

The Presque Isle Congregational Church



United Church of Christ

February 18, 2024

Prelude

Barbara Merryman

Welcoming Music

Words of Welcome

Jennifer Gillis-White

Introit

*As The Deer*¹

Lenten Candle Liturgy

There are seven candles, one for each Sunday in Lent and one for Good Friday. Each week begins with one less candle lit and extinguishes another. On Easter Sunday, the darkened candles will be relit.

Invocation (Unison) *Psalm 92: 1-3, John 3:1-16*

Author of Life, you meet us in the shadows and protect us. You dance with us in the sun. You give us the breath of life and offer us eternal life. In this time of worship, open our hearts, our minds, and our hands, so that we may love you and your creation in the way that Jesus did. Amen

Meditation

Opening Prayer (Unison)

Loving God, as we journey through this holy season of Lent, give us strength and courage to make the changes that are needed in our lives. Open our hearts and minds to your steadfast presence and help us to put our trust in you. Amen

Opening Hymn

All Things Bright and Beautiful

Two-Minute Message

Jennifer Gillis-White

Prayer of Transformation (Unison)

O God of love, as Jesus was driven out to be tempted in the wilderness, we too, face wildernesses of our own. We are tempted to forget your promises, to rely upon our own strength, and to listen to the destructive voices of power and oppression. Free us from our own hubris. Help us to reclaim our spiritual center as rooted in your love. Open our being to hearing your voice proclaim us as your child who is welcomed, held, and whole. Amen.

Words of Grace

Friends, through wilderness and desert, through sacraments born of water, you are a child of God held tenderly in the embrace of our Creator. Remember your baptism. Remember a path has been made for you. Remember you are not alone. Remember, that in Christ Jesus you are forgiven and made whole. Amen.

Musical Offering

*O Love, How Deep*²

Scripture Reading

Mark 1:9-15

¹ Used for corporate worship with permission from Christ Church Woodley, Berkshire, England, UK.

² Performed by the Choir of Trinity Church, Swarthmore, PA. James Smith, Director of Music.

The Baptism of Jesus

⁹ In those days Jesus came from Nazareth of Galilee and was baptized by John in the Jordan. ¹⁰ And just as he was coming up out of the water, he saw the heavens torn apart and the Spirit descending like a dove upon him. ¹¹ And a voice came from the heavens, "You are my Son, the Beloved, with you I am well pleased."

The Testing of Jesus

¹² And the Spirit immediately drove him out into the wilderness. ¹³ He was in the wilderness forty days, tested by Satan, and he was with the wild beasts, and the angels waited on him.

The Beginning of the Galilean Ministry

¹⁴ Now after John was arrested, Jesus came to Galilee proclaiming the good news of God ¹⁵ and saying, "The time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God has come near; [d] repent, and believe in the good news."

Reflection

Rachel Dobbs

Reflective Music

Barbara Merryman

Blessing of our Gifts

Call: Our generosity is born out of our identity in a God whose love is unending and offered to all. In gratitude and joy, we are invited to share a portion of our treasure to ensure that all may come to know of this love of God that never ends. *Pause while the offering plate is brought forward.* Together let us bless our gifts...

Response: Abundant God, receive these gifts of love from your servants and use them for the breaking in of your Kingdom of love and light. In the name of Jesus, whose way calls us forth in service, we pray. Amen.

Pastoral Prayer and The Lord's Prayer

Our Creator*, 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. Amen

**Please use whatever name is most familiar/comfortable when you pray to God.*

Closing Hymn

Lead Me, Lord³

Community News and Announcements

Benediction

Go forth to claim your belovedness, trusting that the God who provided Jesus with strength to overcome the temptations of the desert is the very God who will guide you and lead you this day and always. Amen.

Sung Response

God Be With You

God be with you till we meet again; By good counsel guide, uphold you.
With a shepherd's care enfold you; God be with you till we meet again.

³ Performed by the Choirs of the Catholic Communities, Stamford University, Stamford, CA.