

Emmanuel United Church of Christ

A Congregation of the United Church of Christ

We Welcome You on this Fourth Sunday in Lent

March 19, 2023 - 9:30 AM

Dr. James Cope, Pastor

Janice Garinger, Pastor In Care

Bless the

Lent we

Actually

Have

Blessed Are Those Who Feel Alone



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: Jesus lived a very human life; there were times of mourning and times of rejoicing.

All: Jesus celebrated the joy of friendship, love, celebration, and togetherness.

Leader: Jesus suffered the pain of loss, betrayal, rejection, and loneliness.

All: Jesus mourned the isolation of sadness, discouragement, and loneliness.

Leader: In our moments of joy, we can turn to God with thanksgiving.

All: In our times of need, we can lift up our prayers, knowing that God hears us and understands.

***Opening Hymn**

“What a Friend We Have in Jesus”

#506 (NCH)

The Refreshment of Forgiveness

Call to Confession

The Unison Prayer for Forgiveness

Eternal God, you tell us that for everything there is a season, and a time for every matter under heaven: You are with us from the time we are born until the time that we die. As we go through our lives, we pass through many seasons and experience the ups and downs of life; there is a time to weep, and a time to laugh; a time to mourn, and a time to dance; a time to seek, and a time to lose; a time to keep, and a time to throw away; a time to keep silence, and a time to speak; a time to love, and a time to hate; a time for war, and a time for peace. Gracious God, in every time and season, remind us that you are with us. In Jesus name we pray. Amen.

(Silence is kept for personal reflection and prayer)

Assurance of Pardon

Leader: God hears our cries for mercy and weeps with us. God wills the best for us in all circumstances and works with us to overcome the unbearable.

All: As we walk with Christ, God promises to abide with us and raise us up. Let us live no longer in our distress and loneliness, but accept the grace and forgiveness of 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.

The Gift of the Word

A Story for 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 23

New Testament Lesson Ephesians 5: 8-14

Gospel Lesson John 4: 5-42

Sermon

“The Gift of Someone”

Pastor Cope

Hymn

“Jesus Walked This Lonesome Valley”

#Insert

Offering Ourselves and Our Gifts

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**
You trust us enough to place your blessings in us, so may we be as faithful in offering them back to you, so others might be kept in their loneliness, might be fed in their emptiness, might receive hope in their despair. This we ask in the name of Jesus. Amen.

The Ministry of Prayer

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

The Gathered Go Forth to Serve

***Hymn** **“Blest Are They”** **verses 2,3, and 4** **Insert**

***Words of Benediction**

**God, there is a space here in my heart, in my life,
I wish others could fill.
Would it be embarrassing to admit that I’m lonely?
I need someone walking with me,
Whose eyes see what mine do,
Whose ears are open to hear my thoughts,
And whose heart can be cracked open a smidge more.
I was not built to do this alone. I feel it in the transitions, God,
In the moments I need someone to call,
after a memory I don’t want to forget.
It feels like leaning back without knowing
if I will feel the comfortable weight of being held.
Could you remind me first that I am loved?
That my needs aren’t too much. That my personality isn’t too absurd.
That the details of my life deserve a record, kept by another.
Give me courage to look in new places, to risk reaching out,
Making plans with acquaintances who might turn into friends.
Give me peace.
Give me hope.
Give me people.
And, in the meantime, remind me that lovely moments are still ahead.**

***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 hear, and the burden of the day.

***Postlude**

***Indicates that all who are able, please stand. Bold print indicates unison reading.**