

**Peace United Church of Christ  
March 9th, 2025  
First Sunday in Lent  
10:30am**



*Neighbors, Steve Prince*

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Welcome and Announcements

Ringing of the Bells

\*Call to Worship

Here in this place, we can ask big questions.

**Who is my neighbor?**

**What can I do?**

**What do I need to learn?**

**Where is God in it all?**

Here in this place, we can ask big questions.

**So we listen. We learn.**

**Make us curious, always looking for God.**

This is our invitation. Let us worship God

\*Song

*Let Us Build a House (All Are Welcome)*

see insert

\*Prayer of Confession

**Holy God, you have told us to love our neighbors as ourselves, but we get tripped up when we try to figure out how. We want to know: who is our neighbor? Do we have to love the stranger? Must we have compassion for our enemy? Forgive our human tendency to create exceptions in the face of love. Rewire our hearts so that we might see the face of a neighbor in every stranger we pass. With hope we pray, amen.**

\*Assurance of God's Love

Family of faith,

When we set limits on love,

**God loves extravagantly.**

When we forget that we are neighbors,

**God claims us as God's own.**

When we judge, hold back, or harm,

**God surrounds us with grace.**

There is nothing we can do or leave undone

that could separate us from the love of God.

**This is the good news of the gospel. Through Christ we are forgiven. Thanks be to God!**

**Amen.**

Reception of New Members

Pastor: This is truly a joyful day in the life of our congregation. When we receive new members, we covenant together to care and be cared for, and to support and be supported by each other. We commit ourselves to work together for justice and peace here and with partners all over the world.

Introduction of New Members

Covenantal Questions

(to new members) We are grateful that you have found your way to Peace Church. We are grateful to those communities where you have been cared for and nurtured in Christian faith. Is it your desire now to continue your spiritual journey here at Peace Church? Will you join us in praising God, following in the way of Jesus, and building a beloved community? Will you share your gifts with us? Will you pray with and for us? Will you support the work of this congregation? If so, answer yes. **Yes.**

(to congregation) We are grateful for this opportunity to welcome these new members of our congregation. Do you promise to welcome them, to be open to what they bring, and to care for them? Will you pray for and with them? Will you learn from them even as they learn from you? If so, answer yes. **Yes.**

Congregational response:

**We welcome you with joy into the covenantal life of this church. We promise you our friendship and support as we share the hopes and labors of the church of Jesus Christ. By the power of the Holy Spirit may we continue to grow together in God's love.**

Let us pray:

We give you thanks, O Holy One, for these new members and for the gifts they bring. Open our hearts that we may learn from them. Bless us as we together praise you, follow in the way of Jesus and seek to become your beloved community. Amen.

\*Passing of the Peace

Story for All Ages

Amanda McElray Hunter

Sending the Children

***Jesus calls us in, sends us out bearing fruit in a world of doubt,  
Gives us love to tell, bread to share: God (Immanuel) everywhere!  
Jesus lives again, earth can breathe again, pass the Word around: loaves abound!  
Jesus lives again, earth can breathe again, pass the Word around: loaves abound!***

Contemporary Reading

*Never Met a Stranger*, Rev. Sarah A. Speed

April Knight, reader

When we talk about God, we say  
she's never met a stranger.  
She makes friends at the airport.  
She waves to babies in the check-out line.

When we talk about God,  
we say she'll leave the porch light on.  
She'll have warm bread in the oven.  
She'll have all the time in the world.

When we talk about God, we say  
she'll look you in the eye.  
She'll love you as you are.  
She'll call you by your name.

When we talk about God,  
we never have to talk about  
which side of the road she might walk down.  
Wherever you are,  
that's where she'll be.

Choir Anthem

*Adonai Li*

*Into God's hands I entrust my spirit  
when I sleep and when I wake;  
and with my spirit, my body alsó,  
God is with me, I will not fear.*

Gospel Reading

*Luke 10:25-37*

An expert in the law stood up to test Jesus. "Teacher," he said, "what must I do to inherit eternal life?" He said to him, "What is written in the law? What do you read there?" He answered, "You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your strength and with all your mind and your neighbor as yourself." And he said to him, "You have given the right answer; do this, and you will live."

But wanting to vindicate himself, he asked Jesus, "And who is my neighbor?" Jesus replied, "A man was going down from Jerusalem to Jericho and fell into the hands of robbers, who stripped him, beat him, and took off, leaving him half dead. Now by chance a priest was going down that road, and when he saw him he passed by on the other side. So likewise a Levite, when he came to the place and saw him, passed by on the other side. But a Samaritan while traveling came upon him, and when he saw him he was moved with compassion. He went to him and bandaged his wounds, treating them with oil and wine. Then he put him on his own animal, brought him to an inn, and took care of him. The next day he took out two denarii, gave them to the innkeeper, and said, 'Take care of him, and when I come back I will repay you whatever more you spend.' Which of these three, do you think, was a neighbor to the man who fell into the hands of the robbers?" He said, "The one who showed him mercy." Jesus said to him, "Go and do likewise."

Holy Wisdom, Holy Word. **Thanks be to God.**

Sermon

Rev. Corinne Freedman Ellis

***In Christ there is no East or West, in Christ no South or North;  
But one community of love throughout the whole wide earth.***

***In Christ shall true hearts everywhere their high communion find;  
God's service is the golden cord close binding humankind.***

***In Christ is neither Jew nor Greek, and neither slave nor free;  
For men and women live in God, and all are kin to me.***

***In Christ now meet both East and West, in Christ meet South and North;  
One joyous, true community throughout the whole wide earth.***

## Community Prayers and the Prayer of Jesus

**Our Creator, who art in heaven, hallowed be thy name. Thy kin-dom come, thy 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. Lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil. For thine is the kin-dom, the power, and the glory, for ever and ever. Amen.**

## Choral Amen

## Offertory

*Berceuse*, Laura Netzel

## \*Doxology

**Praise God from whom all blessings flow,  
Praise God all creatures here below,  
Praise God above ye heavenly host,  
Creator, Christ, and Holy Ghost! Amen!**

## \*Prayer of Dedication

## \*Closing Song

*In the Midst of New Dimensions*

#391 NCH

***In the midst of new dimensions, in the face of changing ways,  
Who will lead the pilgrim peoples wandering in their separate ways?***

***Refrain:***

***God of rainbow, fiery pillar, leading where the eagles soar,  
We your people, ours the journey now and ever, now and ever, now and evermore.***

***Through the flood of starving people, warring factions and despair,  
Who will lift the olive branches? Who will light the flame of care?***

***Refrain:***

***As we stand a world divided by our own self-seeking schemes,  
Grant that we, your global village, might envision wider dreams.***

***Refrain:***

***We are man and we are woman, all persuasions, old and young,  
Each a gift in your creation, each a love song to be sung.***

***Refrain:***

***Should the threats of dire predictions cause us to withdraw in pain,  
May your blazing phoenix spirit resurrect the church again.***

***Refrain:***

## \*Benediction

## \*Postlude

*Tarantella*, Laure Netzel

Assisting in Today's Service:

Marsha Hystead and Phyllis Cook, Ushers  
Laura Greensmith, Jen Pearson and Peggy Skylondz, Coffee Hour Volunteers  
Bridget Reistad, Coffee Coordinator  
Heidi Olson and Koren Sjin, Nursery Attendants