

St. John United Church of Christ
Arlington Heights, Illinois



Third Sunday of Lent
March 12, 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 or our Vimeo page, 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 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 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 –

308 N. Evergreen Avenue, Arlington Heights, IL 60004

www.stjah.org | office@stjah.org

facebook.com/stjohnuccah | twitter.com/stjohnuccah | instagram.com/stjohnuccah

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

Janice Gilligan, Church Administrator – 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

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GATHERING MUSIC

GREETING

*CALL TO WORSHIP (Leader and People)

You are invited!

God, help us lay aside the things that prevent us from accepting your invitation.

You are not just welcomed, but wanted!

God, help us let go of our desire to control who else is here with us.

You are called!

God, help us to live each day according to your word, so we'll be dressed and ready when we hear you.

Come!

We come to worship, to prepare, to listen, and to respond.

*OPENING HYMN #198

Lift High the Cross

*PRAYER OF CONFESSION

You continually reach out to us, Holy God, pouring yourself out to draw us into your love.

We confess that we sometimes think we have more important things to do, and we bristle at your reminder of what our priorities are meant to be.

Forgive us when we are preoccupied with maintaining the status quo, and we reject the new thing you are doing.

We confess that much of our energy is taken up with stuff — material things, and the responsibilities that go with them —

and we don't have time to turn aside to join you if we can't see the return on investment.

Forgive us when we take you for granted, assuming you're doing nothing special enough to warrant disrupting our routines.

Give us a glimpse of your kingdom feast, and make us ready not only to respond, not only to come in, but to participate in your vision.

We ask in the name of Christ, through whom we are called as your beloved. Amen.

*ASSURANCE OF FORGIVENESS

If we confess our sins, God who is faithful and just will forgive us our sins and cleanse us from all unrighteousness. Thanks be to God. Amen.

*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 22.1-14

22Once more Jesus spoke to them in parables, saying: ²'The kingdom of heaven may be compared to a king who gave a wedding banquet for his son. ³He sent his slaves to call those who had been invited to the wedding banquet, but they would not come. ⁴Again he sent other slaves, saying, "Tell those who have been invited: Look, I have prepared my dinner, my oxen and my fat calves have been slaughtered, and everything is ready; come to the wedding banquet." ⁵But they made light of it and went away, one to his farm, another to his business, ⁶while the rest seized his slaves, maltreated them, and killed them. ⁷The king was enraged. He sent his troops, destroyed those murderers, and burned their city. ⁸Then he said to his slaves, "The wedding is ready, but those invited were not worthy. ⁹Go therefore into the main streets, and invite everyone you find to the wedding banquet." ¹⁰Those slaves went out into the streets and gathered all whom they found, both good and bad; so the wedding hall was filled with guests.

11 'But when the king came in to see the guests, he noticed a man there who was not wearing a wedding robe, ¹²and he said to him, "Friend, how did you get in here without a wedding robe?" And he was speechless. ¹³Then the king said to the attendants, "Bind him hand and foot, and throw him into the outer darkness, where there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth." ¹⁴For many are called, but few are chosen.'

FOOD PANTRY DONATIONS COLLECTION

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

WORSHIP BAND

In Christ Alone

In Christ alone my hope is found
He is my light my strength my song
This Cornerstone this solid Ground
Firm through the fiercest drought and storm
What heights of love what depths of peace
When fears are stilled when strivings cease
My Comforter my All in All
Here in the love of Christ I stand

In Christ alone who took on flesh
Fullness of God in helpless babe
This gift of love and righteousness
Scorned by the ones He came to save
Till on that cross as Jesus died
The love of God was magnified
For every sin on Him was laid
Here in the death of Christ I live

There in the ground His body lay
Light of the world by darkness slain
Then bursting forth in glorious Day
Up from the grave He rose again
And as He stands in victory
Sin's curse has lost its grip on me
For I am His and He is mine
Bought with the precious love of Christ

No guilt in life no fear in death
This is the power of Christ in me
From life's first cry to final breath
Jesus commands my destiny
No power of hell no scheme of man
Can ever pluck me from His hand
Till He returns or calls me home
Here in the power of Christ I'll stand

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CONTEMPORARY WITNESS

“Appropriate Dress Required”

HYMN #510

Grant Us Wisdom to Perceive You

COMMUNITY PRAYER

INVITATION TO OFFERING AND OFFERTORY

O the Deep, Deep Love of Jesus - arr. by Carol Tornquist

*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 #611

O Day of God, Draw Near

*BENEDICTION

POSTLUDE

Praise to the Lord, the Almighty - arr. by Carol Tornquist

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: Cindy Giambarbera & Dave Landeweer. ANNOUNCEMENTS: Judy Grimes. COFFEE: Pam Ahrendt in Honor of Kalani Polk's Birthday. SCRIPTURE READER: Gus Tashima. CALLED TO CARE: Holly Endicott. SEXTON: Craig Mallar. ALTAR GUILD: Janet Landeweer.

Next Sunday's Worship Leaders: GREETERS: Dennis Roesslein, Holly Petersen & Judy Grimes. ANNOUNCEMENTS: Dennis Roesslein. COFFEE: Christian Ed Committee. SCRIPTURE READER: Jackson Travis. CALLED TO CARE: Corrie Roesslein. SEXTON: Craig Mallar. ALTAR GUILD: Janet Landeweer

The Week Ahead at St. John

- **JuBellation Rehearsal** – Sunday, March 12 at 9:15 A.M.
- **Third Sunday in Lent** – Sunday, March 12 at 10:00 A.M.
- **Lenten Soup Sunday** – Sunday, March 12 at 11:00 A.M.
- **Book Club** – Monday, March 13 at 2:00 P.M.
- **Bible Study** – Tuesday, March 14 at 10:00 A.M.
- **Bell Tones Rehearsal** – Tuesday, March 14 at 6:00 P.M.
- **Council Meeting** – Tuesday, March 7 at 7:00 A.M.
- **Chancel Choir Rehearsal** – Wednesday, March 15 at 6:45 P.M.
- **PADS** – Wednesday, March 15 at 7:00 P.M.
- **Cards** – Thursday, March 16 at 1:00 P.M.
- **PADS** – Friday, March 17 at 7:00 P.M.

Lenten Soup Sundays: The Spiritual Life Committee would 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 through March 26, as follows: 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 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 take them home afterwards.* A free-will offering will be collected that will go to earthquake aid through the UCC. Checks 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. The series will be offered at 2 separate times during the Wednesdays of Lent: 3/15, 3/22, 3/29 & 4/5 at 12-2 pm (bring a sack lunch) and 5-7 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 for a copy of the book and to sign up for the sessions! (pharrislibi@hotmail.com)

One Great Hour of Sharing Sunday is March 19th: *So let's not allow ourselves to get fatigued doing good. At the right time we will harvest a good crop if we don't give up, or quit. Right now, therefore, every time we get the chance, let us work for the benefit of all.* Galatians 6:9-10 [The Message] We cannot physically be in all the places that OGHS serves or even see all the results with our own eyes, but through your generous offerings and special gifts, you help promote the loving community that Paul advocates. OGHS is YOUR reach into the world; working in partnership with people we will never meet, yet to whom we are connected. Your contributions are transforming lives for generations to come and are part of the harvest into which Paul invites us. Your gifts bring the Reign/Kingdom of God closer to us all. We can and do make a difference. Your generosity makes all the difference in the world.

Christian Education Volunteer Opportunity: The Christian Education committee is looking for 1-2 volunteers each week to help with Sunday school as numbers have been unpredictable. You will always be with at least one CE member and won't need to plan a lesson or lead, just be available to help with the younger children. Thank you in advance.

Little Free Pantry Announcement: The Little Free Pantry needs gloves, hats, hand warmers, socks, toothbrushes/toothpaste & laundry detergent. 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. Items most needed are: 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. The group meets on the 2nd and 4th Tuesdays from 7-8 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 4/8 & 5/13 at 5:00 PM in Fellowship Hall.

Book Club: Book Club will meet Monday, March 13 to discuss "4:50 from Paddington" by Agatha Christie. Book Club meets the second Monday of the month at 2:00 PM. 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".**

In today's story, Jesus meets a woman at a well and the two have a long and wide-ranging conversation, although by their society's standards they should never have spoken at all. They are Samaritan and Jew. Man and woman. Traveler and townswoman. So much seems to separate them. But by the end of the story, the unnamed woman and her entire community have been transformed.

This story is often understood as a story of individual piety, about one woman's change of heart. But what if the woman's actions could help to strengthen and inspire entire communities? Could your whole congregation become "women-at-the-well"?

Think of it like this. In the story today, the woman is open hearted in three ways that allow her to receive from and be transformed by the living Christ.

1. She is *curious*. The first question is from Jesus, who asks for a cup of water, but then the woman counters with another question, trying to find out more information. She continued to reach out to Jesus, her questions building a bridge across the gap that separates them.
2. She is *authentic*. She could have easily told a lie, but when Jesus asks her the reality of her life, she tells Jesus the truth about herself. She does not try to cover up the messiness of reality with some more beautiful lie.
3. She is *ready*. She is confident in her faith, so when it comes time to articulate it she can do so. The woman declares she is waiting for the Messiah. She has a specific hope for the future, and she expresses it with confidence.

Is your congregation open-hearted like the woman at the well? Are you ready to see and receive Jesus however he may appear?

1. Are you, as a congregation, *curious*? Are you ready to ask questions and get to know even those who you have been told that you have no business talking to?
2. Are you, as a congregation, *authentic*? Are you willing to tell the truth about yourself, even when the truth is painful?
3. Are you, as a congregation, *ready* and able to articulate your faith? Do you have a specific hope for the future that you have language for?

The woman at the well did not know when the Living Christ would appear, but by maintaining her curiosity, authenticity, and hopefulness, she was ready to receive him when he arrived. May it be so for your congregation, too.



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.



Easter Flowers

We are taking flower orders for our Easter Altar.

This is a beautiful way to remember your loved ones this Easter. We will be ordering an assortment of daffodils, hyacinths, tulips and Easter lily's all in 6-inch pots. **The cost is \$8 per daffodil, hyacinth or tulip plant and the cost per Easter lily is \$11.25.** Please make your checks payable to St. John UCC.

Please fill out this order form and return it to the church office **by Wednesday, March 29.**

I wish to purchase (please indicate quantity):

___ # of daffodil, hyacinth or tulip plants @ \$8 each = \$___

___ # of Easter lily plants @ \$11.25 each = \$___

Enclosed is my check in the amount of \$ _____.

FROM _____

In Memory of _____

In Honor of _____

Envelope Number _____