

**GOOD SHEPHERD UNITED CHURCH:
INCLUSIVE – INSPIRING – INVOLVED**

AN OPEN AND AFFIRMING CONGREGATION

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The Reverend William D. Ingraham, Pastor and Teacher

Order of Worship
March 14, 2010

** Those who wish are invited to stand as they are able.
Nursery care is available for babies to age 3.*

Welcome!

We are delighted to have you worshiping with us today! The Church of the Good Shepherd (COGS) is a dynamic congregation with a rich history and an exciting ministry in the community.

Our church is a part of a blend of four major Protestant denominations that united together in 1957 to form the United Church of Christ. We claim the early Pilgrim and Puritan settlers of this country as part of our heritage, and celebrate the words of Pastor John Robinson, who in his farewell remarks to the Pilgrims as they were leaving for the “new world,” said,

“There is still more light and truth to break forth from God’s holy word.”

We are a church that:

- Takes the Bible seriously, but not literally.
- Worships God with joyful hearts and open minds.
- Includes children in the life and ministry of the church.
- Celebrates creativity and the arts.
- Seeks to be inclusive of ALL people.
- Believes that growth in wisdom and understanding happens at all stages of life.
- Is committed to work for justice for all people and for the environment.
- Cares for one another, laughs easily, and rests in God’s love.
- Looks to Jesus as teacher, prophet and Child of God.

GATHERING SONG "Amazing Grace" (vs. 1, 2, 3) #547

WELCOME and ANNOUNCEMENTS

JOYS and CONCERNS

SHARING GOD’S LOVE and PEACE

(Please return to your seats when you hear the bells.)

PRELUDE "Draw Us to You" by Freyberg
Kate Sauer, organist

*CALL TO WORSHIP Mendy Brown

- One: It’s time to celebrate! Having gone our own ways for a week, a month, Or even years on end, here we are! Together! We are a family of faith.
- Many: After some time apart, from this church or from other churches, Here we stand, in this very room, on this very day. We are community.**
- One: Some have been here all along. They’ve come whenever the doors are open. In fact, some have been the ones to unlock and open the doors!
- Many: Others have come less often, or maybe not at all before today. Each of us is equally welcomed here; each is celebrated in God’s love.**
- One: Each is a blessing to this church and to the world; Each is a valued and intentional part of God’s good creation.
- Many: In this Welcoming Church, we seek to make real God’s love and care, For us and for everyone. Here, we share heavenly love abundantly.**
- All: May it truly be said of us, and of this church: “No matter who you are, Or where you are on life’s journey, you’re welcome here.”**

*OPENING HYMN "There's a Wideness in God's Mercy" #23

*MORNING PRAYER (in unison) Mendy Brown

One: Please pray with me.

**All: Our Gracious, Heavenly God,
We can find ourselves in distant places, strangers in a foreign land,
lost and alone. Sometimes we have gotten there intentionally,
blazing the trail to a place of disappointment and isolation.
Sometimes we wander off by accident, looking up in astonishment,
alarmed not to recognize where we are or how we got there.
Even more disturbing to us, we sometimes remain loyally where we have
always been, yet suddenly find ourselves as outsiders in our own lives.
Help us, we pray! Open our eyes to your presence, and teach us
the ways of your mercy and care. Inspire us to recognize
your outstretched hand, an invitation to find our hope in you.
Guide us into your warm embrace, that we might know and celebrate
your love and care. And help us never to forget that your love
and mercy are not for us alone, but are for all creation.
Make us messengers of your heavenly goodness, and help us to live
after the example of Jesus. Help us always to know ourselves welcomed
in you, and to offer that same welcome to all we encounter.
This we ask in Christ's name. Amen.**

ANTHEM "O Vos Omnes" by Blake Henson
Chancel Choir

*"O all you who pass along this way, behold and see
if there is any sorrow like unto my sorrow." (Lamentations 1:12)*

CHILDREN'S MESSAGE Rev. Ingraham

SCRIPTURE READING Luke 15:1-3, 11b-32 Mendy Brown

SERMON "Prodigal" Rev. Ingraham

SILENT PRAYER / PASTORAL PRAYER / OUR SAVIOR'S PRAYER

**Our Father, our Mother, who is in heaven, Holy be your name.
Your Kingdom come, your will be done, on earth as it is in Heaven.
Give us this day our daily bread, and forgive us our trespasses,
As we forgive those who trespass against us.
And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil.
For yours is the Kingdom, and the power, and the glory, forever. Amen.**

SHARING OUR GIFTS

Offering Invitation Mendy Brown

Offertory "The Wayfaring Stranger" Traditional Folk Song
Dorenda Morse, pianist arr. by Joseph M. Martin

*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 Dedication Mendy Brown

*PARTING HYMN "Jesus, Lover of My Soul" #546

BENEDICTION Rev. Ingraham

(Please leave quietly, so those who wish to listen to the Postlude may do so.)

POSTLUDE "Praise, My Soul, to God of Heaven" by John Goss
Kate Sauer, organist