



**For once you were darkness,
but now in the Lord you are light.
LIVE AS CHILDREN OF LIGHT.**

Ephesians 5:8, NRSV

*Second Congregational Church in Wilton,
United Church of Christ
Open and Affirming*

**ORDER OF WORSHIP
Fourth Sunday of Lent
March 19, 2023**

**Welcome to the worship of God at the
Second Congregational Church in Wilton,
United Church of Christ.
We are glad you are here today!**

***Bold print means congregational participation.
An asterisk (*) indicates to please stand, if you are able.***

GATHERING FOR THE WORD

WORDS OF WELCOME AND ANNOUNCEMENTS

PRELUDE

***CALL TO WORSHIP**

One: God calls to us wake up and see. Light has come
to lead us to all that is good.

Many: **Our eyes have been opened to God's goodness.
We seek to live as children of the light**

One: God sees beyond our outward appearance.
God knows the intent of our hearts.

Many: **We are here to find what is pleasing to God.
We want to know what is right and true.**

One: God is present to all who worship sincerely.
Praise God and give thanks for all God's blessings.

Many: **We seek to know and follow God's will. This is
the day that God has made and we rejoice and
are glad in it.**

***HYMN** "Savior, Like a Shepherd Lead Us" **NO. 440**

PRAYER OF INVOCATION AND LORD'S PRAYER (UNISON)

**God of mercy whose thoughts are not our thoughts and
whose ways are not our ways, thank you for reaching
out to us with Your transforming touch. Let Your light
shine on us now to reveal truth we have not seen.**

Open our eyes to possibilities that we have not realized. Help us to be open to Your truth, revealed to us through the teachings of Jesus. This we pray in Jesus' name as He taught us: Our 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. Lead us not into temptation, and deliver us from evil. For Yours is the kingdom, the power and the glory, now and forever. Amen.

INVITATION TO CONFESSION

Leader: Gracious God. We confess that with our limited insight we often misjudge people and situations. Our view of things is often far removed from the way that You see the circumstances of our lives and our relationships. Individually and as a community we often fall short of what You expect of us. Gathering here today, we are invited to spend a moment of silence, confessing to God all the ways that we know we have fallen short of God's vision for us.

Moment of Silence

All: Gracious and loving God we thank You for Your presence here with us during this time of prayer. We confess that we have individually and as a community of faith wandered from the paths of integrity, justice and peace that You have set before us. We confess that we are quick to judge others and excuse ourselves from those same actions. We decide who is acceptable and who is not rather than practice radical acceptance as taught by Jesus. We assume that You prefer people who are just like us and not those who appear, believe or act differently. Forgive us we pray and help us to change.

WORDS OF ASSURANCE

The goodness and mercy of God is always available to those who come before God with a contrite heart and confess their faults and failings. Know that God forgives you and blesses you, today and every day of your life.

***GLORIA PATRI TUNE: GREATOR EX**

**Glory to the Creator and to the Christ
and to the Holy Ghost.
As it was in the beginning, is now and ever shall be.
World without end. Amen. Amen**

ENGAGING THE WORD

ANTHEM

READING FROM SCRIPTURE

Ephesians 5:8-14

For once you were darkness, but now in the Lord you are light. Live as children of light— for the fruit of the light is found in all that is good and right and true. Try to find out what is pleasing to the Lord. Take no part in the unfruitful works of darkness, but instead expose them. For it is shameful even to mention what such people do secretly; but everything exposed by the light becomes visible, for everything that becomes visible is light. Therefore it says, “Sleeper, awake! Rise from the dead, and Christ will shine on you.”

John 9:1-41

As he walked along, he saw a man blind from birth. His disciples asked him, “Rabbi, who sinned, this man or his parents, that he was born blind?” Jesus answered, “Neither this man nor his parents sinned; he was born blind so that God’s works might be revealed in him. We must work the works of him who sent me while it is day; night is coming when no one can work. As long as I am in the world, I am the light of the world.” When he had said this, he spat on the ground and made mud with the saliva and spread the mud on the man’s eyes, saying to him, “Go, wash in the pool of Siloam” (which

means Sent). Then he went and washed and came back able to see. The neighbors and those who had seen him before as a beggar began to ask, "Is this not the man who used to sit and beg?" Some were saying, "It is he." Others were saying, "No, but it is someone like him." He kept saying, "I am the man." But they kept asking him, "Then how were your eyes opened?" He answered, "The man called Jesus made mud, spread it on my eyes, and said to me, 'Go to Siloam and wash.' Then I went and washed and received my sight." They said to him, "Where is he?" He said, "I do not know." They brought to the Pharisees the man who had formerly been blind. Now it was a sabbath day when Jesus made the mud and opened his eyes. Then the Pharisees also began to ask him how he had received his sight. He said to them, "He put mud on my eyes. Then I washed, and now I see." Some of the Pharisees said, "This man is not from God, for he does not observe the sabbath." But others said, "How can a man who is a sinner perform such signs?" And they were divided. So they said again to the blind man, "What do you say about him? It was your eyes he opened." He said, "He is a prophet." The Jews did not believe that he had been blind and had received his sight until they called the parents of the man who had received his sight and asked them, "Is this your son, who you say was born blind? How then does he now see?" His parents answered, "We know that this is our son, and that he was born blind; but we do not know how it is that now he sees, nor do we know who opened his eyes. Ask him; he is of age. He will speak for himself." His parents said this because they were afraid of the Jews; for the Jews had already agreed that anyone who confessed Jesus to be the Messiah would be put out of the synagogue. Therefore his parents said, "He is of age; ask him." So for the second time they called the man who had been blind, and they said to him, "Give glory to God! We know that this man is a sinner." He answered, "I do not know whether he is a sinner. One thing I do know, that though I was blind, now I see." They said to him, "What did he do to you? How did he open your eyes?" He answered them, "I have told you already, and you would not listen. Why do you want to hear it again? Do you also want to become his disciples?" Then they reviled him, saying, "You are his disciple, but we are disci-

ples of Moses. We know that God has spoken to Moses, but as for this man, we do not know where he comes from.” The man answered, “Here is an astonishing thing! You do not know where he comes from, and yet he opened my eyes. We know that God does not listen to sinners, but he does listen to one who worships him and obeys his will. Never since the world began has it been heard that anyone opened the eyes of a person born blind.

If this man were not from God, he could do nothing.” They answered him, “You were born entirely in sins, and are you trying to teach us?” And they drove him out. Jesus heard that they had driven him out, and when he found him, he said, “Do you believe in the Son of Man?” He answered, “And who is he, sir? Tell me, so that I may believe in him.” Jesus said to him, “You have seen him, and the one speaking with you is he.” He said, “Lord, I believe.” And he worshiped him. Jesus said, “I came into this world for judgment so that those who do not see may see, and those who do see may become blind.” Some of the Pharisees near him heard this and said to him, “Surely we are not blind, are we?” Jesus said to them, “If you were blind, you would not have sin. But now that you say, ‘We see,’ your sin remains.

SERMON “Children of the Light”

***HYMN** “Breathe on Me, Breath of God” NO.461

PRAYERS OF THE PEOPLE

PASTORAL PRAYER, SILENT PRAYER

PRAYER RESPONSE

CALL TO THE OFFERING

***OFFERTORY ANTHEM**

***DOXOLOGY** Tune: OLD HUNDREDTH

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**

(UNISON)

Loving God we seek to pass on Your love for us through our thoughts, words, actions and these gifts that we bring here today. Bless and multiply this offering we pray, so that the light of Christ can continue to shine through this community of faith. This we ask in Jesus' name. Amen.

***HYMN**

“Amazing Grace!”

NO. 422

GOING WITH THE WORD

***BENEDICTION**

***POSTLUDE**

Praising God's glory the flowers are given by Jessie Salisbury and Verna Porter in loving memory of Jessie's parents and Verna's grandparents, Charles and Dorothy Warner.



Refocus for Lent

Give up complaining - focus on gratitude
Give up pettiness - become mature
Give up harsh judgements - think kind thoughts
Give up jealousy - pray for trust
Give up worry - trust God to provide
Give up gossiping - control your tongue
Give up discouragement - be full of hope
Give up sin - turn to virtue
Give up hatred - return good for evil
Give up giving up - persevere
Give up anger - be more patient

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On The Calendar/Announcements

Today, we will be taking an offering for One Great Hour of Sharing.

Dinner Play Rehearsal, March 19, 5:00 PM

Church Missions Meeting, March 21, 9:30 AM

Council Meeting, March 21, 7:00 PM via Zoom

PARTICIPATING IN TODAY'S SERVICE

Rev. Dr. Rhonda MacLeod, Guest Pastor

Dana Dahl, Liturgist

Patricia Cauchon, Director of Music

All the Congregation, Ministers to the World

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