

**Welcome to First Congregational Church United Church of Christ**  
**First Sunday of Lent**  
**March 9, 2025**

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\*\*\*\* *Some rise to their feet, some rise in their hearts—please rise as you are able.*

**GATHERING BELL**

*At the sound of the bell, please silence yourselves and prepare for worship.*

**PRELUDE**     *O Lord Throughout These Forty Days (Consolation)*, Roberta Rowland-Raybold

**ANNOUNCEMENTS**

Rev. Paul Ashby

**INVITATION TO WORSHIP**     **Whoever you are...and wherever you are on life's journey...  
you are welcome here!**

**OPENING REFLECTION**

**CALL TO WORSHIP**

Mark Long

The world seems to turn based on money, power and fame. Unelected billionaires abuse their power to harm the poor and reward the rich.

**Yet Jesus refused the temptation to sell his soul for bread or money.**

Corrupt leaders see the kingdoms of this world as something to invade, take, own and re-name.

**Jesus was promised power over the nations and he replied "You shall worship the Lord and God and serve God."**

Jesus was tempted with fame if he would just jump off the pinnacle of the temple.

**Jesus refused the fame created by ancient social media and declared "Do not put God to the test."**

\*\*\*\*HYMN NCH #436, 1-3

*God of Grace and God of Glory*

All

God of grace and God of glory, on your people pour your power;  
Crown your ancient church's story; bring its bud to glorious flower.  
Grant us wisdom, grant us courage, for the facing of this hour,  
for the facing of this hour.

From the evils that surround us and assail the Savior's ways,  
From the fears that long have bound us – free our hearts for faith and praise.  
Grant us wisdom, grant us courage, for the living of these days,  
For the living of these days.

Cure your children's warring madness; bend our pride to your control  
Shame our reckless, selfish gladness, rich in things and poor in soul.  
Grant us wisdom, grant us courage, make our broken spirits whole,  
Make our broken spirits whole.

**CHILDREN'S MESSAGE**

Paul

**PRAYERS OF THE PEOPLE**

Respond to each shared prayer request with "Peace, Shalom, Salaam."

**PASTORAL PRAYER AND LORD'S PRAYER**

**Our Creator, who art in heaven, hallowed be your name. Your kingdom come, your 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 yours is the kingdom and the power and the glory, forever. Amen.**

INVITATION TO OFFERING

Mark

OFFERTORY

*With a Pure Heart*, Pamela Stewart/John Purifoy

Choir

\*\*\*\*DOXOLOGY (tune: *Old Hundredth*)

**Praise God who calls all humankind;  
Praise Christ for loving ties that bind;  
Praise Spirit making all things new;  
One Love, One God, we honor you!**

\*\*\*\*PRAYER OF DEDICATION

Mark

**Holy One, who inspired the heart of Jesus, inspire us to use our resources with wisdom. Enable us to use money as a tool and not become its tool. Help us to see the needs of the powerless and poor that they may simply live a good life. Free us from the temptation to adore famous billionaires who have lost the capacity for compassion. May the courage of Jesus inspire us to a life of compassion and service. AMEN**

\*\*\*\* HYMN NCH #490

*I Want Jesus to Go With Me*

All

I want Jesus to go with me; I want Jesus to go with me;  
all along my pilgrim journey, O I want Jesus to go with me.

In my trials, O comfort me. In my trials, O comfort me;  
when my heart is almost breaking, O I want Jesus to comfort me.

When I'm in trouble, O stay with me; when I'm in trouble, O stay with me;  
when my head is bowed in sorrow, O I want Jesus to stay with me.

SCRIPTURE

Luke 4:1-13

Mark

Jesus, full of the Holy Spirit, returned from the Jordan and was led by the Spirit in the wilderness, where for forty days he was tested by the devil. He ate nothing at all during those days, and when they were over he was famished. The devil said to him, "If you are the Son of God, command this stone to become a loaf of bread." Jesus answered him, "It is written, 'One does not live by bread alone.' "

Then the devil led him up and showed him in an instant all the kingdoms of the world. And the devil said to him, "To you I will give all this authority and their glory, for it has been given over to me, and I give it to anyone I please. If you, then, will worship me, it will all be yours." Jesus answered him, "It is written,

'Worship the Lord your God,  
and serve only him.' "

Then the devil led him to Jerusalem and placed him on the pinnacle of the temple and said to him, "If you are the Son of God, throw yourself down from here, for it is written,

'He will command his angels concerning you,  
to protect you,'

and

'On their hands they will bear you up,  
so that you will not dash your foot against a stone.' "

Jesus answered him, "It is said, 'Do not put the Lord your God to the test.' " When the devil had finished every test, he departed from him until an opportune time.

MESSAGE

“The Vision Quest of Jesus”

Paul

\*\*\*\*HYMN NCH 476, vs 1,2,4

*My Life Flows on in Endless Song*

All

My life flows on in endless song, above earth’s lamentation.  
I hear the sweet, though far-off hymn that hails a new creation.  
Through all the tumult and the strife, I hear the music ringing;  
it sounds an echo in my soul – how can I keep from singing?

What though my joys and comforts die? My Savior still is living.  
What though the shadows gather ‘round? A new song Christ is giving.  
No storm can shake my inmost calm, while to that rock I’m clinging;  
since Love commands both heaven and earth, how can I keep from singing?

I lift my eyes; the cloud grows thin; I see the blue above it;  
and day by day this pathway smooths, since first I learned to love it.  
The peace of Christ makes fresh my heart, a fountain ever springing;  
all things are mine since I am Christ’s – how can I keep from singing?

\*\*\*\*BENEDICTION

Paul

\*\*\*\*SUNG BENEDICTION

*World Peace Prayer*

All

Lead us from death to life, from falsehood to truth,  
From despair to hope, from fear to trust.  
Lead us from hate to love, from war to peace,  
Let peace fill our hearts, let peace fill our world,  
Let peace fill our universe!

GREETING ONE ANOTHER IN THE SPIRIT OF LOVE

RECESSIONAL

*O Lord Throughout These Forty Days*, Ronald Nelson

**Today’s Worship Leaders**

preacher  
liturgist  
musicians

Rev. Dr. Paul Ashby  
Mark Long  
Karen Caton, Shannon Jones, Chancel Choir

**Hymn Notes**

During Lent, all of the hymns used in our worship will come from the Lenten Devotional, *Lift Up Your Voice*. Copies of the devotional are available in the gathering space, along with a song sheet you may take home. From the devotional: "... each week, biblical texts and beloved songs ... inspire practices you can try at home. As the days lengthen, the birds will sing – and so will we, strengthening our spirits, praying twice, and joining in with creation’s symphony of sorrow and joy, anguish and comfort, death and new life."

**Acknowledgements**

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