

Faith United Church of Christ

“An inclusive spiritual family

shaping a better you for creating a better world.

A place to make a difference.”

March 5, 2017

1st Sunday in Lent

Sacred Fellowship 10:45 a.m.

We are delighted that you are here today! We hope you will find us an affirming, uplifting, and committed family of faith. Here we work to make everyone, without any exceptions, to feel accepted, inspired, and encouraged in their spiritual journey. In dialogue, we seek to understand. In encouragement, we seek to heal. In all things we yearn to live by love, for peace, with joy. This is a place where your intellect will be challenged, your heart will be nurtured, and your spirit refreshed. Varying beliefs are expressed openly and freely, and your doubts will not be suppressed. We trust that we are all, every person and part of creation, continuing to be blessed by God’s grace; and that in community we can help each other to see this grace alive in our lives and relationships. We hope to share our gifts with you, even as we pray that you will want to share your gifts with us. Whoever you are and wherever you may be in your life’s journey, we invite you to be a part of our lives and our spiritual home. Welcome!

POINTS TO PONDER

“Jesus was led up by the Spirit into the wilderness to be tempted by the devil.”

— Matthew 4.1

“It sounds strange to go to a place where you know you are going to be tempted. But maybe this is what it means to have a purpose and values for which you live.”

— Rev. Bret S. Myers, 3/2/2017

“If you are the Son of God, command these stones to become loaves of bread.”

— Matthew 4.3bc

“We prove ourselves not by succumbing to taunts; nor by incredible feats. Who we are is how we live. The evidence should be there for anyone to see.”

— Rev. Bret S. Myers, 3/2/2017

“If you are the Son of God, throw yourself down;
for it is written, ‘He will command his angels concerning you’,
and ‘On their hands they will bear you up, so that you will not dash your foot against a stone.’”

— Matthew 4.6

“To ask others to prove themselves reveals how little we care about their real worth, and the preciousness of their relationship to us based on matters other than their obedience.

Insisting they vow their loyalty to you regardless of your decisions
only makes them wonder about your value to them.

And making them earn your respect will only invite them to pass on the opportunity.

No one likes to be manipulated as a test of their earnestness.

Do we not all love those who will love us even when we mess up?

Jesus loved others not because they thought he was the greatest,
but rather because he loved them as worthy independently of their loyalty.

And this is why they likely loved him as well.”

— Rev. Bret S. Myers, 3/2/2017

“Again, the devil took him to a very high mountain
and showed him all the kingdoms of the world and their splendor; and he said to him,
‘All these I will give you, if you will fall down and worship me.’”

— Matthew 4.8-9

“We are only tempted by that which we value.

Wealth, fame, and power are attractive only to the degree that we don’t have higher values.”

— Rev. Bret S. Myers, 3/2/2017

CALLED TOGETHER AS SPIRITUAL FAMILY

Welcome and Announcements

Please sign the registration pads at the ends of the pews on the center aisle.

We ask that you please shut off cell phones and practice quietness during the service.

*Please join us for fellowship and refreshments after the worship
in Romig Hall (lower level of elevator or stairs).*

* = You are invited to stand as you are able

Prelude

Prélude Modal

J. Langlais

Welcoming the Light of Love in Our Midst (acolytes light altar candles)

We prepare ourselves for communing with the sacred as love’s light is brought into our awareness. The light of love burns within and among each of us, and we carry that light into our sanctuary; visually reminding us of the image of the divine that lives in our hearts, minds, and souls – and that we nourish through our faith-filled fellowship.

*Hymn for Spiritual Living

“Spirit, Spirit of Gentleness”

#286

vss. 1, 2, & 4

***Centering Our Souls (Call to Worship)**

We are beset with temptations galore as we live from day to day.

Small matters distract us from weightier ones. Our priorities get shuffled.

We sometimes forget who we are, and whose we are.

Things become more important than people, and we do not always take the time to be there for others when they most need us.

We are tempted to see our food as a source of status than as nutrition, our clothes as indicators of our coolness rather than garments to warm and shield us.

We desire to control of our world more than we have the desire to live in it and love it despite its mystery.

We forget that the value of friendship is not in unanimity of opinion, but in our commitment to caring; not in possessiveness, but in trust.

Teach us to value relationships more than assets, kindness more than power, and service more than authority.

Weaken our temptations by strengthening our virtues.

Help us to see the inherent worth of each person, and treat them all with the same grace and dignity that we ourselves relish receiving.

For we are known more by how we behave towards others than we are by what we say we esteem.

Make our actions cohere with our values, and our practices reflect our noblest purpose. May it be so, now and always.

WE LISTEN FOR THE SACRED IN THE MIDST OF OUR LIVES

Choral Anthem

How Great The Love

Mary Kay Beall

A Time for All God's Children

Following the Children's Chat, the nursery is available for infants and toddlers under 4 years. The nursery is located through the front door to the right, and up the steps past the offices.

Prayers

Sharing Our Joys and Concerns

Silent Meditation: The Prayers of the People

Pastoral Prayer

The Prayer Jesus Taught (unison) *Please feel free to do the version you know, or the one below:*

"Our heavenly Creator, sacred be your name: your kin-dom* come, your will be done, on earth as if in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread. And forgive us our sins, as we forgive those who sin against us. And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil. For yours is the kin-dom, and the power, and the glory, forever. Amen."

*"Kin-dom" is an inclusive, non-authoritarian, and egalitarian term that reminds us that we are all "kin" as the children of God.

***Hymn for Lenten Discipline** "Lord Jesus, Who through Forty Days"

#211

vss. 1-3

Scripture Lesson

Matthew 4.1-11

Message

"The Devil Has No Boundaries"

***Hymn for Faithfulness**

"God of Grace and God of Glory"

#436

vss. 1-3, 5

WE AFFIRM & CELEBRATE OUR UNITY AS GOD'S CREATION

The Sacrament of Holy Communion

(As God calls all people to the table of forgiveness, peace, and loving fellowship, Faith UCC affirms an inclusive and open Communion Table. All persons (all ages, ethnicities, sexual orientations/identities, dis/abilities, religious affiliations, and other distinguishing features) are welcome to partake of this sacrament which affirms that we are all part of God's family and are to commune together in sacred relationship. Love and peace are the uniting virtues of this spiritual meeting place. Therefore, all who wish to join in this ritual of unity are invited to do so providing that you do so in the spirit of peace and mutual love for one another.)

The Purpose of Holy Communion

God seeks to be in communion with us, and wills that we be in communion with one another. Through the Christ in Jesus, God drew closer to us by living among us with all the desires and temptations of being human, and showed us that we each have the power to overcome wrongdoing by the inspiration of our spiritual lives and the discipline of our physical lives; thereby effecting the Christ in us. Jesus represented the individual model of how we each can do this; and in calling to his side the disciples and followers in his way of love and peace, many of whom were ostracized by the wider society, he revealed how to model this in our community here on Earth.

Reminding us symbolically of this union of body and spirit, Jesus took a loaf of bread, broke it like we are often broken in our relationships with one another, and showed us the way to reconciliation by asking us to share our bread with one another in remembrance of his own example. Through the broken bread, we participate in and become the body of Christ in the world.

In like manner, Jesus took the cup filled with the fruit of the vine, the vine that sustains us and links us to one another, and the fruit that nourishes the spirit of virtue that abides within and between each of us, and asked us to drink of that same spirit of loving-kindness and uniting harmony that was in him. Through the cup of blessing, we participate in and become the new life of Christ in the world.

The bread and fruit we partake nourishes us that we may nourish others. Through this sacrament of Holy Communion, we affirm that we are committed to Christ's way of love and peace by our motives, thoughts, actions, and practices in this world. We acknowledge that we are one community made by God, and that we must consciously

choose, day by day, to be in right relationship with God, each other, and our sacred values. We therefore dedicate ourselves, individually and collectively, to make the Body and Spirit of Christ real in this world, here and now, and throughout our life as a community of the faithful. What we symbolize here in this holy space, we make real by our service when we go forth from this place.

Invitation

Christ invites “all” to the table of reconciliation – those who affirm their intrinsic worth, and those who are yet to do so...those whose hearts and minds are admirable, and those still struggling to make them so...those who are most like us, and those who are least like us. In the spirit of Christ, we at Faith United Church of Christ welcome you to share your spiritual journey with us as we share ours with you in a sacrament designed to bridge all differences in a spirit of extravagant welcome, of heartfelt openness, and of mutual loving-kindness. In coming together, let us recognize our responsibility in living in love and peace with one another and all creation so as to be joined together as one Holy Communion of Body and Spirit throughout this good earth.

Partaking of the Bread and Juice

(Please come forward by rows down the center aisle, taking a piece of bread, dipping it in the cup, eating, and returning to your seats by the side aisles. You may take additional elements with you to bring to those in your row unable to come forward, or we will have a server to bring the elements to any who cannot come forward. Grape juice is used, and gluten free bread is available upon request.)

Commissioning

Go forth with forgiveness, courage, faith, hope, love, peace, justice, kindness, and gentleness. May these virtues, representing the image of God in each one of us as was also manifested in Jesus, strengthen you to reach out in compassion as you nurture and aid others within this worldwide community. May the Spirit and grace of God be with you and among you. Amen

**WE DEDICATE OURSELVES TO GOD’S SERVICE
THROUGH FAITHFULNESS**

Giving of Our Tithes and Offerings

Offertory I call to Thee, Lord Jesus Christ J.S. Bach

***Song of Dedication** Tune: Old Hundredth; p. 7

When we give thanks, then go to sow;

Our blessings are assured to grow.

We are not known by what we keep;

We’re known by deeds that others reap.

***Unison Prayer of Dedication**

O God, whose coming was tender and mild, but whose presence is empowering and passionate: We are thankful for the hope you inspire in our world where poverty is painful and loving-kindness is lacking. Jolt us with justice that the world’s prayers for peace may be answered. Jostle us with generosity that we may know the joy of giving. In this season of Lent, enter into our hearts that hope may arise within us to expect that which has been promised: that nourishment will be provided for the hungry...that comfort will call upon the suffering...that freedom will ensue for the imprisoned...that justice will be imparted to the persecuted...that compassion will nurture the oppressed...that peace will pacify the violent...and that love will live in the midst of all peoples and creatures that you have declared good. May this gift of hope that you give to us be passed on to others by how we give of ourselves through our time, talents, tithes, and offerings. Blessings be.

***Encouragement for the Journey (Benediction)**

May God give you the grace never to sell yourself short;
grace to risk something big for something good;
grace to remember that the world is too dangerous
for anything but truth and too small for anything but love.
So, may God take your minds and think through them;
may God take your lips and speak through them;
may God take your hearts and set them on fire.

Rev. William Sloane Coffin

***Response for Living Forth in Mystery** “In the Bulb There Is a Flower”

#433

vss. 1-2

***Postlude**

“Little” Fugue in g minor, BWV 578

J.S. Bach

***The Light of Love Goes into the World**

Love’s light is not extinguished from our worship, but is transferred from the flame of the candles to the passion in our hearts that we may go forth to let the light of love shine through us as we go to serve in the world!

**WE GO FORTH AS PEACEMAKERS
TO CREATE JUSTICE FOR ALL**

*Our worship is fulfilled, and our purpose is confirmed,
through our service as God’s stewards to the world and all creation.
Use the blessings God has given you as you share
the joy in your heart, the wisdom in your mind,
the love in your spirit, and the peace in your soul.*

Thank you for sharing sacred fellowship with us!

Faith UCC is an open and affirming church, embracing diversity in our congregation and community, and affirming the dignity and worth of every person. We are an inclusive community of faith that celebrates God's presence through worship and the sharing of God's word. We welcome all persons into the full life and ministry of the church, regardless of race, ethnic background, gender identity, sexual orientation, capability, or circumstance of life.

Our Ministry

Ministers — All the Congregation
Ushers — Kees Brandse, Larry Bair
Liturgist — Mary Jane Wild
Acolyte —
Fellowship — Choir

Pastor — Rev. Bret Myers
Trustee — Larry Bair
Children's Message —
Nursery — Parent Care

Church Staff

Custodian — Scott Luzier
Choir Director – Colin Ruffer
Administrative Assistant — Jeff Stormer

Church School Coordinator — Barbara Chellman
Organist – Colin Davis

The liturgies for this morning's worship, along with the Song of Dedication, were written by Rev. Bret S. Myers except where otherwise noted.

Nourishment for the Journey

“The things that will destroy America are prosperity at any price, peace at any price, safety first instead of duty first and love of soft living and the get-rich-quick theory of life.”

— Theodore Roosevelt

When we study the temptations of Jesus, we often focus on the particular temptations of Jesus — often noting the temptation of basic necessities (‘turn the rocks into food’), the temptation of misuse of trust in relationships (‘the angels will save you!’), and the temptation of the desire for power, wealth, and authority (‘all of it will be yours!’). All of them may deal with security: in our sustenance, in our social loyalties, and in our control over others and our status. Some have also alluded to the temptation to prove ourselves, one that arises from insecurity over our identity and calling. Or, we may focus on how Jesus overcame the temptations with wisdom and a single-minded resolution not to be distracted by things that were not associated with his purpose and meaning in life. Conservative churches may focus on the devil and how we are tempted by the devil's wily schemes, and how we ought to always resist. But rarely do we consider the nature of the temptations themselves along with the nature of the one doing the tempting.

Who would ask you to prove who you are, and why would they do such a thing? I don't know anyone who truly loves me who would ask such a thing of me. They rather relish in my successes, and are sad for me in my failures. I can only imagine one who is envious, or one who is an enemy for other reasons, who would begin with, “If you are who you think you are, then do this!” It is as if the tempter is trying to set the person up to fail, and to cross boundaries that will end up shaming the person. Very odd behavior! Not necessarily uncommon behavior, but odd in that it says more about the one doing the tempting than the one being tempted. If someone asks you to prove yourself, you can pretty much rest assured that they don't have your best interests at heart.

If we take away the “If you are the Son of God” part of the first temptation, it may appear to be an effort to encourage the person to look out for themselves: “Hey, you are obviously hungry, why don't you get yourself something to eat?” [Notice that no food is offered Jesus, but rather he is told to get it himself; or in this case, to make it himself. Do you know of anyone who tells those without jobs and are hungry to get a job and make their own living rather than showing generosity towards them? How much has our culture influenced our values rather than our values being influenced by Jesus?] This is not merely a temptation about whether he has the ability to do this, but also one about being diverted from his larger goal (i.e., discernment about his purpose in life) to a need that we all have to deal with (i.e., basic sustenance). Jesus is one who eats to live, not lives to eat. And so he answers that he doesn't live by bread (i.e., food) alone; implying there are higher priorities in life than what we eat.

But it is also a temptation about self-interest. The tempter assumes that self-interest is the right strategy in which to live life. Looking out for #1 rather than others makes good sense for such a person. What is the nature of such a person: narcissism. Narcissists are shallow individuals. They think mainly about their own welfare, regardless of the welfare of others. This is not the way to be in community...to be in sacred relationship with God and others.

Narcissists think they are the greatest. Consequently, they have a disdain for others who are considered by others to be great. They want to compete with them, out maneuver them, out think, and out play them. They want others to look bad, thinking this will make themselves look better. The one tempting Jesus can't stand that Jesus is regarded as great, and appears to want to take Jesus

down a notch or two. Winning against others becomes all-consuming; for only if you win are you valuable in the mind of a narcissist.

Narcissists often don't like people who are losers, who 'get captured by the enemy,' or who aren't as wealthy, powerful, or popular as oneself. They are apt to look down upon those who are homeless, refugees, are of a different nationality or religion, or even skin color. Because everything is about themselves and others are not considered, they lack a moral compass that most people have to care about those other than themselves.

In the 2nd temptation, the tempter's lack of concern for the welfare of Jesus is revealed in the bizarre taunt to throw himself down from the highest part of the tallest building in the city. What an absurd temptation! There is not much logic to it. Who would willingly throw themselves off the highest building to see if others would catch you? Well, perhaps someone who is so concerned with loyalty that they would jeopardize the people around them in order to see if they really are loyal. If someone is always testing whether you really love or care for them, and instigating scenarios to reveal whether you will do what they say or not, that person needs some serious counseling. When someone says, 'The angels will catch you, Jesus!' or 'God will be your co-pilot and intervene on your behalf,' it is best to not act on their suggestions but get them some help themselves. Someone who asks people to do things that could kill them so as either prove their bravery or prove that others really will go out of their way to help them in the worst case scenario is not a very safe person to be around; and are likely not safe for themselves either. We need to show some compassion for such persons and get them the help they need.

The last effort at bringing Jesus down is to promise the world to him. I no longer pretend that this is not a serious temptation. It is clear, even in the last year, and pretty much every election cycle that those who promise the most, even when it is clear they cannot deliver, often are voted in. I still don't understand how people fall for this again and again, but they do. "I'll give you wealth (e.g., tax cuts)! I'll give you power (e.g., raise an even stronger military)! I'll give you pride (e.g., nationalism, patriotism, or even a sense of racial superiority)!", and the lists goes on. Granted, we'd all like to have more control over our lives, would like to be financially secure, and feel safe in a sometimes dangerous world. But these temptations are really about never having enough. For someone who is greedy and self-indulgent, there is no such thing as too much money, too much control, and too much praise. And for a country that goes along with the philosophy that we need to be #1 and look out for ourselves first, this cannot be further from the ethics of Jesus who saw all people as equal in worth and value, and deserving of equal treatment.

Is this the path we want to go down? To let these sorts of values, so interwoven in our society that we actually elected to the highest office one who has them in abundance, be that which guides our goals?

As we begin the season of Lent, we individually and as a nation and world, need to ask who we consider to be our leaders. What kind of values do they have? What motivates them? Whose interests do they consider? Are we willing to follow them just because they are the current leaders? Are we willing to give up our own ethics in order to follow their orders? Are we willing to be tempted away from what is most important in order to serve their selfish schemes? Are we going to come to the defense of others because we don't see the world as all about us? These are important questions in all times, but perhaps now more than in a long while. Where we make our stand, just like Jesus, determines whose side we are on and what values we deem to be most important. Like the tempter, our actions will reveal more about us than it will those whom are affected by our choices. May God strengthen us for the trials we will, like Jesus, need to endure.

--- Rev. Bret S. Myers, 3/2/2017



Welcome to all first-time (and returning) guests to Faith UCC! We would like to get to know you and for you to get to know us. Join us after worship for coffee and conversation. There is free parking on Sundays at the meters and at the McAllister & Pugh Street parking garages – so, we hope you'll worship with us again next Sunday!

ELECTRONIC GIVING OPTIONS: During the offering time in the service, you may place your offerings on the plates the ushers will bring around. If you prefer to give electronically simply **scan the QR code** with your smart phone to be directed to our online donation page.



March Special Offering
One Great Hour of Sharing

One Great Hour is a Christian effort to empower, provide water, supply food, and give relief from disasters.

Learn more at: <http://onegreathourofsharing.org>

Make checks payable to Faith UCC with "OGHS" noted in the memo line, or use the special envelope on Sunday, **March 26th**.



- **March 7** Trustees' Meeting, 7PM @ Clif & Linda Merchant's
- **March 12** Second Sunday in Lent
- **March 13** Consistory Meeting, 5:30PM
- **March 17** St Patrick's Day
- **March 19** Third Sunday in Lent
- **March 25** Meaningful Movies, 2PM **Movie: Amistad**
- **March 26** Fourth Sunday in Lent

Get In Touch with Us!

Faith United Church of Christ 300 E. College Avenue State College, PA 16801
Tel: (814) 237-3904 Websites: www.faithucc.info facebook.com/SCFaithUCC
Church Office Email: faithucc@comcast.net Pastor's Email: revbmyers@yahoo.com

Church Office Hours: 9:30 a.m. – 1:30 p.m. Tuesdays, Wednesdays, & Fridays

Please make an appointment with Rev. Myers if you would like to meet with the pastor. You may call the church office, or his cell at 608-370-9472.



Prayers for healing and wholeness:

Linda Merchant, Susan Meyer, Lisa B. (JoAnn's daughter), Brandon G., Lisa Neidigh, Bunnie Hartswick, Katelynn Wilson, the Family of Jean Dreese, Darlene Ripka, April S., AJ, Randy Brown (Aimee's Dad), Sheila W., the Parrish Family, Robert Zupp (Eileen Pfaff's nephew), Ruth Tressler, Jeff Stormer

Announcements and Upcoming Events



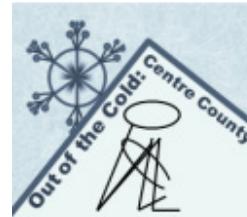
Don't miss the latest webinar series led by Andy Lang, executive director of the Open and Affirming Coalition of the United Church of Christ.

Since Faith Church is already on board, ONA 201 (offered March 21) is the next step in strengthening our ONA commitment.

This webinar is for ONA churches seeking new ways to revive, strengthen and expand their ONA commitment. Participants will learn best practices for ONA church growth—including marketing, communications, advocacy, and personal evangelism. The webinar is offered at 7 p.m. Tuesday, March 21.

All workshops are priced at \$30 for one or two participants, with discounts for three or more participants sitting at the same computer.

Contact ed@openandaffirming.org for more information.



Our turn for hosting **Out of the Cold** Centre County (OOTC3) here at our church ends today.

Many thanks to all who volunteered or supported this vital outreach to our community!

Life After Loss Support Group

St. John's UCC — 218 N. Church Street, Boalsburg

A six-week educational support group for anyone experiencing a loss through death

Sessions will be held from **5:30—8:00 pm** on the following Sundays in 2017:

March 5 March 12 March 19 March 26 April 2 April 9

Participants are encouraged to attend all six classes to receive the most benefit. If you must miss a session due to a prior commitment, please still consider attending.

A light supper will be provided. There is no charge for the classes.



Register by calling the Boalsburg church office at 466-7162

Announcements and Upcoming Events

First IICC Coffee Hour at Webster's Bookstore & Café!

Monday, March 20, 6:30-8:00 pm – Suggested Discussion Topic: *“Does anything need to change?”* (e.g., What small or large change needs to happen in your life? In our country or in the world? In our interfaith activities? Does external change require internal change as well? Which comes first?)

LATEST COMMUNITY COLUMN from Interfaith Initiative Centre County online, a lovely one from Peggy Huo and Debra Greenleaf, on “The Meaning of Chinese New Year” from *The Centre Daily Times* editorial page, Saturday, February 11, 2017:

<http://www.centredaily.com/opinion/article132120639.html>

SITTING FOR PEACE – RSVP for next month's Interfaith Potluck/Meditation

DATE: Saturday, March 25, 6:30 pm

RSVP if you wish to participate in body or in spirit, to Shih-In Ma:

sittingtogether2@gmail.com

Come create and share a space of Love, Peace and Silence

As before, we'll gather with a **vegetarian potluck at 6:30 pm. We'll sit together in stillness and silence from 8:00 until about 8:40.** We welcome diversity here so please do whatever silent-still practice you choose. Then we'll continue nourishing our bodies and our hearts after the sit :-)

If you can't come, please sit with us in spirit from 8:00 pm to about 8:40! If you RSVP, please let me know your 1-3 word intention/dedication/prayer for the energy of our gathering. I will send you the readings in advance and will presence you by name and intention as we start. When you join, it's palpable.

Meaningful Movies & Conversation (open to the community)

Our first “monthly” movie is *Amistad*, by Steven Spielberg.

Saturday, **March 18th** (the day before ‘Amistad Sunday’), at 2 p.m.

Join us! Invite others to come, and feel free to bring refreshments to share!

