



# First Central Congregational

UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST

**LENT THEME: ASCENT**

**March 7, 2021**

**Third Sunday in Lent**

**Prelude**

Elevation #10

*Bouma*

**Welcome and Announcements**

Rev. Katie Miller

**\*Greeting and Passing of the Peace**

*"The Peace of God be with you."*

*In Unison:* **Blest be the tie that binds our hearts in Christian love;  
the fellowship of kindred minds is like to that above.**

*\* Let us rise in body or spirit.*

**Call to Worship**

Pat Lange, liturgist

The heavens are telling the glory of God.

**From the sun's rising to its setting, the creation speaks.**

Day and night, earth's creatures announce God's works.

**Our lips sing praise and our whole selves rejoice in the God who makes us free.**

**\*Processional Hymn**

O God, How We Have Wandered

6-19-96

LENT

# O God, How We Have Wandered

202

Kevin Nichols, 1980; alt.

Luke 15:11-32; 2 Cor. 5:16-20

1 O God, how we have wan - dered and hid - den from your face;  
 2 And now at length dis - cern - ing the e - vil that we do,  
 3 O God of all the liv - ing, both ban - ished and re - stored,

In fool - ish - ness have squan - dered your leg - a - cy of grace.  
 By faith we are re - turn - ing with hope and trust in you.  
 Com - pas - sion - ate, for - giv - ing, our peace and hope as - sured.

But how, in ex - ile dwell - ing, we turn with fear and shame,  
 In haste you come to meet us, and home re - joic - ing bring,  
 Grant now that our trans - gress - ing, our faith - less - ness may cease.

As dis - tant but com - pell - ing, you call us each by name.  
 In glad - ness there to greet us with calf and robe and ring.  
 Stretch out your hand in bless - ing, in par - don, and in peace.

*The tune for this contemporary text appears five times in J. S. Bach's St. Matthew Passion, and first appeared as a hymn setting in the early 1800s. It has an ecumenical history reaching back many centuries. Originally it was a German love song.*

Tune: PASSION CHORALE 7.6.7.6.D.  
 (HERZLICH TUT MICH VERLANGEN)  
 Melody by Hans Leo Hassler, 1601  
 Harm. J. S. Bach. 1729

## **\*Invocation**

Thankful are we for all the blessings of this life--love, freedom, bounty, and beauty. We long for the wholeness that Christ offers. The joy God brings is beyond our words to speak. Come to us today, Holy One, and inspire within us visions of new life. Raise us up and move us forward through this journey of faith. Amen.

## **\*Gloria**

*Black Hymnal, No. 759*

Glory to the Creator, the Christ, the Holy Spirit, Three in One; as it was in the beginning, is now and ever shall be, world without end. Amen. Amen.

## **Conversation with the Children**

### **Psalm Lesson**

Psalm 121

For the Word of God in scripture,  
For the Word of God within us,  
For the Word of God among us,  
**Thanks be to God.**

### **Sermon**

The Hills

Rev. Katie Miller

## **Musical Interlude**

### **\*Prayer of Confession**

Rev. Dr. Jim Harmon

May we, through divine love, shed the false, un-neighborly, covetous, and dishonorable desires of the lives we sometimes live. Help us to keep the commandments and walk in the way that brings life. Amen.

### **\*Words of Assurance**

Live in the grace of God's love as you walk in the way of Jesus and surely you shall find mercy at the end of that road.

### **Offertory**

Lift Thine Eyes

*Mendelssohn*

*Claire Bouma, Lyn Bouma, Katie Miller*

## \*Hymn of Dedication

LASST UNS ERFREUEN

Praise God, from whom all blessings flow; Praise God, all creatures here below: Alleluia! Alleluia!  
Praise God, the source of all our gifts! Praise Jesus Christ, whose power uplifts! Praise the Spirit,  
Holy Spirit! Alleluia! Alleluia! Alleluia!

## \*Offertory Prayer

We bring our gifts as expressions of gratitude, to further your divine mission. Inspire us to challenge the falsehoods that pervade our culture. Center our community on values consistent with your will. May we be eager to serve you, embracing your word in our everyday lives. Amen.

## Celebration of the Sacrament of Communion

As grain that was scattered on the hillside was gathered together and made into one loaf, so too, we, scattered at tables in our own homes, are bound together around Christ's table and become one. As grapes grown in the field are gathered together and pressed into wine, so too are we drawn together and pressed by our times to share a common lot and are transformed into Christ's self-giving love for all.

God be with you.

And with your spirit.

Lift up your hearts

We lift them up to God.

Give thanks to God.

It is right and good to give God thanks and praise.

Praise to you Divine Creator. Thank you for the gift of life, the beauty of nature, and your steadfast loving kindness. Praise to you Divine Redeemer. Thank you for sharing our human existence, from birth through death to everlasting life you have shown us a way worth emulating, bringing healing and hope to those most in need. Praise to you Divine Sustainer. Thank you for the vision to see beyond the immediate, a calm in the midst of storm, the strength to build an ever-expanding community and the courage to bring about any change necessary within our lives. Today we join in communion with all the saints in every time and age to sing your glory:

*Holy, holy, holy Lord, God of power and might. Holy, holy, holy Lord, God of power and might. Heaven and earth are full, full of your glory. Hosanna in the highest, hosanna in the highest. Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord. Hosanna in the highest, hosanna in the highest.*

Words of Institution and Invitation to the Table

The Bread and the Cup

Prayer of Thanksgiving

## \*Recessional Hymn

Amazing Grace

## Amazing Grace, How Sweet the Sound

547

St. 1-4, John Newton, 1779; alt.

St. 5, A Collection of Sacred Ballads, 1790

1 A - maz - ing grace, how sweet the sound, that  
 2 'Twas grace that taught my heart to fear, and  
 3 Through man - y dan - gers, toils, and snares, I  
 4 My God has prom - ised good to me, whose  
 5 When we've been there ten thou - sand years, bright

saved a wretch like me! I once was lost, but  
 grace my fears re - lieved; How pre - cious did that  
 have al - read - y come; 'Tis grace has brought me  
 word my hope se - cures; God will my shield and  
 shin - ing as the sun, We've no less days to

now am found, was blind but now I see.  
 grace ap - pear the hour I first be - lieved!  
 safe thus far, and grace will lead me home.  
 por - tion be as long as life en - dures.  
 sing God's praise than when we'd first be - gun.

John Newton's autobiographical hymn reflects his conversion from his earlier existence as a slave trader. While serving as curate in the English village of Olney, Newton met William Cowper, and together they published Olney Hymns, which included this hymn.

Tune: AMAZING GRACE C.M.  
 (NEW BRITAIN)  
 Columbia Harmony, Cincinnati, 1829  
 Arr. Edwin O. Excell, 1900

X

## **\*Benediction**

### **Benediction Response**

*Bouma*

May you hear laughter in the wind. May you see hope in the light.  
May you find courage in your faith. May you know joy in your God.

### **Postlude**

Elevation #12

*Bouma*

#### **Open & Affirming Statement**

In our ongoing quest for hearts that open, minds that understand,  
and lives that serve, we welcome into our fellowship, membership, leadership, and employment,  
all people, regardless of abilities, race, gender, sexual orientation, or any God-given characteristic.

## Announcements

**March 7, 2021**

**Prayers:** for *Mary Solberg*, having a knee replacement on Monday; *Rick Brenneman*, recovering from surgery; *Mary Guin Knoll*, now at Brookestone Meadows for rehab; *Leigh Gustafson*, recovering from knee surgery, and recuperating in Omaha.

**Chancel decorations:** thanks to *Andy Acker* for the beautiful painting.

**Happy Birthday this week:** to *Patti Clark, Colleen Syster, Laura Toftland, Terry Foster, Josie Johnson, Lena Solberg, Monica Staffefnd, Jim Druliner,* and *James Ladwig.*

**Food Pantry:** Donations will be accepted at church. Checks may be mailed to First Central with "pantry" in the memo line. Frozen meats are now being accepted (and are needed).

**FirstYouth:** 8 p.m., Zoom.

### Activities for the Coming Week, March 8 – March 13

*Lectionary Readings: Number 21:4-9; Psalm 107:1-3, 17-22;  
Ephesians 2:1-10; John 3:14-21.*

**Tuesday:** Council, 7 p.m., Zoom.

**Wednesday:** Choir, 7 p.m., Zoom

Vespers, 8 p.m., FaceBook Live

**Thursday:** Evergreen Thrift Shop 10 a.m. – 2 p.m.

**Saturday:** Evergreen Thrift Shop 10 a.m. – 1 p.m.

### Sunday, March 14

#### **DAYLIGHT SAVING TIME BEGINS**

**Worship:** 10:30 a.m. on YouTube, FaceBook Live, or in person.

**FirstKids:** in Memorial Hall following the Conversation with the Children. Masks required.

**FirstYouth:** 8 p.m., Zoom

*Want to donate electronically? Please scan the QR code.*

