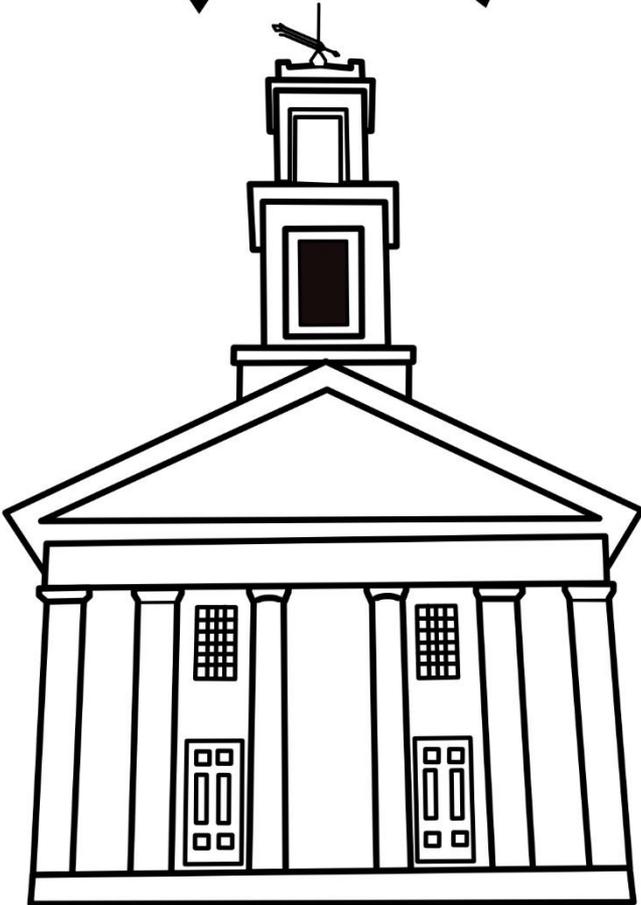


LENT



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

**Middlebury Congregational Church
United Church of Christ
March 15, 2026
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

Softly and Tenderly

arr. Mary McDonald

WELCOME & ANNOUNCEMENTS Liturgist: Michele R. Finn

INTROIT

Adult Choir

Someone's praying, Lord, kumbayah

CALL TO WORSHIP

Liturgist

Leader: The God of our salvation teaches us right paths and leads us in truth

People: We give thanks for the Lord's steadfast love, faithfulness, and wisdom

Leader: God does not see as mortals see

People: We look on outward appearance; God looks on the heart

Leader: Search us, O God, and know our hearts

People: And lead us in the way everlasting

***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 (1 John 1:8-9)

PRAYER OF CONFESSION (UNISON)

Merciful God, you have made us citizens of heaven, but we confess that we have set our minds on earthly things. We have let our desire for security restrain our commitment to serve the poor. We have let our fear curb our obligation to love our enemies. We have let our love for things dull our generosity to the needy. Yet, you know the desires of our heart and nothing is hidden from you. By the power of the Holy Spirit, conform us to the glory of Christ, that we may grow evermore in his likeness and image and do your will in the world. Amen. (Time for individual silent confession)

ASSURANCE OF PARDON (Based on Isaiah 49:15, 66:12-13)

Hear the good news! In scripture the Lord says “Can a woman forget her nursing child, or show no compassion for the child of her womb? Even these may forget, yet I will not forget you.” “As a mother comforts her child, so I will comfort you, says the Lord.” Friends, hear and believe the good news of the gospel: God does not forget us. Through the work of Jesus Christ we are reconciled, restored, and forgiven. Amen.

***SUNG RESPONSE**

New Century Hymnal (Black) #188

Give Me a Clean Heart

Bulletin (Page 7)

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

1 Samuel 16:1-13

The Lord said to Samuel, “How long will you grieve over Saul? I have rejected him from being king over Israel. Fill your horn with oil and set out; I will send you to Jesse the Bethlehemite, for I have provided for myself a king among his sons.” Samuel said, “How can I go? If Saul hears of it, he will kill me.” And the Lord said, “Take a heifer with you and say, ‘I have come to sacrifice to the Lord.’ Invite Jesse to the sacrifice, and I will show you what you shall do, and you shall anoint for me the one whom I name to you.” Samuel did what the Lord commanded and came to Bethlehem. The elders of the city came to meet him trembling and said, “Do you come peaceably?” He said, “Peaceably. I have come to sacrifice to the Lord; sanctify yourselves and come with me to the sacrifice.” And he sanctified Jesse and his sons and invited them to the sacrifice.

When they came, he looked on Eliab and thought, “Surely his anointed is now before the Lord.” But the Lord said to Samuel, “Do not look on his appearance or on the height of his stature, because I have rejected him, for the Lord does not see as mortals see; they look on the outward appearance, but the Lord looks on the heart.” Then Jesse called Abinadab and made him pass before Samuel. He said, “Neither has the Lord chosen this one.” Then Jesse made Shammah pass by. And he said, “Neither has the Lord chosen this one.” Jesse made seven of his sons pass before Samuel, and Samuel said to Jesse, “The Lord has not chosen any of these.” Samuel said to Jesse, “Are all your sons here?” And he said, “There remains yet the youngest, but he is keeping the sheep.” And Samuel said to Jesse, “Send and bring him, for we will not sit down until he comes here.” He sent and brought him in. Now he was ruddy and had beautiful eyes and was handsome. The Lord said, “Rise and anoint him, for this is the one.” Then Samuel took the horn of oil and anointed him in the presence of his brothers, and the spirit of the Lord came mightily upon David from that day forward. Samuel then set out and went to Ramah.

Ephesians 5:8-14

For once you were darkness, but now in the Lord you are light. Walk as children of light, for the fruit of the light is found in all that is good and right and true. Try to find out what is pleasing to the Lord. Take no part in the unfruitful works of darkness; rather, expose them. For it is shameful even to mention what such people do secretly, but everything exposed by the light becomes visible, for everything that becomes visible is light. Therefore it says,

“Sleeper, awake!
Rise from the dead,
and Christ will shine on you.”

SERMON

Seeing as God Sees

The Rev. Katrina Manzi

***HYMN**

Unto the Hills We Lift Our Longing Eyes New Century Hymnal
(Black) #466

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

Jonathan Cook/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)**

Holy God, we have beheld your goodness to us. Accept the offering of the work of our hands, and use us for the sake of Christ, in whose name we pray. Amen.

***HYMN**

O, Christ, the Same

Insert

***BENEDICTION**

***BENEDICTION RESPONSE**

Adult Choir

An Irish Blessing

POSTLUDE

Irish Air

arr. Phil Lehenbauer

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

An Irish Blessing

May the road rise up to meet you, may the wind be always at your
back,

May the sun shine warm upon your face, and the rain fall soft upon
your fields.

‘Til we meet again, may God hold you in His hands.

Ps. 51:1-12

Margaret J. Douroux, 1970; alt.

Give me a clean heart so I may serve you.

The first system of the score features a vocal line in the upper staff and a piano accompaniment in the lower staff. The key signature has two flats (B-flat and E-flat), and the time signature is 8/8. The lyrics are: "Give me a clean heart so I may serve you."

God, fix my heart so that I may be used by you.

The second system continues the melody and accompaniment. The lyrics are: "God, fix my heart so that I may be used by you."

For I'm not worthy of all these blessings.

The third system continues the melody and accompaniment. The lyrics are: "For I'm not worthy of all these blessings."

Give me a clean heart and I'll follow you.

The fourth system concludes the piece. The lyrics are: "Give me a clean heart and I'll follow you."

Margaret J. Douroux, the daughter of a Baptist minister, is known especially for this gospel song, which was recorded by singer James Cleveland. Among her other popular songs found in church hymnals is "God Is Not Dead."

Tune: DOUROUX 10.12.10.10.
Margaret J. Douroux, 1970
Arr. Albert Denis Tessier, 1987



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DOING GOD'S WORK

The Congregation, *Ministers in the World*
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Donna Obarowski, *Choir Director*

David Obarowski, *Organist*

Diane Barnard, *Bookkeeper/Asst. Treasurer*

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