



**Christ United Methodist Church and
First Congregational United Church of Christ
Second Sunday of Lent**

March 1, 2026



Thank you for participating in a unified worship of Christ United Methodist Church and First Congregational United Church of Christ. We hope your presence in the service is meaningful in the ways you need it to be.

Gathering Music

Welcome and Announcements

Prelude

“O God, Our Help in Ages Past”

William Croft

****Call to Worship**

One: Children of God, in Lent we remember that our salvation is an unearned gift, that new life is a matter of faith, not of works. We gather together to lay down the burden of trying to earn our salvation.

All: Like Nicodemus, who met Jesus in the dark of night, we struggle to accept that new life is not just possible, but given as a free gift of grace. We gather to bring our struggles into the light and embrace God’s grace with open arms.

One: Like Paul writing to the Romans, we remember God’s promise of new life has always rested on grace. We gather to receive the promise of salvation by grace through faith.

All: Like the many who have followed, questioned, and grown in the faith, we submit ourselves to be formed by grace as we work out our salvation day by day. We gather as people guided by the promise of new life, a promise fulfilled by Christ, whose path we follow.

****Hymn**

“On a Hill Far Away”

NCH #195

1 On a hill far a - way stood an old rug-ged cross, the
 2 Oh, that old rug-ged cross, so de - spised by the world, has a
 3 In that old rug-ged cross, which bore Love so di - vine, a
 4 To the old rug-ged cross I will ev - er be true, its

em - blem of suf - fering and shame; And I love that old cross where the
 won - drous at - trac - tion for me; For the dear Lamb of God left the
 won - drous beau - ty I see, For up - on that old cross Je - sus
 shame and re - proach glad - ly bear; When God calls me some-day to my

dear - est and best for a world of lost sin - ners was slain.
 glo - ry of heaven to bear it to cold Cal - va - ry.
 suf - fered and died to par - don and sanc - ti - fy me.
 home far a - way, there God's glo - ry for - ev - er I'll share.

Refrain

So I'll cher - ish the old rug - ged cross, till my
 cross, the old rug - ged cross,

tro - phies at last I lay down; I will cling to the old rug - ged cross, the cross, and ex - change it some - day for a crown. old rug - ged cross,

After serving as an officer in the Salvation Army, George Bennard was ordained by the Methodist Episcopal Church. In the midst of his travels through the Midwest conducting revival services, he was inspired to write this hymn.

Tune: THE OLD RUGGED CROSS Irr.
George Bennard, 1913

Scripture Reading

Romans 4:1-5, 13-17

What then shall we say that Abraham, our forefather according to the flesh, discovered in this matter? If, in fact, Abraham was justified by works, he had something to boast about—but not before God. What does Scripture say? “Abraham believed God, and it was credited to him as righteousness.” Now to the one who works, wages are not credited as a gift but as an obligation. However, to the one who does not work but trusts God who justifies the ungodly, their faith is credited as righteousness.

It was not through the law that Abraham and his offspring received the promise that he would be heir of the world, but through the righteousness that comes by faith. For if those who depend on the law are heirs, faith means nothing and the promise is worthless, because the law brings wrath. And where there is no law there is no transgression. Therefore, the promise comes by faith, so that it may be by grace and may be guaranteed to all Abraham’s offspring—not only to those who are of the law but also to those who have the faith of Abraham. He is the father of us all. As it is written: “I have made you a father of many nations.” He is our father in the sight of God, in whom he believed—the God who gives life to the dead and calls into being things that were not.

John 3:1-17

Now there was a Pharisee, a man named Nicodemus who was a member of the Jewish ruling council. He came to Jesus at night and said, “Rabbi, we know that you are a teacher who has come from God. For no one could perform the signs you are doing if God were not with him.” Jesus replied, “Very truly I tell you, no one can see the kingdom of God unless they are born again.” “How can someone be born when they are old?” Nicodemus asked. “Surely they cannot

enter a second time into their mother’s womb to be born!” Jesus answered, “Very truly I tell you, no one can enter the kingdom of God unless they are born of water and the Spirit. Flesh gives birth to flesh, but the Spirit gives birth to spirit. You should not be surprised at my saying, ‘You must be born again.’ The wind blows wherever it pleases. You hear its sound, but you cannot tell where it comes from or where it is going. So it is with everyone born of the Spirit.” “How can this be?” Nicodemus asked. “You are Israel’s teacher,” said Jesus, “and do you not understand these things? Very truly I tell you, we speak of what we know, and we testify to what we have seen, but still you people do not accept our testimony. I have spoken to you of earthly things and you do not believe; how then will you believe if I speak of heavenly things? No one has ever gone into heaven except the one who came from heaven—the Son of Man. Just as Moses lifted up the snake in the wilderness, so the Son of Man must be lifted up, that everyone who believes may have eternal life in him.” For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life. For God did not send his Son into the world to condemn the world, but to save the world through him.

Sermon

Rev. Sara MacGivra Branom

Musical Reflection

“Ah Holy Jesus”

arr. Jan Sanborn

A Time For Prayer

Sharing of Joys and Concerns: *If you have a joy or concern, please write it on the slip of paper provided at the tables any time before the service or as you come forward to receive communion. Light a candle if you wish symbolizing the presence of God, the light of faith overcoming darkness, and the prayers of the faithful lifting up to heaven. Your requests will be given to the pastor and church prayer team.*

Prayers of the People and 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 sins as we forgive those who sin 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.

Invitation to Generosity

The season of Lent invites us to consider what it means for us to live life sacrificially, to lean into Jesus’ call to costly discipleship. How might God be calling you to a new way of sharing your resources to build care and equity in our communities and world? Let us offer whatever gifts we have to love the world like God did in giving God’s Son.

Offertory

“Lord Jesus, Think on Me”
Chancel Choir

Daman’s Psalmes
arr. Georgiann Toole

Our ministries rely on the generosity of our members and friends. If you would like to make a financial contribution to support our work in Great Falls and beyond, you can send checks to P.O. Box 6303, Great Falls, MT 59406 or use the corresponding QR codes.

First Congregational UCC Donations:



Christ UMC Donations:



****Doxology**

UMH #94

**Praise God from whom all blessings flow;
Praise Christ all creatures here below:
Alleluia! Alleluia!
Praise God, the source of all our gifts!
Praise Jesus Christ, whose power uplifts!
Praise the Spirit, Holy Spirit!
Alleluia! Alleluia! Alleluia!**

Communion

Welcome to the Table

Invitation to the Table

One: Jesus said, "I am the bread of life. You who come to me shall not hunger; you who believe in me shall never thirst."

Many: In company with all who hunger for spiritual food, we come to this table to know the risen Christ in the sharing of this life-giving meal.

Communion prayer

One: May God be with you

Many: And also with you.

One: Lift up your hearts.

Many: We lift them to God.

One: Let us give thanks to God most High.

Many: It is right to give God thanks and praise.

One: Eternal God, who has created the heavens and the earth, giving breath to every living thing, we thank you for all the gifts of creation and for the gift of life itself. We thank you for making us in your own image, for forgiving us when we act as though you have no claim on us, and for keeping us in your steadfast care.

We rejoice in Jesus Christ, the only one eternally begotten by you, who was born of your servant Mary and shared the joys and sorrows of life as we know it.

We remember Christ's death, we celebrate Christ's resurrection, and, in the beloved community of your church, we await Christ's return at the end of history.

We take courage from the abiding presence of your Holy Spirit in our midst.

We offer you our praise for women and men of faith in every age who stand as witnesses to your love and justice. With all the prophets, martyrs, and saints, and all the company of heaven, we glorify you:

Many: Holy, holy, holy God of love and majesty, the whole universe speaks of your glory, O God Most High. Blessed is the one who come in the name of our God! Hosanna in the highest!

Words of Institution

Receive Communion

Prayer of Thanksgiving -Unison

God of our salvation,
we give you thanks for this meal that restores our souls,
reconciles us to you, and strengthens us for the journey.
Through the body and blood of your Son,
may we become Christ's body in the world,
bearing witness to your love for all creation,
through Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord.

****Closing Song**

“There’s Bread for the Journey”

SP&P #210

♩=192

A A/G# F#m E B7 E

There's bread for the cup of for-

B7 A B7 E

jour - ney_ and friends for the way. There's hope for to -
-give - ness, all bless - ings_ re - lease, to heal and re -

B7 E A B7sus B7 E E

- mor - row_ and love for to - day. The
- new us_ and bring us_ God's peace.

A A/G# F#m E D/A A/G# B7/F# E E7

O Ho - ly Spir - it, bind us to - geth - er, now.

A A/G# F#m E B7 A/B B7 E E

O Ho - ly Spir - it, bring us your peace. peace. There's

F C7 Bb C7

bread for the jour - ney_ and friends for the way. There's
cup of for - give - ness, all bless - ings_ re - lease, to

F C7 Bb C7sus C7 F F

hope for to - mor - row_ and love for to - day. The
heal and re - new us_ and bring us_ God's peace.

B^b B^b/A Gm F B^b B^b/A C⁷/G F F⁷
 O Ho - ly Spir - it, bind us to - geth - er, now.

B^b B^b/A Gm F C⁷ B^b/C C⁷ F F
 O Ho - ly Spir - it, bring us your peace. peace.

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Benediction

Postlude

“Hosanna, Loud Hosanna”

arr. Sanborn

(please be seated for the postlude)

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Acknowledgements:

UCC Worship Ways March 1, 2026

SundaysandSeasons.com

** Please stand in body or heart