

**St. John United Church of Christ**  
Arlington Heights, Illinois



**First Sunday of Lent**  
February 26, 2023

# Welcome to St. John

**Welcome** Thank you for joining us for in-person worship today!

**Livestreaming** All of St. John's worship services are now livestreamed. You can watch the service live or at another time by going to our website, [www.stjah.org](http://www.stjah.org) or our Vimeo page, [www.vimeo.com/stjah](http://www.vimeo.com/stjah).

**Holy Communion** All are welcome to participate in Holy Communion at St. John. We believe that Jesus welcomed all to his mission of love and all are welcome to the table. We celebrate Holy Communion on the first & third Sundays of the month. All are invited to come forward, row by row. If you cannot come forward, a server will bring communion to you. ***A gluten-free option is available upon request.***

**Giving** Offering plates are passed during worship. You can also give by going to [www.stjah.org](http://www.stjah.org) and clicking the "GIVE" tab at the top of the page, or by mail. Thank you for your generosity!

**Children in Worship** Infants and children bring life to our worship and are always welcome. Worship Activity Packets are available for children.

**Interested in Membership?** Contact the office at [office@stjah.org](mailto:office@stjah.org) or 847-255-6687.

**Open and Affirming** We are an ONA church. Please visit our website and see our ONA Statement on the back page of this bulletin for more information.

**Wifi Network & Password** Guest & StJohnGuest

## CONTACT US –

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Office: 847.255.6687

Office Hours: 9:00 a.m. to 12:00 p.m. Monday – Friday

## STAFF –

Rev. Judith Wang, Interim Pastor – [pastor@stjah.org](mailto:pastor@stjah.org)

Janice Gilligan, Church Administrator – [office@stjah.org](mailto:office@stjah.org)

Dr. J. Paul Cochran, Organist & Orchestra Director

Linda Styzek, Pianist & Worship Band Coordinator

Alberto Mantovano, Choir Director & Livestream Coordinator

Carin Zachar, Bell Choir Director

# First Sunday of Lent

## February 26, 2023

### GATHERING MUSIC

### GREETING

May the grace and peace of Jesus Christ be with each of you.  
**And also with you.**

### \*CALL TO WORSHIP (Leader and People)

God's grace is beyond our capacity  
**and so we come to give thanks for forgiveness we can never earn.**  
God's grace demands our response  
**and so we come to learn the ways of faithful living.**  
God's grace is meant to be shared  
**and so we come to encounter love and be equipped for loving.**

### \*OPENING HYMN #43

Love Divine, All Love's Excelling

### \*PRAYER OF CONFESSION

God of endless love, you call us to love as you do.

**We confess that we do not.**

You call us to community made in your image, honest and vulnerable and real;  
you call us to speak up when we witness hurt and to choose the way of  
accountability and reconciliation.

**We confess that we do not.**

We admit that we avoid; we talk *about* rather than *to* people;

**and we sweep things under the rug rather than deal with upsetting situations.**

You promise that the forgiveness we experience is the forgiveness we offer;  
that the peace we want can only be found when we practice forgiveness.

We confess that we want forgiveness for ourselves and punishment for others.

**Have patience with us, O God, for we are a work in progress.**

**And when we falter, when we ask for things from you that we are unwilling to grant to our neighbor, nudge us again by your Spirit.**

**Give us ears to hear the witnesses you send, and help us grow into the people you intend: forgiven, loved, and free to forgive and love.**

**We ask in Jesus' name. Amen.**

## \*ASSURANCE OF FORGIVENESS

God's grace is beyond our capacity to understand. God hears the confessions of our hearts and lips. Through Jesus Christ we are forgiven of our sins, and by the power of the Holy Spirit we are empowered for new life.

## OUR LORD'S PRAYER (Unison)

**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; and lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil. For thine is the kingdom and the power and the glory, forever. Amen.**

## \*THE PEACE [*Please simply say "Peace be with you" with a nod or wave.*]

The peace of Christ be with you!

**And also with you!**

## \*RESPONSE #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.**

## WELCOME AND COMMUNITY ANNOUNCEMENTS

### HISTORICAL WITNESS

Matthew 18.15-35

15 'If another member of the church sins against you, go and point out the fault when the two of you are alone. If the member listens to you, you have regained that one. <sup>16</sup>But if you are not listened to, take one or two others along with you, so that every word may be confirmed by the evidence of two or three witnesses. <sup>17</sup>If the member refuses to listen to them, tell it to the church; and if the offender refuses to listen even to the church, let such a one be to you as a Gentile and a tax-collector. <sup>18</sup>Truly I tell you, whatever you bind on earth will be bound in heaven, and whatever you loose on earth will be loosed in heaven. <sup>19</sup>Again, truly I tell you, if two of you agree on earth about anything you ask, it will be done for you by my Father in heaven. <sup>20</sup>For where two or three are gathered in my name, I am there among them.'

21 Then Peter came and said to him, 'Lord, if another member of the church sins against me, how often should I forgive? As many as seven times?' <sup>22</sup>Jesus said to him, 'Not seven times, but, I tell you, seventy-seven times.'

23 'For this reason the kingdom of heaven may be compared to a king who wished to settle accounts with his slaves. <sup>24</sup>When he began the reckoning, one who owed him ten thousand talents was brought to him; <sup>25</sup>and, as he could not pay, his lord ordered him to be sold, together with his wife and children and all his possessions, and payment to be made. <sup>26</sup>So the slave fell on his knees before him, saying, "Have patience with me, and I will pay you everything." <sup>27</sup>And out of pity for him, the lord of that slave released him and forgave him the debt. <sup>28</sup>But that same slave, as he went out, came upon one of his fellow-slaves who owed him a hundred denarii; and seizing him by the throat, he said, "Pay what you owe." <sup>29</sup>Then his

fellow-slave fell down and pleaded with him, "Have patience with me, and I will pay you." <sup>30</sup>But he refused; then he went and threw him into prison until he should pay the debt. <sup>31</sup>When his fellow-slaves saw what had happened, they were greatly distressed, and they went and reported to their lord all that had taken place. <sup>32</sup>Then his lord summoned him and said to him, "You wicked slave! I forgave you all that debt because you pleaded with me. <sup>33</sup>Should you not have had mercy on your fellow-slave, as I had mercy on you?" <sup>34</sup>And in anger his lord handed him over to be tortured until he should pay his entire debt. <sup>35</sup>So my heavenly Father will also do to every one of you, if you do not forgive your brother or sister from your heart.'

## WORSHIP BAND

### Jesus Messiah

He became sin who knew no sin  
That we might become His righteousness  
He humbled Himself and carried the cross  
Love so amazing love so amazing

Jesus Messiah Name above all names  
Blessed Redeemer Emmanuel  
The Rescue for sinners  
The Ransom from heaven  
Jesus Messiah Lord of all

His body the bread His blood the wine  
Broken and poured out all for love  
The whole earth trembled and the veil was torn  
Love so amazing love so amazing

All our hope is in You  
All our hope is in You  
All the glory to You God  
The Light of the world

Jesus Messiah  
Lord of all  
The Lord of all  
The Lord of all

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## FOOD PANTRY DONATIONS COLLECTION

CHILDRENS' GATHERING [Children will be dismissed to Sunday School after the Children's Gathering]

CONTEMPORARY WITNESS

"Accountability and Accounting"

HYMN #13

O, My Soul, Bless Your Creator

## COMMUNITY PRAYER

## INVITATION TO OFFERING AND OFFERTORY

Trumpet in Dialogue - Louis Clerambault

### \*DOXOLOGY

Text #778 Tune: TALLIS' CANON (#100)

**Praise God from whom all blessings flow;  
Praise God, all creatures here below;  
Praise God for all that love has done;  
Creator, Christ, and Spirit, One.**

### \*PRAYER OF DEDICATION

### \*CLOSING HYMN #23

There's a Wideness in God's Mercy

### \*BENEDICTION

## POSTLUDE

Rondeau - Jean Mouret

The Call to Worship and the Prayer of Confession were written for the Narrative Lectionary by Rev. Teri Peterson.

\*Indicates when congregation may stand.

**Bolded text** is intended to be read in unison by the whole congregation.

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This Sunday's Worship Leaders: GREETERS: Holly Petersen & Dave Landeweer.

ANNOUNCEMENTS: Dave Landeweer. FLOWERS: Jane Allen in Honor of her Mother. COFFEE: Spiritual Life. SCRIPTURE READER: Rachel Martin. CALLED TO CARE: SEXTON: Paul Giambarberee. ALTAR GUILD: Roberta Morand.

Next Sunday's Worship Leaders: GREETERS: Barbara Blye, Holly Peterson & Dennis Roesslein.

ANNOUNCEMENTS: Barbara Blye. FLOWERS: COFFEE: Cooper Family for Cicely's Birthday & Hanna's Adoption Day. SCRIPTURE READER: Sharon Porter. CALLED TO CARE: Barbara Blye. SEXTON: Craig Mallar. ALTAR GUILD: Janet Landeweer.

### **The Week Ahead at St. John**

- **First Sunday in Lent** – Sunday, February 26 at 10:00 A.M.
- **Lenten Soup Sunday** – Sunday, February 26 at 11:00 A.M.
- **Bible Study** – Tuesday, February 28 at 10:00 A.M.
- **Chancel Choir Rehearsal** – Wednesday, March 1 at 6:45 P.M.
- **PADS** – Wednesday, March 1 at 7:00 P.M.
- **Cards** – Thursday, March 2 at 1:00 P.M.
- **PADS** – Friday, March 3 at 7:00 P.M.

**Lenten Soup Sundays:** In the past we have had soup suppers on Wednesday nights during Lent. This year, we are a PADS site on Wednesday evenings. The Spiritual Life Committee would still like to provide an opportunity for fellowship during Lent so we will host **Lenten Soup Sundays**, a light soup luncheon following worship on five Sundays following Ash Wednesday. Each Sunday's soups will be provided and hosted by one of our St. John committees, February 26 through March 26, as follows: 2/26-Spiritual Life; 3/5- Stewardship; 3/12-Music Committee; 3/19-Christian Ed; 3/26-Council

This will replace our Coffee Hour. Please join us for a light soup & bread lunch following worship during Lent. *Spiritual Life encourages everyone to bring their own soup bowls to the Lenten Soup Sundays. It will help save money for St. John and it's a great way for us to help our planet. You can drop them off in Fellowship Hall prior to the service and then take them home afterwards.*

A free-will offering will be collected that will go to earthquake aid through the UCC. If you wish to write a check, it can be made out to St. John UCC and indicate Earthquake Aid on the memo line. If you wish to give online, choose the Other tab and then fill in Earthquake Aid.

**Congregational United Church of Christ Lenten Series:** Pastor Steve Welker of the Congregational UCC is offering a six-week Lenten series on a book called "A Clearing Season: Reflections for Lent" by Sarah Parsons. This series will be offered at 2 separate times during the Wednesdays of Lent: 3/1, 3/8, 3/15, 3/22, 3/29 and 4/5 at noon-2:00 pm (bring a sack lunch) and 5:00-7:00 pm (a simple soup dinner will be served). All sessions will be held at the Congregational UCC (1001 W. Kirchoff Rd.) in Arlington Heights. Contact Pat Harris to get a copy of the book and to sign up for any or all of these sessions! ([pharrisbi@hotmail.com](mailto:pharrisbi@hotmail.com))

**Little Free Pantry Announcement:** The Little Free Pantry continues to be well utilized. Gloves, hats, hand warmers, socks, toothbrushes/toothpaste & laundry detergent are needed. With St. John serving as a PADS site, the pantry will reach even more people in need. Thank you for your continued support. Sign up to help for a 2-week commitment at <https://tinyurl.com/2uzc4tdf>.

**Food Pantry Focus:** The Lutheran Church of the Cross Food Pantry is thankful for our weekly donations. The following items are most needed: 2/26 – Canned meats & fish; 3/5 - Canned fruits; 3/12 - Canned meals like SpaghettiOs or ravioli; 3/19 - Peanut butter, 16 oz. to 28 oz. max.; 3/26 - White rice, 1-2 lb. bags/boxes (or Rice-a-Roni, if plain white is not available). Thanks, Connie & Mission Team

**Conversations on Race:** The St. John & Temple Beth Am discussion group started a new book entitled The Sum of Us, What Racism Costs Everyone and How We Can Prosper Together by Heather McGhee. This group meets on the 2nd and 4th Tuesday evenings from 7:00-8:00 pm via Zoom. Tom and Martha Mockaitis lead the discussions. All are welcome! Please let Martha or Tom know if you would like to join and the Zoom link will be provided.

**St. John Social:** Join us on the second Saturday of the month. Share your favorite dishes at our potluck dinner and join in the fun as we work on a service project or play a few games, and catch up with friends. Everyone is welcome. Join us on 3/11, 4/8 & 5/13 at 5:00 PM in Fellowship Hall.

**Book Club:** Book Club will meet Monday, March 13th to discuss "4:50 from Paddington" by Agatha Christie. Book Club meets the second Monday of the month at 2:00 PM in Fellowship Hall. All are welcome!

**United Church of Christ Turkey and Syria Earthquake Appeal:** The United Church of Christ is appealing for support for recovery efforts in Turkey and Syria. Financial support will be used by

our partners in the areas of greatest need, for relief and long-term recovery. **Please make your check payable to St John UCC and write "Earthquake Relief" in the memo. If you are giving online, choose "other" and enter "Earthquake".**

February 26, 2023 / **First Sunday in Lent** / Matthew 4:1-11 / Abundant Grace  
*Seminary Sunday/Church Vocations Sunday*

UCC General Minister and President Rev. John Dorhauer produces and presents a weekly podcast called *Into the Mystic*, a reminder that the art of spiritual reflection should be made a priority, taken seriously and practiced regularly.

On this Seminary Sunday and Church Vocations Sunday, his emphasis on spiritual reflection is especially timely for those on the path to theological education and church work.

On a recent episode of the podcast called "Watch Over Your Heart's Integrity," he begins with a favorite quotation from the ancient and wise desert fathers, "In your exploration of God, whatever path you find your soul longs after in your quest for the Sacred, do that, and always watch over your heart's integrity."

Rev. Dorhauer goes on to say that he was surprised to learn as a student that there were so many different theologies and that so many of them were incompatible with each other. The more he studied, the more in awe he became of all the ways there are to access God and determine what Her primary characteristics might be. Was God removed and heavenly, or accessible and willing to sit with us, or present in sanctuaries and available to priests alone, or over seeing judge. He learned as a student that the answer to all these is a resounding YES. Dorhauer was further in awe that those who put together the texts seemed to accept, even to celebrate, these dichotomies.

How do you find God? In a soaring cathedral? In nature, being on a mountain? In a quiet and rustic chapel in silence? In the smile of a child or a hug from a loved one? In a beautiful and artistic turn of phrase? Any of these things and many more can call to mind the goodness of God.

"There are as many pathways to God as there are people walking the earth," Dorhauer concludes. Whatever path you might find yourself on, follow the words and wisdom of the desert fathers. "In your exploration of God, whatever path you find your soul longs after in your quest for the Sacred, do that, and always watch over your heart's integrity."



[www.stjah.org](http://www.stjah.org)

**ST. JOHN UCC OPEN & AFFIRMING STATEMENT**



The congregation of St. John United Church of Christ rejoices that our community of faith is strengthened by diversity. We declare ourselves to be an open and affirming congregation, extending God's extravagant welcome to all people regardless of culture, economic status, age, sex, ethnicity, race, sexual orientation, gender identity and gender expression, marital status, or physical/mental condition. We invite everyone to join our journey of faith and participate fully in the life of our congregation.