



Community UCC

We're worth our words

Welcoming Progressive Community

Vibrant Messengers of Hope



Champaign, Illinois

Third Sunday in Lent, Year A

March 8, 2026

Thoughts before worship: *"Surely, This Must Be It"* Rev. Sarah Speed.

Everyone has a job. I wash the potatoes, filling the sink with slivers of potato peel. You brine the turkey, hovering by the oven all afternoon. Someone sets the table, taking care to fill a vase with asters and marigolds, sprigs of holly and shoots of evergreen. We play music while we prepare. *"What The World Needs Now is Love"* comes on. We can't get it out of our heads. We whistle along to Dionne all afternoon. And eventually, the doorbell rings.

You've invited the neighbors, the grad student who sits on the second row at church, the widower in the choir. We add seats to the table. We go around the room and share one thing we're grateful for. Eyes well as we create a laundry list of beauty. The kids get squirmy, but we're grateful for that too.

And then we eat! We scoop whipped potatoes and crisp green beans with fresh garlic. We pass the bread basket, leaving crumbs all over the table. They are tiny reminders of communion in our midst. And at the end of the night, when we walk our guests to the car and carry sleeping children to their car seats, our neighbors say, *What a holy moment it all was.* Surely this must be what heaven feels like. Surely we *can* create it together.

Prelude

Andrey Ivanov

*Call to Worship

If you need good news,

settle into this space. We have good news to share.

If you need a word of hope,

then trust us when we say, *there is hope enough to go around.*

If you need a glimmer of joy,

then you're in luck! We have resilient joy abounding.

We welcome you to our service this morning. Celebrating the diversity of creation, Community United Church welcomes persons of any age, ability, race, gender identity, sexual orientation or life condition. May the Divine Presence become real to you through this time of worship. We hope you come back!

Note: *Our worship services are live streamed. If you prefer not to have the back of your head seen on the live stream worship please do not sit in the first seven pews on the left side (organ/piano) of the sanctuary.*

Note 2: *The congregation responds to the liturgy parts in **BOLD***

*Everyone is invited to stand in body or in spirit.

If you need to feel God's presence in your midst,
then know that this is God's house.

This is the good news of the gospel.

God is here. Love is real. Joy is on the move. Let us worship our with-us God!

Today's theme is, "The good news is...together, the impossible is possible." The question of the day is this — when has God interrupted your life with abundance? Find the pennant flags in your pew and write your answer, place in the offering plate.

***Invocation**

Let us pray,

Holy God, we could press our ear to the page, hoping to hear you more clearly. We could silence all the alarms and notifications, hoping to catch a murmur of your voice. We could still our beating hearts, and *still* we might miss your voice. So today we pray, open up space in our hearts, in our spirits, in our minds, to feel your presence among us. With you, anything is possible. We believe. Help our unbelief. Amen.

***Opening Hymn**

Human Minds Just Can't Imagine

Insert

Sung to the tune of *God Whose Giving Knows No Ending*, NCH 565

Welcome, a Word About Worship, and an Opportunity to Check-In

Introit

Glory, Glory, Hallelujah

Call to Confession

Beloved, we are like the disciples. The day that Jesus fed 5,000, his disciples could not imagine a solution to the crowd's hunger. They told Jesus to send the crowds away. We often do the same. Like the disciples, we try to follow Jesus around, but when we run into issues, we often cannot imagine how we could play a part. That is why we need the Prayer of Confession. For in this prayer, we remember that we *can* make a difference. Join me in this moment of truth telling.

Prayer of Confession

Holy God,

With you the impossible is possible. 5,000 can be fed. We have new sight. The hopeless can find hope. With you the impossible is possible, but we are quick to forget that.

We look at our hurting world and tell ourselves that nothing can be done. We forget that you empowered the disciples to feed the crowd. We forget that you are always with us.

Forgive our small-minded ways. Forgive us for doubting that change could ever come. But even more so, forgive us when we refuse to be a part of it. With hope for a better tomorrow we pray, amen.

Words of Forgiveness

Beloveds, no matter how many mistakes the disciples made, Jesus still washed their feet. Jesus still fed them. Jesus still called them beloved. The same is true for you and me, so hear and believe this good news: today is a new day, and once again, we belong to God. We are forgiven. We are called. We are not alone. What good, good news. Amen!

***Passing the Peace**

Children's Moment

Anthem

Greater Love Hath No One

CUCC Choir

Many waters cannot quench love,

Neither can the floods drown it.

Love is strong as death.

Greater love hath no one than this,

That a man lay down his life for his friends.

Who his own self bare our sins in his own body on the tree,

That we, being dead to sins, should live unto righteousness.

*Ye are washed, ye are sanctified,
Ye are justified in the name of the Lord Jesus.
Ye are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, a holy nation;
That ye should show forth the praises of him
Who hath call'd you out of darkness into his marvellous light.
I beseech you people, by the mercies of God,
That you present your bodies, a living sacrifice, holy,
Acceptable unto to God, which is your reasonable service.*



Call to Prayer

community-ucc.org/pray

Prelude to Scripture

Whether we take what is written in the Bible as fact, metaphor, myth, or story, let us listen now for the meaning it might hold for us on this day.

Sacred Reading from the Gospels

Mark 6:32-44

³²And they went away in the boat to a deserted place by themselves. ³³Now many saw them going and recognized them, and they hurried there on foot from all the towns and arrived ahead of them. ³⁴As he went ashore, he saw a great crowd, and he had compassion for them, because they were like sheep without a shepherd, and he began to teach them many things. ³⁵When it grew late, his disciples came to him and said, "This is a deserted place, and the hour is now very late; ³⁶send them away so that they may go into the surrounding country and villages and buy something for themselves to eat." ³⁷But he answered them, "You give them something to eat." They said to him, "Are we to go and buy two hundred denarii worth of bread and give it to them to eat?" ³⁸And he said to them, "How many loaves have you? Go and see." When they had found out, they said, "Five, and two fish." ³⁹Then he ordered them to get all the people to sit down in groups on the green grass. ⁴⁰So they sat down in groups of hundreds and of fifties. ⁴¹Taking the five loaves and the two fish, he looked up to heaven and blessed and broke the loaves and gave them to his disciples to set before the people, and he divided the two fish among them all. ⁴²And all ate and were filled, ⁴³and they took up twelve baskets full of broken pieces and of the fish. ⁴⁴Those who had eaten the loaves numbered five thousand men.

Sacred Reading from the Epistles

Ephesians 3:20-21

²⁰Now to God who by the power at work within us is able to accomplish abundantly far more than all we can ask or imagine, ²¹to God be glory in the church and in Christ Jesus to all generations, forever and ever. Amen.

Postlude to Scripture

Together, let us say:

May the Spirit bless us with wisdom and wonder as we ponder the meaning of these words for our lives.

*Hymn

*En santa hermandad
(United by God's Love)*

NCH 392 v. 1, 2, Spanish solo
v. 1, 2 Spanish all, v. 1, 2 English all
En español y luego en inglés

En san-ta her-man-dad va-mos a can-tar.

Al Cre-a-dor can-te-mos que nos dio su gra-cia.

Estrillo:

Tue-res Cris-to el Re-den-tor; lle-na-nos de a-mor.

Tue-res nues-tro Sal-va-dor y Li-ber-ta-dor.

U-nit-ed by God's love, let us sing to-geth-er.

Sing praise to our Cre-a-tor, God of grace and mer-cy,

Refrain:

You are the one Re-deem-er Christ, fill our hearts with love;

You are the Sav-ior, Je-sus Christ, Lib-er-a-tor God.

Message

The Good News Is...Together, the Impossible is Possible

Silent Meditation

Community Joys and Concerns

Pastoral Prayer

Prayer Response

Hold On

Call to Offering

community-ucc.org/



Offertory

Cum dederit from Nisi dominus

Elena Negruta

Commissioning of the Community

*Sending Hymn

Called as Partners in Christ's Service

NCH 495

*Called as part-ners in Christ's ser-vice, called to min-is tries of grace,
We re-spond with deep com-mit-ment fresh new lines of faith to trace.
May we learn the art of shar-ing, side by side and friend with friend,
E-qual part-ners in our car-ing to ful-fill God's cho-sen end.*

*Christ's ex-am-ple, Christ's in-spir-ing, Christ's clear call to work and worth,
Let us fol-low, nev-er fal-tering, rec-on-cil-ing folk on earth.
Men and worn-en, rich-er, poor-er, all God's peo-ple, young and old,
Blend-ing hu-man skills to-geth-er gra-cious gifts from God un-fold.*

*Thus new pat-terns for Christ's mis-sion, in a small or glob-al sense,
Help us bear each oth-er's bur-dens, break-ing down each wall or fence.
Words of com-fort, words of vi-sion, words of chal-lenge, said with care,
Bring new power and strength for ac-tion, make us col-leagues, free and fair.*

*So God grant us for to-mor-row ways to or-der hu-man life
That sur-round each per-son's sor-row with a calm that con-quers strife.
Make us part-ners in our liv-ing, our com-pas-sion to in-crease,
Mes-sen-gers of faith, thus giv-ing hope and con-fi-dence and peace.*

*Benediction

As you go from this place
meet anger with love,
fear with hope,
pain with gentleness.

Speak the Good News
of love for all,
peace that surpasses our understanding,
and good news that
rolls down like water.

Thanks be to God.
Amen.

*Benediction Response

Ain'-a That Good News

CUCC Choir

Postlude

Andrey Ivanov

Please join us in the Parlor for the after party.

Human Minds Just Can't Imagine

AUSTRIAN HYMN 8.7.8.7 D ("God Whose Giving Knows No Ending")

Words: Anna Strickland (2025)

Music: Joseph Haydn (1797)



Hu - man minds just can't i - ma - gine all that God can bring
God, ex - pand our dreams and vi - sion when we think our gifts
Like the grains of wheat are ga - thered from the vast and roll -



to bear Through our small and sep - arate be - ings, e - ven
too small Help us trust your great pro - vis - ion and to
-ing fields Like the grapes from vi - ny bran - ches whose small



when we join to share Still we fol - low where Christ leads us,
an - swer when you call You who gave us time and ta - lents
fruit the wine will yield We re - mem - ber as one bo - dy,



ma - ny pie - ces of one whole That we might al - low
will up - hold and see us through As we join to - geth -
each of us a cru - cial part In the glo - bal church



our dream - ing to trans - form our bro - ken world
-er in the work you've gi - ven us to do
pro - fess - ing: we be - long to God's own heart

cknowledgements

Liturgy from [asanctifiedart.org](https://www.asanctifiedart.org) Tell Me Something Good Lenten Series written by Rev. Sarah (Are) Speed

Introit, "*Glory, Glory, Hallelujah*," Spiritual arr. Nolan Williams Jr.

Anthem, "*Greater Love Hath No One*," John Ireland

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Prayer Response, "*Hold On*," Heidi Ann Wilson, used by composer's permission

Offertory, "*Cum dederit* from *Nisi dominus*" Antonio Vivaldi

Benediction Response, "*Ain' -a That Good News*," Spiritual arr. Robert Fryson

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Serving Today

Ministers: The Community of Community UCC
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Liturgist: Chase Skye
Usher: Tom Ward
Accompanist: Andrey Ivanov **Musician:** Elena Negruta
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Your Ministry Team Leaders

Moderator: Beth Hogan* Past Moderator: Susan Pawlicki* Incoming Moderator: Bill Gropp* Clerk: Jeff Radek* Pastoral Relations Committee: Cara Finnegan Personnel Committee: Stephen Kolderup Community Building: Peg Wade* <ul style="list-style-type: none">- Care Team: (Coordinator Open)<ul style="list-style-type: none">- Prayer Shawls: Elena Kasper- Meal Train: Jennifer Robbennolt- Driver's Ministry: Mary Bunyard- Visitor & Healing Music Ministry: Marilou Hinrichs- Card Ministry: Peg Wade- Health and Wellness Team: Chase Skye, Kelly Tull- Hospitality Team: Rocio (Ro) Arroyave Jamison and Dennis Jamison	Children & Family: Alison Anders*, Jennifer Johnson Finance: Roger Wade* (treasurer), David Willcox (financial secretary) Identity: Keri Evans* (open) Mission: Jeanne Ward* and Patty Gropp Sound & Ethical Practices (SEP): Sue Fristoe*, Shane Brownfield <ul style="list-style-type: none">- Buildings & Grounds: Tom Ward, Marla Elmore- Contracts & Insurance: Andrew McClure UCC Campus Ministry Liaison: Ilsa Kantola* Worship: Mara Smith*, Sebastian Major <ul style="list-style-type: none">- Sound Coordinator: Roger Wade
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*denotes Church Life Board Member

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