First Sunday in Lent
March 9, 2025
10:15 AM
Theme: Stranger & Neighbor

Intro Paragraph for bulletin:
This parable begins and ends with the question, "Who is my neighbor?" and the answer is surprisingly, "the stranger." The Samaritan, whose place of worship and customs are different from the lawyer who questions Jesus, is both a stranger and a neighbor to the man who was beaten and left in a ditch. In our world, many of our physical neighbors are strangers to us, and many of our neighbors—those closest to us—feel like strangers in divisive political climates. If we align our intentions and actions, then maybe we need to reconsider who we label as "stranger," and ask ourselves if we have acted as good neighbors.

+ GATHERING +

The Holy Spirit calls us together as the people of God.

WELCOME & ANNOUNCEMENTS

PRELUDE Arioso - Lani Smith

CALL TO WORSHIP
Here in this place, we can ask big questions.
Who is my neighbor?
How can I help?
What do I have to learn?
Where is God in it all?
Here in this place, we can ask big questions.
So may we listen. May we learn.
May we stay curious, and may we look for God.
This is our invitation to lean in.
Let us worship the God who meets us
in between the big questions we ask
and the answers we seek.

HYMN ELW 327 Through the Night of Doubt and Sorrow vs. 1-2

GREETING
The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, the love of God
and the communion of the Holy Spirit be with you all.
And also with you.

CONFESSION AND FORGIVENESS

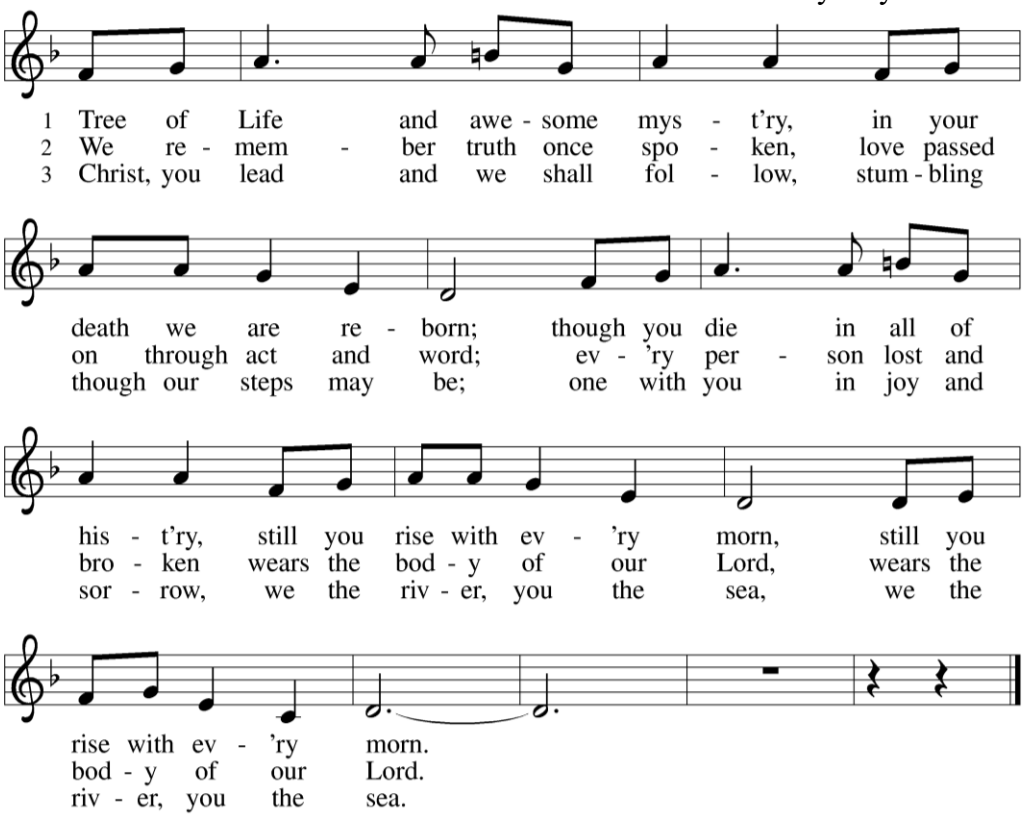
Our faith tells us to love our neighbor as we love ourselves, but you and I know that is often easier said than done. Fortunately for us, prayer can be a tool for transformation. When we are honest before God and each other, we open the door to growth and change. So join me in the prayer of confession. Join me now, so that tomorrow, we will be even better at loving our neighbors as ourselves.

Let us pray:

Holy God, you have told us to love our neighbors as ourselves, but we get tripped up on logistics. We want to know: who is our neighbor? Do we have to love the stranger? Must we have compassion for our enemy? Forgive our human tendency to create exceptions in the face of love. Rewire our hearts so that we might see the face of a neighbor in every stranger we pass. With hope we pray, Amen.

Family of faith,
when we set limits on love,
God loves extravagantly.
When we forget that we are neighbors,
God claims us as God's own.
When we judge, hold back, or harm,
God surrounds us with grace.
There is nothing we can do or leave undone
that could separate us from the love of God.
This is the good news of the gospel. Thanks be to God! Amen.

HYMN OF PRAISE ELW 334 Tree of Life and Awesome Mystery



PRAYER OF THE DAY
Gracious God…In the name of the One who never stops speaking to us, we pray **Amen.**

+ WORD +

God speaks to us in scripture reading, preaching, and song.

READING: Psalm 25:1-10

To you, O LORD,
I lift up my soul.
My God, I put my trust in you; let me not be put to shame,
nor let my enemies triumph over me.
Let none who look to you be put to shame;
rather let those be put to shame who are treacherous.
Show me your ways, O LORD,
and teach me your paths.
Lead me in your truth and teach me,
for you are the God of my salvation; in you have I trusted all the day long.
Remember, O LORD, your compassion and love,
for they are from everlasting.
Remember not the sins of my youth and my transgressions;
remember me according to your steadfast love and for the sake of your goodness, O LORD.
You are gracious and upright, O LORD;
therefore you teach sinners in your way.
You lead the lowly in justice
and teach the lowly your way.
All your paths, O LORD, are steadfast love and faithfulness
to those who keep your covenant and your testimonies.

The Word of the Lord.
Thanks be to God.

GOSPEL ACCLAMATION

GOSPEL: Luke 10:25-37

At the beginning of the reading:
The holy Gospel according to Luke.
Glory to you, O Lord.

At the conclusion of the reading:
This is the gospel of the Lord.
Praise to you, O Christ.

SERMON

HYMN OF THE DAY I Saw A Stranger

AFFIRMATION OF FAITH
Church, if God asked you, “Who is your neighbor?”
what would you say?
We would say,
every child, every person,
every weeping willow,
and every morning lark.
Every freckled face,
every wrinkled pair of hands,
every tail-wagging dog,
and every crisp ripe apple.
We would say,
we are connected—
to one another, to all of God’s creation.
There are no strangers in God’s house.
We are all family here.
I think God would delight in that answer. For it is said,
“You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart,
with all your soul,
with all your strength,
with all your mind,
and you shall love your neighbor as yourself.”
We believe. Help our unbelief. Amen.

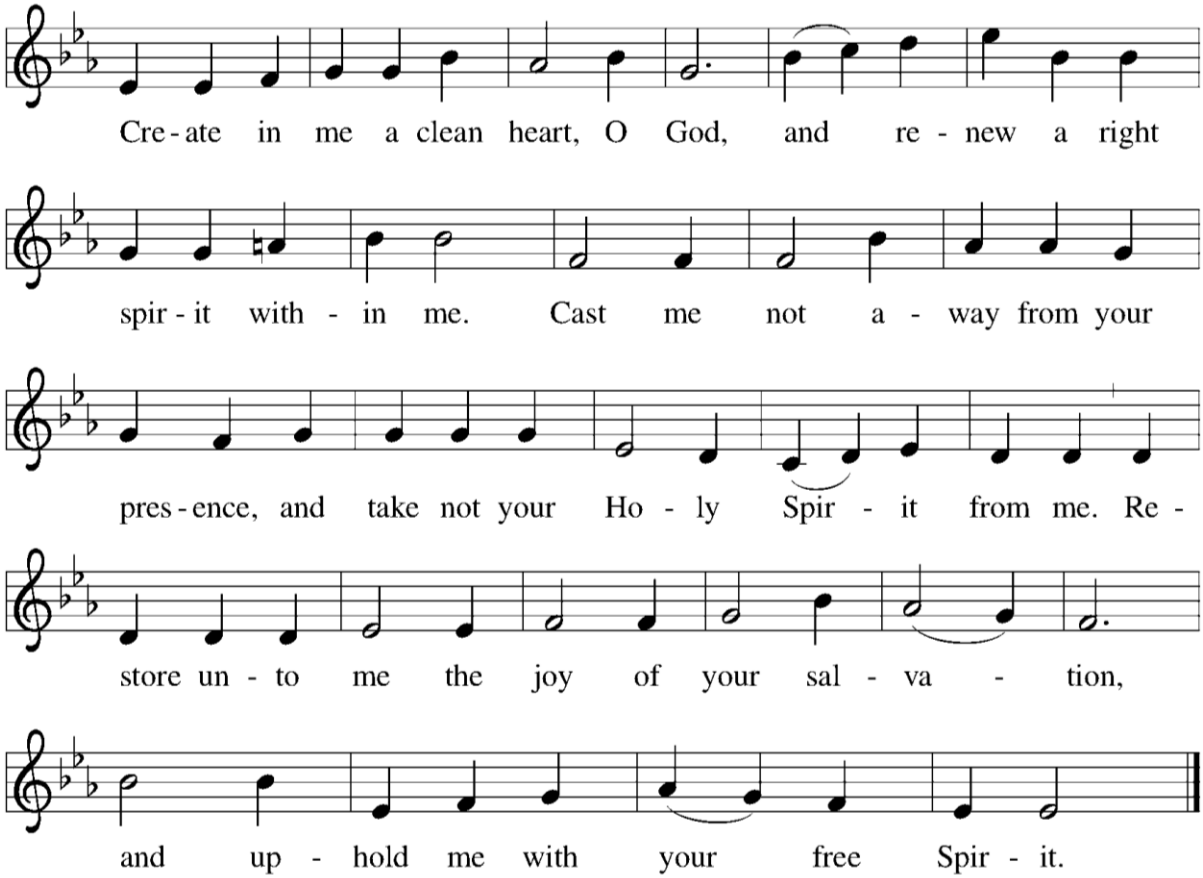
OFFERING

MUSICAL OFFERING Pass Me Not - William H. Doane, setting by Lloyd Larson

Hymn text for reflection:

Pass me not, O gentle Savior;
hear my humble cry.
While on others Thou art calling,
do not pass me by.
Savior, Savior, hear my humble cry.
While on others Thou art calling,
do not pass me by.
- Fanny Crosby, 1868

OFFERTORY



OFFERING PRAYER

Gracious Provider, you set your immense treasures among us, opening your heart to the world. As we prepare to feast on your bountiful love, deepen our commitment to sharing those treasures with others, through our Savior, Jesus Christ. **Amen.**

PRAYERS OF THE PEOPLE

Each prayer petition will end with the phrase:

God, in your mercy,

receive our prayer.

The prayers conclude:

Receive the prayers of your people and draw all things together in your love, in the name of Jesus, who leads us from death to life.

Amen.

LORD'S PRAYER

As Jesus taught us, we are bold to pray.

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; and lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil. For thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, forever and ever. Amen.

+ SENDING +

God blesses us and sends us in mission to the world.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

BENEDICTION
As you leave this place,
may you find God in every messy middle.
May you know that the world is bigger than two sides.
May you trust that you are made in the image of God,
and therefore, you contain multitudes.
May you move through this world with an open heart,
a curious mind, and the confidence that you do not go alone.
God – Father, Son and Spirit – is with you in the mountains,
in the valleys,
and everywhere in between.
Amen

SENDING HYMN ELW 327 Through the Night of Doubt and Sorrow vs. 3-4

DISMISSAL
Go in peace, trusting that God will meet you
in between intention and action.
Thanks be to God.

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PRAYER LIST

Please continue to keep the following people connected to our congregation in your prayers: Bob Moran, Leonard & Martha Gibeon, David Mounts, Ruthie Jadick, Jill Iris, Ed Schanely, Steve Keyser, Andrew Breuninger, Marie Wolfe, Joe Tursi, Brooks Maurer, the Stauffer family, Diane Quinn, Tiffany Reber, Bill Hutt, Renee Fels, Rebecca Jellen, Ardythe Mussleman and Sarah Keller.

Mark Your Calendar

Monday, March 10	5:45pm Lent Soup and Study
	7:30pm Council Meeting
Wednesday, March 12	7pm Midweek Worship at New Goshenhoppen UCC
Sunday, March 16	8am Worship
	9am Faith Formation
	10:15am Worship

Lent Soup & Study with Friedens UCC Monday, March 10 through April 14 at 5:45 PM On Monday evenings in Lent, we will gather for a simple soup supper and then discussion on the book 12 T*iny Things: Simple Ways to Live a More Intentional Life* by Heidi Barr & Ellie Roscher. Books are available for purchase in the church office for $13, as are bookmarks with the reading schedule for anyone who prefers to purchase the book on Kindle or Audible.

First Communion Workshop Saturday, March 22 9:30-11:30 AM
This workshop will be geared towards elementary age students, Grades 2-5. A parent/guardian is expected to attend the workshop with each student.
ATTENTION PARENTS WITH STUDENTS OLDER THAN 5TH GRADE!
Do you have a student who is in middle school who has never received first communion training? A special workshop geared for older students will be held the same day – Saturday, March 22 – from 1-3 PM. Students who attend either workshop will receive the first communion on Palm Sunday, April 13 at 10:15 AM.

Our mid-week Lenten worship this year focuses on the "I AM" statements in the Gospel of John for the sake of intentional reflection on and proclamation of God becoming flesh.
As we did last year, we will join the Reformed churches in the Upper Perkiomen Valley in our observance of Lent, including Ash Wednesday and Good Friday – and new this year, the Easter Vigil.
May our journey through Lent together as community in Christ prepare your heart and mind for the great celebration of Easter!

Wednesday, March 12 – Pastor Steve Myren, preacher
7 PM Service at New Goshenhoppen UCC, East Greenville

Wednesday, March 19 – Pastor Becky Schanely, preacher
7 PM Service at St. Paul's Lutheran Church, Red Hill

Wednesday, March 26 – Pastor Kevin Compton, preacher
7 PM Service at Pennsburg UCC, Pennsburg

Wednesday, April 2 – Pastor Nick Pence, preacher
7 PM Service at Friedens UCC, Sumneytown

Wednesday, April 9 – Pastor Serena Sellers, preacher
7 PM Service at Palm Schwenkfelder Church, Palm

Good Friday, April 18 – Noon and 7 PM services
at St. Mark's Lutheran Church, Pennsburg

Easter Vigil, April 19 – Pastor David Williams, preacher
7 PM Service at New Goshenhoppen UCC, East Greenville