

**Federated Church of Sturbridge and Fiskdale
Fourth Sunday in Lent ~ Sunday, March 27, 2022**

PRELUDE

SPECIAL MUSIC

What a Friend We Have In Jesus

Words: Joseph Scriven (1855)
Music: Charles C. Converse (1868)
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**WELCOME AND GATHERING PRAYER
ANNOUNCEMENTS**

CALL TO WORSHIP

One: It is time to come home,
All: God, we have heard Your call for us, but we're stuck in the world!
One: Have no fear; you are loved and missed by the Father.
All: Holy One, help us to take this first step.
One: Come, the Spirit's light will guide your way and lead you home.
All: Lord, in hope and faith, we place ourselves here with our family and You.

OPENING HYMN

Softly and Tenderly, Jesus is Calling, #340

Words & Music: Will L. Thompson (1880)
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*Softly and tenderly Jesus is calling,
calling for you and for me;
patient and loving, he's waiting and watching,
watching for you and for me.*

[Refrain:]

*Come home, (Come home,) come home, (come home,)
ye who are weary, come home;
earnestly, tenderly, Jesus is calling,
calling, "O sinner, come home!"*

*Why should we tarry when Jesus is pleading,
pleading for you and for me?
Why should we wait, then, and heed not his mercies,
mercies for you and for me? [Refrain]*

*O for the wonderful love he has promised,
promised for you and for me;
tho' we have sinned, he has mercy and pardon,
pardon for you and for me. [Refrain]*

UNISON PRAYER

Lord, help me take the first steps toward You and a better life. I know that I get lost, stuck, and wander away at times, but without You, I cannot thrive. I can't find the path home at times, for the world's darkness covers the way. Holy One, Your steadfast love, and light always guide me back home to You and Your people. Lord God, in this time and space, I ask You to lead me back to You and Your ways. Thank you for never giving up on me and showing me how to be the disciple I am called to become. In Jesus' name, Amen!

Our Lord's Prayer

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.

GLORI PATRI

Glory Be to the Father

WORDS: Lesser Doxology (3rd-4th centuries)
MUSIC: Henry W. Greatorex, 1851
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Glory be to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Ghost; as it was in the beginning, is now, and ever shall be, world without end. Amen, Amen.

CHILDREN'S MESSAGE Shelli Fairbrother

CHILDREN'S HYMN

This Little Light of Mine

Words & Music: Harry Dixon Loes
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*This little light of mine, I'm gonna let it shine. (X3)
let it shine, let it shine, oh let it shine.*

SCRIPTURE READING

Gospel Lesson: Luke 15:1–3, 11b–32

SERMON

The First Steps are the Hardest!, Pastor Dave

HYMN

Amazing Grace, #546

Words: John Newton (1779)
Music: Edwin O. Excell (1900)
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*Amazing grace! How sweet the sound
that saved a wretch like me!
I once was lost, but now am found,
was blind, but now I see.*

*'Twas grace first taught my heart to fear
and grace my fears relieved;
how precious did that grace appear
the hour I first believed.*

*Through many dangers, toils, and snares,
I have already come;
'tis grace hath brought me safe thus far,
and grace will lead me home.*

*When we've been there ten thousand years,
bright shining as the sun,
we've no less days to sing God's praise
than when we'd first begun.*

MORNING OFFERING

WE OFFER OURSELVES TO GOD

We joyfully offer ourselves in God's work using our time, talent, and treasure.

If you have not made your offering, please feel free to take your offering up at this time!

DOXOLOGY

Praise God from Whom All Blessings Flow

WORDS: Thomas Ken, 1674
MUSIC: Louis Bourgeois, 1551
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*Praise God, from whom all blessings flow
Praise Him, all creatures here below
Praise Him above, ye heavenly host
Praise Father, Son, and Holy Ghost. Amen.*

PRAYER OF DEDICATION (UNISON)

Lord, apart from You and one another, our lives lose its meaning. Make us one in Spirit as we worship with our offerings. Thank you for leading us back to You and Your ways. May these simple offerings go to house those who need housing, feed those without dinner, and clothe those without a jacket. Amen!

WE PAUSE TO REFLECT AND PRAY

Prayers of the People: All are invited to offer prayers of concerns or joys.

Sharing our joys and concerns

Pastor: God is with you

All: And also, with you

Pastor: Let us pray

PASTORAL PRAYER

SUNG RESPONSE

Hear Our Prayer, O Lord

WORDS: Psalm 143:1

MUSIC: George Whelpton, 1897

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*Hear our Prayer, O Lord. Hear our prayer O Lord.
Incline thine ear to us, And grant us thy peace. Amen.*

CLOSING HYMN

Just As I Am, Without One Plea, #339

Words: Charlotte Elliott (1835)

Music: William B. Bradbury (1849)

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*Just as I am, without one plea,
but that thy blood was shed for me,
and that thou bid'st me come to thee,
O Lamb of God, I come, I come!*

*Just as I am, though tossed about
with many a conflict, many a doubt,
fightings and fears within, without,
O Lamb of God, I come, I come!*

*Just as I am, thou wilt receive,
wilt welcome, pardon, cleanse, relieve;
because thy promise I believe,
O Lamb of God, I come, I come!*

*Just as I am, thy love unknown,
hast broken ev'ry barrier down;
now, to be thine, yea, thine alone,
O Lamb of God, I come, I come!*

BENEDICTION

BENEDICTION RESPONSE

Go in Peace, #445

Words: Barbara L. Waters

Music: Kenneth E. White

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Go in peace and the peace of God be with you this day.

Go in peace and the peace of God be with you always.

Celebrate and share the joy! Celebrate new life!

Go in peace and the peace of God be with you always.

RECESSIONAL POSTLUDE

Luke 15:1-3, 11b-32 (NRSV)

15 Now all the tax collectors and sinners were coming near to listen to him.
2 And the Pharisees and the scribes were grumbling and saying, "This fellow welcomes sinners and eats with them."

3 So he told them this parable:

The Parable of the Prodigal and His Brother

11 Then Jesus said, "There was a man who had two sons. 12 The younger of them said to his Father, 'Father, give me the share of the property that will belong to me.' So he divided his property between them. 13 A few days later the younger son gathered all he had and traveled to a distant country, and there he squandered his property in dissolute living. 14 When he had spent everything, a severe famine took place throughout that country, and he began to be in need. 15 So he went and hired himself out to one of the citizens of that country, who sent him to his fields to feed the pigs. 16 He would gladly have filled himself with the pods that the pigs were eating; and no one gave him anything. 17 But when he came to himself he said, 'How many of my Father's hired hands have bread enough and to spare, but here I am dying of hunger! 18 I will get up and go to my Father, and I will say to him, "Father, I have sinned against heaven and before you; 19 I am no longer worthy to be called your son; treat me like one of your hired hands."' 20 So he set off and went to his Father. But while he was still far off, his Father saw him and was filled with compassion; he ran and put his arms around him and kissed him. 21 Then the son said to him, 'Father, I have sinned against heaven and before you; I am no longer worthy to be called your son.' 22 But the Father said to his slaves, 'Quickly, bring out a robe—the best one—and put it on him; put a ring on his finger and sandals on his feet. 23 And get the fatted calf and kill it, and let us eat and celebrate; 24 for this son of mine was dead and is alive again; he was lost and is found!' And they began to celebrate. 25 "Now his elder son was in the field; and when he came and approached the house, he heard music and dancing. 26 He called one of the slaves and asked what was going on. 27 He replied, 'Your brother has come, and your father has killed the fatted calf, because he has got him back safe and sound.' 28 Then he became angry and refused to go in. His Father came out and began to plead with him. 29 But he answered his Father, 'Listen! For all these years I have been working like a slave for you, and I have never disobeyed your command; yet you have never given me even a young goat so that I might celebrate with my friends. 30 But when this son of yours came back, who has devoured your property with prostitutes, you killed the fatted calf for him!' 31 Then the Father said to him, 'Son, you are always with me, and all that is mine is yours. 32 But we had to celebrate and rejoice, because this brother of yours was dead and has come to life; he was lost and has been found.'"