

**Welcome to First Congregational Church United Church of Christ**  
**Fourth Sunday of Lent**  
**March 15, 2026**

---

\*\*\*\* *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

*Be Thou My Vision (Slane)*, Joshua Evanovich

Martha Jones

ANNOUNCEMENTS/MOMENT FOR MINISTRY

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

Nancy Palubicki

Our spiritual blindness produces crime, cruelty, isolation, racism, ignorance and war.

**Let Your silent presence open our eyes to the path of compassion, care, mercy and self-giving.**

Help us to share our wisdom and generate the hope that is a blessing for the future.

**Save us from the blindness of political leaders who seek to cover up the history of slavery, Jim Crow laws, and the denial of voting rights.**

Save us from the blindness that uses the excuse of finding a few criminals to be cruel to all perceived immigrants.

**Enable us to help our neighbors and bring healing to the places of brokenness and fear.**

\*\*\*\*HYMN Song Folder 26

*Christ, Be Our Light*

All

Longing for light, we wait in darkness. Longing for truth, we turn to you.

Make us your own, your holy people, light for the world to see.

*refrain*

Christ, be our light! Shine in our hearts. Shine through the darkness.

Christ, be our light! Shine in your church gathered today.

Longing for peace, our world is troubled. Longing for hope, many despair.

Your word alone has pow'r to save us. Make us your living voice. *refrain*

Longing for food, many are hungry. Longing for water, many still thirst.

Make us your bread, broken for others, shared until all are fed. *refrain*

Longing for shelter, many are homeless. Longing for warmth, many are cold.

Make us your building, sheltering others, walls made of living stone. *refrain*

Many the gifts, many the people, many the hearts that yearn to belong.

Let us be servants to one another, making your kingdom come.

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.**

---60 Seconds for Personal Prayers and Silent Contemplation---

INVITATION TO OFFERING

Nancy

OFFERTORY

*You Think of Me*, Mock/Nichols

Choir

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

**Praise God from whom all blessings flow.**

**Praise God all creatures here below.**

**Praise God for all that love has done.**

**Creator, Christ, and Spirit One.**

\*\*\*\*PRAYER OF DEDICATION

Nancy

**Holy One, we embrace our calling to see with new eyes, to lift others with gentle hands, to feed the hungry and heal the sick. Let us offer our prayers of gratitude and share in the work of love that creates joy in the hearts of those who struggle. Amen**

\*\*HYMN *Sing! Prayer and Praise #161*

*Open My Eyes, Lord*

All

Pam Gregory, solo on bridge

Open my eyes, Lord. Help me to see your face.

Open my eyes, Lord. Help me to see.

Open my ears, Lord. Help me to hear your voice.

Open my ears, Lord. Help me to hear.

Open my heart, Lord. Help me to love like you.

Open my heart, Lord. Help me to love.

I live within you, deep in your heart, O Love.

I live within you. Rest now in me.

***Soloist will sing bridge:***

And the first shall be last, and our eyes are opened, and we'll hear like never before.

And we'll speak in new ways, and we'll see God's face in places we've never known.

You dwell among us, here in our midst, O Lord.

Help us to know you, Emmanuel.

Open our eyes, Lord. Help us to see your face.

Open our eyes, Lord. Help us to see.

SCRIPTURE

John 9:1-16

Nancy

As he walked along, he saw a man blind from birth. His disciples asked him, "Rabbi, who sinned, this man or his parents, that he was born blind?" Jesus answered, "Neither this man nor his parents sinned; he was born blind so that God's works might be revealed in him. We must work the works of him who sent me while it is day; night is coming, when no one can work. As long as I am in the world, I am the light of the world." When he had said this, he spat on the ground and made mud with the saliva and spread the mud on the man's eyes, saying to him, "Go, wash in the pool of Siloam" (which means Sent). Then he went and washed and came back able to see. The

neighbors and those who had seen him before as a beggar began to ask, "Is this not the man who used to sit and beg?" Some were saying, "It is he." Others were saying, "No, but it is someone like him." He kept saying, "I am he." But they kept asking him, "Then how were your eyes opened?" He answered, "The man called Jesus made mud, spread it on my eyes, and said to me, 'Go to Siloam and wash.' Then I went and washed and received my sight." They said to him, "Where is he?" He said, "I do not know."

They brought to the Pharisees the man who had formerly been blind. Now it was a Sabbath day when Jesus made the mud and opened his eyes. Then the Pharisees also began to ask him how he had received his sight. He said to them, "He put mud on my eyes. Then I washed, and now I see." Some of the Pharisees said, "This man is not from God, for he does not observe the Sabbath." Others said, "How can a man who is a sinner perform such signs?" And they were divided.

MESSAGE "New Eyes, New Hope" Paul

\*\*\*\*HYMN NCH 451 *Be Now My Vision* All

Be now my vision, O God of my heart; nothing surpasses the love you impart –  
You my best thought, by day or by night, waking or sleeping, you presence my light.

Be now my wisdom, and be my true word; ever within me, my soul is assured;  
Mother and Father, you are both to me, now and forever you child I will be.

Riches I need not, nor life's empty praise, you, my inheritance, now and always;  
you and you only are first in my heart, great God, my treasure, may we never part.

\*\*\*\*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 *Open My Eyes, Lord*, Manibusan/Zaragoza Martha

---

**Acknowledgements**

Unless otherwise noted, the following music is reprinted and/or included in the worship recording with permission through OneLicense #A-709231. All rights reserved. All other music not recorded or in public domain.

- ◇ *Be Thou My Vision*. Arr Joshua Evanovich © 2016, Hope Publishing Company.
- ◇ *Christ, Be our Light*. Words and music: Bernadette Farrell © 1993. Pub. by OCP Publications.
- ◇ *Open My Eyes*, Words and music: Jesse Manibusan and Rufino Zaragoza © 1988, 1998. Published by spiritandsong.com.
- ◇ *You Think of Me*. Words and music by Patricia Mock and Richard A. Nichols © 2014, Lorenz Publishing Company.
- ◇ *Be Now My Vision*. Tune: *Slane*, a traditional Irish melody harm. by David Evans © 1927 by Oxford University Press. Words: ancient Irish text, transl. Mary E. Byrne, 1905, verified by Eleanor H. Hull, 1912. Word adaptation © 1992, The Pilgrim Press.
- ◇ *Lead Us from Death to Life (World Peace Prayer)*. Words of refrain by Satish Kumar. Tune by Marty Haugen © 1985 GIA Publications, Inc.

---

**Today's Worship Leaders**

preacher Rev. Dr. Paul Ashby  
liturgist Nancy Palubicki  
musician Martha Jones