



February 25, 2024

Second Sunday
in Lent

Guest Preacher:
Rev. Fritz West

Welcome!

We encourage wearing name tags. Coffee and tea are welcome in worship.
Restrooms: main level (exit front left), lower level (at foot of entry stair/elevator)
Optional nursery care (infant - age 3): downstairs, starts at 9:25

The Love of God Gathers Us

Gathering Music

We gently settle into sacred time and space

Ring the Bell

Prelude & Candle Lighting “When I Survey the Wondrous Cross” *Mason/Watts*

We acknowledge the light of Christ among us

Words of Welcome

SPP = *Sing! Prayer and Praise*

* = Sitting or standing

NCH = *New Century Hymnal*

***Call to Worship** (*responsive*)

Psalm 22:23-28

You who worship God, give praise! Children of Leah and children of Rachel, glorify God!

Children of Jacob, fall down and worship!

For God has not despised—not disdained—the suffering of those in pain!

God didn't hide but answered them when they cried for help!

You are the theme of my praise in the Great Assembly—
And I will fulfill my vows in the presence of your worshipers.

Those who are poor will eat and be satisfied—

Those who seek you will give you praise – long life to their hearts!

The whole Earth, from one end to the other, will remember and come back to you—

All the families of the nations will bow down to you. For yours is the kingdom, you Ruler of nations!

***Opening Song (SPP #139) “I’m Gonna Live So God Can Use Me”**

verses 1 & 3

Acknowledging Our Need for God’s Grace

The singing bowl’s vibrations invite us into depths of grace

***Prayer of Confession and Longing** (*unison*)

God of covenants, we often move through a desert or wilderness unchanged. Today, let us hear your words in scripture and song. May they move us and change us. We are parched and thirsty due to failures to live as you have called us to live—doing justice, loving mercy, and walking humbly with you. We have filled ourselves with things that only increase thirst. Our lives are left dry and cracked from sin. Forgive us, O God. Wash us again in the healing waters of your love. Refresh us and empower us to live as your people—with justice, mercy, and humility. May we embody the good news of Jesus Christ, in whose name we pray. Amen.

***Musical Interlude**

...to accompany our quiet prayers

***Assurance of Grace** (*responsive*)

One: The peace of Christ be with you! **All: And also with you!**

***Passing the Peace**

To those with us online and onsite: smiles, peace signs, handshakes

A Time With Children and Youth

Sung Invitation

...as young people come forward

**This little light of mine, I'm gonna let it shine...
...let it shine, let it shine, let it shine.**

Singing “Happy Birthday”

Addison Albright (22nd, 6 yrs), **Sharon** Neuenfeldt (22nd), **David** Staberg (22nd), **Beckham** Bettin (23rd, 11 yrs), **Joe** Legato (28th), **Mary Ann** Litfin (Mar. 2nd), **Wendy** Staberg (Mar. 2nd)

Wondering Together

Blessing One Another

...with arms wide open

Children: God be with you **All: And also with you**

Sung Affirmation

...as young people depart or return to families

**Ev'rywhere I go, I'm gonna let it shine...
...let it shine, let it shine, let it shine.**

*infant - age 3 | nursery care available downstairs (9:25-10:30)
PreK-Gr. 1, Gr. 2-5 | gather now for Sunday School downstairs
Youth Group (gr. 6-12) | gathers now in the Corner Meeting Room upstairs
We welcome sounds and movements of children in worship*

Proclaiming God's Love

A Reading from the Psalms | *NRSV, part 1, p. 13*

Genesis 17:1-7, 15-16

A Reading from the Gospels | *NRSV, part 2, p. 44*

Mark 8:32-38

Responding To God's Love

Prayer Hymn (NCH #191) "Before Your Cross, O Jesus"
all verses

Prayers of the People

...God, in your love: Hear our prayer

Prayer of Jesus (*unison*)

Our Father and Mother who art in heaven,
hallowed be thy Name.
Thy kin-dom 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 kin-dom, and the power, and the glory, forever. Amen.

Invitation to the Offering

Greeters pass offering plates

We give by cash, check or electronically (scanning the QR code)

*Note: Checks currently need to be written to People's Congregational Church
(As our bank awaits IRS confirmation of our new name.)*



Offertory

"Teach Me"

O'Shea

*Offertory Response

"Praise God" by John Mueller
sung twice

Praise, God, for these gifts;
we lift them up for heaven's blessing.
Praise God, for these gifts;
we lift them up to serve you, Lord.

***Prayer of Dedication** (*unison*)

God of all, we present these offerings for use in expanding your liberating reign. With them, we offer our varied ministries in the days ahead—that each of us may be part of your answer to the cries of the world. Amen.

Going Forth to Share God’s Love

***Closing Song (SPP #139)** “I’m Gonna Live So God Can Use Me”
verses 2 & 4

***Benediction**

***Sending Song** *Forming a circle, optionally linking elbows or hands*

Irish Blessing
sung twice

**May the road rise to meet you
May the wind be at your back
May the sun shine warm upon your face
The rain fall soft upon your fields
And until we meet again
Till we meet again
May God hold you in the palm of God’s hand**

We carry the light of Christ with us in all times and spaces

***Postlude** “There is Peace” *Shelton/Hendrix*

All are welcome downstairs for refreshments & good company!

Today Following Worship:

10:30am | All are welcome in the Fellowship Hall for refreshments & good company!

11:00—noon | Adult Faith Conversations: **The World into Which Jesus Was Born**
Fellowship Hall (childcare provided) & Zoomed

The DVD series is designed for its audience to interact with well-known, Progressive theologians who challenge Christians to think about the relevance of a renewed understanding of Jesus in the context of our current culture.

PRAYER CORNER

We hold these joys and concerns in our prayers:

*For **Sam Gromoll and family** as they weather the disappointment of surgeries postponed to May 17th due to a recent skin infection. To learn more about Sam's journey, visit his CaringBridge: <https://www.caringbridge.org/visit/samgromoll>.

*For **Aidan Gromoll**, who has just arrived in Dunkirk, France to provide first aid and medical care to refugees and migrants until late March.

*For **Linda Tossey**, resilience and hope as she moves into a new phase in cancer treatment.

*We give thanks for the joy generated during the World Cup Cross-County Skiing event held in Minneapolis last weekend.

*We hope that a recent statement made by a New York judge about the value of contrition will encourage each of us on our journeys toward humility and integrity.

Red Cross Blood Drive | Feb. 28 | 9 am—3 pm

Register by calling 1-800-733-2767 OR at RedCrossBlood.org, enter “Bayport”



Volunteers needed:

8-9am | Setup (welcome Red Cross staff, hold doors open, etc.)

3-4pm | Tear-down (available to assist Red Cross staff)

Call or email Megan to volunteer: office@stcroixunitedchurch.org

You are Invited to Our Next Inquirers Gathering!

For newer and long-time friends alike... learn about:

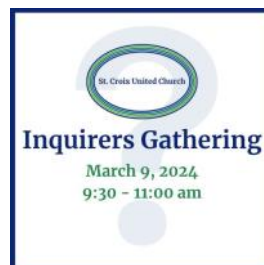
The life and work of St. Croix United Church

Our denominational affiliations

How to deepen your participation in our congregation

What membership (a pledge of mutual support) means to us

Please let Pastor Clare know if you would like to attend on
March 9th.



Feeling ready to commit to membership? Our next New Members Sunday will likely be March 17 or April 14! Please also reach out to Pastor Clare if you would like to have a conversation about membership.

Lenten Season at St. Croix United Church

Wednesday Evenings in Lent

Feb. 21 – Mar. 20

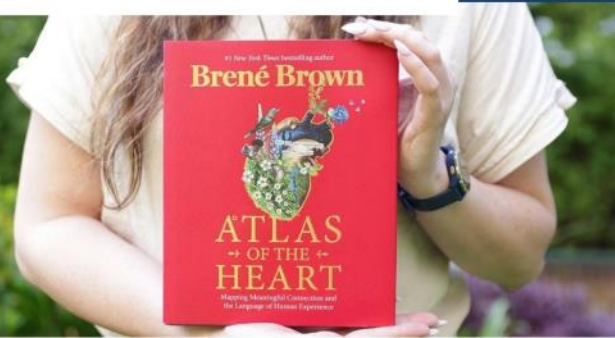
5:30 pm | Contemplative Worship

6 pm | Soup Supper

6:30 – 7:15 pm | Discussions

inspired by

Atlas of the Heart, by Brene Brown



Take One

**Leave
One/\$1**

Book Sale

Would you like to pass along the gift of a good book?
Or declutter your home of books you no longer need?

Books of all genres and for all ages are welcome!

(no magazines, newspapers, CD*, DVD, or VHS)

*exception: audio books in CD format are welcome

We welcome you to drop a bag or box of books
in the Fellowship Hall.

***Feel free to peruse the sale anytime,
taking a book in return for 1 book or \$1.***

We have adopted an Open and Affirming (ONA) Welcome Statement!

"St. Croix United Church is an open and affirming Christian community, which is faithfully committed to ministries of compassion, diversity, equity, and social justice. United by the grace, love, and forgiveness we know in Jesus Christ, we honor the sacredness of relationships with our neighbors. We welcome persons of every gender identity and expression, sexual orientation, race, ethnicity, physical ability, mental health status, and socio-economic condition into the full life and ministry of the church. By embracing our diversity, we learn and grow into a stronger community."



Special Offering: As part of our ONA process, we are gifting \$1,000 from our Blessing Fund to the Nan Leekley LGBTQ Youth Fund (through the St. Croix Valley Foundation).


We are invited to add individual gifts through Feb. 29th.

(Cash or checks to Peoples Congregational Church, memo: "LGBTQ Youth Fund.")

We make an annual gift to Walker West (St. Paul) as reparations for use of "This Little Light of Mine" and other Black spirituals. *Walker West creates a music learning community rooted in the African-American cultural experience, where people of all ages and backgrounds can gather, explore, and grow through music.*

Thank you to today's partners: Rev. Fritz West (guest preacher, member of our church), Sharon Neuenfeldt (Worship Accompanist), Michael Bjork (Choir Director), SCUC Choir, Bob Dickie & Cindy Parsons (greeters), Maya Solano-Klisch (youth greeter), Mary Maren Bjork (liturgist), Naomi Kirstein & Carol Dusbabek (fellowship), Paul Spilseth, Bob Dickie & Mark Stephan (tech team), Lisa Culbertson (Childcare Provider), Carol Dusbabek, Claire Spilseth, & Kim Klisch (preK-Gr1), Cindy Baker (Gr2-Gr5), Cheri Schwartz (Sunday School Float), David Kirstein (Youth Leader), Jackie Savage (sanctuary organizer), Andi Favilla (decorations)



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I'm Gonna Live So God Can Use Me 139

$\text{♩} = 68$

1. I'm gon-na live so _____ God can use me _____ an - y -
2. I'm gon-na work so _____ God can use me _____ an - y -
3. I'm gon-na pray so _____ God can use me _____ an - y -
4. I'm gon-na sing so _____ God can use me _____ an - y -

- time, Lord, _____ and an - y - where. _____
- time, Lord, _____ and an - y - where. _____
- time, Lord, _____ and an - y - where. _____
- time, Lord, _____ and an - y - where. _____

- I'm gon-na live so _____ God can use me _____
- I'm gon-na work so _____ God can use me _____
- I'm gon-na pray so _____ God can use me _____
- I'm gon-na sing so _____ God can use me _____

- an - y - time, Lord, _____ and an - y - where. _____
- an - y - time, Lord, _____ and an - y - where. _____
- an - y - time, Lord, _____ and an - y - where. _____
- an - y - time, Lord, _____ and an - y - where. _____

Before Your Cross, O Jesus

Ferdinand Q. Blanchard, 1929; alt.

Mark 8:34; Gal. 6:14; Phil. 1:27; 3:7-10

- 1 Be-fore your cross, O Je-sus,
our lives are judged to-day;
the mean-ing of our ea-ger strife
is test-ed by your way.
A-cross our rest-less liv-ing
the light streams from your cross,
and by its clear, re-veal-ing beams
we mea-sure gain and loss.
- 2 The hopes that lead us on-ward,
the fears that hold us back,
our will to dare great things for God,
the cour-age that we lack,
The faith we keep in good-ness,
our love, as low or pure,
on all, the judg-ment of the cross
falls stead-y, clear, and sure.
- 3 Yet hum-bly, in our striv-ing,
we rise to face its test.
We crave the power to do your will
as once you did it best.
On us let now the heal-ing
of your great Spir-it fall,
and make us brave and full of joy
to an-swer to your call.

Ferdinand Q. Blanchard, moderator of the General Council of Congregational Churches (1942-1944), was active in missions and was a leading advocate of educational opportunity for African-Americans. This hymn was written for Euclid Avenue Congregational Church in Cleveland, Ohio, which he served for forty years.

Tune: ST. CHRISTOPHER 7.6.8.6.8.6.8.6.
Frederick C. Maker, 1881