



February 23, 2025

"How Can We
Love Our Enemies?"

Welcome!

We encourage wearing name tags.

Restrooms: main level (exit front left), lower level (at foot of entry stair/elevator)

The Love of God Gathers Us

Gathering Music

...as we settle into sacred time and space

Ringling the Bell

Prelude & Candle Lighting "Like a River Glorious"

J. Mountain

...acknowledging the light of Christ among us

Words of Welcome & Announcements

Singing Bowl & Opening Words from a Neighbor

Tibetan singing bowls took form in the 6th and 5th centuries BCE.
In some Buddhist traditions, they accompany meditation and chanting.
They now contribute to spiritual practices and well-being in many spaces.

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

Welcome, travelers. Welcome!

Sometimes it is harder to cross an unrepaired sidewalk than to travel a thousand miles.

Sometimes it is harder to forgive an old friend than to welcome a stranger.

But God teaches us to welcome stranger, friend and enemy as we would welcome Jesus.

However far we have come this week; we bring to this time of worship our minds, our compassion, and our dedication.

Let us continue our journey together!

***Opening Song (SPP #123)** “Draw the Circle Wide”
verses 1—2

Acknowledging Our Need for God’s Grace

Centering Ourselves *...in stillness and breath*

Prayer of Confession and Longing (*unison*)

O God, sometimes your call to love feels too hard for us. You ask us to love our enemies when we scarcely love our friends and ourselves as you intend. You ask us to give as much as we take, and to forgive when we want to nurse bitterness. We thank you for accepting us as we are and showing us how we can grow. Help us to believe that we can love more generously – through your grace and in the way of Jesus. Amen.

Musical Interlude *... to accompany our quiet prayers*

Assurance of Grace

Choral Anthem “Love Lifted Me” *by Greg Gilpin*

A Time With Children and Youth

Sung Invitation

...as young people come forward

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

Singing "Happy Birthday"

Beckham Bettin (2/23 - 12 yrs), Joe Legato (2/28)

Wondering Together

Blessing One Another

...with arms wide open

Young Ones: 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...

Children's Activity | Children (age 3 - gr. 4) go downstairs with Claire and Wendy
Youth Group | Youth (gr. 5-12) go with Telae to their main-level meeting space
Nursery | Families with infants & toddlers are welcome to utilize the downstairs nursery
We welcome the sounds and movements of children who stay in worship!

Proclaiming God's Love

A Reading from the Gospels | NRSV (New Testament, p. 64)

Luke 6:27-38

A Reading from a contemporary voice | Lyrics by Paul Demer

"Love for Enemies"

Here ends the readings. **Thanks be to God!**

Morning Message

"How Can We Love Our Enemies?"

As reparations for use of Black spirituals, we support Walker West (St. Paul):
*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.*

Responding To God's Love

Music for Reflection

“Love for Enemies”

sung by Paul Demer

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*)

**Heavenly Father, heavenly Mother,
Holy and blessed is your true name.
We pray for your reign of peace to come,
We pray that your good will be done,
Let heaven and Earth become one.
Give us this day the bread we need,
Give it to those who have none.
Let forgiveness flow like a river between us,
From each one to each one.
Lead us to holy innocence
Beyond the evil of our days —
Come swiftly Mother, Father, come.
For yours is the power and the glory and the mercy:
Forever your name is All in One. Amen.**

Invitation to the Offering

*We give by cash, check or electronically (scanning the QR code)
Blue electronic giving cards represent gifts made electronically.*



Offertory

“Pues Si Vivimos”

Spanish Melody

***Offertory Response**

Halle, Halle, Halle-lu-u-ja.
Halle, Halle, Halle-lu-u-ja.
Halle, Halle, Halle-lu-u-ja.
Halleluja! Halleluja!

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

Creative and generous God, from whom new possibilities spring – make a way for us where there has been no way. We give thanks as you pour into our spirits with the living water of your boundless love. Free us to offer our whole selves in return, participating fully in your newness of life. Amen.

Going Forth to Share God's Love

***Closing Song (SPP #123)** “Draw the Circle Wide”
verses 3

***Benediction**

***Passing the Peace**

The peace of Christ be with you! **And also with you!**

... online and onsite: smiles, peace signs, handshakes

***Postlude**

...as we pass the peace

Today Following Worship:

10:30am | All are welcome downstairs for refreshments and good company!

11:00am | **Adult Faith Conversations** Join us as we explore the meaning of Black History Month as we respond to our Christian calling.

PRAYER CORNER

*For **Sam Gromoll**, after a stay at Masonic Children's Hospital last week, and healing from influenza A.

*For **Naomi Kirstein**, swift healing after cataract surgery last Thursday.

*For Cheri and Bob Schwartz's granddaughter, **Bea**, who turned 7 years old last weekend - may she be surrounded by God's love and strength.

***May we remember to be the church**, loving one another in the midst of deep change, loss, and possibility in our world and in our congregation.

*For the **Albright family**, healing from the trauma of the fire that claimed their camper and beloved dog last fall.

*With Cindy Parsons and Bob Dickie, continued prayers for healing for their daughter **Erin** after her recent knee injury while far away from home.

*With **Kathy Whiterabbit**, we give joy for connection and readiness to join our church! We hold her adopted brother, **Fred**, in prayer as he recently lost his federal job and health benefits and now interviews with the Ho-Chunk Nation. We pray for Fred's daughter, **Annie**, as she struggles with a possible eating disorder.

Red Cross Blood Drive **Wednesday, Feb. 26th | 9 am - 3 pm**

Please call 1-800-RED CROSS or visit RedCrossBlood.org

Volunteers are appreciated to make this event a welcoming success!

Set-up, Clean-up, Greeters, Bakers

If you are able to help, please contact Bob Dickie or Megan!

Give Blood.
Save Lives. Advance
the Health of the World.
American Red Cross



BLOOD DRIVE
ST. CROIX UNITED CHURCH
309 N Third St
Barrport, MN 55003



Our 2 Food Share Pantries are open 365 days a year.

Items that go fast:

Cream of wheat cereal/Oatmeal, Kid-friendly cereal

Peanut Butter in plastic jars

Individual tuna packets, Dinty More Stews (single serving)

Mac and Cheese—single servings, Snacks, Hot Cocoa

“Just-add-water” baking mixes (pancakes, muffins, etc)

*Please be sure to bring items in cardboard or plastic packaging
as the temperatures drop. No cans or glass!*

**Help stock the pantries with a donation (scan the QR code or designate
a check/cash for “Food Share Pantries”)**





Ash Wednesday | **March 5**

5:45 pm Dinner | 6:30 pm Worship Service

We come together as we enter into the Lenten season.

We'll share in candlelight, music, prayer, readings, pastoral reflection, and Holy Communion.

As we depart, we will receive the imposition of ashes on forehead or hand.

Let us seek the love of God in the company of one another.

Wednesday Evenings in Lent | **March 12 - April 9**

5:30 pm | worship: stories of resilience

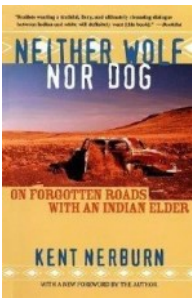
6:00 pm | soup supper

6:30 pm | book discussion

Worship: Story Sharers Needed!

Come for music, prayer, and stories. **Would you be willing to share about a challenging experience you've lived through and where you found resources to support you in building resilience within and beyond that challenging time?**

If you could be one of our story sharers, please contact Pastor Clare!



Lenten Book Discussions -

"Neither Wolf Nor Dog" by Kent Nerburn

This 1995 narrative invites us to start a conversation about healing through the acknowledgment of the unvarnished truth.

A captivating blend of memoir and travelogue, the book follows writer Nerburn as he spends time with Dan, a Lakota elder eager to share his wisdom before he passes. Nerburn's journey takes him to an undisclosed reservation in South Dakota, where he gathers Dan's profound insights. Along the way, Nerburn realizes that this journey is far from straightforward, leading to unexpected discoveries and deeper understanding.

The title itself implies that true existence requires embracing our full identity. As a nation, how can we genuinely exist if we deny our past? This is the profound question at the heart of this powerful narrative.

Stillwater's Valley Bookseller has copies available for 15% off, if you mention "St. Croix United Church book group!"

Inquirers Gathering

Wednesday, Feb. 26 | 2:30 pm

Newer and long-time friends will learn about:

- * The life and work of St. Croix United Church
 - * Our denominational affiliations
- * How to deepen your participation with us
 - * What membership means to us



Please let Pastor Clare know if you plan to attend
(pastor@stcroixunitedchurch.org, 651-600-6409)

Week at a Glance:

Blood Drive | Feb. 26, 9 am - 3 pm | @ Church

Inquirers Gathering | Feb. 26, 2:30 pm | @ Church


Choir Rehearsal | Feb. 26, 6:30 pm | @ Church

Strategic Planning Task Force | Feb. 28, 11 am | @ Church

Thank you to today's partners: Sharon Neuenfeldt (Worship Accompanist), Lori Mildon (flute), Mary Horak Binger & Cheri Schwartz (ushers), Sam Gromoll (acolyte), Cheri Schwartz (liturgist), St. Croix United Choir, Claire Spilseth & Wendy Staberg (age 3 - gr 4), Jane Hanson (youth group), Heather Kennedy-Bordeaux & Chris Bordeaux (fellowship), Paul Spilseth, Bob Dickie, Mark Stephan (tech team), Jackie Savage (sanctuary organizer), Andi Favilla, Mary Binger, Naomi Kirstein (altar decor)



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RESPOND

123

Draw the Circle Wide

$\text{♩} = 132$

Draw the cir-cle_ wide. Draw it wid-er still. Let this be our_

song, no one stands a - lone, stand-ing side by side, draw the cir-cle_

To verses Last time, Fine

wide._____ wide._____

1. God the still - point of the cir - cle, 'round whom all cre -
 2. Let our hearts touch far hor - i - zons, so en - com - pass
 3. Let the dreams we_ dream be larg - er, than we've ev - er

- a - tion turns; noth - ing lost, but
 great and small; let our lov - ing
 dreamed be - fore; let the dream of

held for - ev - er in God's gra - cious arms._____
 know no bor - ders, faith - ful to God's call._____
 Christ be in us, o - pen ev - 'ry door._____

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