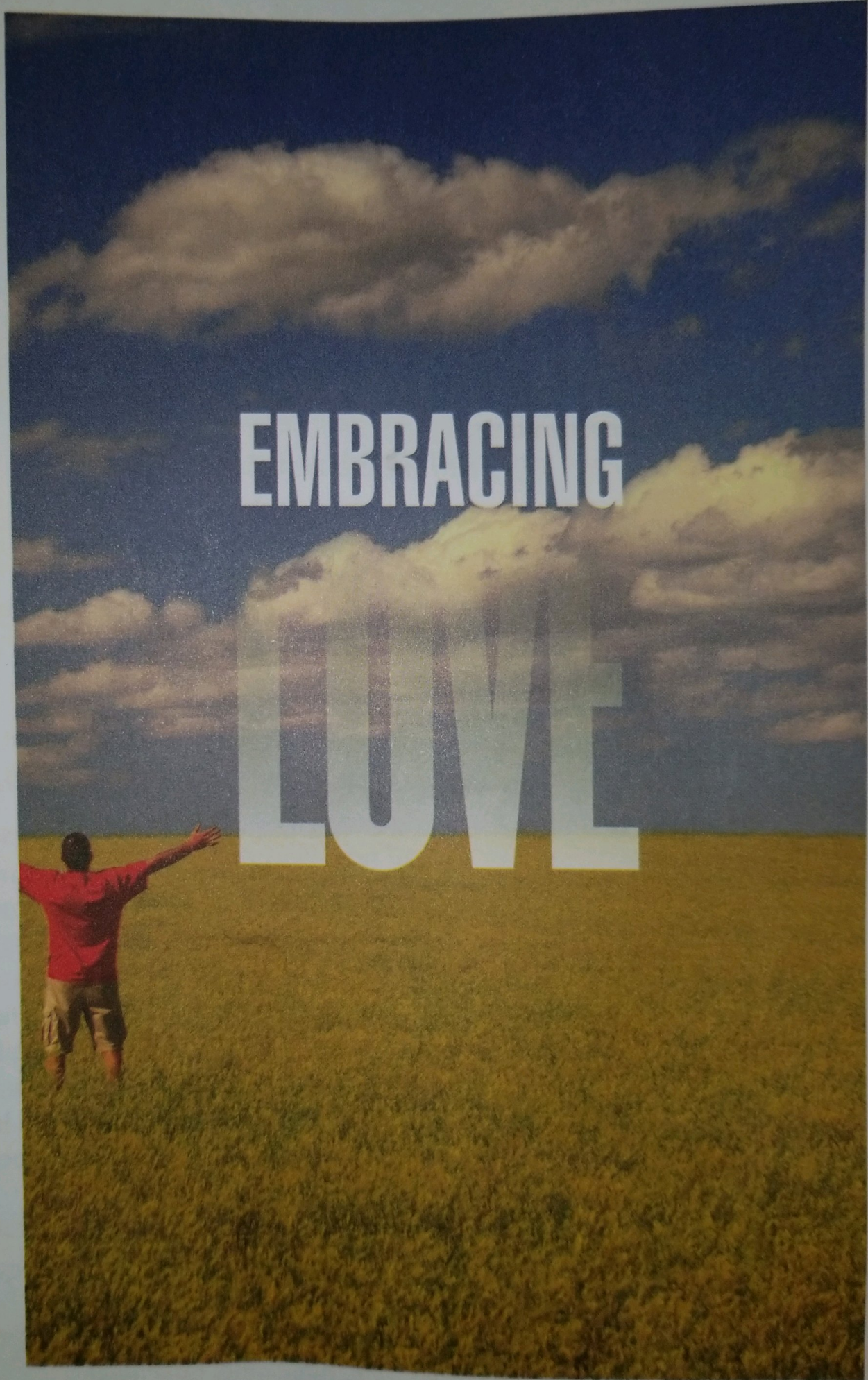


Rev. Neil H. Wilson, Senior Pastor
Rev. Paula B. Gile, Associate Pastor
K. Robert Bengtson, Director of Music
(603) 524-0668

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



EMBRACING
LOVE

Gathering ~ for Worship

March 31, 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

K. Robert Bengtson

Meditative Thought

"I have always found that mercy bears richer fruits than strict justice."

- Abraham Lincoln, 19th century

Welcome & Announcements

Introit

"When, like the Woman at the Well"

Chancel Choir

Praising

Call to Worship (seated) Congregational response is the bold print.

To those who eagerly came to worship God,

you are welcome here.

To those who grumbled about coming,

you are welcome here.

To those who are not sure why they are here,

you are welcome here.

In the name of the one who loves and forgives us, you are welcome in this place.

Thanks be to God!

***Opening Hymn**

"All Are Welcome"

See Insert

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 version was written by the young people of this church that were confirmed May 2014.*

Our God, who watches over us from above, whose name we hold sacred, may the goodness and kindness of heaven be a part of all of our daily lives on earth. Feed our Spirit this day, forgive our wrongdoings as we forgive others. Don't lead us in the wrong path. Protect us from those who seek to lead us down the wrong path. For your way is the path to your kingdom, your power, and your glory for eternity. Amen

A Moment with our Children

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

*Halle, Halle, Halle-lu-jah, Halle, Halle, Halle-lu-jah, Halle,
Halle, Halle-lu-jah, Halleluiah, Halleluiah*

Musical Offering *"When Jesus Wept"* Chancel Choir

Reflecting & Praying

Scripture Reading Luke 15:1-3, 11b-32

Sermon *"My Child Is Home"* Rev. Paula Gile

Meditative Moment

Prayer Preparation *"Lord, Listen to Your Children Praying"* Children Praying

Lord, listen to your children praying

Lord, send your Spirit in this place;

Lord, listen to your children praying,

Send us love, send us power, send us grace.

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

Prayer Response *"Amen"* Chancel Choir

Committing

Stewardship Invitation (Place One Great Hour of Sharing Offering in the plate)

Offertory *"Cross of Jesus, Cross of Sorrow"* 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**

We offer these gifts, O God of all people, in the hope and trust that you will use them to bring healing and hope where there is need. Where natural disaster has befallen, may these gifts help build new life. Where refugees seek safety from violence and fear, may these gifts enable caring and welcoming hearts and hands. Where hatred sullies your hope for your human family, may our gifts be a sign and instrument of reconciliation. Thank you, God, for the privilege of this offering. May it indeed do more than we can imagine! Amen.

Going to Serve

***Closing Hymn** *"O God, How We Have Wandered"* # 202

***Pastoral Benediction**

Benediction Response *"Lord Jesus, Who through Forty Days"* Chancel Choir

Organ Postlude

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

This Week's Committee Meetings and Gatherings

Today, Mar. 31 - 10:45 a.m. Bell Choir Practice
4:00 p.m. Channel 25 Worship Broadcast
9:30 p.m. Channel 25 Worship Broadcast
Monday, Apr. 1 - 4:00 p.m. Channel 25 Worship Broadcast
Tuesday, Apr. 2 - 6:30 p.m. Membership Committee Mtg.
7:00 p.m. Stitches of Love Knitting Circle
Wednesday, Apr. 3 - 6:30 p.m. Outreach Committee Mtg.
Thursday, Apr. 4 - 5:30 p.m. Lenten Soup & Study
7:00 p.m. Choir Practice
Next Sunday, Apr. 7 - 9:30 a.m. Sunday Worship

An Invitation to Spiritual Practices from the Deacons

~ for more information see April Tower Tidings ~

Sunday, March 31

11:00 a.m. - 11:30 a.m.

Be a Prayer Disciple

Bean Room

Sunday, April 7

11:00 a.m. - 11:30 a.m.

How to Sit for the Easter Vigil

Small Chapel in Sanctuary

Thursday, April 18

5:30 p.m.

Maundy Thursday Supper & Service

Church Hall

Friday, April 19 through Sunday, April 21

from 3:00 p.m. to Easter Sunrise 6:00

a.m. Good Friday Easter Prayer Vigil

Sanctuary

Friday, April 19

7:00 p.m.

Good Friday Service

Sanbornton Congregational Church

Sunday, April 21

Easter Coffee Hour

Church Hall

Today

One Great Hour of Sharing

We are receiving the One Great Hour of Sharing on Sunday, March 31, 2019. Look for the envelopes in the pews and in your bulletins & please give generously.

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 Kay and Ray Vercoe

Today's Ushers are Brad Geltz, Carole Domin, Martha Kruse, John Walker

The Altar Flowers today are given *In loving memory of our brother, David Arthur Bastille by Louise and Edward Jr. Bastille; and, Maurine and Richard Bastille.*

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

March 31, 2019

Luke 15:1-3, 11b-32

Embracing Love

One Great Hour of Sharing Offering

Jesus' story about a precious son lost and recovered was a response to self-righteous religious authorities who questioned the company he was keeping, but it's also appropriate for Lenten reflection on our own lives. Where do we find ourselves in this story? Why do we so often identify with the older brother? Are we, like that older brother, perhaps stuck in scarcity thinking, when we'd be much happier, much freer, trusting that there is more than enough for all, and great cause for celebration?

One Great Hour of Sharing

You arrive home in the evening, tired from a long day, and on the news comes a bulletin about an earthquake, or refugee crisis, or typhoon, or famine that has struck. You watch it on the television, or your computer screen and say to yourself, "There's so much misery in the world." Then, you change the channel. After all, what can you do? You have work the next day, and your life to live. In your wallet might be twenty or forty dollars. How far could that go to help thousands of people? You can do something other than look in your wallet and feel powerless. We have a way to reach into that news story and make a difference. You can watch but you don't have to stand still; you can run toward the one who needs you and give to One Great Hour of Sharing.

One Great Hour of Sharing is more than a helping organization. It's part of the mission of the Christian church. More than just the United Church of Christ, we join with eight other Christian denominations in this work. Together, with those partners, we raise approximately 12 million dollars a year. Of each dollar given, more than 90 cents is used directly for mission services on the ground in areas of need.

Imagine yourself separated from your family by a disaster and there are only strangers all around you. Then picture someone handing you something warm to drink, a blanket and a way to get home again. Give to One Great Hour of Sharing because when we join our gifts with others we can make a difference in the world. Share in this ministry because it's a way we can share the love of Christ with others.

Give generously so we can all be there to offer hope to those suffering and to restore home the lost.