

Second Sunday in Lent
March 1, 2026
United Church of Christ - Neillsville
Pastor Julie Ruegsegger

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PRELUDE "Adagio in G minor" Tomaso Albinoni
Karen Mohr

RINGING OF THE CARILLON

WELCOME AND ANNOUNCEMENTS

STEWARDSHIP MOMENT JoAnn Voss

PREPARING OUR HEARTS TO HEAR THE WORD

HYMN: "Gathered Here" Phil Porter
#742 NCH (sing twice)

Gathered here in the mystery of this hour,
Gathered here in one strong body,
Gathered here in the struggle and the pow'r,
Spirit, draw near.

MEDITATION MOMENT

A Story of Love by Roddy Hamilton

RESPONSE: "Come and Fill Our Hearts"
#16 MV (sing twice)

Come and fill our hearts with your peace.
You alone, O God are holy.
Come and fill our hearts with your peace,
A- - - men.

CALL TO WORSHIP

Come, all who need help!
Our help comes from God,
the one who made heaven and earth.
Come, all who desire blessing!
Our blessing comes from God,
the God of Abraham, the God of the ages.
Come, all who long for salvation!
Our salvation comes from Jesus Christ,
the one sent by God to save the world.

OPENING PRAYER

God of the ages, we come into this holy space asking
for your blessing, only to find that the abundance of
your love is already around us. Open our eyes to

see the blessing of your creation in the beauty all
around us. Open our ears to hear the blessing of
your word as it is proclaimed in story and song this
day. Open our hearts to experience the blessing of
faith through the gentle touch of a friend or the
supportive smile of a stranger. And open our doors,
that we may become vessels of your blessing to a
world still in need of salvation. All this we pray in
the name of Jesus Christ. Amen.

HYMN "Guide Me, O My Great Redeemer"

#18 NCH William Williams

1 Guide me, O my great Redeemer,
pilgrim through this barren land;
I am weak, but you are mighty;
hold me with your powerful hand.
Bread of heaven, bread of heaven,
feed me till I want no more,
feed me till I want no more.

2 Open now the crystal fountain,
where the healing waters flow.
Let the fire and cloudy pillar
lead me all my journey through.
Strong Deliverer, strong Deliverer,
ever be my strength and shield,
ever be my strength and shield.

3 When I reach the River Jordan,
bid my anxious fears subside.
Death of death, and hell's destruction,
land me safe on heaven's side.
Songs of praises, songs of praises
I will ever sing to you,
I will ever sing to you.

PRAYER OF TRANSFORMATION

God of salvation, you shower our lives and our
world with love, yet we too often turn away from
your blessing. It is just so easy to complain! There
are little annoyances each day, but they pile up into
a mountainous burden that becomes a curse on our
lives. Free us from our unwise choices, O God.
When we are distracted and confused, redirect our
attention to the abundant opportunities to

experience your love. During this Lenten journey, focus our hearts on you, that we may choose the blessing of salvation offered us each day through Jesus Christ, in whom we pray. Amen.

WORDS OF GRACE

RESPONSE: *“Hold Us in Your Grace, O God”*

Lyrics: Keri K. Wehlender

Music: Bruce Harding and Keri K. Wehlender

Hold us in your grace, O God; hold us in your grace.

Hold us in your grace, O God; hold us in your grace.

Hold us, hold us in your grace.

Hold us, hold us in your grace.

PASSING OF THE PEACE

“You are blessed by God, and you are a blessing from God.”

RESPONSE: *“Lord, I Lift Your Name on High”*

#88 W&R Words and Music: Rick Founds

Lord, I lift your name on high.

Lord, I love to sing your praises.

I’m so glad you’re in my life,

I’m so glad you came to save us.

You came from heaven to earth to show the way,

From the earth to the cross, my debt to pay;

From the cross to the grave,

from the grave to the sky;

Lord, I lift your name on high.

HEARING THE WORD

CHILDREN’S TIME

Bonnie Weyer

SCRIPTURE READINGS

Wayne Voss

OLD TESTAMENT Genesis 12:1-4a

¹ The Lord had said to Abram, “Go from your country, your people and your father’s household to the land I will show you.

² “I will make you into a great nation, and I will bless you;

I will make your name great, and you will be a blessing.

³ I will bless those who bless you, and whoever curses you I will curse; and all peoples on earth will be blessed through you.”

⁴ So Abram went, as the Lord had told him; and Lot went with him. Abram was seventy-five years old when he set out from Harran.

OLD TESTAMENT John 3:1-17

¹ Now there was a Pharisee, a man named Nicodemus who was a member of the Jewish ruling council. ² He came to Jesus at night and said, “Rabbi, we know that you are a teacher who has come from God. For no one could perform the signs you are doing if God were not with him.”

³ Jesus replied, “Very truly I tell you, no one can see the kingdom of God unless they are born again.”

⁴ “How can someone be born when they are old?” Nicodemus asked. “Surely they cannot enter a second time into their mother’s womb to be born!”

⁵ Jesus answered, “Very truly I tell you, no one can enter the kingdom of God unless they are born of water and the Spirit. ⁶ Flesh gives birth to flesh, but the Spirit gives birth to spirit. ⁷ You should not be surprised at my saying, ‘You must be born again.’ ⁸ The wind blows wherever it pleases. You hear its sound, but you cannot tell where it comes from or where it is going. So it is with everyone born of the Spirit.”

⁹ “How can this be?” Nicodemus asked.

¹⁰ “You are Israel’s teacher,” said Jesus, “and do you not understand these things? ¹¹ Very truly I tell you, we speak of what we know, and we testify to what we have seen, but still you people do not accept our testimony. ¹² I have spoken to you of earthly things and you do not believe; how then will you believe if I speak of heavenly things? ¹³ No one has ever gone into heaven except the one who came from heaven—the Son of Man. ¹⁴ Just as Moses lifted up the snake in the wilderness, so the Son of Man must be lifted up, ¹⁵ that everyone who believes may have eternal life in him.”

SERMON *“From Darkness into Light”* Pastor Julie

HYMN *“When Peace, Like a River”*

#438 NCH (vs 1-3) Horatio G. Spafford

**1 When peace like a river upholds each day,
when sorrows like sea billows roll;
whatever my lot, you have taught me to say,
“It is well, it is well with my soul.”**

Refrain:

It is well (it is well) with my soul (with my soul);
it is well, it is well with my soul.

2 Though evil should tempt me,
though trials should come,
let this blessed assurance control:
that Christ has regarded my helpless estate,
and has paid life and blood for my soul. *Refrain*

3 My sin - oh, the bliss of this glorious thought -
my sin - not in part, but the whole -
is nailed to the cross, and I bear it no more.
Praise the Lord! Praise the Lord, O my soul! *Refrain*

RESPONDING TO THE WORD

SACRAMENT OF COMMUNION

Invitation to the Table

Great Thanksgiving

Let us lift up our hearts.

We lift them to the Lord.

Let us give thanks to the Lord our God.
It is right to give our thanks and praise.

Words of Institution

Prayer Of Our Savior

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

Sharing The Elements

Prayer Of Thanksgiving

Divine Light of our journey-

In a spirit of gratitude we give thanks for this time at
your holy meal. This time at the Table filled us with
strength, knowing that as we continue on this
Lenten journey, we will find your peace surrounding
us. Amen.

THE OFFERING SERVICE

Invitation to Generosity

Offertory "Impromptu" Shubert

Doxology

Praise God throughout these forty days;
Praise Christ, our Lord, whom God did raise;
And praise the Spirit who imparts
God's love in Christ into our hearts. Amen.

Prayer of Dedication

Generous God, you shower us with gifts, including
the greatest gift of all, your own Son, Jesus Christ.
In thanksgiving and praise, we offer you our time,
our money, our very selves. In these actions, we
proclaim our intention to be a blessing in your
world. Amen.

HYMN "Blessed Assurance"

#473 NCH (vs. 1-2) Fanny Crosby

1 Blessed assurance, Jesus is mine!
O, what a foretaste of glory divine!
Heir of salvation, purchase of God,
born of His Spirit, washed in His blood.

Refrain:

This is my story, this is my song,
praising my Savior all the day long;
this is my story, this is my song,
praising my Savior all the day long.

2 Perfect submission, perfect delight,
visions of rapture now burst on my sight;
angels descending, bring from above
echoes of mercy, whispers of love. [*Refrain*]

BLESSING

SHARING OUR BLESSINGS AND BURDENS

*As we are gathered together as children of God, we
are called to share our blessings and joys and our
concerns, our deepest fears, sadnesses, griefs and
needs so that we may bear one another up and
support each other in prayer and Christian love.*

SENDING OUT TO THE WORLD

HYMN "Blessed Assurance"

#473 NCH (vs. 3) Fanny Crosby

3 Perfect submission, all is at rest,
I in my Savior am happy and blest;
watching and waiting, looking above,
filled with His goodness, lost in His love.

