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The Congregational Church of Laconia
United Church of Christ
18 Veterans Square
Laconia, NH 03246-3425

Open Invitation



Gathering ~ for Worship

March 24, 2019

9:30 a.m.

The Congregational Church of Laconia, United Church of Christ, is a welcoming Christian community with a scriptural foundation seeking Justice and peace for all.

Preparing

Organ Prelude

Meditative Thought *"The darker the night, the brighter the stars, the deeper the grief, the closer is God!"* — Fyodor Dostoevsky, *Crime and Punishment*

K. Robert Bengtson

Welcome & Announcements

Introit

"Ah, Holy Jesus"

Chancel Choir

Praising

Call to Worship (seated) *Congregation please respond with bold print.*

Only the hungry search for bread. Only the thirsty look for water.

This is a place for those who are hungry and thirsty in spirit.

Only those who ache for meaning will pursue it.

Only those who yearn for a deeper life will seek it.

This is a place for those who ache and yearn for something more.

So let us come here today with our hunger and thirst,
our unsatisfied longings, our heart-felt yearnings,

And let the God of life satisfy our souls.

***Opening Hymn**

"God Is My Shepherd"

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Invocation (unison) *Through the season of Lent we will be using a different translation of the Prayer of Jesus commonly known as "the Lord's Prayer" as our Invocation. Today's is a translation from "The Message" a contemporary rendering of the Bible from the original languages, crafted to present its tone, rhythm events, and ideas in everyday language.*

Our Father in heaven, reveal who you are.

Set the world right; Do what's best -- As above, so below.

Keep us alive with three square meals.

Keep us forgiven with you and forgiving others.

You're in charge! You can do anything you want!

You're ablaze in beauty!

Yes. Yes. Yes.

(For comparison) 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 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.

Chancel Choir

Rev. Paula Gile

***Passing of the Peace & the Gloria**

*Halle, Halle, Halle-lu-jah, Halle, Halle, Halle-lu-jah, Halle,
Halle, Hall-lu-jah, Hallelujah, Hallelujah*

Mission Moment

Reception of New Member

Douglas Teegarden, Connie Clark

Reflecting & Praying

Scripture Reading

Luke 13 1-9

Pew Bible p. 950

Sermon

“Why God?”

Rev. Neil Wilson

Meditative Moment

Prayer Preparation

"Spirit of the Living God"

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Spirit of the living God, fall afresh on me; Spirit of the living God fall afresh on me.

Melt me, mold me, fill me, use me. Spirit of the living God, fall afresh on me.

Pastoral Prayer

(Yellow prayer cards may be placed in the offering plate.)

Prayer Response

"Amen"

Chancel Choir

Committing

Stewardship Invitation

Offertory

"I'm So Glad Trouble Don't Last Always"

Chancel Choir

*Doxology

Praise God from whom all blessings flow; Praise God, all creatures here below;

Praise God above, you heavenly host: Creator, Christ, and Holy Ghost.

***Prayer of Consecration/Dedication**

Going to Serve

*Closing Hymn

“Be Still, My Soul”

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***Pastoral Benediction**

Benediction Response

"Sunset to Sunrise Changes Now"

Chancel Choir

Organ Postlude

***Rise, if able and moved.**

Welcome & Information

Welcome to our service of worship! Please introduce yourself to those sitting near you & use a pew rack card to inform us of requests.

Wireless hearing assistance devices, back cushions, large print bulletins & children's bulletins are available; please ask an usher.

Faith Formation: After the Moment with our Children, children/youth in grades 1-8 are invited to meet across The Bridge in the Yellow Room. We are currently learning about the Love of Neighbor through a variety of experiences and service projects. Confirmation students are welcome to join in the fun and assist the younger kids.

Children's Offering: With great enthusiasm the children are collecting money to donate to World Vision to provide clean water to communities in need. Many Church members are contributing by donating coins in the Change for the Church containers available at each door. Place filled containers in the offering plate or give them to one of the young people.

Nursery & Child Care: Children younger than 1st grade are welcome in the Nursery before the service begins or following the Moment with our Children. Please escort your child to the Nursery room across The Bridge and pick them up after the service. Visitors are always welcome!

Yellow prayer request cards are available in pews. Write your request(s) and place them in the offering plate. Our prayer disciples will pray during the week.

Our Service is video recorded and published.

Our Greeters today are John Gill, Doug Teegarden

Today's Ushers are Susan Smith, Dave Smith, Martha Kruse, John Walker

The Altar Flowers today are given *In loving memory of our parents Edward, Sr. and Evelyn Bastille; and Alvin and Marion Meckes* by Louise and Edward Bastille.

Join us for a time of fellowship downstairs following the service for refreshments served by the Council Committee. Fair Trade coffee is served in biodegradable cups. We are a *Just Peace Church* caring for our environment.

This Week's Committee Meetings and Gatherings

Today, March 24 - 10:45 a.m. Bell Choir Practice

11:00 a.m. Stories from Kenya

4:00 p.m. Channel 25 Worship Broadcast

9:30 p.m. Channel 25 Worship Broadcast

Monday, March 25 - 4:00 p.m. Channel 25 Worship Broadcast

Tuesday, March 26 - 7:00 p.m. Stitches of Love Knitting Circle

Thursday, March 28 - 5:30 p.m. Lenten Soup & Study

7:00 p.m. Choir Practice

Next Sunday, March 31 - 9 :30 a.m. Sunday Worship

Some Announcements

Thursday March 28 5:30 p.m.

Lenten Soup & Study Series

Our study centered on the book "Plenty Good Room" which combines an in-depth look at scripture, American history, and the music and lyrics of several African American spirituals. Join in a meal of soup, a time of fellowship and a time of spiritual reflection. You do not have to read a book or prepare - come and be filled with warm soup and the love of God.

Sunday March 31

One Great Hour of Sharing

Look for the envelopes in the pews and in your bulletins. Please give generously.

Sunday April 14 11:00 a.m.

Sharing a Legacy Planning Series - Medical Planning with Orinana Filiault

The Stewardship Committee has organized a series of three information sessions which address important components of legacy planning and sharing. These information sessions will be held on the second Sunday of the months of March and April. The talks begin immediately following coffee hour. Each session will last about one hour. We invite you to attend. No reservations needed.

THIRD SUNDAY OF LENT

March 24, 2019

Isaiah 55:1-9

Open Invitation *Amistad Sunday*

Isaiah offers in nine verses the heart of the biblical message: God loves us, no matter what, reaching out to us even (or especially) in the worst of times, making promises that are not pie-in-the-sky, not theoretical. God promises what we most deeply yearn for: homecoming when we're lost, a rich feast when we're hungry, fresh water to satisfy our thirst, and a community of hope when we long for meaning—something greater than ourselves through which we might be a blessing to the world. There's no price of admission to this feast, and everyone (even the most unexpected) will be invited to the party.

A Litany for Amistad Sunday (based on Isaiah 43)

The 1839 slave revolt aboard the Amistad brought Congregationalists from New England together to defend the rights of these slaves to their freedom. That defense finally came before the U.S. Supreme Court. When it was finished, the slaves were freed and the American Mission Society (a forerunner of the United Church Board for Homeland Ministries) was formed.

One: In the hold of the ship, the Amistad, the slaves were chained and rowed together.

MANY: But God made a way in the sea, a path in the mighty waters.

One: Chains were broken, slaves revolted,
But God said, "Do not remember the old ways I am about to do a new thing."

MANY: The slaves were recaptured, prisoners again, but not alone.

A committee was formed to support and defend.

Advocates, lawyers, ministers and more.

People of faith who brought clothing and money and food.

One: Now it springs forth; do you see it?

MANY: Before the court, the Supreme Court, justice, this time, prevailed,

One: "I will make a way through the wilderness," said the God of the slaves.

MANY: And the slaves were acquitted. All were set free.

One: God gave water and rivers in the desert so the thirsty could drink.

MANY: The slaves went home but their friends persisted.

One: For abolition, for education, for liberty.

The American Missionary Society was born,

And continues today as part of the United Church of Christ.

MANY: So says God, "These are the people whom I formed for myself
so they might declare my praise."

One: Let us worship our God, a God of freedom and justice.
Oh God of the Amistad,

MANY: Give hope to our prayers and make true our hope
that liberty and equality and fairness bless this land.



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