are being devastated. There is naked aggression happening and a disregard for life and a future for peace. Strengthen those who defend their land, O LORD, those who strive to protect their families, communities and way of life. Soften the hearts of the aggressors, that they may repent, return home, and live in peace. In Jesus' name we pray. Amen.

Time of Silence

Words of Poetry & Lighting the Candle of Peace

It is a custom in our congregation to light our Peace Candle during worship, as a witness to the Prince of Peace and our communal intention to be peace-makers as a Just Peace Church.

Steps

by Bernice Baker

*These steps, burdened
With unthinkable load;
Heavy, weary,
Crimson tears
Overflowing,
Longing to
Smile without fear.
These steps
Do leave marks
Forevermore,
Of deepest
Compassion, most
Unfaltering and pure,
Despite their most unthinkable load*



Passing of the Peace

Hymn - Come and Find the Quiet Center

Come and Find the Quiet Center 151

Fm Cm Fm Eb

1 Come and find the qui - et cen - ter in the crowd - ed life we lead,
 2 Si - lence is a friend who claims us, cools the heat and slows the pace,
 3 In the Spir - it let us trav - el, o - pen to each oth - er's pain,

D♭maj7 Eb B♭m Eb/G Fm

find the room for hope to en - ter, find the frame where we are freed;
 God it is who speaks and names us, knows our be - ing, touch - es base,
 let our loves and fears un - rav - el, cel - e - brate the space we gain:

B♭m Fm B♭m C

clear the cha - os and the clut - ter, clear our eyes that we can see
 mak - ing space with - in our think - ing, lift - ing shades to show the sun,
 there's a place for deep - est dream - ing, there's a time for heart to care,

B♭m Fm/A♭ D♭maj7 Eb Fm

all the things that real - ly mat - ter, be at peace, and sim - ply be.
 rais - ing cour - age when we're shrink - ing, find - ing scope for faith be - gun.
 in the Spir - it's live - ly schem - ing there is al - ways room to spare!

Words: Shirley Erena Murray, 1931-

Music: Swee Hong Lim, 1963-

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 Music © 2005 Hope Publishing Company

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Scripture Readings

1st Scripture John 3:1-17 (New Revised Standard Version Updated Edition)

3 Now there was a Pharisee named Nicodemus, a leader of the Jews. **2** He came to Jesus by night and said to him, “Rabbi, we know that you are a teacher who has come from God, for no one can do these signs that you do unless God is with that person.” **3** Jesus answered him, “Very truly, I tell you, no one can see the kingdom of God without being born from above.” **4** Nicodemus said to him, “How can anyone be born after having grown old? Can one enter a second time into the mother’s womb and be born?” **5** Jesus answered, “Very truly, I tell you, no one can enter the kingdom of God without being born of water and Spirit. **6** What is born of the flesh is flesh, and what is born of the Spirit is spirit. **7** Do not be astonished that I said to you, ‘You must be born from above.’ **8** The wind blows where it chooses, and you hear the sound of it, but you do not know where it comes from or where it goes. So it is with everyone who is born of the Spirit.” **9** Nicodemus said to him, “How can these things be?” **10** Jesus answered him, “Are you the teacher of Israel, and yet you do not understand these things?

11 “Very truly, I tell you, we speak of what we know and testify to what we have seen, yet you do not receive our testimony. **12** If I have told you about earthly things and you do not believe, how can you believe if I tell you about heavenly things? **13** No one has ascended into heaven except the one who descended from heaven, the Son of Man. **14** And just as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, so must the Son of Man be lifted up, **15** that whoever believes in him may have eternal life.

16 “For God so loved the world that he gave his only Son, so that everyone who believes in him may not perish but may have eternal life.

17 “Indeed, God did not send the Son into the world to condemn the world but in order that the world might be saved through him.

Children’s Message Believe!

Choir Anthem Make Me a Channel of Your Peace

Message World might be saved?

Musical Reflections

Joys and Concerns, Pastoral Prayer and the Lord’s Prayer

Our Father, Mother 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 trespasses as we forgive those who trespass against us. And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil. For thine is the kingdom and the power and the glory, forever. Amen

News of God at Work in our Congregation & Community

Our Time of Giving

Doxology

*Praise God from whom all blessings flow;
Praise God, all creatures here below;
Alleluia, alleluia
Praise God for all that love has done;
Creator, Christ, and Spirit, One.
Alleluia, Alleluia, Alleluia, Alleluia, Alleluia.*

Closing Hymn #43 Love Divine, All Loves Excelling

- 1 Love divine, all loves excelling,
joy of heaven, to earth be found,
fix in us thy humble dwelling,
all thy faithful mercies crown.
Jesus, thou art all compassion,
pure, unbounded love thou art.
Visit us with thy salvation;
enter every trembling heart.
- 2 Breathe, O breathe thy loving Spirit
into every troubled breast.
Let us all in you inherit,
let us find the promised rest.
Take away the love of sinning;
Alpha and Omega be.
End of faith, as its beginning,
set our hearts at liberty.
- 3 Come, Almighty, to deliver,
let us all thy life receive.
Suddenly return, and never,
never more thy temples leave.
You we would be always blessing,
love you as your angels love,
pray, and praise for your unfailing,
wounded arms outstretched above.
- 4 Finish, then, thy new creation;
pure and spotless may we prove.
Let us see your great salvation
perfectly restored in thee.
Changed from glory into glory,
till in heaven we take our place,
Crowned as saints, we ever shall be
lost in wonder, love and praise.

Benediction

Sending Music

Announcements

PRAYER LIST: Meredith Eliot (Church-Davison), Vicki Biggs-Anderson, Paulette Anholm, Mike Carlson, Gwen Dornfeld, Sally Dunn, Bob and Helen Carter, Countries of Ukraine, Turkey and Syria

Shut-ins and Care Center: Nona Smith, Lou Goodell, Bev Denyes, Nancy Cihlar , Tom Hedstrom

The Measure of Our Faithfulness

The First Congregational UCC adopted a 2023 Budget at the Annual Meeting on 28 January 2023, showing a need for a yearly income of \$164,110.00.

After nine weeks, the Budget Donations and Income should be \$27,405.15.

The Actual Donations so far this year have been \$31,796.59.

Kevin R LeVoir
Treasurer

THIS WEEK

THURSDAY, MARCH 2

10:00 AM - Tai Chi

11:00 AM - Building and Grounds

12:00 PM- Women's AA

1:00 PM - Plymouth Church Matins Choir

2:00-6:00PM - Piano Lessons

FRIDAY, MARCH 3

7:00AM - AA (FS)

8:00AM - Harbor Watch

2:00-6:00PM - Piano Lessons

5:00 PM - Family Fun Night Potluck, Games & Activities

SATURDAY, MARCH 4

9:30AM-2:30PM - Piano Lessons

SUNDAY, MARCH 5

9:00 AM - Sunday School

on [Zoom](#)

9:30 AM – Choir Practice

FRIDAY, MARCH 3

7:00AM - AA (FS)

8:00AM - Harbor Watch

2:00-6:00PM - Piano Lessons

5:00 PM - Family Fun Night Potluck, Games & Activities

SATURDAY, MARCH 4

9:30AM-2:30PM - Piano Lessons

2:00PM- Pride Community Celebration

SUNDAY, MARCH 5

9:00 AM - Sunday School on [Zoom](#)

9:30 AM – Choir Practice

10:30 AM- Worship Service *Inside* AND ON [ZOOM](#), 2nd Sunday in March we are going through some of the Gospel of John, we start with the story of Nicodemus and the scripture that has been plastered everywhere John 3:16 “For God so loved the world that he have his only Son, so that everyone who believes in him may not perish but may have eternal life.” What if that wasn’t the point of the story? What other things may be lifted up? How about the world (yes everything) might be saved, not just some, most, or all people?

4:00 PM - Journey Discipleship Group

5:00 PM - Pride Committee

MONDAY, MARCH 6

3:00PM-5:00PM - Food Shelf Open to the Public (LL)

7:00PM - ALANON

TUESDAY, MARCH 7

2:00-6:00PM - Piano Lessons

7:00PM - Zen Meditation (LL)

WEDNESDAY, MARCH 8

10:00 AM- Ministerial Lectionary Study

2:00-6:00PM -Piano Lessons

3:30 PM- Rooted and Rising Book Study: Inhabiting Eden

6:00 PM -Lenten Service in Fellowship Hall

THURSDAY, MARCH 9

9:00AM - Chaplin's Meeting

10:00AM - Tai Chi

12:00PM- Women's AA

2:00-6:00PM - Piano Lessons

2:00 PM - WTIP interview for Rooted and Rising

FRIDAY, MARCH 10

7:00AM - AA (FS)

8:00AM - Harbor Watch

2:00-6:00PM - Piano Lessons

SATURDAY, MARCH 11

9:30AM-2:30PM -Piano Lessons 10:30

10:30PM - Surely Discipleship Group

SUNDAY, MARCH 12

9:00 AM - Sunday School on [Zoom](#)

9:30 AM – Choir Practice

10:30 AM - Worship Service - *Inside* AND ON [ZOOM](#), 3rd Sunday in Lent, during this Sunday, we cover most of chapter 4 in sharing the story of the Samaritan Woman at the Well. In this story, we have many boundaries that are crossed with the “Messiah” being alone with a foreign woman, a woman who has ‘had’ many husbands and currently cohabiting with a man, and Samaritans believing a woman they shun.

When you give to One Great Hour of Sharing, you deploy resources to people in need all around the world, and in our own communities. When man-made or natural disasters strike, love responds. Not just for the immediate future, but for the long haul. When you give to One Great Hour of Sharing, you are working alongside families to restore not only structures, but hope. Your giving ensures that no matter how difficult the situation, *Love remains.*

And now these three remain: faith, hope and love. But the greatest of these is love.

— 1 Cor. 13:13



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SC522B

Love brings you home



On Memorial Day 2019, tornadoes swept through the Miami Valley of Ohio, destroying thousands of homes and apartments and leaving a trail of downed trees and power lines in their wake. Many of the tornado-affected families have had to relocate multiple times since the tornadoes due to substandard housing conditions and inflated rent.

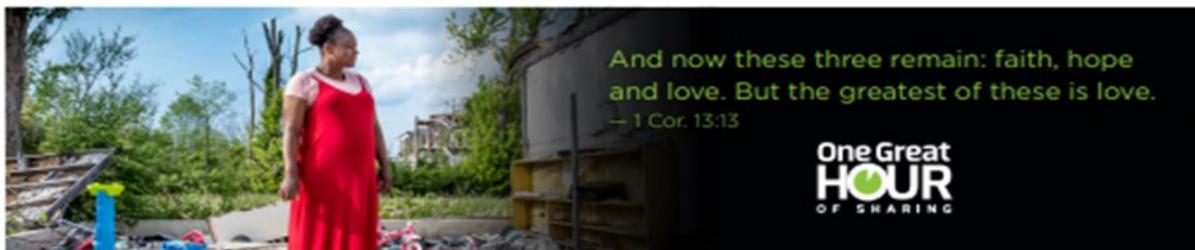
Two years after the storm, the Stephens family were still unable to find adequate living quarters. The family of ten was forced to live apart. In addition to dealing with unscrupulous contractors, the family had to haggle with insurance companies as they tried to rebuild their home. The Stephenses, like so many other families, remained in temporary housing and separated, pending the completion of repairs.

Yet, all was not lost. The Stephens family connected with the Miami Valley Long-Term Recovery Operations Group, and volunteer teams finished the repairs.

Alongside these traditional home repair projects, and with support from One Great Hour of Sharing, the MVLTRG helped launch the Tornado Survivors' Pathways to Homeownership Project to help alleviate the housing crunch in the Dayton area. Volunteers and local nonprofits work together to transition "nuisance" properties and vacant lots into affordable, single-family housing options for tornado survivors who were displaced from rental housing, stabilizing both families and the community. First-time homeowners receive the support they need to build for their futures.

Sammy Deacon, Brethren Disaster Ministries Long-Term Project Leader, says "When you reach out to help someone else, the blessing comes back to you as well. An important aspect of the recovery effort is listening to people's stories and knowing you have the opportunity to help them—physically and spiritually."

With support for long-term recovery, including innovative programs like the Pathways to Homeownership project, One Great Hour of Sharing helps create opportunities for families to thrive after disasters. Because love remains.



And now these three remain: faith, hope and love. But the greatest of these is love.
— 1 Cor. 13:13



Photo by Craig Thompson