

FIRST CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH OF ST. CLAIR



UNITED CHURCH  
OF CHRIST



**“No matter who you are or where you are on life’s journey,  
you’re welcome here.”**

**300 Adams Street, St. Clair, MI 48079  
810-329-4142 [www.firstcongscc.org](http://www.firstcongscc.org)**

**WE GATHER TO WORSHIP GOD – March 20, 2022**  
**Lent 3**

† Those who are able, may stand.

**CHIMES**

O Jesus, I Have Promised

**PRELUDE**

There is a Balm in Gilead

**WELCOME**

Rev. Alana Kelley

Welcome to First Congregational Church of Saint Clair United Church of Christ where no matter who you are or where you are on life's journey you're welcome here. Many thanks to all who are here for this worship service. Greetings to those of you with us on the Facebook Livestream. And a big thank you to all who helped with preparations for this morning's worship service.

**ANNOUNCEMENTS**

(Announcements are in the back of this bulletin.)

† **GATHERING SONG**

There's a Wideness in God's Mercy NC Hymnal 23 vs 1,2

**OPENING WORDS**

Jody Skonieczny

As we continue our look at what it means to release oppressive expectations about perfection in our lives and in our faith, this week we turn to a harmful idea that the prescription for our fear of failure is to simply work harder. We might feel we are climbing an 'endless staircase' of achievement, for high grades or success...in caregiving, work, or social pressure." This Lent, we are taking some time to stop climbing ladders and staircases, to tend our souls slowly and lovingly, tilling the soil and fertilizer, and embracing our holy, "good enough," lives.

**CALLING ON GOD TOGETHER**

Together we Pray:

**Holy One, Our Balm, Our Feast we lift our hands and call your name,  
in need of healing—thirsting and hungry. Your steadfast love is better  
than life. Open us this day to your nourishment  
in the songs of the land, in the beauty of the sky—  
in the simple and good enough moments that fill our days.  
Amen.**

**RESPONSE**

Good Enough

**What in our lives do we dream about for tomorrow, void of sorrow?  
Time spent regretting decisions of our yesterdays, mistakes we made?**

**Sometimes we get what we get, life disappoints us and yet,  
God is still here and somehow; this faith is good enough. (repeat)**

### **JOYS, CONCERNS, AND THE INVITATION TO PRAY**

We will take a moment to share your joys and concerns and then move into silent prayer. Your prayer requests will be lifted up during the Pastoral Prayer. After each petition, the response will be "Ever listening God" "**Hear our prayer.**"

### **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.**

### **MOMENT WITH THE CHILDREN**

The children are invited to come forward for a short message meant just for them. Afterward we'll sing together: "There is Room for All" SSP 76 On Screen

**There is room for all in the shadow of God's wing; there is room for all,  
sheltered in God's love. And I rejoice and sing, "My refuge and my rock, in  
whom I trust." There is room for all, there is room for all!**

### **MISSION MOMENT**

One Great Hour of Sharing

Barb Fandrick

### **WE PRAISE GOD BY SHARING OUR GIFTS**

Offering Meditation: When food and shelter are not enough; when prayer and care are lacking...Our gifts that support the church help us to fill and to touch some of these. The biggest gift we can give is to love the world so much that we give of ourselves. As we share our offerings may we realize our lives are good enough. As we provide for the ministries this church provides within the building and out in the world, let's thank God that we are able to give when so many are not able to give. May God bless our hopes and dreams as we listen to the gift of music.

### **OFFERTORY**

Lord, I Want to be a Christian

### **†RESPONSE**

Old 100<sup>th</sup>

**Praise God from whom all blessings flow, Praise Jesus Christ, our burdens  
know, Praise Spirit through whom our hearts grow, Praise Three-in-One,  
from here below. AMEN.**

## †UNISON PRAYER OF DEDICATION

Generous God, in light of your extravagant blessings– no matter what the state of the world or our imperfect lives– we offer our gifts and ourselves, and know that you transform what we plant into the produce of love. Amen.

**HYMN OF PREPARATION**                      Amazing Grace                      NC Hymnal 547 vs 1,2,4

**THE FIRST READING**                      Isaiah 55:1-9                      Jody Skonieczny

## MUSICAL MEDITATION

**THE GOSPEL READING**                      Luke 13:1-9                      Rev. Alana Kelley

The Word of God who is still speaking,  
**Thanks be to God.**

**SERMON**                      How to Be Perfect: A Short Guide                      Rev. Alana Kelley

**CLOSING HYMN**                      What Wondrous Love is This                      NC Hymnal 223 vs 1,2,3

## †THE COMMISSIONING    A Blessing for When You Realize Everyone is Struggling

**One:** Blessed are you who see things clearly, where struggle is everyone's normal.  
We walk among the association of the afflicted, a club no one wants to join.

**All:** And while this life isn't always shiny, it does come with superpowers;  
Superpowers of ever-widening empathy and existential courage that gets us  
back up after another fall.

**One:** Our awe deepens at the beauty and love that can be found amid life's rubble.  
Like flowers that grow from the cracks in the sidewalk, virtues blossom.  
We thank God for this.

**All:** Blessed are all of us who struggle sometimes, for we are in good company, and  
we'll never walk alone."

### **Good Enough Reprise**

God is still here and somehow; this faith is good enough.

## †BENEDICTION

May God bless you and keep you well. God's face shine upon you and be gracious to you. God asks us to accept the joys and the costs of discipleship, therefore go out into

the world and carry with you the Peace of Jesus Christ, the Love of God and the Encouragement of the Holy Spirit. **Amen.**

## POSTLUDE

## Guide Me, O My Great Redeemer



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### **PLEASE KEEP IN YOUR THOUGHTS AND PRAYERS...**

Rachel O'Connor, Anna Moore, Doug Johnson, Julie Rock, Gary Westbrook, Marge Guinther, Barb Jeffries, Genie Lucyk, Laura Paxton, Ann Whittaker, Matthew Pennewell, Lisa Latuperissa, Tommy Galvin, Brian Paret, Jr, Holly Weatherford (Breanna Paret's wife), everyone fighting the virus and the families of those who have lost that fight. Also, remember Edwin Summers, Cameron Coverly, Nathan Distelrath, all who are serving in the military, first responders, medical personnel, and our elected officials.

### **TODAY'S WORSHIP ASSISTANTS**

SUNDAY STEWARD: Don and Pat O'Connor  
SOUND & LIVESTREAM: Tim Galvin, Don Rice  
MUSIC: Denise Gregg, Anna Moore  
USHERS: Cal Eschenburg  
THIS WEEK'S READER: Jody Skonieczny  
POWER POINT: David Kelley

### **NEXT WEEK'S WORSHIP ASSISTANTS**

SUNDAY STEWARDS: Don and Pat O'Connor  
SOUND & LIVESTREAM: Tim Galvin, David Kelley  
MUSIC: Denise Gregg, Anna Moore  
USHERS: Jim Light & Doug Johnson  
NEXT WEEK'S READER: Karen Galvin  
POWER POINT: Pat O'Connor

## **OPEN AND AFFIRMING INCLUSIVE CHURCH COVENANT**

The members of the First Congregational Church of St. Clair, United Church of Christ, declare that we are a fully inclusive, open and affirming congregation. We affirm the life and teachings of Jesus Christ and believe that all people are children of God. As such, we welcome to the community of faith all people of diverse race, physical and mental abilities, ethnicity, gender identity, sexual orientation, marital status, and socio-economic status. We covenant to provide to all a safe, loving, nurturing and compassionate community.

### **~CHURCH ANNOUNCEMENTS~**

**CONFIRMATION...** Confirmation means owning your Christian faith and joining the church as an adult member of the church. Confirmation Class will meet on ALL Sundays except for Easter Sunday, April 17th until Confirmation (June 5th). Our next meeting is March 20th. If you hope to be Confirmed you must attend church and remaining meetings. All ages welcome!

**BIBLE STUDY...**Bible Study will meet on Zoom on first and third Wednesdays from 11:00 a.m.- 12:00 p.m. Have your NRSV Bibles handy. Email Pastor Alana if you'd like the Zoom link to join Bible Study. Alana.k227@gmail.co

**LENT STUDY...** The LENT Study will meet in Friendship Hall on Wednesdays during Lent, March 23rd - April 13th, from 6:30 pm to 7:15 p.m. Please bring your NRSV Bible or grab one from the Sanctuary before the study begins. There's a sign-up sheet on the back table.

**BOOK STUDY...** We're reading American Dirt by Jeanine Cummins. We'll meet at the church to discuss it on Wednesday April 20<sup>th</sup> from 6:30-7:30 p.m. Books are available on Amazon \$13.84 or used from \$6.00. There are several copies in the church library.

**FRIDAYS** 10:30a.m. - 12:00 p.m. join Pastor Alana for coffee and conversation at the TAP.

**ARE YOU THINKING ABOUT CHURCH MEMBERSHIP?** If you're wondering about becoming a church member, please speak with Pastor Alana to set up a time to chat. She'll answer all your questions about the United Church of Christ and this church specifically.

**LITTLE FOOD PANTRY...** Please remember to pick up a couple extra items during your next trip to the store. Donations may be left in the library in the tote labeled "Little Food Pantry". Current Pantry needs: March "must haves"- (1) – cereal, (2) canned

chicken or tuna, (3) mashed potatoes (box or pouch), (4) cookies. Thank you!

THANK YOU – Ann Whittaker thanks her church family for all the thoughts and prayers that have been given. She especially wants to tell you how much she enjoys the cards she gets at home. It brings a smile every time she gets one. She says thank you all very much.

REMINDER – Channel articles are due no later than March 20, 2022.



### Easter Lily Donation Form

As Easter approaches, we are looking forward to decorating the altar with white Easter Lilies. You may make a donation toward the lilies in memory of or in honor of a loved one. These memorials will be included in the Easter bulletin. Please fill out the form below and return it, with your donation, to the office by April 1st.

Your name \_\_\_\_\_ Amount donated \_\_\_\_\_

Phone Number \_\_\_\_\_

Who are you remembering or honoring (please write the name(s) exactly as you'd like them to appear in the bulletin.

Remembering \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

or honoring \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

***Please return this information and your donation to the office no later than April 1st***

## HYMN LYRICS

### **GATHERING SONG**      There's a Wideness in God's Mercy      NC Hymnal 23 vs 1,2

There's a wideness in God's mercy, like the wideness of the sea;  
there's a kindness in God's justice, which is more than liberty.  
There's no place where earthly sorrows are more felt than in God's heaven;  
there's no place where earthly failings have such kindly judgment given.

For the love of God is broader than the measures of our minds;  
and the heart of the Eternal is most wonderfully kind.  
If our love were but more faithful, we would gladly trust God's word;  
and our lives would show thanksgiving for the goodness of our God.

### **HYMN OF PREPARATION**                      Amazing Grace                      NC Hymnal 547 vs 1,2,4

Amazing grace, how sweet the sound, that saved a wretch like me!  
I once was lost, but now am found, was blind but now I see.

'Twas grace that taught my heart to fear, and grace my fears relieved;  
How precious did that grace appear the hour I first believed!

My God has promised good to me, whose word my hope secures;  
God will my shield and portion be as long as life endures.

### **CLOSING HYMN**                      What Wondrous Love is This                      NC Hymnal 223 vs 1,2,3

What wondrous love is this, O my soul! O my soul!  
What wondrous love is this, O my soul!  
What wondrous love is this!  
that Christ should come in bliss to bear  
the heavy cross for my soul,  
for my soul, to bear the heavy cross for my soul!

To God and to the Lamb I will sing, I will sing,  
to God and to the Lamb, I will sing;  
To God and to the Lamb who is the great I am,  
while millions join the theme,  
I will sing, I will sing;



while millions join the theme, I will sing;

And when from death I'm free, I'll sing on, I will sing on,  
and when from death I'm free, I'll sing on!  
and when from death I'm free, I'll sing and joyful be,  
and through eternity I'll sing on, I'll sing on,  
and through eternity I'll sing on!