

**Peace United Church of Christ
March 23rd, 2025
Third Sunday in Lent
10:30am**



Fig Leafing, Hannah Garrity
A Sanctified Art LLC | sanctifiedart.org

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Prelude

Welcome and Announcements

Ringling of the Bells

*Call to Worship

Worship is a place to rest.

We breathe deeply here.

We still our aching bones.

We sit in the quiet.

We surround ourselves with music.

Worship is a place to rest.

Worship is a place to grow.

We listen for God's word.

We invite it to challenge us.

We lean in with curiosity.

We ask questions.

Worship is a place to grow.

So come into this space.

Come rest and grow here.

For where two or more are gathered,

God is always there.

Let us worship our gracious God.

*Song

Amazing Grace

#547 NCH

***Amazing grace, how sweet the sound, that saved a wretch like me!
I once was lost, but now am found, was blind but now I see.***

***'Twas grace that taught my heart to fear, and grace my fears relieved;
How precious did that grace appear the hour I first believed!***

***Through many dangers, toils, and snares, I have already come
'Tis grace has brought me safe thus far, and grace will lead me home.***

***My God has promised good to me, whose word my hope secures;
God will my shield and portion be as long as life endures.***

***When we've been there ten thousand years, bright shining as the sun,
We've no less days to sing God's praise than when we'd first begun.***

*Prayer of Confession

Holy God,

There are days when we fail to rest.

We stretch ourselves too thin. We say "yes" to every invitation.

We run a million miles a minute. We ignore your command to rest.

There are also days when we fail to act.

We wait for someone else. We take the easy road.

We find excuses and justify our inaction.

God, forgive our imbalance.

Remind us that birds rest, and they also fly.

Show us how to do the same. Amen.

*Assurance of Forgiveness

Family of faith, hear the good news: Our God does not keep score. Our God does not hold grudges. Our God offers grace and boundless love. So join me in proclaiming the good news of the gospel:

God's grace is deeper than the ocean. God's love is wider than the sky.

We are seen. We are claimed. Through Christ, we are forgiven.

May this realization change and inspire us.

Thanks be to God! Amen.

*Passing of the Peace

Story for All Ages

I Am an Acorn, Carol Johnson

Amanda McElray Hunter

*I am an acorn, the packet, the seed
God is within me, and God is the tree
I am unfolding the way I should be
Carved in the palm of God's hand
Carved in the palm of God's hand
- Carol Johnson*

Sending the Children

***Jesus calls us in, sends us out bearing fruit in a world of doubt,
Gives us love to tell, bread to share: God (Immanuel) everywhere!
Jesus lives again, earth can breathe again, pass the Word around: loaves abound!
Jesus lives again, earth can breathe again, pass the Word around: loaves abound!***

Contemporary Reading

Slow Growth, Rev. Sarah A. Speed

Darlene Leafgren, reader

There's a vine in the South that covers everything.
It chokes out the light. Grows up to twelve inches per day.
In a matter of years, it will blanket a forest.
If you saw it from space, you'd marvel at its reach.
If you saw it from the passenger seat, you'd weep at what it covers.
Those looking for fast shade plant this invasive vine.
Who can blame them? We're all impatient.
But if it's fruit you want—
the tart cherry,
the sticky sweet kumquat,
the soft side of a peach,
the crisp bite of an apple—
then bless the rain.
Thank the sun.
Put your hands in the dirt,
and wait.

Anthem

If Ye Love Me, Thomas Tallis

Scripture Reading

Luke 13:6-9

Then he told this parable: "A man had a fig tree planted in his vineyard, and he came looking for fruit on it and found none. So he said to the man working the vineyard, 'See here! For three years I have come looking for fruit on this fig tree, and still I find none. Cut it down! Why should it be wasting the soil?' He replied, 'Sir, let it alone for one more year, until I dig around it and put manure on it. If it bears fruit next year, well and good, but if not, you can cut it down.' "

Holy Wisdom, Holy Word. **Thanks be to God.**

Special Music

For Emily #3, Jim Pospisil

Emily Ramsey

Sermon

Rev. Corinne Freedman Ellis

Song

I Heard the Voice of Jesus Say

#489 NCH

***I heard the voice of Jesus say, "Come unto me and rest;
Lay down, O weary one, lay down your head upon my breast."
I came to Jesus as I was, so weary, worn, and sad,
And there I found a resting place, where Jesus made me glad!
I heard the voice of Jesus say, "Behold, I freely give
The living water; thirsty one, draw near, and drink, and live."
I came to Jesus, and I drank of that life giving stream;
My thirst was quenched, my soul revived, and now I am redeemed.
I heard the voice of Jesus say, "I am this lost world's Light,
Look unto me; your morn shall rise, and all your day be bright."
I looked to Jesus, and I found my guiding Star, my Sun;***

And in that light of life I'll go till traveling days are done.

Community Prayers and Pastoral Prayer

The Prayer of Jesus

Our Creator, who art in heaven, hallowed be thy name. Thy kin-dom 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 kin-dom, the power, and the glory, for ever and ever. Amen.

Sung Amen

Offertory

Theme from *Schindler's List*, John Williams

Emily Ramsey

*Doxology

**Praise God from whom all blessings flow,
Praise God all creatures here below,
Praise God above ye heavenly host,
Creator, Christ, and Holy Ghost! Amen!**

*Prayer of Dedication

*Closing Song

Let There Be Peace on Earth

#26 P&W

***Let there be peace on Earth,
and let it begin with me.
Let there be peace on Earth,
the peace that was meant to be.
With God our Creator, family all are we.
Let me walk with my family in perfect harmony

Let peace begin with me.
Let this be the moment now.
With every step I take,
let this be my solemn vow.
Take each moment and
live each moment with peace eternally.
Let there be peace on Earth,
and let it begin with me.***

*Benediction

*Postlude

Assisting in Today's Service:

Rhonda & Noah Mittlefehldt, Greeters

Warren Post, Head Usher

Kay & Bob Stevens, Terese Tomanek, Coffee Hour Volunteers

Pat & Lynn Devlin, Coffee Coordinators

Lorelie Schwensohn and Elise Westbrook, Nursery Attendants