

St. John's United Church of Christ

Open Hearts. Open Minds. Open Doors.

10 A.M. Worship February 4, 2024

Fifth Sunday after Epiphany

WE GET READY FOR THE WORD

Prayer of Preparation

Living God, we read your Word in the lives of people who embody your Spirit. Some of them surround us today and link us to you. All of us have the potential to become your letters to the world. That is what we want to be. We gather to find that integration of faith and deed, trust and discipleship that will make us authentic witnesses to your steadfast love. Make yourself known among us so we will experience your presence inside us and in all the gaps between us. Amen.

Welcome and Announcements

*(Please note the * indicates when you should stand.)*

*Sharing the Peace of Christ

Peace be with you

And also with you

WE PREPARE OUR HEARTS FOR THE WORD OF GOD

Prelude

"Here I Am, Lord"

Schutte arr. Raney

*The Call to Worship - from Psalm 147: 1-11, 20c and Isaiah 40: 21-31

One: To whom can we compare you, O Holy One?

All: We lift up our eyes,

One: We wait upon the Eternal God.

All: How good it is to sing praises to our God.

One: A song of praise is fitting!

All: Let us worship God together.

*Opening Prayer (In Unison)

Everlasting God, Creator of the ends of the earth, you who spread the heavens like a curtain, and make us a tent to live in, gather us in the shelter of your love, and renew our strength, that with wings as eagles we might not grow weary as we walk with you. We pray in the power of your Holy Spirit. Amen.

* Hymn

"On Eagle's Wings"

#77

You who dwell in the shelter of the Lord
Who abide in God's shadow for life
Say to the Lord, "My refuge
My rock, in whom I trust!"

[Chorus]

And I will raise you up on eagle's wings
Bear you on the breath of dawn
Make you to shine like the sun
And hold you in the palm of my hand.

The snare of the fowler will never capture you
And famine will bring you no fear
Under God's wings, your refuge
My faithfulness, your shield
[Chorus]

You need not fear the terror of the night
Nor the arrow that flies by day
Though thousands fall about you
Near you it shall not come
[Chorus]

WE HEAR GOD'S WORD

Prayer for Transformation and New Life

One: God invites us to come to worship as our whole selves: God offers us a new beginning day by day and week by week. Trusting in God, we pray for transformation and new life:

All: Holy One, we hope in your steadfast love, bringing our broken hearts and our wounded spirits. Make us aware of the hearts we break, the spirits we wound, of those we treat as outcasts, of those we tread down. Renew us in your grace, renew us in your strength. Amen.

Words of Grace

One: Have you not known? Have you not heard? God does not grow weary with us, but loves, forgives, and renews us. Go with renewed strength in your walk of faith.

All: Alleluia! Amen!

Special Music

"How Can I Keep from Singing?"

Lowry arr. Kim

Time for the Child in us All

Pastor Lisa

Scriptures: Isaiah 40:21-31

One: This is the Word of God for the People of God.

ALL: Thanks be to God.

Message

* Hymn	<i>"How Firm a Foundation"</i>	#618 verses 1, 2, 3
"How firm a foundation, ye saints of the Lord, is laid for your faith in God's excellent word! What more can be said than to you God has said, to you who for refuge to Jesus have fled? "Fear not, I am with thee, oh, be not dismayed, for I am thy God and will still give thee aid; I'll strengthen thee, help thee, and cause thee to stand upheld by my righteous, omnipotent hand. "When through deep waters I call thee to go, the rivers of woe shall not thee overflow; for I will be near thee, thy troubles to bless, and sanctify to thee thy deepest distress.		

Pastoral Prayer

Invitation to Give Generously

(Thank you for being so generous in your care of St. John's UCC and its mission, through your participation and giving. Your stewardship makes a difference. You may make your offering several ways including in church, online, by text at 833-502-0657, or mail. We are grateful for your support.)

***Doxology (In Unison)**

**Praise God from whom all blessings flow,
Praise God, all creatures here below;
Praise God above, you heavenly hosts;
Creator, Christ, and Spirit, One. Amen.**

***Prayer of Dedication (*In Unison*)**

Holy One, we bring our gifts and pray that they may be for the building up and lifting up of your people, for the binding of wounds and the healing of hearts, for shelter and for covering and clothing for those in need. With these gifts we offer our praise as we hope in your steadfast love. Amen.

RECOGNITION OF REV. SHARON MADDOX'S 40TH ORDINATION ANNIVERSARY

Lorin Cope, Representative of the St. Louis Association

Mark Strothmann

SERVICE OF HOLY COMMUNION

Invitation

* Hymn	<i>"Come, Share the Lord"</i>	#408
We gather here in Jesus' name His love is burning in our hearts like living flame For through the loving Son the Father makes us one Come take the bread come drink the wine Come share the Lord No one is a stranger here, everyone belongs; finding our forgiveness here, We in turn forgive all wrongs. He joins us here He breaks the bread The Lord who pours the cup is risen from the dead The One we love the most is now our gracious host Come take the bread come drink the wine Come share the Lord	We are now a family of which the Lord is head; though unseen he meets us here In the breaking of the bread. We'll gather soon where angels sing We'll see the glory of our Lord and coming King Now we anticipate the feast for which we wait Come take the bread come drink the wine Come share the Lord	

Words of Institution

Prayer for the Holy Spirit

The Lord's Prayer (*In Unison*)

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.
Lead us not into temptation but deliver us from evil.
For thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory forever. Amen.

Sharing the Elements

***Prayer of Thanksgiving (*In Unison*)**

We thank you gracious God for this meal which you have given us. As we gather around our own tables in the days ahead, might we be reminded of this table, where all are welcome, and love always is the answer to hate. Amen.

A LITANY OF FAREWELL

Helen Stortz, President of the Church: A church community is constantly changing. Loved ones come to the end of their lives; new lives are born and baptized into the faith community. Individuals and families come and go throughout our life together. It is important for us to recognize and mark well these times of passage, these endings and beginnings. Today we bid farewell and Godspeed to Rev. Lisa Hart who has faithfully served as our interim pastor, whose time with our congregation has now drawn to a close.

Pastor Lisa: I thank you, the people of St. John's United Church of Christ, both members and friends, for the love, kindness, and support you have shown me and my family during our time here. I thank you for accepting my leadership and receiving me as your interim pastor. I recall with joy the many things we have been able to accomplish together, and with sadness the things we were not able to do. I ask your understanding and your forgiveness for the mistakes I have made and for the times I may have let you down.

Congregation: *(In Unison)*

We receive with thankfulness the ministry you have offered us in the time we have shared. We accept that you now leave us to minister in new ways, trusting that God goes with you on that journey. Your presence among us will not be forgotten. We are grateful for the time you have been with us and ask your forgiveness for our own mistakes and for times we may have let you down.

Lorin Cope, St. Louis Association Representative: Do you, the members and friends of St. John's United Church of Christ, now release Pastor Lisa from the duties of interim pastor?

Congregation: **We do, with the help of God.**

Lorin: Do you, Pastor Lisa, release St. John's United Church of Christ from turning to you and relying on you to serve them as Pastor?

Pastor: I do, with the help of God.

Lorin: Do you, Pastor Lisa, offer your encouragement for the continued ministry here at St. John's United Church of Christ?

Pastor: I do, with the help of God.

Lorin: Let us pray.

Congregational Prayer: *(In Unison)*

O God of all creation, whose love for all is trustworthy and true, help each of us to trust the future which rests in your care. During our time together we have experienced laughter and tears, hopes and disappointments. Guide us as we carry these cherished memories with us in new directions until that time when we are completely one with you and with one another. In the name of Jesus Christ, we pray. Amen.

Lorin: Go now, Pastor Lisa, with our blessing, surrounded by our love and led by the promises of God, the presence of Christ Jesus, and the guidance of the Holy Spirit.

Congregation: **Amen!**

WE GO FORTH TO SERVE

* Hymn	"Rain Down"	by Jaime Cortez
(Refrain) Rain down, rain down. Rain down your love on your people. Rain down, rain down Rain down your love, God of life. Faithful and true is the word of our God. All of God's works are so worthy of trust. God's mercy falls on the just and the right; full of God's love is the earth. (Refrain)	We who revere and find hope in our God Live in the kindness and joy of God's wing. God will protect us from darkness and death; God will not leave us to starve. (Refrain) God of creation, we long for your truth; You are the water of life that we thirst, Grant that your love and your peace fill our hearts All of our hope lies in you. (Refrain)	

Benediction

Postlude

"This Little Light of Mine"

Spiritual arr. Raney

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Preaching: **Pastor Lisa Hart**
Director of Music Ministry: **Ruth Notch**
Liturgist: **Amanda Jones**
Usher Team: **Phil Difani**
Technology: **Steve Hawkinson**
Fellow & Lockup: **Helen Stortz**
Flautist: **Jennifer Adams**
Song leaders: **Kathy & Mike Scherr**

Announcements

Global Ministries requests that we pray with **Fiji** this week

We pray for **Barb Ackerman, June Evers, Elizabeth Hart, Sue Kinnaman, Cherie Messina, Barbara Tretter and Gloria Vaclavik** Please let us know your prayer concerns

Rick Wagner expresses his gratitude to the congregation for their thoughts and prayers.

2/11/24 Service
Preaching: **Rev. Carl Dollgener**
Liturgist: **Lynn Potts**
Usher Team: **Phil Difani**
Technology: **Steve Hawkinson**
Fellow & Lockup: **Laura Dierberg Ayers**
Children's Time: **Rev Rich Brandon**
Special Music: **Duet**

2/18/24 Service
Preaching: **Rev. Susan King**
Liturgist: **Danny Mueller**
Usher Team: **Jim Pisoni**
Technology: **Steve Hawkinson**
Fellow & Lockup: **Laura Dierberg Ayers**
Children's Time: **Danny Mueller**
Special Music: **Handbells**

2/25/24 Service
Preaching: **Rev. Donna Pupillo**
Liturgist: **Laura Dierberg Ayers**
Usher Team: **Larry Sontag**
Technology: **Steve Hawkinson**
Fellow & Lockup: **Laura Dierberg Ayers**
Children's Time: **Laura Dierberg Ayers**
Special Music: **Flautist**

Please join us after service for a celebration luncheon.

Preschool & Kids Day Out registration for the 2024/2025 school year began January 22.

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... Looking Ahead February ♥

2/8	9:25 AM	Volunteer at Lydia's House (contact Laine Angelo or office)
2/9	8:00 AM	Biweekly Newsletter
2/11	11:00 AM	Cemetery Board Meeting
2/12	4:30 PM	Christian Education Committee
2/14	7:00 PM	Ash Wednesday Service
2/18	10:00 AM	1 st Sunday of Lent
2/18	11:00 AM	Ted Gottlieb "Senior Living Community"
2/19	6:30 PM	Council Meeting
2/19		Presidents' Day (office/ECC closed)
2/20	12:00 PM	ECC early dismissal
2/22	6:00 PM	Table Fellowship at Paul Manno's Chesterfield
2/23	8:00 AM	Biweekly Newsletter
2/25	9:15 AM	Loaves & Fishes
2/25	10:00 AM	2nd Sunday of Lent
2/25		Global Ministries Pray for Ecuador
2/25	11:00 AM	Mission Meeting
2/27	6:30 PM	Bunko Women's Fellowship

more at <https://www.stjohnsuccchesterfield.org/fellowship>

Please check your News Notes/Website for specific information around upcoming activities

... Looking Ahead March

3/3	10:00 AM	3rd Sunday of Lent
3/3		Communion Sunday
3/3		Global Ministries Pray for Egypt
3/3	11:00 AM	Senior Ministry Meeting (library)
3/4	9:00 AM	Pastor Katie Jo's first day in the office
3/6 – 3/7		ECC Parent Conferences
3/8	8:00 AM	Biweekly Newsletter
3/9	6:30 PM	Bingo, doors open at 6:30
3/10	10:00 AM	Pastor Katie Jo's first Service
3/10	10:00 AM	4th Sunday of Lent
3/10		Global Ministries Pray for Japan
3/11	4:30 PM	Christian Education Committee
3/17	10:00 AM	5th Sunday of Lent
3/17		Global Ministries Pray for Myanmar
3/18	6:30 PM	Council Meeting
3/18 to 22		ECC Spring Break
3/22		Biweekly Newsletter
3/24	10:00 AM	6th Sunday of Lent
3/24		Global Ministries Pray for Cuba
3/26	6:30 PM	Bunko Women's Fellowship
3/28	6:00 PM	Table Fellowship at TBD
3/28		Maundy Thursday
3/29		ECC No School
3/29		Good Friday
3/30		Holy Saturday
3/31	9:15 AM	Loaves & Fishes
3/31	10:00 AM	Easter
3/31		Global Ministries Pray for Greece
3/31	11:00 AM	Mission Meeting