



March 17, 2024

“What Life Will
We Lose?
What Life Will
We Gain?”

Fifth Sunday
in Lent

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 downstairs (infant - age 3)

The Love of God Gathers Us

Gathering Music

We gently settle into sacred time and space

Ring the Bell

Prelude & Candle Lighting

“The Old Rugged Cross”

Bennard

We acknowledge the light of Christ among us

Words of Welcome and Announcements

SPP = *Sing! Prayer and Praise*

* = Sitting or standing

NCH = *New Century Hymnal*

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

Jesus said, “Unless a grain of wheat falls to the ground and dies, it shall not have life.”

In Lent, we come to know that the only way to life, healing, and wholeness comes paradoxically through letting go—through a thousand small deaths.

We cannot encounter light unless we are willing to enter into shadows.

Fullness of life often means the death of lesser things.

Let us embrace the life Jesus offers –

Trusting in God’s everlasting power to give life, to heal, and to make whole.

***Opening Song (SPP #84) “All My Days”**
all verses

Acknowledging Our Need for God’s Grace

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

Prayer of Confession and Longing (*unison*)

Psalm 51:1-11

Have mercy on me, O Gracious One, according to your steadfast love.

According to your abundant kindness, forgive me where my thoughts and deeds have hurt others. Lead me in the path of justice, guide my steps on paths of peace!

Teach me, that I may know my weaknesses, the shortcomings that bind me — the unloving ways that separate me, that keep me from recognizing your life in me. For, I keep company with fear, and dwell in the house of ignorance. Yet, I was brought forth in love, and love is my birthright.

You have placed your truth in the inner being. Therefore, teach me the wisdom of the heart. Forgive all that binds me in fear, that I might radiate love. Cleanse me that your light might shine in me. Fill me with gladness; help me to transform weakness into strength. Look not on my past mistakes but on the aspirations of my heart.

Create in me a clean heart, O Gracious One, and put a new and right spirit within me. Enfold me in the arms of Love, and fill me with your Holy Spirit. 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”

Trevor Stokes (10th), **Stan Hilliard** (12th), **Jim Purnick** (13th), **Cindy Baker** (14th), **Kim Klisch** (14th), **Jonah Gromoll** (18th, 7 yrs), **Milo Holler** (19th, 3 yrs), **Calvin Vandre** (21st, 9 yrs), **Megan Adams** (23rd), **Keely Vandre** (23rd)

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 Hebrew Scriptures | *The Inclusive Bible*

Jeremiah 31:31-34

A Reading from the Gospels | *The Inclusive Bible*

John 12:20-33

Here ends the readings.

May God speak to us through these sacred words.

Morning Message **“What Life Will We Lose? What Life Will We Gain?”**

Responding To God's Love

Prayer Hymn (NCH #475)

"God's Eye Is on the Sparrow"

all verses

Prayers of the People

*We share aloud prayers for ourselves, others, and parts of the world
Please tell Pastor Clare if you prefer yours not be added to our printed Prayer Corner*

...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

“Take My Life and Let it Be”

C'esar/Malan

***Offertory Response**

**Praise God from whom all blessings flow;
Praise God all creatures here below;
Praise God above, you heavenly host;
Creator, Christ and Holy Ghost. Amen**

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

Wondrous Creator, you provide for our strength and gladness through human creativity and labor. You supply all that is needed to bring forth what sustains us. May we share a portion of what we have received for the good of the world. Amen.

Going Forth to Share God's Love

***Closing Hymn (NCH #451)**

**"Be Now My Vision"
verses 1-3**

***Benediction**

***Sending Song**

Forming a circle, optionally linking elbows or hands

"Let There Be Peace on Earth"

**Let there be peace on Earth, and let it begin with me
Let there be peace on Earth, the peace that was meant to be.**

With God as creator, family all are we.

Let us walk with each other in perfect harmony.

Let peace begin with me; let this be the moment now.

With ev'ry step I take, let this be my solemn vow;

To take each moment, and live each moment in peace eternally!

Let there be peace on Earth, and let it begin with me.

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

***Postlude**

"Go Make a Diff'rence"

Angrisana/Tomazak

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: “Saving Jesus Redux”

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.

It's Minnesota FoodShare Month!



As the largest grassroots fundraiser in the state, the MN FoodShare Campaign brings together individuals, community organizations, businesses, and faith communities to help nearly 300 food shelves statewide.

Our local community food shelf, Valley Outreach, is the only nonprofit in the St. Croix Valley/Stillwater, MN area that provides people with a wide range of support – whether they need food, clothing, or help navigating resources during challenging times.

The Local Outreach Team has decided that all monetary donations will be sent to Valley Outreach to help reach more people in the community. Cash and checks are welcome. (Please make checks out to People's Congregational Church, memo: MN FoodShare)



*You may also donate by going to valleyoutreachmn.org and click on DONATE (be sure to indicate “St. Croix United Church” as your organization!).



Donations of food items will continue to be collected in the grocery cart in our entry area and put into the Little Free Pantry located at our St. Peter's building. We continue to stock it at least once/week (as it is being used regularly)!

*Reminder: Please donate nutritious items. No glass or metal packaging during the cold months.

PRAYER CORNER

We hold these joys and concerns in our prayers:

*For the family of Pat Mazzitello's friend, **Cindy**, caring from afar as siblings Jennifer and Tom, as well as their mother, manage complex health issues.

*For **Linda Tossey**, as she transitions to a difficult new cancer treatment and travels recreationally with family this week.

*With MaryAnn Litfin, we give thanks for the power of prayer and recent news that her fiancé **John's** aggressive cancer has been contained!

*For Sharon Neuenfeldt's brother, **Allen**, as he awaits more information and a treatment plan for recurring cancer.

*For **Rachel**, friend of Nat Graf and Pat Mazzitello, after a double mastectomy.

*With **Sharri Kinkead**, we give thanks for the community that continues to surround her since the death of her beloved Michael 3 years ago.

*For **AmberLee**, colleague to Michael Bjork, as she struggles with mental health.

*Celebrating anniversaries: **Gina & Rick** Buberl (11th), **Stan & Barb** Hilliard (19th)

And in the wider community...

*For the family and friends of **Anders Engstrom**, in their shock and grief after he tragically died in the St Croix River last week.

*For all **caregivers** (professionals, family members, friends), we give thanks as they walk in the loving way of Jesus!

*For **medical technology and innovation** that support our living, we give thanks!

*For safety, renewal, and joy for all who are traveling for a spring break!

Gerten's Spring Plant Sale is ON!

Our church receives 30% of all plant sales and 15% of all gift card sales! AND you'll have beautiful plants for your summer garden!

THE LAST DAY to order is March 28th. See the Mid-Week news for how to order. Plants/Flowers will be delivered on May 16th.



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

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

Please let Pastor Clare know if you would like to attend on **April 6th.**

Holy Week at St. Croix United Church

March 24: Palm Sunday Outdoor Community Worship and Palm Processional

- 9:45am at Chestnut Street Plaza, near Stillwater Lift Bridge
- Hosts: Ascension Episcopal, Bethlehem Lutheran, First Presbyterian, St. Croix United, Trinity Lutheran
- Parade route: Midway through worship, we will process 0.4 miles through downtown Stillwater (from the plaza: head south on Sam Bloomer, west on Nelson, north on Water, east on Mulberry, then follow the trail back to the plaza).
- Those who prefer to gather indoors in the company of others can connect to our live stream from First Presbyterian Church (Stillwater).

March 28: Maundy Thursday

- 7pm at St. Croix United Church

The word "Maundy" comes from the Latin, 'mandatum' or 'command.' Recalling the commandment Jesus gave the disciples to "love one another as I have loved you," this service includes dramatic readings narrating Jesus' last gathering with his friends, praying in the garden, and arrest. We will also share in Holy Communion.

March 29: Good Friday

- 7pm at St. St. Croix United Church w/ Bethlehem Lutheran


The word "Tenebrae" in Latin means "darkness." It will be a dramatic and moving experience of Christ's Passion, encompassing all of our senses. The service includes readings, the gradual extinguishing of light, passing the cross over our heads, a message from Pastor Amy Vigesa, anointing with oil, embodying the earthquake, and departing in silence and darkness.

March 31: Easter Sunday

- 6:45am Sunrise Service at People's Park (1003 5th Ave N, Bayport)
- 9am Breakfast at St. Croix United Church
- 9:30am Easter Egg Hunt
- 10am Worship Service

Thank you to today's partners: Sharon Neuenfeldt (Worship Accompanist), Michael Bjork (Choir Director), SCUC Choir, Kathy & Bob Iverson (greeters), Sharri Kinkead (liturgist), Cindy Baker & Cheri Schwartz (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), David & Naomi Kirstein (Youth Leader), Jackie Savage (sanctuary organizer), Andi Favilla (decorations)



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All My Days

84

$\text{♩} = 78$ N.C. A⁷sus

1. You

D D/F# G A⁷sus G/B D D/F# D G

know my_ words, be - fore they're said. You know my need and
 I should fly_ be - yond the_ dawn, the shad - ows will_ not
 ev - ery_ thought, each word we say,_ the whole of_ time, the
 mend my_ heart and free my_ voice. From sin re - leased, I

E/G# Esus A F#7/A# Bm F#m7 G Am D7 Gadd9

I am_ fed. You give me_ life._ You know my_ ways, my
 o - ver - come. If I lie_ down in deep - est_ night, still
 pre - sent day,_ are held with - in_ your might - y_ hand too
 will re - joice. O search me_ now, my spir - it_ cries, and

D/A G/B Em/C#F#aug Bm D7/A D/G D/F# Em7

strength, my path_ for all my_ days, my strength, my_ path, for
 you are_ there, my truth, my_ light, still you are_ there, my
 won - der - ful_ to com - pre - hend, too won - der - ful_ to
 let my_ song of praise a - rise,_ and let my_ song of

Asus N.C. A⁷sus Asus N.C. Dadd9

1. 2. 3. 4.

all my days.____ 2. If praise a - rise.____
 truth, my light.____ 3. Our
 com - pre - hend.____ 4. O

Words: Laurie Zelman

Music: Mark A. Miller

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Matt. 10:26-30; Luke 12:4-7

Civilla D. Martin, c. 1905; alt.

Stanzas, in unison

1 Why should I feel dis-cour-aged, why should the shad-ows come,
 2 "Let not your heart be trou-bled," Christ's ten-der word I hear,
 3 When-ev-er I am tempt-ed, when-ev-er clouds a-rise,

Why should my heart be lone-ly and long for heaven and
 And rest-ing on God's good-ness, I lose my doubts and
 When song gives place to sigh-ing, when hope with-in me

home, When God is ev-er my por-tion? My
 fears; Though by the path . . . God leads me but
 dies, I then draw close to my Sav-ior, from

con-stant friend will be: God's eye is on the spar-row, and I
 one step I may see: God's eye is on the spar-row, and I
 care I am set free: God's eye is on the spar-row, and I

Civilla Martin, a native of Nova Scotia, assisted her husband in his evangelistic campaigns. Charles Gabriel was editor for Rodeheaver Publishing Company, Chicago, and one of the most popular gospel songwriters of the early 1900s.

Tune: SPARROW Irr.
 Charles H. Gabriel, 1905

know God watch-es me; God's eye is on the spar-row, and I
know God watch-es me; God's eye is on the spar-row, and I
know God watch-es me; God's eye is on the spar-row, and I

Refrain, in harmony

know God watch-es me.
know God watch-es me. I sing be-cause I'm
know God watch-es me.

hap-py, I'm hap-py, I sing be-cause I'm free, God's
I'm hap-py, I'm free,

eye is on the spar-row, and I know God watch-es me.

Be Now My Vision

*Ancient Irish text, c. 8th century; transl. Mary E. Byrne, 1905
Versified by Eleanor H. Hull, 1912; adapt.*

Unison

1 Be now my vi - sion, O God of my heart;
 2 Be now my wis - dom, and be my true word;
 3 Rich - es I need not, nor life's emp - ty praise,
 4 Sov - ereign of heav - en, my vic - to - ry won,

noth - ing sur - pass - es the love you im - part—
 ev - er with - in me, my soul is as - sured;
 you, my in - her - i - tance, now and al - ways;
 may I reach heav - en's joys, O bright heav - en's Sun!

You my best thought, by day or by night,
 Moth - er and Fa - ther, you are both to me,
 You and you on - ly are first in my heart,
 Heart of my own heart, what - ev - er be - fall,

wak - ing or sleep - ing, your pres - ence my light.
 now and for - ev - er your child I will be.
 great God, my trea - sure, may we nev - er part.
 still be my vi - sion, O Rul - er of all.

Dating from the eighth century or earlier, this Irish hymn was translated into prose by Mary Byrne. It was then versified by Eleanor Hull, author of several books on Irish literature and history. David Evans arranged the Irish melody for this text in 1927.

Tune: SLANE 10.10.9.10.
*Traditional Irish melody
 Harm. David Evans, 1927*