

# WELCOME TO WORSHIP

March 30, 2025

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We welcome all who are visiting with us today.

It is good to have you in worship with us. Please introduce yourself to Pastor Phil this morning and let us know if there is any way we might be of service to you or your family.

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**Silent Reflection:** "In the silence of the Cross, the uproar of weapons ceases and the language of reconciliation, forgiveness, dialogue, and peace is spoken."

~ Pope Francis

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## ANNOUNCEMENTS

## RINGING OF THE CHURCH BELLS

## PRELUDE

## CALL TO WORSHIP

**ONE:** Do you feel it? God's kingdom beneath our feet.

**ALL:** We live in the new creation shaped by God out of our brokenness.

**ONE:** Do you know it? God's reconciling love in Christ has shattered our ways of viewing people.

**ALL:** No longer do we label our sisters and brothers, we welcome them with open arms.

**ONE:** Do you believe it? God has made everything, including us, new.

**ALL:** And God sends us forth to share this good news with everyone!

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## CALL TO CONFESSION

### PRAYER OF CONFESSION (*unison*)

On this very day, O God, we admit all the lengths to which we go so we might avoid you. You offer us that kingdom of joy and wonder, yet we would hide in places where temptation waits. You invite us to feast on your grace and peace, but we stubbornly refuse because you also welcome those we call “outsiders.” But you come running towards us, sweeping us up in your arms, tears of grace mingling with our cries of confession, a mighty river washing away our sinful ways to restore us to new life. For your limitless grace and abundant love, we thank you. Amen.

## ASSURANCE OF PARDON

### GLORIA PATRI

734

## A TIME FOR THE CHILD IN ALL OF US

### Prayer for the children (*unison*):

We send blessings upon our children for all God’s love,  
all Christ’s friendship and all the caring of the Holy Spirit. Amen.

### Song Response

Lord, listen to your children praying, Lord, send your Spirit in this place;  
Lord, listen to your children praying, send us love, send us power,  
send us grace.

### SCRIPTURE:

Psalm 32

2 Corinthians 5:16-21

Luke 15:1-3, 11b-32

**HYMN**                    *Softly and Tenderly*                    348

**SERMON**

**UCC STATEMENT OF FAITH** – *Insert*

**HYMN**                    *Lord of All Hopefulness*                    469

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**INVITATION TO OFFERING**

**WE GIVE:**

*We give you but your own, whate'er the gift may be;  
All that we have is yours alone, we give it gratefully.*

**PRAYER OF DEDICATION** (*unison*)

Thank you, God, for proclaiming our worth when we do not value ourselves. Thank you for welcoming us to a celebration of life with so many precious gifts. Thank you now for the privilege of sharing so others may be led to your joyous embrace. Help us to be generous in gratitude for your lavish provision for all our needs. Amen.

**PRAYERS OF OUR CHURCH/SILENT PRAYERS/LORD'S PRAYER**

**PRAYER RESPONSE**            **Hear Our Prayer, O Lord**                    490

*Hear our prayer, O Lord, hear our prayer, O Lord;  
Incline thine ear to us, and grant us thy peace. Amen.*

**\* HYMN**                    *This Is a Day of New Beginnings*                    355

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## **BENEDICTION**

## **POSTLUDE**

### **SERVING YOU TODAY**

Council Person/Liturgist: Angela Imming  
Accompanist: Melody Hollis

### **IN OUR THOUGHTS AND PRAYERS**

**St. John's:** Sean and Dustin, sons of Margie & Wally Foxworthy

**St. Jacob:** Carol Casperson, Marvin Docter, Lori Townsend Erwin, Lori Foley, Sylvia Hoerchler, Norma Logsdon, Jackie Miller, Darik Zobrist, and the family of Ashley Emmerich and her son Jacob

**IL South Conference:** Each week the churches of the Illinois South Conference are asked to pray for congregations and their pastors and other ministries of the UCC. This week we are asked to pray for:

#### **Church & Pastors**

- Chaplain at Barnes-Jewish Hospital - Rev. Dr. Chance (Christopher Guelbert) Beeler
- Irvington Friedens UCC- Rev. Stacy (Mark) Tate

#### **Retired Pastors**

- Rev. Gustav Kuether

### **UPCOMING BIRTHDAYS AND ANNIVERSARIES**

Ashley & Jerid Ahrens, 7 years, March 31  
Kelli & Jeremy Zurliene, 13 years, March 31  
Duane Zobrist, April 3  
Patti and Duane Woods, 39 years, April 5

## CHURCH ATTENDANCE, March 23, 2025

St. John's – 9      St. Jacob – 27

### CHURCH CONTACT INFORMATION

Pastor's office hours: Tuesday through Thursday: 10 a.m. to 3 p.m.

Secretary's office hours: Tuesdays & Thursdays: 9 a.m. to 2 p.m.

St. Jacob Phone: 618-644-2142 / St. Jacob E-mail: [stjucc@hometel.com](mailto:stjucc@hometel.com)

Website: [stjacobucc.org](http://stjacobucc.org)

Pastor Phil Barbier: Phone: 314-312-2347 / E-mail: [pastor@hometel.com](mailto:pastor@hometel.com)

### **BLESSING BOX LOCATED AT ST. JACOB UCC**

The "Blessing Box" (located on the east side of St. Jacob UCC) can use donations of non-perishable food, hygiene products, and other items for those in need. Anyone can donate -- items are anonymously given and received. Please consider blessing our neighbors in need, and if you are in need, please feel free to stop by.

### **FOOD PANTRY DONATIONS**

With the inflation these past few months, use of local food pantries has been high, and donations have been low. To help our communities we have a donation tub/box for food pantry donations in the sanctuary at St. John's and St. Jacob.

**Items for St. John's (For Lebanon Matthew 25:40 Ministries):** Canned goods including: green beans, corns, carrots, mixed vegetables, stew, chili, soup, fruit, spaghetti sauce, diced tomatoes, tomato sauce, potatoes (boxed/bags), Rice a Roni, macaroni and cheese, pasta, Ramen noodles, Jello, pudding, peanut butter, jelly, cereal, oatmeal, powdered sugar, brown sugar, oil, Crisco, dish soap, laundry detergent (quart bottles/sheets/pods), dryer sheets, paper towels, toilet paper, baggies (sandwich/qt./gal.) plastic wrap, toilet bowl cleaner, and cleaning solution

**Items for St. Jacob (Ministries Unlimited):** Pop-tarts, oatmeal, cheese cracker sandwiches, beef jerky, fruit cups, Vienna sausages, ketchup, mustard, broth, cooked ham, pasta sauce, jelly, pancake mix, & syrup

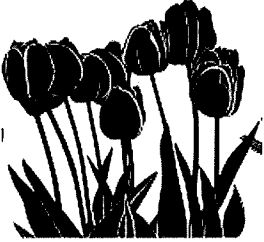
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## ANNOUNCEMENTS



### **EASTER FLOWER ORDER FORMS**

Order your flower(s) to decorate your church sanctuary for Easter Sunday, April 20. The deadline to order flowers is Sunday, April 13. Order forms are located on the table in the Narthex.

### **LENTEN BIBLE STUDY**

This year's Lenten Bible Study will be held each Wednesday, through April 9 at 7 p.m., and we'll be using the book *Lent in Plain Sight: A Devotion through Ten Objects* by Jill Duffield.

### **VOLUNTEER LITURGISTS AT ST. JACOB**

We are looking for volunteers willing to read scripture, no long-term commitment, just one Sunday at a time. Everyone from the congregation is invited to take part in helping lead worship. There is a sign-up sheet located on the table in the Narthex.

### **LAWN MOWING VOLUNTEERS NEEDED**

Please volunteer to mow the church lawn. There is a sign-up sheet on the table in the Narthex at St. Jacob.



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### **FIRST LESSON: Psalm 32**

The one whose wrongdoing is forgiven, whose sin is covered over, is truly happy! The one the Lord doesn't consider guilty – in whose spirit there is no dishonesty – that one is truly happy!

When I kept quiet, my bones wore out; I was groaning all day long – every day, every night! – because your hand was heavy upon me. My energy was sapped as if in a summer drought. So I admitted my sin to you; I didn't conceal my guilt. "I'll confess my sins to the Lord," is what I said. Then you removed the guilt of my sin.

That's why all the faithful should pray to you during troubled times, so that a great flood of water won't reach them. You are my secret hideout! You protect me from trouble. You surround me with songs of rescue!

I will instruct you and teach you about the direction you should go. I'll advise you and keep my eye on you. Don't be like some senseless horse or mule, whose movement must be controlled with a bit and a bridle. Don't be anything like that! The pain of the wicked is severe, but faithful love surrounds the one who trusts the Lord. You who are righteous, rejoice in the Lord and be glad! All you whose hearts are right, sing out in joy!

**SECOND LESSON: 2 Corinthians 5:16-21**

So then, from this point on we won't recognize people by human standards. Even though we used to know Christ by human standards, that isn't how we know him now. So then, if anyone is in Christ, that person is part of the new creation. The old things have gone away, and look, new things have arrived!

All of these new things are from God, who reconciled us to himself through Christ and who gave us the ministry of reconciliation. In other words, God was reconciling the world to himself through Christ, by not counting people's sins against them. He has trusted us with this message of reconciliation.

So we are ambassadors who represent Christ. God is negotiating with you through us. We beg you as Christ's representatives, "Be reconciled to God!" God caused the one who didn't know sin to be sin for our sake so that through him we could become the righteousness of God.

**GOSPEL: Luke 20:27-38**

All the tax collectors and sinners were gathering around Jesus to listen to him. The Pharisees and legal experts were grumbling, saying, "This man welcomes sinners and eats with them."

Jesus told them this parable:

Jesus said, "A certain man had two sons. The younger son said to his father, 'Father, give me my share of the inheritance.' Then the father divided his estate between them. Soon afterward, the younger son gathered everything together and took a trip to a land far away. There, he wasted his wealth through extravagant living.

"When he had used up his resources, a severe food shortage arose in that country and he began to be in need. He hired himself out to one of the citizens of that country, who sent him into his fields to feed pigs. He longed to eat his fill from what the pigs ate, but no one gave him anything. When he came to his senses, he said, 'How many of my father's hired hands have more than enough food, but I'm starving to death! I will get up and go to my father, and say to him, "Father, I have sinned against heaven and against you. I no longer deserve to be called your son. Take me on as one of your hired hands."' So he got up and went to his father.

"While he was still a long way off, his father saw him and was moved with compassion. His father ran to him, hugged him, and kissed him. Then his son said, 'Father, I have sinned against heaven and against you. I no longer deserve to be called your son.' But the father said to his servants, 'Quickly, bring out the best robe and put it on him! Put a ring on his finger and sandals on his feet! Fetch the fattened calf and slaughter it. We must celebrate with feasting because this son of mine was dead and has come back to life! He was lost and is found!' And they began to celebrate.

"Now his older son was in the field. Coming in from the field, he approached the house and heard music and dancing. He called one of the servants and asked what was going on. The servant replied, 'Your brother has arrived, and your father has slaughtered the fattened calf because he received his son back safe and sound.' Then the older son was furious and didn't want to enter in, but his father came out and begged him. He answered his father, 'Look, I've served you all these years, and I never disobeyed your instruction. Yet you've never given me as much as a young goat so I could celebrate with my friends. But when this son of yours returned, after gobbling up your estate on prostitutes, you slaughtered the fattened calf for him.' Then his father said, 'Son, you are always with me, and everything I have is yours. But we had to celebrate and be glad because this brother of yours was dead and is alive. He was lost and is found.'"



## THE UCC STATEMENT OF FAITH

We believe in God, the Eternal Spirit, who is made known to us in Jesus our brother, and to whose deeds we testify:

God calls the worlds into being, creates humankind in the divine image, and sets before us the ways of life and death.

God seeks in holy love to save all people from aimlessness and sin.

God judges all humanity and all nations by that will of righteousness declared through prophets and apostles.

In Jesus Christ, the man of Nazareth, our crucified and risen Lord, God has come to us and shared our common lot, conquering sin and death and reconciling the whole creation to its Creator.

God bestows upon us the Holy Spirit, creating and renewing the church of Jesus Christ, binding in covenant faithful people of all ages, tongues, and races.

God calls us into the church to accept the cost and joy of discipleship, to be servants in the service of the whole human family, to proclaim the gospel to all the world and resist the powers of evil, to share in Christ's baptism and eat at his table, to join him in his passion and victory.

God promises to all who trust in the gospel forgiveness of sins and fullness of grace, courage in the struggle for justice and peace, the presence of the Holy Spirit in trial and rejoicing, and eternal life in that kingdom which has no end.

Blessing and honor, glory and power be unto God.

Amen.

