

**Fourth Sunday in Lent**  
**March 19, 2023**  
United Church of Christ, Neillsville  
Pastor Sue Vornholt

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**PRELUDE**

Holly Pisors

**RINGING OF THE CARILLON**

**OUR SHARED LIFE AND SERVICE**

(Announcements)

We thank God for these opportunities for fellowship and service. **Thanks be to God!**

**GREETING**

The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, the love of God, and the gifts of the Holy Spirit be with you all. **And also with you.**

**CALL TO WORSHIP** ( Ephesians 5, John 9)

When the world is dark and full of hate and fear,  
when we cannot see God

**we will turn on the light.**

When we cannot find our way back to love and peace

**we will turn on the light.**

When our vision dims due to the darkness within

**we will turn on the light.**

Christ opens our eyes with the gift of sight.

**The light of the world is Jesus Christ**

Come and worship the one  
who brings sight to the blind.

**Hallelujah! Praise God, the light of the world!**

**HYMN** *"I Need You Every Hour"*

#517 NCH                      Annie Hawks, Robert Lowry

**1 I need Thee every hour, O God of grace;  
The peace your voice affords, I now embrace.**

**Refrain: I need you, how I need you!**

**Every hour I need you;**

**O bless me now, my Savior; I come to you.**

**2 I need you every hour, in faith or fear;  
Temptations lose their power When you are near.  
[Refrain]**

**3 I need you every hour, In joy or pain;  
Come quickly and abide, Or life is vain. [Refrain]**

**4 I need you every hour, Teach me your will;  
And your rich promises in me fulfill. [Refrain]**

**OPENING PRAYER**

Gracious God, who created us in God's own image, we are grateful for all that you have done for us, for all that you are doing in us, and for all that you will do through us, moving in powerful ways at all times and in all places.

Open our ears to hear familiar words in new ways - ways that will change us and challenge us to become the people you created us to be.

Grant us the power and the courage to come out of the darkness and into the light of Jesus Christ,

**CALL TO CONFESSION** (Pastor)

God has come to us in Christ, but we often live as if it made no difference. Let us confess our sin.

**PRAYER OF CONFESSION** (ALL)

**Forgiving God, in a world filled with so much pain, we would rather shut our eyes and be blind than see things as they really are. Grant us the courage to face the reality of our world, and give us the strength to bring your light to those who walk in darkness.**

**Help me see others as you see them, and forgive us when we do not trust you enough to open our eyes to the possibilities before us. Heal our self-inflicted blindness, O God, and lead us in the footsteps of the light of the world, who reveals your glory in his life, his teachings, and his love. In his holy name, we pray. Amen**

## **ASSURANCE OF PARDON** (Pastor)

Christ came to lead us in paths of righteousness and to guide us through our lives.

Christ is with us in times of danger and times of peace. The goodness and mercy of God are given to us each and every day of our lives. God forgives us for our failings, upholds us in love.

## **PRAISE RESPONSE**

(sung twice)

**Gloria, gloria, in excelsis Deo.**

**Gloria, gloria, alleluia, alleluia.**

## **PASSING OF THE PEACE**

Give voice to God's love and peace; those around us need to hear the Good News.

**All: The Peace of God be with you.**

*All are invited to greet one another with such words as "The peace of Christ be with you, and the response: "And also with you."*

## **CHILDREN'S MESSAGE**

### **SCRIPTURE READINGS**

**1 Samuel 16:1-13**

**John 9:1-41**

#### **1 Samuel 16:1-13**

16 The LORD said to Samuel, "How long will you mourn for Saul, since I have rejected him as king over Israel? Fill your horn with oil and be on your way; I am sending you to Jesse of Bethlehem. I have chosen one of his sons to be king." <sup>2</sup> But Samuel said, "How can I go? If Saul hears about it, he will kill me." The LORD said, "Take a heifer with you and say, 'I have come to sacrifice to the LORD.' <sup>3</sup> Invite Jesse to the sacrifice, and I will show you what to do. You are to anoint for me the one I indicate."

<sup>4</sup> Samuel did what the LORD said. When he arrived at Bethlehem, the elders of the town trembled when they met him. They asked, "Do you come in peace?" <sup>5</sup> Samuel replied, "Yes, in peace; I have come to sacrifice to the LORD. Consecrate yourselves and come to the sacrifice with me." Then he consecrated Jesse and his sons and invited them to the sacrifice.

<sup>6</sup> When they arrived, Samuel saw Eliab and thought, "Surely the LORD's anointed stands here before the LORD." <sup>7</sup> But the LORD said to Samuel, "Do not consider his appearance or his height, for I have rejected him. The LORD does not look at the things

people look at. People look at the outward appearance, but the LORD looks at the heart." <sup>8</sup>

Then Jesse called Abinadab and had him pass in front of Samuel. But Samuel said, "The LORD has not chosen this one either." <sup>9</sup> Jesse then had Shammah pass by, but Samuel said, "Nor has the LORD chosen this one." <sup>10</sup> Jesse had seven of his sons pass before Samuel, but Samuel said to him, "The LORD has not chosen these." <sup>11</sup> So he asked Jesse, "Are these all the sons you have?" "There is still the youngest," Jesse answered. "He is tending the sheep." Samuel said, "Send for him; we will not sit down until he arrives."

<sup>12</sup> So he sent for him and had him brought in. He was glowing with health and had a fine appearance and handsome features. Then the LORD said, "Rise and anoint him; this is the one."

<sup>13</sup> So Samuel took the horn of oil and anointed him in the presence of his brothers, and from that day on the Spirit of the LORD came powerfully upon David. Samuel then went to Ramah.

#### **John 9:1-41**

<sup>9</sup> <sup>1-2</sup> Walking down the street, Jesus saw a man blind from birth. His disciples asked, "Rabbi, who sinned: this man or his parents, causing him to be born blind?" <sup>3-5</sup> Jesus said, "You're asking the wrong question. You're looking for someone to blame. There is no such cause-effect here. Look instead for what God can do. We need to be energetically at work for the One who sent me here, working while the sun shines. When night falls, the workday is over. For as long as I am in the world, there is plenty of light. I am the world's Light." <sup>6-7</sup> He said this and then spit in the dust, made a clay paste with the saliva, rubbed the paste on the blind man's eyes, and said, "Go, wash at the Pool of Siloam" (Siloam means "Sent"). The man went and washed—and saw.

<sup>8</sup> Soon the town was buzzing. His relatives and those who year after year had seen him as a blind man begging were saying, "Why, isn't this the man we knew, who sat here and begged?"

<sup>9</sup> Others said, "It's him all right!" But others objected, "It's not the same man at all. It just looks like him." He said, "It's me, the very one." <sup>10</sup> They said, "How did your eyes get opened?" <sup>11</sup> "A man named Jesus made a paste and rubbed it on my eyes and told me, 'Go to Siloam and wash.' I did what he said. When I washed, I saw." <sup>12</sup> "So where is he?" "I don't know."

<sup>13-15</sup> They marched the man to the Pharisees. This day when Jesus made the paste and healed his blindness was the Sabbath. The Pharisees grilled him again on how he had come to see. He said, "He put a clay paste on my eyes, and I washed, and now I see." <sup>16</sup> Some of the Pharisees said, "Obviously, this man can't be from God. He doesn't keep the Sabbath." Others countered, "How can a bad man do miraculous, God-revealing things like this?" There was a split in their ranks. <sup>17</sup> They came back at the blind man, "You're the expert. He opened *your* eyes. What do you say about him?" He said, "He is a prophet." <sup>18-19</sup> The Jews didn't believe it, didn't believe the man was blind to begin with. So they called the parents of the man now bright-eyed with sight. They asked them, "Is this your son, the one you say was born blind? So how is it that he now sees?" <sup>20-23</sup> His parents said, "We know he is our son, and we know he was born blind. But we don't know how he came to see—haven't a clue about who opened his eyes. Why don't you ask him? He's a grown man and can speak for himself." (His parents were talking like this because they were intimidated by the Jewish leaders, who had already decided that anyone who took a stand that this was the Messiah would be kicked out of the meeting place. That's why his parents said, "Ask him. He's a grown man.") <sup>24</sup> They called the man back a second time—the man who had been blind—and told him, "Give credit to God. We know this man is an impostor." <sup>25</sup> He replied, "I know nothing about that one way or the other. But I know one thing for sure: I was blind . . . I now see." <sup>26</sup> They said, "What did he do to you? How did he open your eyes?" <sup>27</sup> "I've told you over and over and you haven't listened. Why do you want to hear it again? Are you so eager to become his disciples?" <sup>28-29</sup> With that they jumped all over him. "You might be a disciple of that man, but we're disciples of Moses. We know for sure that God spoke to Moses, but we have no idea where this man even comes from." <sup>30-33</sup> The man replied, "This is amazing! You claim to know nothing about him, but the fact is, he opened my eyes! It's well known that God isn't at the beck and call of sinners, but listens carefully to anyone who lives in reverence and does his will. That someone opened the eyes of a man born blind has never been heard of—ever. If this man didn't come from God, he wouldn't be able to do anything." <sup>34</sup> They said, "You're nothing but dirt! How dare you take that tone with us!" Then they threw him out in the street.

<sup>35</sup> Jesus heard that they had thrown him out, and went and found him. He asked him, "Do you believe in the Son of Man?" <sup>36</sup> The man said, "Point him out to me, sir, so that I can believe in him." <sup>37</sup> Jesus said, "You're looking right at him. Don't you recognize my voice?" <sup>38</sup> "Master, I believe," the man said, and worshiped him.

<sup>39</sup> Jesus then said, "I came into the world to bring everything into the clear light of day, making all the distinctions clear, so that those who have never seen will see, and those who have made a great pretense of seeing will be exposed as blind."

<sup>40</sup> Some Pharisees overheard him and said, "Does that mean you're calling us blind?" <sup>41</sup> Jesus said, "If you were really blind, you would be blameless, but since you claim to see everything so well, you're accountable for every fault and failure."

**MESSAGE** "Redefined by God" Pastor Sue

**HYMN** "God Loved the World"

#208 NCH

Trs. August Crull

**1 God loved the world, and loving gave  
a wondrous gift, the lost to save,  
That all who would in Christ believe  
Should everlasting life receive.**

**2 Christ Jesus is the ground of faith,  
Who was made flesh and suffered death;  
All who confide in Christ alone  
Are built on this chief cornerstone.**

**3 If you are sick, if death is near,  
This truth your troubled heart can cheer;  
Christ Jesus saves us all from death;  
that is the firmest ground of faith.**

**4 Be of good cheer, for God in Christ  
Forgives the flock, by sin enticed,  
And justified by Jesus' blood,  
Your baptism grants the highest good.**

**PRAYERS OF THE PEOPLE**

One: Let us pray as Christ Our Savior has taught us.

**THE LORD'S PRAYER**

**Our Father, 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 debts, as we forgive our debtors. And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil. For thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, forever. Amen

**INVITATION TO GENEROSITY** (Pastor)

God has led us to this place to heal and inspire us, to gently redirect us, until we see the world as God does and love it with God's love. With our gifts, we affirm that God's generosity can make us all into a new creation by the way we give of ourselves.

**PRAYER OF DEDICATION AND THANKSGIVING**

May thee tangible gifts and all the tangible gifts we share among us make known to the world that God is within us and among us. Amen

**CLOSING HYMN** *"God Be With You"*

#81 NCH                                      Jeremiah Rankin

**1 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.**

Refrain:

**Till we meet, till we meet,  
Till we meet at Jesus' feet;  
Till we meet, till we meet,  
God be with you till we meet again.**

**2 God be with you till we meet again;  
Wings of shelter safely hide you,  
Daily manna still provide you:  
God be with you till we meet again. [Refrain]**

**3 God be with you till we meet again;  
When life's perils thick confound you,  
Put unfailing arms around you:  
God be with you till we meet again. [Refrain]**

**4 God be with you till we meet again;  
Keep love's banner floating o'er you,  
Smite death's threatening wave before you:  
God be with you till we meet again. [Refrain]**

**BENEDICTION**

**POSTLUDE**

Holly Pisors

**JOYS AND CONCERNS**

**WELCOME**

**We welcome you to our service of worship!  
We are glad that you have joined us  
in-person, through the internet or on the radio.  
We pray that you will hear God's call,  
seek to follow Jesus, led by the Holy Spirit.**

**ANNOUNCEMENTS**

**RADIO BROADCAST**

**11 AM Sunday radio broadcast on WCCN  
98.5FM and 1370AM**

You tube link for March 19, 2023  
<https://youtu.be/-NstGhK8TgE>

**This week's radio broadcast  
is sponsored by  
"a faithful listener".**

**ANNOUNCEMENTS**

**Monday, March 20th -  
9 AM – Card Making Group**

**Tuesday, March 21st –  
1 PM – Bible Study – 510 W 14<sup>th</sup> Street  
\*every week at Marge Goetsch's home  
5 PM – Trustees meeting**

**Wednesday, March 22nd –  
5 PM – Church Council Meets  
6 PM – Soup Supper at Calvary  
7 PM - Lenten Worship Service at Calvary**

## We Need Your Help!

Volunteers are needed to host coffee fellowship each Sunday after worship. The sign-up sheet is posted on bulletin board at rear of church.

## COFFEE FELLOWSHIP



### Hosting Coffee Fellowship

March 19 – H & K Mathis

March 26 – Vine & Burch

April 2 – Carole Romens

April 9 –

April 16-

We need your help - Please sign up on bulletin board at rear of church for hosting coffee fellowship.

### Wednesday dates

## **Lenten Worship & Soup Supper at UCC**

March 29<sup>th</sup>

We need your help for these suppers, any one can volunteer for set up, clean up or what ever needs to be done.

Contact Janice in the office 715-743-2147.



Place your order for Easter Lilies no later than April 3<sup>rd</sup>. If you wish to dedicate your lilies, please let Janice know how you would like it listed in the bulletin. The cost of the lily is **\$17.00** and please make your check out to UCC. You may take your lily home after Easter worship service. Thank you for adding to the beauty of our church sanctuary on Easter Sunday.

We will be receiving our  
**One Great Hour of Sharing**  
offering on **March 19<sup>th</sup>**.

Envelopes are available in the pews.



### UCC Called to Care Team

UCC is forming a member's care-giving group with the intention to connect with members in need. If you know a member who could benefit from a visit from another member, please share this person's name with Janice Miller at 715-743-2147 or [neillsvilleuccoffice@gmail.com](mailto:neillsvilleuccoffice@gmail.com) or if you are interested in joining this group please contact the above.

# TODAY



## Meal Giveaway

March 19, 2023

11:00-11:15 AM

United Church of Christ-Neillsville  
515 West Second Street