

*Emmanuel United Church of Christ  
A Congregation of the United Church of Christ*

We Welcome you on this 1<sup>st</sup> Sunday in Lent  
February 26, 2023 - 9:30 AM

**Pastor Jim Cope and Pastor Jan Garinger**

*Bless the  
Lent we  
Actually  
Have*



1<sup>st</sup> Sunday in Lent – Blessed Are The Imperfect

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*The Gathering*

**Ringing of the Church Tower Bell**

**Our Life Together**

**Prelude**

**The Solemn Declaration**

**Choral Introit            “Come and Find the Quiet Center”            Insert**

**Come and find the quiet center in the crowded life we lead,  
find the room for hope to enter, find the frame where we are freed;  
clear the chaos and the clutter, clear our eyes that we can see  
all the things that really matter, be at peace and simply be.**

**Prayer of Invocation**

**\*Call to Worship**

Leader: When we feel down-hearted....

**All: Jesus says: “Rise!”**

Leader: When we wonder if we can continue on our journey...

**All: Jesus says: “I am with you. You have nothing to fear.”**

Leader: When we hunger and thirst in our souls for relief...

**All: Jesus says: “Come, follow me.”**

**\*Opening Hymn            “In the Cross of Christ I Glory”            #193 (NCH)**

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*The Refreshment of Forgiveness*

**Call to Confession**

**Our Prayer of Confession**

Lord of power and compassion, we are so overwhelmed in these times with fears. We fear that we will not have enough of whatever we need to survive. We fear the anger and hostility that abides in the world, in our own country, in our own neighborhoods. All around us is anxiety about living. And we draw into ourselves as a response to the needs. We want someone else to take care of those in need. We want someone else to fight our battles for us. We want someone else to stop the darkness. We feel as though we are drowning in the depth of despair. But you, O Lord, are the bright light, the power to heal, the reassuring hand of comfort and strength. You offer to us healing love, strength for our exhausted souls, courage to face whatever comes, with the full confidence that you are with us in all these times. Forgive our weakness and our little faith. Give us hearts of strength and hope. Enable us to be among those who would reach out to others with welcome, healing, forgiveness, and love.  
*(Silence is kept for personal reflection and prayer)*

**Assurance of Pardon**

Leader: God is reaching out for you today. God offers healing and encouragement out of God’s great love for you. It is a free gift – continually given by God.

**All: Thanks be to God. Amen**

**\*Choral Response            “On Eagles Wings”            #775 (NCH)**  
**And God will raise you up on eagle’s wings, bear you on the breath of dawn, make you to shine like the sun, and hold you in the palm of God’s hand.**

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*The Gift of the Word*

**A Time with the Children of all ages**

**Choral Preparation            “Breathe On Me Breath of God”            #191(RED)**

**Breathe on me, Breath of God,  
Until my heart is pure,  
Until with Thee I will one will,  
To do and to endure.**

**The Scripture Readings**

Old Testament Lesson    *Psalm 32*  
New Testament Lesson    *1 John3:1-3*  
Gospel Lesson                *Matthew 4:1-11*

**Sermon                                “Just Try A Little Harder”            Pastor Garinger**

**Hymn                                        “Blessed Assurance”            #473 (NCH)**

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*Offering Ourselves and Our Gifts*

**Call to Offering**

## Offertory

**\*Offertory Response**                    **“Take My Gifts”**                    **#562 (NCH)**  
**Take whatever I can offer, gifts that I have yet to find, Skills that I am slow to sharpen, talents of the hand and mind, things made beautiful for others in the place where I must be: take my gifts and let me love you, God who first of all loved me.**

**\*Prayer of Dedication**  
We share our gratitude for all of the gifts that we have been given – from our possessions, our knowledge and our abilities. May our “best” be something that we do not hoard but that we freely give away. As we embrace this season of Lent, may we recognize the best of our time, talents, and treasures, and share with God and our neighbors. Amen.

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### ***The Ministry of Remembrance and Prayer***

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**Prayers of the People**  
**The Lord’s Prayer (using debts and debtors)**

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### ***The Gathered Go Forth to Serve***

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**\*Hymn**                                    **“Blest Are They”**                                    **Insert**  
    **Verses 1 – 2 - 4**

## **\*Words of Benediction**

**Blessed are we who see the impossibility of solving today. It can’t be done. God, there are lists on lists and errand on errands and a taste, like tin in our mouths, of the unfinishedness – the imperfectability – of our lives. Are we counting items instead of knowing what counts? God, help us live here, seeing the whole truth of what is. Blessed are we who walk toward the discomfort, bringing what gifts we have, and our sufferings too, whether of illness or loss, grief or betrayal, confusion or powerlessness. Blessed are we who scoot up close so we can whisper our loves, our fears, all that feels too heavy to carry alone, and all that we wish we could hold onto for longer. Show us what we love. Show us what we never want to lose. And show us what we no longer need here in this beautiful, limited day, as a place our trust and hope in you. Amen**

**\*Closing Response**                    **“Beneath the Cross of Jesus”**                    **#190 (NCH)**  
**Beneath the cross of Jesus, I gladly take my stand, the shadow of a mighty rock within a weary land; A home within the wilderness a rest upon the way, from the burning of the noon-tide heat, and the burden of the day.**

## **\*Postlude**

\*Indicates that all who are able, please stand. **Bold** print indicates unison reading.  
**Notice Someone Missing?** *If so give them a call and let them know they are missed.*