

LENT



**MIDDLEBURY CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH
UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST
OPEN & AFFIRMING
MIDDLEBURYUCC.ORG**

Middlebury Congregational Church
United Church of Christ
March 23, 2025
Third Sunday in Lent

*all those who are able please stand

Our worship begins with the Prelude.

Please be mindful of those who wish to spend this time in prayer

PRELUDE

Beneath the Cross of Jesus

arr. Stan Pethel

WELCOME & ANNOUNCEMENTS

Liturgist: Jack Traver

INTROIT

Adult Choir

Just as I am, you will receive, will welcome, pardon and relieve;
Because your promise I believe, O Lamb of God, I come!

CALL TO WORSHIP

Liturgist

Leader: Seek the Lord while God may be found. Call upon God
who is near.

People: We will return to the Lord our God.

Leader: God's thoughts are not our thoughts. God's ways are not
our ways.

People: We come, seeking new paths to follow.

Leader: As the heavens are higher than the earth so are God's ways
higher than ours.

**People: We come as pilgrims on the journey, praising God
along the way.**

***HYMN**

Beneath the Cross of Jesus

Pilgrim Hymnal (Red) #160

INVOCATION

THE 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 trespasses, as we forgive those who trespass against us. And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil. For thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, forever and ever. Amen. [We use "Father" and "trespasses," but please use whatever words bring you closest to God.]

CALL TO CONFESSION (Based on Isaiah 55:6-7)

PRAYER OF CONFESSION (UNISON)

God of mercy, you sent Jesus Christ to seek and save the lost. We confess that we have strayed from you and turned aside from your way like lost sheep. We are misled by pride. We see ourselves as great when we are small. We follow our own ways, ignore your voice, and distrust your provision. We have failed in love, neglected justice, and ignored your truth. Have mercy, O God, and forgive our sin. Return us to paths of righteousness through Jesus Christ our Savior. Amen. (Time for individual silent confession)

ASSURANCE OF PARDON (1 Timothy 1:15; 1 Peter 2:24)

Hear the good news! The saying sure and worthy of full acceptance, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners. He himself bore our sins in his body on the cross, that we might be dead to sin, and alive to all that is good. Friends, hear and believe the good news of the gospel: in Jesus Christ we are forgiven. Amen.

***SUNG RESPONSE (ALL SING)** (Same tune as opening hymn)

Yet humbly, in our striving, O God, we face its test.
We crave the power to do Thy will with Him who did it best.
On us let now the healing of His great Spirit fall,
And make us brave and full of joy to answer to His call.
Amen.

*Children Pre-K through 7th grade may exit through the back doors
of the sanctuary and meet in the Social Hall for Sunday School*

PRAYER FOR ILLUMINATION

READINGS OF THE HOLY SCRIPTURE

Isaiah 55:1-9

Ho, everyone who thirsts, come to the waters; and you that have no money, come, buy and eat! Come, buy wine and milk without money and without price. Why do you spend your money for that which is not bread, and your labor for that which does not satisfy? Listen carefully to me, and eat what is good, and delight yourselves in rich food. Incline your ear, and come to me; listen, so that you may live. I will make with you an everlasting covenant, my steadfast, sure love for David. See, I made him a witness to the peoples, a leader and commander for the peoples. See, you shall call nations that you do not know, and nations that do not know you shall run to you, because of the Lord your God, the Holy One of Israel, for he has glorified you.

Seek the Lord while he may be found, call upon him while he is near; let the wicked forsake their way, and the unrighteous their thoughts; let them return to the Lord, that he may have mercy on them, and to our God, for he will abundantly pardon. For my thoughts are not your thoughts, nor are your ways my ways, says the Lord. For as the heavens are higher than the earth, so are my ways higher than your ways and my thoughts than your thoughts.

Luke 13:1-9

At that very time there were some present who told him about the Galileans whose blood Pilate had mingled with their sacrifices. He asked them, “Do you think that because these Galileans suffered in this way they were worse sinners than all other Galileans? No, I tell you; but unless you repent, you will all perish as they did. Or those eighteen who were killed when the tower of Siloam fell on them—do you think that they were worse offenders than all the others living in Jerusalem? No, I tell you; but unless you repent, you will all perish just as they did.”

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 gardener, ‘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.’”

SERMON

The Rev. Katrina Manzi

Death, Growth, and Providence

***HYMN**

Once to Every Man and Nation

Pilgrim Hymnal (Red) #441

JOYS, CONCERNS, & PASTORAL PRAYER

Prayer requests will be received from the congregation. Please be mindful worship is livestreamed, so we advise caution on using last names to preserve people’s privacy.

OFFERTORY

Lenten Meditation

Jay Althouse

Adult Choir

***Doxology in Unison**

Pilgrim Hymnal (Red) #515

Praise God, from Whom all blessings flow;
Praise him, all creatures here below;
Praise him above, ye heav'nly host;
Praise Father, Son, and Holy Ghost.

***PRAYER OF DEDICATION (UNISON)**

Gracious God, we offer to you only a portion of what you have given us. All that we have is from your hand. May we and our gifts be always used for sharing your love and advancing your kingdom; through Christ our Lord. Amen.

***HYMN**

Just As I Am

Pilgrim Hymnal (Red) #319

***BENEDICTION**

***BENEDICTION RESPONSE**

Adult Choir

O Lamb of God, I come! Amen.

POSTLUDE

Just As I Am

arr. Marianne Kim

Please join us downstairs in the Social Hall after worship for fellowship and refreshments



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DOING GOD'S WORK

The Congregation, *Ministers in the World*
Church Officers & Members of our Boards & Committees
Staff:

The Rev. Katrina Manzi, *Minister*
Donna Obarowski, *Choir Director*
David Obarowski, *Organist*
Diane Barnard, *Bookkeeper/Asst. Treasurer*
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Rebecca Trosan, *Nursery Attendant*
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