

CHURCH OF THE GOOD SHEPHERD U.C.C.

AN OPEN AND AFFIRMING CONGREGATION

Progressive Christians

aspiring to diversity, engaging in service, and sincerely friendly

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The Reverend William D. Ingraham, Pastor and Teacher

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.

First Sunday in Lent

February 26, 2012

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

GATHERING SONG "Great Is Your Faithfulness" #423

WELCOME and ANNOUNCEMENTS Fred Chapman

JOYS and CONCERNS

SHARING GOD'S LOVE and PEACE

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

PRELUDE (silent meditation) "Prayers in the Night" by Linda Lamb
Joyful Noise Bell Choir

*CALL TO WORSHIP Fred Chapman

One: Today marks the first Sunday in Lent. It is a season of fasting and sacrifice, of desert wanderings and deep soul-searching. It is a time for turning to God.

Many: We embark upon the Lenten journey unafraid of honest thinking – willing to look deeply within ourselves, and to trust in God's sustaining love and compassion.

One: The Hebrew children wandered in the wilderness for forty years. Even when they worried or doubted, God sustained them through to the promised land.

Many: Jesus wandered in the wilderness for forty days. He was tempted and tested, yet God sustained him, giving him what he needed to find his way.

One: The season of Lent invites us to embrace our own wilderness days. As we wander through times of trial or trouble, let us hold fast to the goodness of God.

Many: As we chose the Lenten path – a path of seeking, discerning and confessing – let us walk with faith and hope, sustained by heavenly love that has no end.

*OPENING HYMN "Teach Me, O Lord, Your Holy Way" (vs. 1, 2, & 4) #465

*MORNING PRAYER (in unison) Fred Chapman

One: Please pray with me.

**All: God of grace and compassion,
Our Lenten journeys call us to turn inward, examining our lives
in the light of Jesus' teaching. We embark on this task knowing well
the measure of our inadequacy. There are countless ways we fall short
of loving you with all our hearts, minds, souls and strength.
We do not always love our neighbors as ourselves. Forgive us, we pray.
Help us to find that path of love in all our days, and for heaven's mettle
to be the defining character of our lives.
This we ask in the name of Jesus. Amen.**

WORDS OF ASSURANCE Fred Chapman

One: Hear the Good News.
God's love for us is great – greater than we can perceive. We can trust
in heaven's mercy, and in the promise that God's love will never let us go.
In the name of Jesus Christ, we are forgiven.

All: Thanks be to God!

ANTHEM "Hear My Prayer" by Moses Hogan
Chancel Choir

CHILDREN'S MESSAGE Rev. Ingraham

SCRIPTURE READING Psalm 25:1-10 Fred Chapman

SERMON "Prayer for Guidance" 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 debts,
as we forgive our debtors.
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 Fred Chapman

Offertory "Nun Bitten Wir Den Heiligen Geist" by D. Buxtehude
("We pray now to the Holy Spirit")

*Doxology

**Praise God from whom all blessings flow;
Praise God, all creatures here below;
Praise God for all that love has done,
Creator, Christ, and Spirit, One.**

*Prayer of Dedication Fred Chapman

*PARTING HYMN "If You But Trust in God to Guide You" #410

BENEDICTION Rev. Ingraham

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

POSTLUDE *Dorenda Morse, piano*