

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

Rev. Neil H. Wilson, Senior Pastor
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Wilderness Companions



Gathering ~ for Worship

March 10, 2019

9:30 a.m.

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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 noonday devil of the Christian life is the temptation to lose the inner self while preserving the shell of edifying behavior. Suddenly I discover that I am ministering to AIDS victims to enhance my resume. I find I renounced ice cream for Lent to lose five excess pounds... I have fallen victim to what T.S. Eliot calls the greatest sin: to do the right thing for the wrong reason."* — Brennan Manning, *The Ragamuffin Gospel: Good News for the Bedraggled, Beat-Up, and Burnt Out*

K. Robert Bengtson

Welcome & Announcements

Introit

"God Is Here! As We Your People Meet"

Chancel Choir

Praising

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

Our souls are created to be God's dwelling place,
and the dwelling place of the soul is God.

As we worship, we experience the God who dwells in us.

Through our worship, we dwell in God.

As we make the Holy One our dwelling place, no evil shall overtake us.

Come, live and love in the shelter of the Most High and say,

"God is my refuge and fortress in whom I trust."

**Through our worship, we love the God who dwells in us,
and in whom we dwell. God is our refuge and our home.**

*Opening Hymn

"We Worship You, God"

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Invocation (unison)

O Holy One, we come to you in gladness and expectation to begin our Lenten exploration. You offer steadfast love as our strong refuge;
Your boundless grace is our sheltering presence, and we rejoice!
In the unity of worship, we trust that you will speak to us and through us as we begin this Lenten journey with each other and with Christ.
Prepare our hearts to seek you and embrace you, to hear you and follow you, to love you and to serve you. With gladness and expectation we pray in the manner Jesus taught: *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. Amen

A Moment with our Children

Rev. Paula Gile

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

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

Musical Offering

"Behold The Lamb Of God" (arr. John Dykes)

Chancel Choir

Reflecting & Praying

Scripture Reading 26:16

Luke 4: 1-13

Pew Bible p. 936

Sermon

"The Children's Message"

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

"In Heavenly Love Abiding" (Howard Helvey)

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**

"Beneath the Cross of Jesus"

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***Pastoral Benediction**

Benediction Response

"Forty Days and Forty Nights"

Organ Postlude

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

This Week's Committee Meetings and Gatherings

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

11:00 a.m. Legacy Planning Funerals

4:00 p.m. Channel 25 Worship Broadcast

9:30 p.m. Channel 25 Worship Broadcast

Monday, Mar. 11 - 4:00 p.m. Channel 25 Worship Broadcast

Tuesday, Mar. 12 - 6:30 p.m. Property & Finance

7:00 p.m. Stitches of Love Knitting Circle

Wednesday, Mar. 13 - 1:00 p.m. Communications Comm.

6:30 p.m. Deacons Mtg

Thursday, Mar. 14 - 5:30 p.m. Lenten Soup & Study

7:00 p.m. Choir Practice

Next Sunday, March 17 - 9:30 a.m. Sunday Worship

Some Announcements

Sharing a Legacy Planning Series 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 will be held in the Church Library at 11:00, immediately following coffee hour. Each session will last about one hour. We invite you to attend.

TODAY - Funeral Planning with Craig Beane

April 14 - Medical Planning with Oriana Filiault

Lenten Soup & Study Series begins this week **Thursday 5:30 p.m. Church Hall**

This season's 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.

Summer Mission/Work trip We are planning on one this Summer to work with the Maine Seacoast Mission Home Rehabilitation Program in Cherryfield, ME the week of July 14- 19. Interested speak to Pastor Neil. neil@laconiaucc.org (603)524-0668

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. Please speak to one of our ushers if you have any concerns.

Our Greeters today are Maurine and Richard Bastille

Today's Ushers are Catherine Tokarz, Martha Kruse, Doug Teagarden, John Walker

The Altar Flowers today are given *In loving memory of my husband, Hans* by Janet Janke.

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

March 10, 2019

Luke 4:1-13

Wilderness Companions

Lent begins in the deserted wilderness, where we are given another opportunity to deepen our understanding of who Jesus is. Today's lesson is about the way and the why of the ministry of Jesus: we might say that the ground rules are set. The Son of God is not here to grab power for himself, or to show off how much he matters to God, or to work magic for the masses. Jesus spends forty days struggling alone and wandering, tested by the seductive voice of evil that is backed up by scripture. This reminds us how easily the Bible can be used for wrong purposes and to be mindful of seductively good things that can lead away from God.

Jesus leaves the wilderness, filled as always with the Holy Spirit, assured that he is God's beloved, and ready for what lies ahead. As our own Lenten journey begins, we too are sure of Jesus, our companion in whatever wilderness we face, and we walk with trust in him.

This Lent, contemplate tests you have faced in your journey of faith and what path you will take in the Lenten season ahead. Even better than giving up chocolate, we might develop a daily spiritual practice of reflection on God's provision, God's abundance, and God's power in our lives.

"The greatest temptations are not those that solicit our consent to obvious sin, but those that offer us great evils masking as the greatest goods." (*Thomas Merton, No Man Is an Island*)

Take the UCC Environmental Justice Quiz!

Did you know that UCC ministers coined the phrase "environmental racism" and played a leading role in giving birth to the environmental justice movement in the 1980s?

During a six week campaign of civil disobedience in 1982, a movement was born that made national headlines and introduced the world to the issue of environmental racism.

Did you know that the UCC is building a powerful environmental network that stays connected through a blog and e-newsletter called The Pollinator?

The Pollinator is a digital platform of the UCC for the sharing of ideas and inspiration, so that we might become more fruitful in the pursuit of environmental justice. Its focus is the building of a faith-filled and faith-rooted movement for the care of creation.

Did you know that UCC churches are deepening and expanding their commitment to the environment by becoming Creation Justice Churches?

Whether it is taking on climate change or addressing the lead poisoning of children, environmental justice ministries could not have a higher purpose or calling than they do now.

Learn more at ucc.org/environmental-ministries and get involved.

