



Very truly, I tell you,
no one can see the kingdom of **GOD**
without being **born** from above.

John 3:3, NRSV

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

**ORDER OF WORSHIP
Second Sunday of Lent
March 5, 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: People of God, where do we put our trust?
Where do we find wholeness and meaning?

Many: **We lift up our eyes to the hills.
Our help comes from the Creator
of heaven and earth.**

One: We are followers of Jesus who taught us how
to live into God's vision for the world.
We are born again through the Spirit.

Many: **Our lives are a gift from God who loves us.
By the grace of God we are born again each day.**

PRAYER OF INVOCATION AND LORD'S PRAYER (UNISON)

Loving God, send us Your Spirit today so that we may be renewed. Open our hearts in new ways to the promise and blessing of Your healing grace. Help us to be a blessing to one another and to Your world. Strengthen our faith to withstand the trials and temptations that lead us astray on our journey towards You. Speak to us where we are and expand our vision beyond these walls and beyond our own life so that we may continue to grow in You. This we ask in Jesus name and pray 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.

*HYMN "God of Grace and God of Glory" NO. 569

CALL TO CONFESSION

As we gather this day, we realize that we are imperfect. We remember the times that we have not followed what we profess to believe. We are now invited to confess to God all our failures and imperfections. As we silently ask God for forgiveness, we open our hearts to God's Spirit.

(moment of silence)

PRAYER OF CONFESSION (Unison)

O God, we confess that we are far too ready to say that we believe than to act on those beliefs. We say we believe, yet we live in fear of the things of this world. We admire Jesus but find it difficult to follow in His footsteps. For all this and more, we ask Your forgiveness and the presence of Your Spirit which can bring us rebirth and new life.

ASSURANCE OF GRACE

We know that our lives are precious to You O God. We believe that all those who come before You with a humble and contrite heart will be forgiven. Receive then, with humility and joy, God's forgiveness and the rebirth that comes from the Spirit.

***GLORIA PATRI TUNE: GREATOREX**

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

ENGAGING THE WORD

ANTHEM

READING FROM SCRIPTURE

John 3:1-17

Now there was a Pharisee named Nicodemus, a leader of the Jews. He came to Jesus by night and said to him, "Rabbi, we know that you are a teacher who has come from God; for no one can do these signs that you do apart from the presence of God." Jesus answered him, "Very truly, I tell you, no one can see the kingdom of God without being born from above." Nicodemus said to him, "How can anyone be born after having grown old? Can one enter a second time into the mother's womb and be born?" Jesus answered, "Very truly, I tell you, no one can enter the kingdom of God without being born of water and Spirit. What is born of the flesh is flesh, and what is born of the Spirit is spirit. Do not be astonished that I said to you, 'You must be born from above.' The wind blows where it chooses, and you hear the sound of it, but you do not know where it comes from or where it goes. So it is with everyone who is born of the Spirit." Nicodemus said to him, "How can these things be?" Jesus answered him, "Are you a teacher of Israel, and yet you do not understand these things? "Very truly, I tell you, we speak of what we know and testify to what we have seen; yet you

do not receive our testimony. If I have told you about earthly things and you do not believe, how can you believe if I tell you about heavenly things? No one has ascended into heaven except the one who descended from heaven, the Son of Man. And just as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, so must the Son of Man be lifted up, ¹⁵that whoever believes in him may have eternal life. “For God so loved the world that he gave his only Son, so that everyone who believes in him may not perish but may have eternal life. “Indeed, God did not send the Son into the world to condemn the world, but in order that the world might be saved through him.

SERMON

“Born Again”

***HYMN**

“Blessed Assurance”

NO. 426

PRAYERS OF THE PEOPLE

PASTORAL PRAYER, SILENT PRAYER

PRAYER RESPONSE

CALL TO THE OFFERING

The faith that sustains us is one which is dynamic and active. Our relationship with God calls us to move beyond the safety of routine and engage with the world. Our offering to this church enables it to continue to nourish us and all those who come here. Our offerings make possible all of the ministries of this church and our outreach into the world.

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

Thank You God for the glimpses of eternity we get through the experience of daily living. Bless and multiply our gifts this day given freely so that this church may continue to be a blessing to us and to our community. Amen

HOLY COMMUNION

***HYMN**

“I am the Bread of Life”

NO. 703

CALL TO THE TABLE

BREAKING AND POURING

PRAYER OF THANKSGIVING

Gracious and loving God, we thank You for this simple meal of bread and wine, given to us by Jesus. We thank You for the grace You have poured out upon us through the sharing of bread and cup. Help us to continue to follow the teaching of Jesus and to love others as we are loved by You. Amen

***HYMN**

“I Have Decided to Follow Jesus”

NO. 344

GOING WITH THE WORD

***BENEDICTION**

***POSTLUDE**

On The Calendar/Announcements

Join us to watch and Episode of the Chosen, March 12
Following Worship

Jewelry and Book Sale, March 18, 10:00 AM–2:00 PM
Set up will be in the morning at 8:00 AM. If you can
help, please contact Loretta and let her know.

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

author unknown

PARTICIPATING IN TODAY'S SERVICE

Rev. Dr. Rev. Rhonda MacLeod Guest Pastor
Marilyn Warner, Liturgist
Patricia Cauchon, Director of Music
All the Congregation, Ministers to the World

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