

First Sunday of Lent

February 26, 2023

10:00 A.M.



For Your Contemplation:

“The purpose of Lent is not expiation, to satisfy the divine justice, but above all a preparation to rejoice in God’s love. And the preparation consists in receiving the gift of God’s mercy – a gift which we receive in so far as we open our hearts to it, casting out what cannot remain in the same room with mercy.

Now one of the things we must cast out first of all is fear. Fear narrows the little entrance of our heart. It shrinks up our capacity to love. It freezes up our power to give ourselves. If we were terrified of God as an inexorable judge, we would not confidently await God’s mercy, or approach God trustfully in prayer. Our peace, our joy in Lent are a guarantee of grace.” . . . Thomas Merton in *Seasons of Celebration*

“The devil is in our midst. And like Jesus before us we are in a wilderness of temptations.”
. . . from the sermon

Prelude *Lenten Meditation* (Ola Gjeilo)

Ringing of the Chime

Welcome and Informal Moments

This is the day the Lord has made; let us rejoice and be glad in it! Psalm 112:1-10

Choral Introit *Jesus, Remember Me*

Invitation to Worship

One: Lent calls us to journey along the edge, to anticipate that final trip to Jerusalem.

Many: Lent calls us to the cutting edge, when the wheat falls to the ground and new life comes forth; the cutting of a new covenant.

One: Lent calls us not only to give up something, but also to take upon ourselves a community of intention of true participation in the mystery of God-with-us.

Many: Lent calls us to corporate penitence, accountability, and preparation.

*Gathering Hymn *Jesus, Tempted in the Dessert* (please see insert)

**All who are able may stand.*

***Unison Prayer of Invocation**

As we observe the season of Lent we find ourselves standing beneath the cross of Jesus, and it is a sobering experience, for the cross judges both our world and our individual lives. Let us join together with our Prayer of Confession.

Gracious God, we acknowledge that when the going gets rough, we begin to assert ourselves and our own needs and we pull back from community.

Like the Israelites in the desert, we murmur and complain; we criticize and blame. In Your compassion, forgive us; help us, through the grace of Jesus Christ, to maintain our unity of purpose and commitment even in the wilderness days. For it is in Christ's name that we pray.

Through Christ the dividing walls have been broken down.

We have been handed the hope that we can live our lives in new ways.

Such a gift surely sets us free!

We are free! And we will rise as God's freely chosen ones, shining forth in the world with love! AMEN.

Scripture *Genesis 2:15-17: 3:1-7, Matthew 4:1-11*

Libby Mooney, Reader

Sermon *"Unceasing Temptation"*

Rev. David C. Myers

Text: [After His baptism] "Then Jesus was led up by the Spirit into the wilderness to be tempted by the devil." . . . Matthew 4:1

*Hymn *Jesus Walked This Lonesome Valley*

No. 191

Joys and Concerns

One: Come near to the Lord.

All: Lord, be with us this day.

One: Lift your sorrows and joys to the Lord.

All: Lord, hear the cries of our hearts.

One: Come, rest in the love and mercy of God.

All: Bless us, O Lord, that we may be blessings for others in Your name.

Pastoral Prayer

Silence

Lord's Prayer

**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 debts, as we forgive our debtors. And lead us not into
temptation but deliver us from evil: For thine is the kingdom, and the power,
and the glory, forever. Amen.**

Prayer Response O Lord, Hear My Prayer

Invitation to Generosity

Choral Anthem/Offertory *Like a River in My Soul* (Tim Osiek)

*Doxology

**Praise God from whom all blessings flow;
Praise God, all creatures here below;
Praise God for all that love has done;
Creator, Christ, and Spirit, One. Amen**

*Prayer of Dedication and Thanksgiving

**We dedicate our lives and all that we have to the work of life, of love, of peace.
Receive our gifts and lead us in wisdom and courage. Amen.**

*Closing Hymn *Precious Lord, Take my Hand* No. 470

*Benediction

Sung Benediction

*Go now in peace. Never be afraid.
God will go with you each hour of every day.
Go now in faith, steadfast, strong and true.
Know He will guide you in all you do.
Go now in love, and show you believe.
Reach out to others so all the world can see.
God will be there watching from above.
Go now in peace, in faith, and in love.*

Postlude

(Ludivico Einaudi)



First Congregational Church

UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST

Wiscasset, Maine 04578

(207) 882-7544

www.uccwiscasset.org



First Congregational Church

We welcome you to the First Congregational Church of Wiscasset.
We are an open and affirming congregation and are open theologically,
growing spiritually, and concerned socially.



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Those serving you today:

Reader: Libby Mooney

Ushers: Mary and Vivian McKinney

Coming Up This Week:

Sunday, February 26:	Worship 10am Youth Group, 11:30 – 12:15
Monday, February 27:	Mah Jongg, 6:00pm – 8:30pm
Tuesday, February 28:	250 th Committee Mtg, 10:00am Sheepscot Valley Chorus, 7:00pm – 9:00pm
Wednesday, March 1:	Organ Society, 9:30am
Thursday, March 2:	3:00pm Chimes practice 4:00pm Choir practice
Sunday, March 5:	Worship 10am Summerfest Meeting following Worship No Youth Group

Minister: Rev. David C. Myers

Music Director and Organist: Joel Pierce

Sexton: Mary McKinney

Office Administrator: Ted Gilbert

First Congregational Church (UCC)

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Jesus, Tempted in the Desert

Written by Herman G. Stuemple, Jr. sung to the tune Ebenezer (# 530 in our Hymnal)
This Hymn comes from **The Faith We Sing**, 2000. Abingdon Press.

Jesus, tempted in the desert, lonely, hungry, filled with dread:
“Use your power,” the tempter tells Him; “Turn these barren rocks to bread!”
“Not alone by bread,” He answers, “Can the human heart be filled.
Only by the Word that calls is our deepest hunger stilled!”

Jesus, tempted at the temple, high above its ancient wall:
“Throw yourself from lofty turret; angels wait to break Your fall!”
Jesus shuns such empty marvels, feats that fickle crowds request:
“God, Whose grace protects, preserves us, we must never vainly test.”

Jesus, tempted on the mountain by the lure of vast domain:
“Fall before me! Be my servant! Glory, fame, you’re sure to gain!”
Jesus sees the dazzling visions, turns His eyes another way:
“God alone deserves our homage! God alone will I obey!”

When we face temptation’s power, lonely, struggling, filled with dread,
Christ Who knew the tempter’s hour, come and be our living bread.
By Your grace, protect, preserve us, lest we fall Your trust betray.
Yours, above all other voices, be the Word we hear, obey.

Genesis 2:15-17

¹⁵The Lord God took the man and put him in the garden of Eden to till it and keep it. ¹⁶And the Lord God commanded the man, ‘You may freely eat of every tree of the garden; ¹⁷but of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil you shall not eat, for in the day that you eat of it you shall die.’

Genesis 3:1-7

The First Sin and Its Punishment

3 Now the serpent was more crafty than any other wild animal that the Lord God had made. He said to the woman, ‘Did God say, “You shall not eat from any tree in the garden?”?’ ²The woman said to the serpent, ‘We may eat of the fruit of the trees in the garden; ³but God said, “You shall not eat of the fruit of the tree that is in the middle of the garden, nor shall you touch it, or you shall die.”’ ⁴But the serpent said to the woman, ‘You will not die; ⁵for God knows that when you eat of it your eyes will be opened, and you will be like God,^[a] knowing good and evil.’ ⁶So when the woman saw that the tree was good for food, and that it was a delight to the eyes, and that the tree was to be desired to make one wise, she took of its fruit and ate; and she also gave some to her husband, who was with her, and he ate. ⁷Then the eyes of both were opened, and they knew that they were naked; and they sewed fig leaves together and made loincloths for themselves.

Matthew 4:1-11

The Temptation of Jesus

4 Then Jesus was led up by the Spirit into the wilderness to be tempted by the devil. ² He fasted for forty days and forty nights, and afterwards he was famished. ³ The tempter came and said to him, ‘If you are the Son of God, command these stones to become loaves of bread.’ ⁴ But he answered, ‘It is written,

“One does not live by bread alone,
but by every word that comes from the mouth of God.”

⁵ Then the devil took him to the holy city and placed him on the pinnacle of the temple, ⁶ saying to him, ‘If you are the Son of God, throw yourself down; for it is written,

“He will command his angels concerning you”,
and “On their hands they will bear you up,
so that you will not dash your foot against a stone.”

⁷ Jesus said to him, ‘Again it is written, “Do not put the Lord your God to the test.”’

⁸ Again, the devil took him to a very high mountain and showed him all the kingdoms of the world and their splendour; ⁹ and he said to him, ‘All these I will give you, if you will fall down and worship me.’ ¹⁰ Jesus said to him, ‘Away with you, Satan! for it is written,

“Worship the Lord your God,
and serve only him.”

¹¹ Then the devil left him, and suddenly angels came and waited on him.