

United Churches of Durham Middlefield Federated Church

March 1, 2026
Second Sunday in Lent



Art: Study of Nicodemus Visiting Jesus, Henry Ossawa Tanner (1899)

THE UNITED CHURCHES OF DURHAM and MIDDLEFIELD FEDERATED CHURCH

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Worship Service
March 1, 2026
Second Sunday in Lent, Communion

WELCOME AND ANNOUNCEMENTS

This is the day the Lord has made
Let us rejoice and be glad in it!

PRELUDE

“Prelude 22”

D. Shostakovich

*** CALL TO CELEBRATION**

God is merciful and gracious,
slow to anger and abounding in steadfast love.
**God does not deal with us according to our sins,
nor punish us for our unfaithfulness.**

Then let us turn to the Gracious One, trusting in God.

**We praise you, O God, and return to you,
that you may give us new birth in your Holy Spirit.**

*** HYMN**

Love Divine, All Loves Excelling

384

*** PRAYER OF INVOCATION**

**Gracious God, you loved the world so deeply that you gave us your
only Son, your Word made flesh, that in communing with him we
might find infinite life. We come to him now, to listen, to let our
hearts speak, and to be born anew. Let the light of your truth fill us,
so that in your light we become light. Amen.**

*** PASSING OF THE PEACE**

The peace of the Lord be with you. **And also with you.**
(We exchange greeting of peace)

YOUNG AT HEART MESSAGE

COMMUNITY PRAYER

*Please stand in your pew and give your prayer appeal. We end the
appeal with the following call and response:*

This is my prayer **This is our prayer**

PASTORAL PRAYER followed by **The Lord's Prayer**

Our God/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.

SCRIPTURE READING Psalm 121

pg. 498

SERMON "So Many Questions"

Gospel: John 3:1-17

pg. 863-864

*** HYMN OF RESPONSE**

Bread of the world

624

OFFERING

If not using a check, please use the envelopes in the pew to designate your gift to MFC. Offerings to UCD can also be given online or by texting GIVE to 860-631-4572 to use the Tithely App. Thank You.

Offertory: "At the Table of the Lord"

* Response: **O Bless the gifts our hands have brought,
And bless the work our hearts have planned.
Ours is the faith, the will, the thought;
The rest, O God, is in Your hand.**

* Prayer of Dedication

Source of light and love, all things belong to you. You generously share with us the blessings of home, food, friends, and life itself. Receive a portion of what you have given us in our morning's offering. May our gifts and joyful service strengthen your church, that we may share good news and compassion with those in need. Amen.

COMMUNION

INSTRUCTION AND CALL TO COMMUNION

INVITATION

CONFESSION OF SIN and ASSURANCE of FORGIVENESS

God of mercy, we confess that we have not loved you with all our being.

We have done things which we ought not to have done,

and we have left undone things which we ought to have done.

We have built walls between neighbors and between countries, and we have ignored the cries of those in need.

Forgive us and set us free, that we may live into the hope of your calling, that your reign may come on earth as it is in heaven.

Through Jesus Christ we pray. Amen.

(Time for silent confession)

Thanks be to God: Jesus died for our sins.

We are forgiven!

We are forgiven. Thanks be to God.

WORDS OF INSTITUTION

The Lord Jesus, the same night he was betrayed, took bread; and when he had given thanks, he broke it and gave it to them, saying, "Take, eat; this is my body which is given for you: do this in remembrance of me."

After the same manner also, he took the cup when they had supped, saying, "This cup is the new testament in my blood: this do, as often as you drink it, in remembrance of me."

The bread which we break is the communion of the body of Christ.

The cup of blessing which we bless is the communion of the blood of Christ.

In this bread and in this wine, we receive again the generous, and costly gift of life, offered to us through the sacrifice of Jesus.

This meal is a proclamation of God's goodness, a thanksgiving for God's grace and a sharing in God's life. And we will keep celebrating in this way until Jesus returns. Amen.

***AFFIRMATION OF FAITH**

We believe in God who in love created all things

For beauty and community,

and never stopped loving.

A God who meets us in the shadows,

who welcomes our questions,

who invites us to begin again.
We believe God in love became one of us in Jesus.
We believe that Jesus showed us a new way,
a deeper faith,
a more compassionate existence.
We believe that all of our beginnings should return us
to this foundation,
and that no matter how many times we lose our way,
God always welcomes us home. Amen

PRAYER OF CONSECRATION

SHARING THE BREAD AND CUP

THANKSGIVING

* **CLOSING HYMN** **Lord, Dismiss Us with Your Blessing** **# 671**

* **SENDING and BENEDICTION**

POSTLUDE “We, The Unfinished Story” J-J. Moore

** Indicates standing as you are able*

Words for worship by Steve Garnaa-Holmes, A Sanctified Art

Lenten Giving: Heifer International

At our United Churches, Lenten giving means Heifer International. Over the years, we have donated thousands of dollars to support their good work. This year's collection will start on Sunday, February 22, and continue through the Sunday after Easter, April 12. You can leave donations in the offering plate or in the labeled jar, or you can participate by sending a donation to the church office with “for Heifer” noted.