

LENT



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

Middlebury Congregational Church
United Church of Christ
March 30, 2025
Fourth 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

Awake Thou Wintry Earth

Johann Rinck

WELCOME & ANNOUNCEMENTS

Liturgist

INTROIT

Adult Choir

Seek the Lord while he may be found,
call upon him while he is near.

CALL TO WORSHIP (Based on Psalm 103:1, 3-4, 8, 22) Liturgist

Leader: Bless the Lord, O my soul

People: All that is within me, bless God's holy name

Leader: The Lord forgives all your iniquity

People: And redeems your life from the Pit

Leader: God crowns you with steadfast love and mercy

**People: The Lord is merciful and gracious, slow to anger and
abounding in steadfast love**

Leader: Bless the Lord, all his works, in all places of his dominion

People: Bless the Lord, O my soul

***HYMN**

Softly and Tenderly

New Century Hymnal (Black) #449

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 1 John 1:8-9)

PRAYER OF CONFESSION (UNISON)

Merciful God, we confess that we have strayed from your ways. Like the prodigal son, we have wasted our inheritance. You gave us the earth for our home, but we squander the earth's resources and hoard its bounty. You gave us neighbors to love, but we pursue selfish ambitions. You gave us the commandments that lead to human flourishing, but we break your law and forsake your love. Forgive us our sin and bring us to repentance. Draw our wandering hearts back to you that we may find freedom in obedience to your love; through Christ our Lord we pray. Amen. (Time for individual silent confession)

ASSURANCE OF PARDON (Based on Psalm 103:10-12)

Hear the good news! Scripture tells us the Lord does not deal with us according to our sins, nor repay us according to our iniquities. For as the heavens are high above the earth, so great is God's steadfast love; as far as the east is from the west, so far God removes our transgressions from us. 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)

Along the sacred way where you are leading,
Saving our souls from all loss,
We will go also and answer your pleading
To lay our sins at your cross.
Come home, come home, all who are weary, come home;
Earnestly, tenderly, Jesus is calling,
Calling, "O sinner, come home!"

*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

Psalms 32

Happy are those whose transgression is forgiven, whose sin is covered.

Happy are those to whom the Lord imputes no iniquity, and in whose spirit there is no deceit.

While I kept silence, my body wasted away through my groaning all day long.

For day and night your hand was heavy upon me; my strength was dried up as by the heat of summer. Selah

Then I acknowledged my sin to you, and I did not hide my iniquity; I said, "I will confess my transgressions to the Lord," and you forgave the guilt of my sin. Selah

Therefore let all who are faithful offer prayer to you; at a time of distress, the rush of mighty waters shall not reach them.

You are a hiding place for me; you preserve me from trouble; you surround me with glad cries of deliverance. Selah

I will instruct you and teach you the way you should go; I will counsel you with my eye upon you.

Do not be like a horse or a mule, without understanding, whose temper must be curbed with bit and bridle, else it will not stay near you.

Many are the torments of the wicked, but steadfast love surrounds those who trust in the Lord.

Be glad in the Lord and rejoice, O righteous, and shout for joy, all you upright in heart.

Luke 15:1-3, 11b-32

Now all the tax collectors and sinners were coming near to listen to him. And the Pharisees and the scribes were grumbling and saying, “This fellow welcomes sinners and eats with them.” So he told them this parable:

Then Jesus said, “There was a man who had two sons. The younger of them said to his father, ‘Father, give me the share of the property that will belong to me.’ So he divided his property between them. A few days later the younger son gathered all he had and traveled to a distant country, and there he squandered his property in dissolute living. When he had spent everything, a severe famine took place throughout that country, and he began to be in need. So he went and hired himself out to one of the citizens of that country, who sent him to his fields to feed the pigs. He would gladly have filled himself with the pods that the pigs were eating; and no one gave him anything. But when he came to himself he said, ‘How many of my father’s hired hands have bread enough and to spare, but here I am dying of hunger! I will get up and go to my father, and I will say to him, “Father, I have sinned against heaven and before you; I am no longer worthy to be called your son; treat me

like one of your hired hands.” So he set off and went to his father. But while he was still far off, his father saw him and was filled with compassion; he ran and put his arms around him and kissed him. Then the son said to him, ‘Father, I have sinned against heaven and before you; I am no longer worthy to be called your son.’ But the father said to his slaves, ‘Quickly, bring out a robe—the best one—and put it on him; put a ring on his finger and sandals on his feet. And get the fatted calf and kill it, and let us eat and celebrate; for this son of mine was dead and is alive again; he was lost and is found!’ And they began to celebrate. “Now his elder son was in the field; and when he came and approached the house, he heard music and dancing. He called one of the slaves and asked what was going on. He replied, ‘Your brother has come, and your father has killed the fatted calf, because he has got him back safe and sound.’ Then he became angry and refused to go in. His father came out and began to plead with him. But he answered his father, ‘Listen! For all these years I have been working like a slave for you, and I have never disobeyed your command; yet you have never given me even a young goat so that I might celebrate with my friends. But when this son of yours came back, who has devoured your property with prostitutes, you killed the fatted calf for him!’ Then the father said to him, ‘Son, you are always with me, and all that is mine is yours. But we had to celebrate and rejoice, because this brother of yours was dead and has come to life; he was lost and has been found.’”

SERMON

The Rev. Katrina Manzi

Turning Towards Home

***HYMN**

The God of Second Chances

Insert

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

Footsteps

Craig Courtney

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)**

O God, all that we have comes from you. Receive this offering and with it the offering of our lives, for we return to you only what you have so graciously given. Use us for the sake of Christ, in whose name we pray. Amen.

***HYMN**

Amazing Grace

New Century Hymnal (Black) #547

***BENEDICTION**

***BENEDICTION RESPONSE**

Adult Choir

Amen, Amen, Amen.

POSTLUDE

Amazing Grace

arr. Garrett Parker

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*

Sara Hubbard, *Faith Formation Volunteer Coordinator*

Rebecca Trosan, *Nursery Attendant*

Sarah Kwashnak, *Office Assistant*