

March 19, 2023
The Fourth Sunday in Lent

Greeting

Welcome Statement (Printed on the bulletin insert)

Into Silence *You prepare a table before me...*

Prelude and Bringing in the Light

• **Call to Worship** (Adapted from Psalm 28)

Leader: To you, O Lord, I call;
my rock, do not refuse to hear me,
for if you are silent to me,
I shall be like those who go down to the Pit.

People: **Blessed be the Lord,
for he has heard the sound of my pleadings.
The Lord is my strength and my shield;
in him my heart trusts;
so I am helped, and my heart exults,
and with my song I give thanks to God.**

Leader: The Lord is the strength of his people;
God is the saving refuge of his anointed.
O save your people, and bless your heritage;
be their shepherd, and carry them for ever.

• **Hymn** *For the Beauty of the Earth* (NCH #28)

• **Morning Prayer**

God, some days we are afraid. Walk with us through whatever shadowy valley we face. Some days we are lonely. Come to us then and stay near. Some days we are hurt—by neighbors, by loved ones, by life. Grant us the peace of forgiving the cause of harm. Some times we do the hurting. Give us the wisdom to see the truth and the integrity to make it right. And in all things, on every day, remind us of your unfailing grace, your kindness and your love. Amen.

• **Promise**

There is no sin you can confess for which you have not already and long ago been forgiven. This is the gospel for you today—the good news by which we are made whole and for which we say...

Thanks be to God!

* **Sung Response** (Words will be on the screen)

Announcements

Invitation to Offering

Offertory

• **Sung Response** (Words will be on the screen)

• **Prayer of Dedication (Unison)**

Open our hearts, Loving God, to your generous grace. Open our hands to be generous and gracious. Make use of our gifts and our lives to benefit your people everywhere we pray, in Jesus name. Amen.

Kids Time

1st Scripture Reading **Luke 15:11-19**

2nd Scripture Reading **Luke 15:20-31**

Sermon “The Prodigal God”

The Table of Our Lord

Invitation *Remembering* (On Screen)

If you are hungry, or even just curious, come and eat.

Prayers of the people and the Lord’s Prayer

• **Closing Hymn** *Children of the Heavenly Father* (NCH #487)

• **Benediction** May the road rise up to meet you.
May the wind be always at your back;
May the sun shine warm upon your land;
the snow fall soft upon your fields and until we meet again,
may God hold you in the hollow of God’s hand.
(traditional Gaelic blessing)

Postlude

• *Please stand if you are able*

ANNOUNCEMENTS

Liturgists: Sherri Roberts

Radio Sponsor this week: Rod & Carol Hehenberger in memory of Carol's father, Ray Jensen

If you would like to sponsor a radio broadcast call the church office at 608-643-8387 to check on available dates. Cost is now at \$90.00/week. Your support of this important ministry is much appreciated.

Address Changes—If your phone number, mailing or email address changes please send the new address to the church office so we can keep our records up to date.

The One Great Hour of Sharing is an ongoing ministry of the United Church of Christ supporting people experiencing hunger, thirst, disaster or crisis around the world. See the enclosed pamphlet in today's bulletin for more information. We will be receiving the OGHs Offering next Sunday, March 26. Thanks for being generous.

We are in need of volunteers for Mobile Meals delivery during the week of March 20th. If you can help out please put your name on the sign up sheet in the foyer. Thank you.

We will have a very full Lenten season at First Church this year. You will find the schedule for the season in today's bulletin and a longer explanation of what's coming in the February Scoop The soup will be served at 5:30 pm and the conversations begin by (or maybe before) 6:00 pm. And if you can make a good pot of soup or bake a great loaf of bread contact Tammie Huerth or Shirley Lendved to offer your help.

From our Stock the Schools campaign—suggested donations for March: Food items: Individual ritz cracker type packages or similar
Personal items: body wash, bar soap, men's and women's deodorant
Your generous donations are greatly appreciated by everyone. Please drop your donations off in the red tote outside the educational doors during office hours (Monday-Friday 8am–Noon) or inside during Sunday worship. Thanks for your help.

This is the last Sunday for ordering t-shirts and supporting the Sauk High School GSA. Order forms are in the foyer. The forms and your check can be given to anyone on the ONA Committee or to Brigitta Brickl. Thank you.

The Child Protective Services office supports parents and caregivers in keeping kids safe in their homes. They are looking for donations of the following items. If you can help out bring your donation to church and we will see they get delivered: Baby Gates, Door/Window Alarms, Cabinet Locks, Outlet Covers, Baby Monitors, Diapers, Pull-ups, Baby Wipes, Convertible Car Seats, Portable Play Yard/Playpen. For questions or information contact Melanie Sommerfield at: 608-355-4299 Melanie.Sommerfield@saukcountywi.gov. Thank you.

Church Offering Update:

Monthly Offering Status:	
Monthly Budget:	\$ 15,262
February offering:	\$ <u>13,865</u>
Net:	\$ (1,397)

Totals for the Year:	
Offering budget thru Feb:	\$ 30,525
Offering collected thru Feb:	\$ 27,487
Expenses thru Feb:	\$ <u>31,566</u>
Net:	\$ (4,079)

First UCC Welcome Statement:

“Come to me,” Jesus said, “all who are weary and carrying heavy burdens, and I will give you rest” (Matthew 11:28)

Reflecting the friendship of God toward all Creation, First United Church of Christ—Sauk City is an Open and Affirming congregation. We welcome all persons—of any sexual orientation, gender identity or expression, race, age, family structure, faith background, ability or economic circumstance. We recognize every person as a child of God, welcome all to worship and serve with us and consider all who come to be a necessary part of this fellowship with all its privileges and responsibilities. “No matter who you are, how you identify, who you love, or where you are on life's journey, know that you are loved by God and you are welcome here.”

Luke 15:11-19

Then Jesus said, "There was a man who had two sons. The younger of them said to his father, "Father, give me the share of the property that will belong to me.' So he divided his property between them. A few

days later the younger son gathered all he had and traveled to a distant country, and there he squandered his property in dissolute living. When he had spent everything, a severe famine took place throughout that country, and he began to be in need.

So he went and hired himself out to one of the citizens of that country, who sent him to his fields to feed the pigs. He would gladly have filled himself with the pods that the pigs were eating; and no one gave him anything.

But when he came to himself he said, "How many of my father's hired hands have bread enough and to spare, but here I am dying of hunger! I will get up and go to my father, and I will say to him, "Father, I have sinned against heaven and before you; I am no longer worthy to be called your son; treat me like one of your hired hands."

Luke 15:20-31

So he set off and went to his father. But while he was still far off, his father saw him and was filled with compassion; he ran and put his arms around him and kissed him. Then the son said to him, "Father, I have sinned against heaven and before you; I am no longer worthy to be called your son."

But the father said to his slaves, "Quickly, bring out a robe —the best one — and put it on him; put a ring on his finger and sandals on his feet. And get the fatted calf and kill it, and let us eat and celebrate; for this son of mine was dead and is alive again; he was lost and is found!" And they began to celebrate.

"Now his elder son was in the field; and when he came and approached the house, he heard music and dancing. He called one of the slaves and asked what was going on. He replied, "Your brother has come, and your father has killed the fatted calf, because he has got him back safe and sound." Then he became angry and refused to go in.

His father came out and began to plead with him. But he answered his father, "Listen! For all these years I have been working like a slave for you, and I have never disobeyed your command; yet you have never given me even a young goat so that I might celebrate with my friends. But when this son of yours came back, who has devoured your property with prostitutes, you killed the fatted calf for him!"

Then the father said to him, "Son, you are always with me, and all that is mine is yours. But we had to celebrate and rejoice, because this brother of yours was dead and has come to life; he was lost and has been found."



First United Church of Christ

Schedule for the Season of Lent

- Wednesday, March 22nd 6:00pm
- Wednesday, March 29th 6:00pm

We will provide a simple meal of soup and bread in the fellowship hall at **5:30 pm**, followed by conversations on topics to be determined, for the five Wednesdays in March. All are Welcome, please join us on this Lenten journey.

Maundy Thursday - April 6, 6:00 pm

Good Friday - April 7, 1:30 pm