



**NEWTON
CONGREGATIONAL
UNITED CHURCH
OF CHRIST**
God is still speaking,

An Open and Affirming Congregation

*No matter who you are, or where you are on life's journey,
you are welcome here!*

**Virtual Worship • March 22, 2020 • 10:00am
Fourth Sunday in Lent**

Digital Bulletin

This document is prepared so you can join our Sunday morning live-stream worship via our Facebook page (facebook.com/NewtonUCC) or call in via Zoom (Dial 312-626-6799; then enter Meeting ID: 404 046 215), or worship on your own at a time convenient for you (visit our Facebook page or website—uccnewton.org).

We are new to online and streaming worship at Congregational UCC, so we're prepared for a few "hiccups" and technical difficulties. Of course, there is nothing that compares to being physically present with one another in worship, and yet this is what we need to do to "love our neighbors" during the current national emergency.

We apologize in advance for any problems that you may encounter in connecting to the service and welcome your feedback on how to improve the virtual worship experience over the coming weeks when we will not be able to worship in our sanctuary.

PREPARING FOR VIRTUAL WORSHIP

As you prepare to join in online worship with us, in addition to making whatever technical preparations you need to make, consider how to prepare your personal space for worship:

- Silence your phone and eliminate distractions
 - Light a candle or some incense
 - Open your Bible or browser to Psalm 23
- Position your body in a posture of worship and prayer

~ ~ ~

*Only goodness and love will follow me all the days of my life,
and I will dwell in your house, O God, for days without end.*

Psalm 23:6

PRELUDE

WELCOME AND ANNOUNCEMENTS

REMEMBERING WHO WE ARE

One: As we prepare ourselves to join together in worship,
let us remind ourselves who we are
as members and friends of Congregational United Church of Christ.

**All: We are a community of God's beloved
dedicated to following the teachings of Jesus as we live our faith
by loving and serving all of God's creation
and striving for justice and peace
throughout our community, our nation, and the world.**

THE BREATH OF GOD

* CALL TO WORSHIP

One: During this season of Lent, we are called to turn back to God and God's ways
and dwell with confidence in the presence of the divine.

**All: We are called to self-examination and reflection
that we might remember who we are and whose we are.**

One: On this fourth Sunday in Lent,
we are invited to welcome the comforting presence of the divine,
which makes us lie down and rest held by the beauty of creation
and leads us to drink safely from crystal-clear waters,
restoring us, refreshing us, empowering us to live.

**All: Continue to lead us, O God, in your path showing us the way of true life.
Comfort us as we face challenging, uncertain, fearful times.
Provide for us as you have always provided for your beloved
out of abundance and with grace beyond measure.**

One: We open ourselves to your presence this day, O God,
that we might experience the safety, security, and sustenance
that come only from you.

**All: We open ourselves to your presence this day, Loving Spirit,
trusting that your goodness and your compassion
will follow us and will lead us all the days of our lives,
as we dwell with the whole of your creation
in your house of unbounded love forever and ever.
We pray in Jesus's name. Amen.**

OPENING HYMN 288 v. 1, 3-4

O God of Vision

Lobe Den Herren

*O God of vision far great-er than all hu-man schem-ing,
gath-er us now in your pres-ence, re-fresh-ing, re-deem-ing.
Show us a-new life in your breath-tak-ing view,
love-ly be-yond all our dream-ing.*

*Grant to us in-sight, O God, for this time of de-ci-sion.
May we dream chal-leng-ing dreams both of depth and pre-ci-sion.
Speak through the dark. Dispel by light-ning's bright spark
what-ev-er clouds dim our vi-sion.*

*Break the sun's rays in-to col-or, a rain-bow a-round us.
Storm clouds, though real and near, are not e-nough to con-found us.
Arched in the sky, beau-ty and pro-mise are high,
giv-ing us hope to as-tound us.*

CALL TO PRAYER

PRAYER FOR TRANSFORMATION AND RECONCILIATION

(You are invited to take in a deep breath as Rev. Petersen offers the "fill us" portion of each statement, and then to let out a great sigh as she offers the "take away" portion.)

One: Fill us with your love, O God, and take away our fear.
Fill us with your joy, O God, and take away our negativity.
Fill us with your peace, O God, and take away our anxiety.
Fill us with your patience, O God, and take away our irritability.
Fill us with your kindness, O God, and take away our criticalness.
Fill us with your generosity, O God, and take away our greed.
Fill us with your faithfulness, O God, and take away our distrust.
Fill us with your gentleness, O God, and take away our harshness.
Fill us with your self-control, O God, and take away our reactivity.
(silent prayer and reflection)

All: **As we rest in the presence of your loving arms, Gentle Spirit,
fill us with every good gift renewing, restoring, and empowering us
to join in ministry with you and one another
that all may know your love, that all may know your peace,
that all may have opportunity to truly rest and delight
in the gift of this life you offer.
We pray in the name of Jesus, Amen.**

ASSURANCE OF GOD'S GRACE

SHARING OF GOD'S PEACE

One: The peace of God be with you.

All: **And also with you.**

HYMN

Lead Us from Death to Life

World Peace Prayer

*Lead us from death to life, from false-hood to truth,
from de-spair to hope, from fear to trust.
Lead us from hate to love, from war to peace;
let peace fill our hearts, let peace fill our world,
let peace fill our u-ni-verse.*

A TIME WITH CHILDREN

SCRIPTURE

Psalms 23

* GLORIA PATRI

Greatorex

***Glo-ry to the Cre-a-tor, the Christ, the Ho-ly Spir-it, Three-in-One;
as it was in the be-gin-ning, is now and ever shall be,
world with-out end. A-men. A-men.***

SERMON

Active Trust

Rev. Jessica Petersen

PAUSE

(What did you hear yourself saying as you were listening to the presentation of the scripture and the sermon? How is God speaking to you today?)

HYMN 357 v. 1, 4-5

We Call Ourselves Disciples

Lancashire

***We call our-selves dis-ci-ples, as pil-grims on the way.
We seek the truth in wis-dom, and beau-ty in each day.
As wom-en, men and chil-dren, we serve Christ's path to clear.
In joy-ful ex-pec-ta-tion we see God's reign draw near.***

***We join with all dis-ci-ples to live the Word in deed,
to share the cup of wa-ter and bread with all in need;
to work till God's com-pass-ion and righ-teous-ness pre-vail,
till all this plan-et's peo-ple know jus-tice with-out fail.***

***So now the vi-sion bright-ens, the light of Christ burns still
in hearts of all dis-ci-ples to be the church God wills.
From qui-et med-i-ta-tion, and joy-ous hymns of praise,
we go to do God's mis-sion! Christ, lead us all our days!***

LIVING PSALM 23—Creation Justice—Lent 4

(This piece was written by the Rev. Justo González II, Interim Conference Minister, Illinois Conference and is included in the *Living Psalms Book*. *Living Psalms Book* is created by UCC Witness & Worship Artists' Group, a Network of UCC connected artists, activists and ministers bridging the worship and liturgy of the local church with witness and action in the community. © Copyright 2020 Faith INFO Team, United Church of Christ, 700 Prospect Avenue, Cleveland, OH 44115-1100. Permission granted to reproduce or adapt this material for use in services of worship or church education. All publishing rights reserved.)

The Creator and Sustainer of all of creation is my shepherd, I shall not want.
Mother Nature on the other hand pleads with us
to recognize the need for environmental justice and care for all created beings.

Climate justice invites me to lie down in green pastures before they cease to exist
because of our recklessness.

The Universe full of its glory invites me to relax and enjoy the beauty and majesty
of still waters that are not polluted and abused at the hands of humankind.
Those still waters are shrinking. What will we do?

Being one with nature and recognizing God's abundant gift of creation restores my soul.
There is hope that we can turn this around before it is too late for humanity.
The path, I discover, is clear.

To achieve right relationship and bring climate justice is our goal.
For God's sake, let us recognize all creation as part of us before it turns away
and claims its revenge for the injustices we have done to the planet.

We are walking through the valley of the shadow of death that we, as humans, have created. It would not be a true statement if I said, "I fear no evil".
I fear humanity and its lack of respect for the earth and the resources God has provided. Gracious God, I seek to fear no evil.
Yet, I have doubts that we can get our act together and preserve the earth that you have provided for us to live on as your children.
Even in doubt and despair, I can only embrace your promise to be with me.
The love you have for all created beings and creation itself, comfort me.

You are still creating and preparing a table for humanity in spite of all the violations we have perpetrated on our planet and towards each other. With love and kindness, you anoint our heads with oil reminding us to be good stewards of our environment. With your grace and our human action our cup can once again overflow as we care for our planet and each other.

Surely goodness and mercy will flow from the heavens to help us resurrect all that we have violated and lost by ignoring our climate and not working for environmental justice.
Once we awaken from our sleep and slumber, we will organize and work in a coordinated fashion or risk death and destruction. God desires us to dwell with all of creation, Mother Nature and climate justice in the house that God built.
Let's not destroy that one either.

PRAYER OF OUR SAVIOR (**Other options for "Father" include "Mother," "Parent," "Creator."*)

**Our Father* 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 debts as we forgive our debtors.
Lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil.
For thine is the kingdom and the power and the glory forever. Amen.**

INVITATION TO OFFERING

(During our hiatus from in-person worship, you are encouraged to mail your pledges and offerings to the church office: Congregational United Church of Christ, 308 E 2nd St N, Newton, IA 50208.)

OFFERTORY

DOXOLOGY

Old Hundredth

***Praise God from whom all bles-sings flow,
praise God all crea-tures here be-low.
Praise God for all that love has done,
Cre-a-tor, Christ, and Spir-it, One. A-men.***

PRAYER OF DEDICATION

***For beau-ty of mead-ows, for gran-deur of trees,
for flow-ers of wood-lands, for crea-tures of seas,
for all you cre-at-ed and gave us to share,
we praise you, Cre-a-tor, ex-tol-ing your care.***

***As stew-ards of beau-ty re-ceived at your hand,
as crea-tures who hear your most ur-gent com-mand,
we turn from our waste-ful de-struc-tion of life,
con-fess-ing our fail-ures, con-fess-ing our strife.***

***Teach us once a-gain to be gar-den-ers in peace;
all na-ture a-round us is ours but on lease;
your name we would hal-low in all that we do,
ful-fill-ing our call-ing, cre-at-ing with you.***

BENEDICTION

POSTLUDE

Reprinting and Streaming of Hymns:

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