



**IMMANUEL CONGREGATIONAL  
UNITED CHURCH of CHRIST**

1 Hovey Street • Oxford, MI 48371

[www.icucc.org](http://www.icucc.org) • 248-628-1610

March 1, 2026 • 11:00 a.m.



**Welcome to worship at Immanuel United Church of Christ!**

**God is Still Speaking,**

**Immanuel Open and Affirming Statement:**

We welcome and affirm all people in celebrating diversity. We welcome to our faith family people of every race, age, gender, gender identity and expression, sexual orientation, mental or physical ability and those who have doubts or questions.

**Thank You for taking the time to turn off your cell phone during the worship service.**

Prelude

\*Bringing in the Light of Christ

(\* denotes those who are able may stand.)

Ringling of the Bell

Welcome

Choir Anthem "In This Moment Remembrance"

Jeff Erno

Immanuel Choir

Pastor Liz Wilson, Liturgist

**\*Call to Worship**

One: God calls us to set out in faith

**Many: The love of God leads us home**

One: Christ blesses us that we might bless others

**Many: The blessings of Christ heal our world**

One: The Holy Spirit strengthens us for the journey

**Many: The power of Spirit sustains and supports us.**

One: The One who made heaven and earth meets us here.

Invocation

Jeff Erno

Lord of light and love, your Spirit enlivens our spirits, even as your kingdom draws us to you.

May we be born from above, that our souls might ascend to your realm and taste the joy of eternal life in your name. For you sent your Son into our world, not to condemn the world, but that all who enter into his light might have life and have it abundantly.

**\*Hymn: "Love Divine, All Loves Excelling"**

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(Please remain standing for the Prayer of Confession)

**Unison Prayer of Confession:**

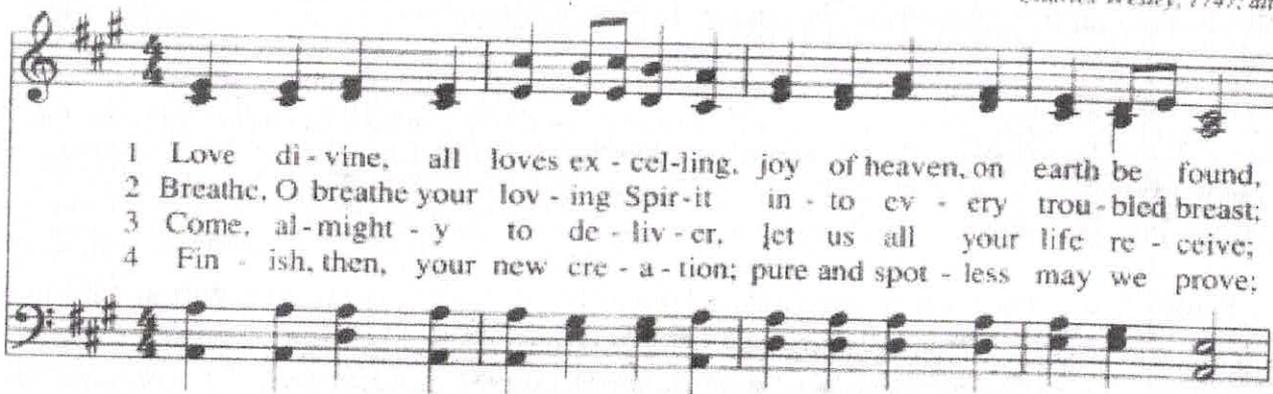
Jeff Erno

**Maker of heaven and earth, when we face times of trial, lift our eyes to the hills to find our help. For you meet us in our need, and you lift us from the cares and toils that weaken our spirits and sap our strength. Call us this day as you called your followers of old, for we long experience your awesome power and respond with faithful hearts and willing spirits. Bless us each day, that we might share the promise of your blessings with a world struggling to find its way. Amen**

## Love Divine, All Loves Excelling

Mal. 3:1; 2 Cor. 3:18; 5:17; Eph. 5:27

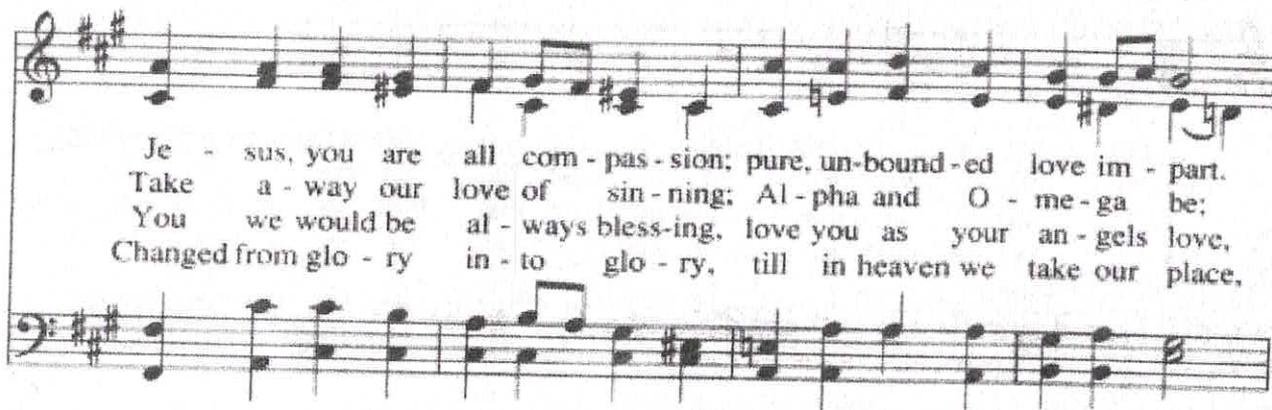
Charles Wesley, 1747; alt.



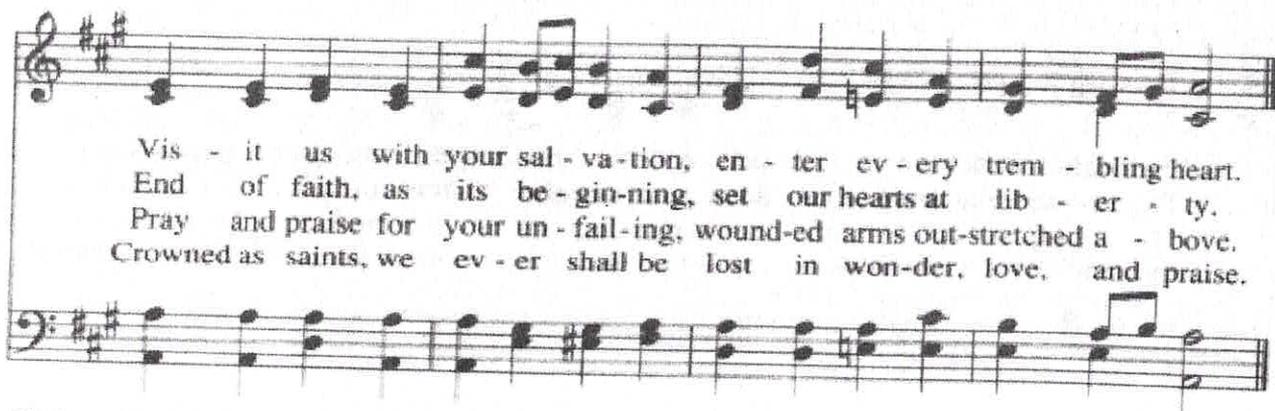
1 Love di-vine, all loves ex-cel-ling, joy of heaven, on earth be found,  
2 Breathe, O breathe your lov-ing Spir-it in-to ev-ery trou-bled breast;  
3 Come, al-might-y to de-liv-er, let us all your life re-ceive;  
4 Fin-ish, then, your new cre-a-tion; pure and spot-less may we prove;



Fix in us a hum-ble dwell-ing, all your faith-ful mer-cies crown;  
Let us all in you in-her-it, let us find your prom-ised rest;  
Sud-den-ly re-turn, and ne-ver, ne-ver-more your tem-ples leave.  
Let us see your great sal-va-tion per-fect-ly re-stored in you;



Je-sus, you are all com-pas-sion; pure, un-bound-ed love im-part.  
Take a-way our love of sin-ning; Al-pha and O-me-ga be;  
You we would be al-ways bless-ing, love you as your an-gels love,  
Changed from glo-ry in-to glo-ry, till in heaven we take our place,



Vis-it us with your sal-va-tion, en-ter ev-ery trem-bling heart.  
End of faith, as its be-gin-ning, set our hearts at lib-er-ty.  
Pray and praise for your un-fail-ing, wound-ed arms out-stretched a-bove.  
Crowned as saints, we ev-er shall be lost in won-der, love, and praise.

This hymn is said to have been suggested by a "Song of Venus" from Dryden's King Arthur. It is one of 6,500 written by Charles Wesley, the "sweet singer of Methodism," who was skilled at

Page 2

Tune: BEECHER 8.7.8.7.D.

John Zundel, 1855

Alternate tune: HYFRYDOL.

For another harmonization, see 368, 105

Words of Assurance

Jeff Erno

Just as the wind blows where it will, God's Spirit moves in our world, calling us into ever deeper life with Christ. Hear and claim this good news. It is freely given.

The Congregation Prays

Sharing of Joys and Concerns

Pastor Liz Wilson, Liturgist

**Congregational Response: "Lord hear our prayers."** (Response after each Prayer request)

Silent Meditation

Pastoral Prayer

Jeff Erno

**The Lord's Prayer:** (use words most comfortable for you)

Pastor Liz Wilson, Liturgist

**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 us our trespasses, as we forgive those who trespass against us. And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil. For thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, forever. Amen.**

Scripture Readings:

Genesis 12:1-4

Romans 44:13-25

John 3:1-17

Pastor Liz Wilson, Liturgist

Page 10 Old Testament

Page 155 New Testament

Pages 93 & 94 New Testament

Sermon:

"The Blessing of Faith"

Jeff Erno

\*Hymn:

"Blessed Assurance"

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**CELEBRATION OF HOLY COMMUNION** (Led by Pastor Liz Wilson)

Insert

Stewardship Message

Announcements

*(Be sure to read about up-coming events in the back of the bulletin.)*

Offering:

Offertory

\***Doxology:** (The tune is found on page 356 of your red hymnal.)

**PRAISE GOD, FROM WHOM ALL BLESSINGS FLOW...**

**PRAISE GOD, ALL CREATURES HERE BELOW...**

**PRAISE GOD, ABOVE, YOU HEAVENLY HOST...**

**CREATOR, CHRIST AND HOLY GHOST...AMEN.**

Prayer of Dedication of Gifts and Self

Jeff Erno

Gracious God, just as you blessed the saints of old when they ventured forth in faith, so now bless us in our living and in our giving. Transform our gifts and offerings into blessings for a weak and weary world, that all may touch your great love. Amen.

\*Hymn:

"Faith of the Martyrs"

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\*The Light of Christ goes into the world

# HOLY COMMUNION

## WELCOME

We invite all who worship with us to partake of Holy Communion. As Christ welcomed all, we too welcome all, regardless of church membership or affiliation, regardless of where all are in life's journey.

## INVITATION

One: Come freely, for this table of grace is here for all. Come confidently, for this table of love offers blessings beyond our wildest dreams. Come humbly, for this table is set by Christ, who humbled himself to both live and die in his great love for us.

## PRAYER OF THANKSGIVING

One: Lift up your hearts!

**Many: We lift them up to God!**

One: Celebrate God's love!

**Many: It is right to give God our thanks and praise!**

One: We give thanks and praise to you, God of love and grace! We celebrate the creative presence that called forth this glorious earth and the heavens above.

**Many: Holy, holy, holy Lord, God of power and might, heaven and earth are full of your glory. Hosanna in the highest. Blessed is the one who comes in the name of the Lord. Hosanna in the highest.**

One: Even when faced with impending death, Christ gave thanks and blessed the fruit of your good earth, offering not only bread and wine, but the bread of life and the wine of salvation.

**Many: Christ has died. Christ is risen. Christ will come again.**

## WORDS OF INSTITUTION

Then he took a loaf of bread, and when he had given thanks, he broke it and gave it to them, saying, "This is my body, which is given for you. Do this in remembrance of me." And he did the same with the cup after supper, saying, "This cup that is poured out for you is the new covenant in my blood. Do this in remembrance of me."

## SHARING THE BREAD AND CUP

Please come forward to receive the bread and the cup. Approach in single file down the center aisle. After all have received the elements, we will partake together. Let us partake of the bread. Let us partake of the cup.

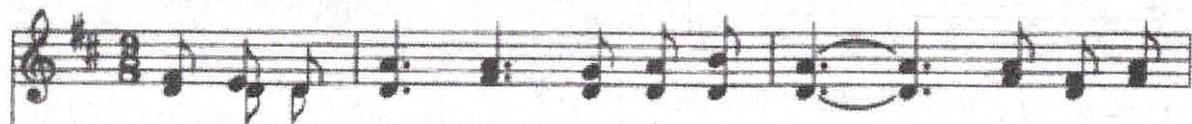
## PRAYER AFTER COMMUNION

One: Pour out your Holy Spirit on us, that we might be disciples of your love and grace. Pour out your Holy Spirit on these gifts of bread and wine, that your life and love might flow through us.

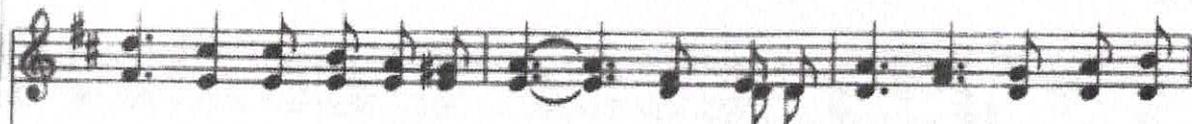
**ALL: Thank you, O Christ, for this feast of life. We are fed by your love; we are strengthened by your life. We are sent forth into this world to live your way and share your joy. We are now called to feed as we have been fed, forgive as we have been forgiven, love as we have been loved. Thanks be to God. Amen.**

Acts 17:30-31; Rev. 7:9-14

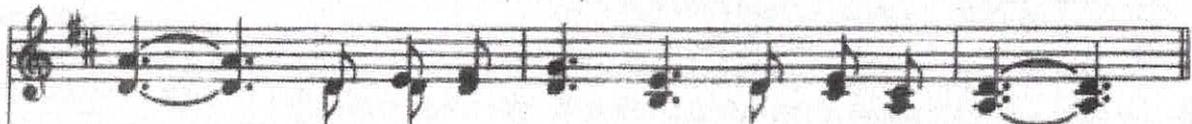
Fanny Crosby, 1873; alt.



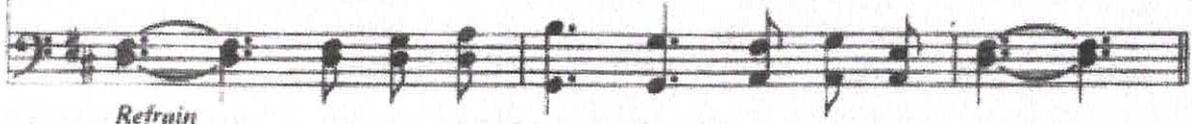
1 Bless-ed as - sur - ance, Je - sus is mine! O what a  
 2 Per - fect sub - mis - sion, per - fect de - light! Vi - sions of  
 3 Per - fect sub - mis - sion, all is at rest, I in my



fore - taste of glo - ry di - vine! Heir of sal - va - tion, pur - chase of  
 rap - ture now burst on my sight: An - gels de - scend - ing, bring from a -  
 Sav - ior am hap - py and blessed; Watch - ing and wait - ing, look - ing a -



God, born of the Spir - it, washed in Christ's blood.  
 above ech - oes of mer - cy, whis - pers of love.  
 above, filled with God's good - ness, lost in Christ's love.



Refrain



This is my sto - ry, this is my song, prais - ing my Sav - ior all the day long;



This is my sto - ry, this is my song, prais - ing my Sav - ior all the day long.



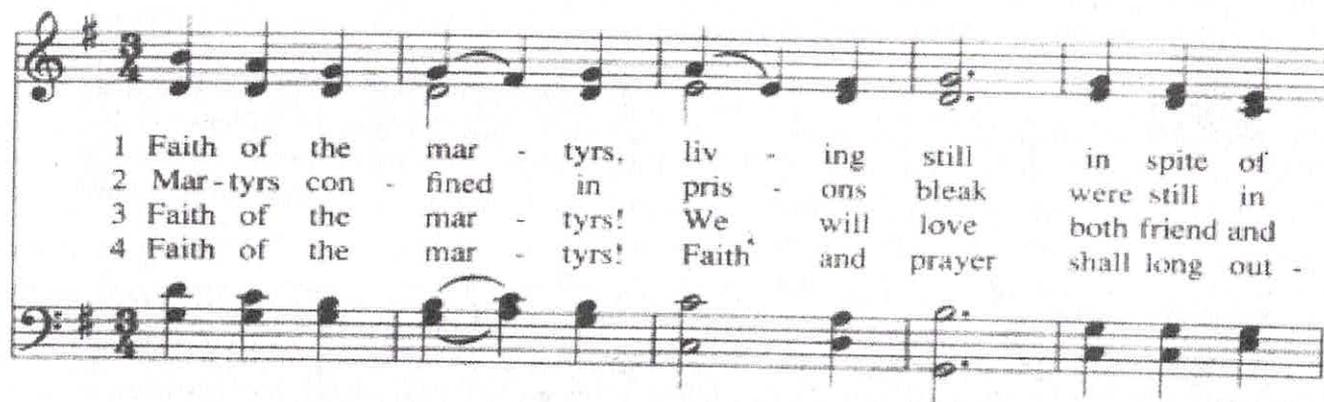
After hearing Phoebe Knapp play this tune on the piano, Fanny Crosby assigned the poem on the spot. In her almost 95 years, Crosby wrote more than 8,500 gospel hymns and songs.

From *The New Century Hymnal*,  
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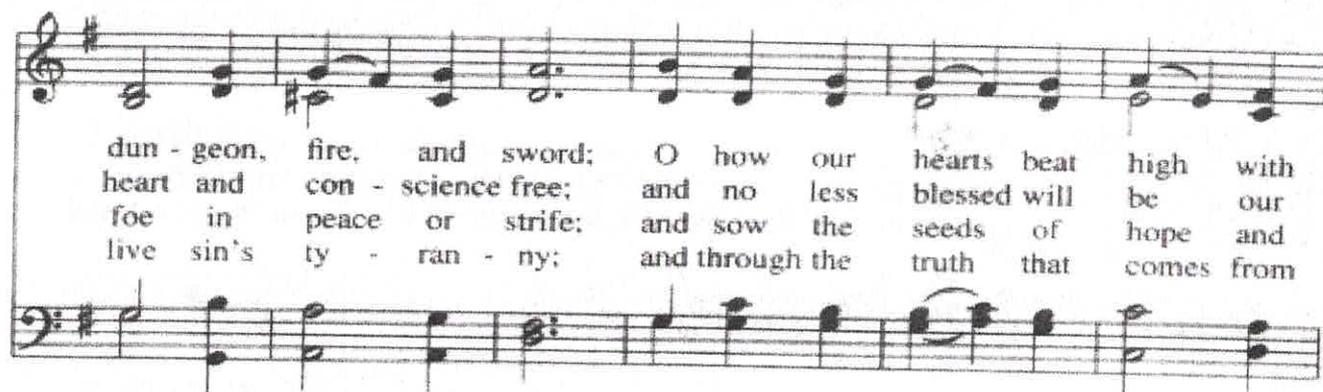
# Faith of the Martyrs

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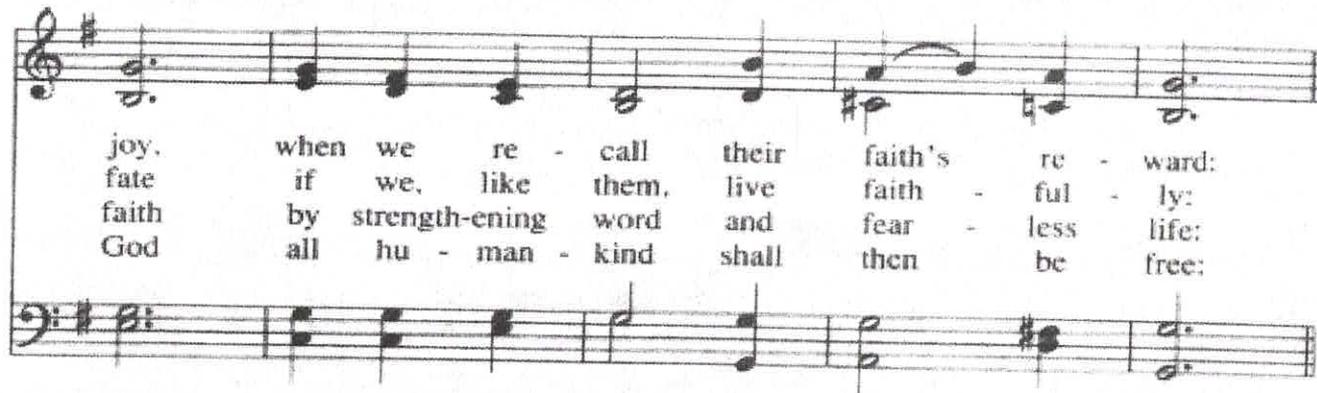
Frederick W. Faber, 1849: alt.



1 Faith of the mar - tyrs, liv - ing still in spite of  
2 Mar - tyrs con - fined in pris - ons bleak were still in  
3 Faith of the mar - tyrs! We will love both friend and  
4 Faith of the mar - tyrs! Faith and prayer shall long out -

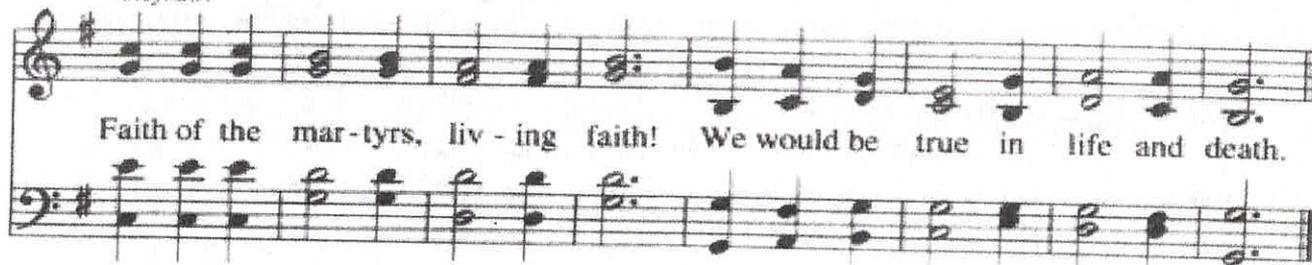


dun - geon, fire, and sword; O how our hearts beat high with  
heart and con - science free; and no less blessed will be our  
foe in peace or strife; and sow the seeds of hope and  
live sin's ty - ran - ny; and through the truth that comes from



joy, when we re - call their faith's re - ward:  
fate if we, like them, live faith - ful - ly:  
faith by strength - ening word and fear - less life:  
God all hu - man - kind shall then be free:

## Refrain



Faith of the mar - tyrs, liv - ing faith! We would be true in life and death.

The Greek term *martyres* is translated in the New Testament as "witness" and forms the basis for the English word "martyr." The hymn was written as a call for the return of the Church of England to the Roman Catholic church, and "our fathers . . ." in the original text referred to those faithful to Rome who had suffered martyrdom.

Tune: ST. CATHERINE L.M. with refrain  
Henri F. Hemy, 1864  
Adapt. James G. Walton, 1874

\*Benediction:

Jeff Erno

One: Hear the words of the psalmist.

**Many: The Lord is our keeper.**

One: The Lord is our shade at our right hand.

**Many: The sun shall not strike us by day, nor the moon by night.**

One: The Lord will keep us going out and coming in.

**Many: From this time and forever more.**

**ALL: AMEN**

One: Go with the blessings of God.

**Please wait to exit unit after the recessional.**

Grace for fellowship hour

Jeff Erno

\*Postlude

*We scatter to serve*\*\*\*\*\*

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**Join together for refreshments in Fellowship**

**In Worship and Service Today**

**Sermon:** Jeff Erno

**Liturgist:** Pastor Liz Wilson

**Children's Message:** Pastor Liz Wilson

**Choir Director:** Ken Martin

**Accompanist:** Ann McKinley

**Our Tech team:** Tammy & Ken Martin

**Floral Arrangements:** A gift created by Amy Wilson

**Ministers:** All the Immanuel Church faith community

**Sunday School:** Amy Wilson, Liz Wilson, Susanne Waldrep

**Church Officers & Staff**

**Moderator:** Ken Martin

**Vice Moderator:** TBA

**Treasurer:** Art Nagasaki

**Council Secretary:** Susanne Waldrep

**Clerk:** Susanne Waldrep

**Church Secretary:** Sue Molczyk

**Building & Grounds Team Leader:** TBA

## Calendar at a Glance

### Weekly Events

11:00 a.m. Sunday Worship & Fellowship

9:30 a.m. Sunday Book Study

5:30 p.m. Community Meal every

Tuesday

5:00 p.m. Wednesday Free Meals

7:00 p.m. Wednesday Choir practice

6:00 p.m. Thursday Prayer Meeting

### Monday, March 2

7:00 p.m. Council Meeting

### Saturday, March 7

6:00 p.m. Chili Cook-off

### Sunday, March 8

Daylight savings begins

### Sunday, March 15

Newsletter deadline

### Tuesday, March 17

St. Patrick's Day Dinner

### Sunday, March 29

Palm Sunday

## Birthdays and Anniversaries for the month of March:

### Birthdays

March 5: Tyler Sellers

March 11: Alex Hanft

### Anniversaries

March 10: Roxanne & Mike Todd

March 21: Margi & Ed Sellers

- Please be sure to visit Immanuel's website at [www.icucc.org](http://www.icucc.org)
- Please join us for Sunday Service via Virtual Worship. Go to: <https://www.facebook.com/oxfordimmanuelucc> You do not have to join facebook, it will ask if you want to join. If not click no and it will still get you to the service.
- **Treasurer's Note:** Our offerings for February 22 was \$1,011. We need to collect \$1,675 each week to fund our approved budget. Remember to honor your pledge commitments and tithes, especially when you miss any Sundays! Art Nagasaki, Treasurer
- REMINDER to bring in old socks & flexible plastic Kroger packaging for recycling. Call Peggy with questions.
- Please continue to collect and donate your pop can tabs. There's a container in Fellowship Hall. Pop can tabs help support the Ronald McDonald Houses where parents can stay when their child is hospitalized. Tammy will be sending our donation later in May to the Ronald McDonald House in Ann Arbor.
- Please be sure to check the green mailboxes for mail addressed to you. Also, check the yellow wire shelf next to the drinking fountain for anything belonging you. It all wants to go home.
- Knitters, crocheters and crafters: If you need yarn for projects, we have a wide variety of colors and types in our craft room downstairs. Just let Tammy or Ken know

## Bold Blessing

*For God so loved the world that he gave his only Son, so that everyone who believes in him may not perish but may have eternal life. — John 3:16*

Twenty-seven words. That's all John uses to tell us about this life of faith. It's short, sweet and powerful. So much so that German Reformer Martin Luther labeled the 27 words "the heart of the Bible, the Gospel in miniature."

But could it really be that simple?

I asked that question once when I found myself singing a Vacation Bible School song about John 3:16 in front of 20 sugared-up children. As I belted out the biblical truth about God loving the world — complete with the choral refrain "he is the truth, the way, the life"— I wondered what those words would mean someday to the little voices that joined me off key.

Would remembering God's limitless love for them be the very thing that would save them? And how many would go beyond the way-too commercialized Gospel soundbite of John 3:16 to grapple alongside Nicodemus, the educated Pharisee who was told by Jesus that "no one can see the kingdom of God without being born from above?"

While it would be wonderful for 27 words to be the Gospel in miniature, we know there's more to this life of faith. There are dark nights of the soul as well as glorious epiphanies.

Through it all, we question God's love more often than we like to admit, and we find it down right frightening to surrender to the Spirit. As Jesus explained to Nicodemus it is the second birth of the Spirit, not flesh, that will help us see a bit better the reign of God. But the Spirit, Jesus says, will blow where it chooses.

And that is okay. Really. Read my words again. It is okay to allow the Spirit to blow you in the God direction. Go to the unknown and unwelcomed places knowing that as you are guided by the Spirit. God's bold blessing is forever with you. That is the blessing of a love so strong and steadfast that no harm will ever come to you.

Now that's the song I wish I belted out for those children at Vacation Bible School — a song of being born in the Spirit and of living unafraid of life's twisting and changing paths, for there's always an abundance of God's redemptive love for them — and for you.

*Loving and merciful God, on this second Sunday in Lent may we feel the Spirit winds whipping in our lives, leading us to be born again into new creations that are awakened to the never-ending God opportunities. In Jesus' name, we pray. Amen.*

*(Rev. Donna Frischknecht Jackson is a communications specialist for the United Church of Christ and author of today's Sunday Bulletin.)*



UNITED CHURCH  
OF CHRIST