

# Emmanuel United Church of Christ

## A Congregation of the United Church of Christ

We Welcome You on this Second Sunday in Lent

March 5, 2023 - 9:30 AM

Dr. James Cope, Pastor

Janice Garinger, Pastor In Care

Bless the  
Lent we  
Actually  
Have



Blessed Are The Curious

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### *The Gathering*

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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: People of God, where do we put our trust? Where do we find wholeness and meaning?

**All: We lift up our eyes to the hills. Our help comes from the Creator of heaven and earth.**

Leader: We are sons and daughters of Abraham and Sarah. We trust in God, who neither slumbers nor sleeps.

**All: We are followers of Jesus, who proclaimed God’s realm. We are born of the Spirit, born from above.**

Leader: Our lives are a gift from God, who loves us. By the grace of God, we are born anew each day.

**All: God loved the world in the gift of Jesus Christ. Through faith in Christ, we receive everlasting life.**

**\*Opening Hymn**

**“Ask Me What Great Thing I Know”**

**#49 (NCH)**

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### *The Refreshment of Forgiveness*

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Call to Confession

#### **The Unison Prayer for Forgiveness**

**We are all too human, Faithful God, and so think we have nothing to learn from others, and thus discount ancestors in the faith like Nicodemus or Sarah. We look for an answer online, convinced that we can trust whatever we find. We close tight the shutters of our souls, so the Spirit can only rattle us, but not get in to transform our lives. Yet you continue to keep watch of us, Promise Giver, whether it is when we swagger through the sunshine of our lives, or in those shadowed moments of uncertainty in the night. You will not stumble as you continue to come to us, to lead us into your kingdom. You will always be our help, whether or not we recognize it or accept it, even as you remained faithful to Jesus Christ, our Lord and Savior. Amen.**

*(Silence is kept for personal reflection and prayer)*

Assurance of Pardon

Leader: Our hope, our help, our peace, our joy? All come from God, the One who loves us and the world so much, that Jesus came to bring us salvation.

**All: Keeper of our souls, be with us; Watcher of our days, lead us; Salvation of our lives, have mercy on us. 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*

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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 Genesis 12:: 1-4

New Testament Lesson Romans 4: 1-5, 13-17

Gospel Lesson John 3: 1-17

Sermon

“How Can These Things Be?”

Pastor Cope

Hymn

“What Wondrous Love Is This”

#223 (NCH)

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*Offering Ourselves and Our Gifts*

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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.

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*The Ministry of Prayer*

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Prayers of the People followed by **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” verses 1,3, and 5

Insert

\*Words of Benediction

Blessed are we in the tender place between curiosity and dread,  
We who wonder how to be whole,  
when dreams have disappeared and part of us with them,  
where mastery, control, determination, bootstrapping, and grit,  
are consigned to the realm of before (where most of the world lives),  
in the fever dream that promises infinite choices, unlimited progress,  
best life now.

Blessed are we in the after,  
forced into stories we never would have written.  
Far outside of answers to questions we even know to ask.  
God, show us a glimmer of possibility in this new constraint,  
that small truths will be given back to us.

We are held.

We are safe.

We are loved.

We are loved.

We are loved.

\*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.