



*Central and Algonquin United
Methodist Churches*

Sunday, March 22, 2026

With Pastor Marty Johnston

Mission Statement:

**Connecting all people to God by building bridges
of caring, outreach, and acceptance.**

Central United Methodist
Pastor Marty Johnston
March 22, 2026
Liturgical Colors: Purple
Fifth Sunday in Lent
CCLI License# 3999519

Ushers/Greeters: Tom Brown, Don Montag

Liturgist: Sherry Hutchins

PRELUDE “Theme for Worship” Thygerson

CHORAL INTROIT “ Lord, Who Throughout These Forty Days” Hernaman / arr. Buchanan

WELCOME/MISSION STATEMENT

Connecting all people to God by building bridges of
caring, outreach, and acceptance

***Call to Worship:** (Inspired by Psalm 130)

Leader: Sometimes we come to worship full of gratitude.

Other times we come carrying worry, regret, or weariness.

Psalm 130 reminds us that wherever we are starting from, we
can call out to God.

People: Out of the depths we cry to You, O Lord.

Leader: The good news of our faith is this: when we cry out to God,
we are not ignored. God hears us, welcomes us, and meets us
with mercy.

People: With the Lord there is steadfast love.

Leader: So today we wait for the Lord—not with despair, but with
hope.

People: We wait for the Lord more than watchmen wait for the morning.

Leader: And just as surely as morning comes after the night, God's grace rises to meet us again.

People: Let us worship the Lord with hope and trust.

*OPENING HYMN

“Great is Thy Faithfulness”

UMH 140

GREAT IS THY FAITHFULNESS

*PASTOR'S OPENING PRAYER *

Faithful God, we come to You this morning from many different places. Some of us arrive with gratitude and joy. Others come carrying worry, grief, or quiet burdens we have not shared with anyone.

But wherever we begin, You meet us with steadfast love.

You are the God who hears when we cry out from the depths. You are the God who is not afraid to step into our sorrow. And You are the God who speaks life even in places that feel like tombs.

As we worship today, quiet the noise within us. Open our hearts to Your presence. Help us trust that even when hope feels delayed, You are still at work.

Receive our prayers, our songs, and our lives. And remind us again that Your faithfulness never fails.

Through Christ our Lord we pray.

TIME FOR YOUNG CHRISTIANS

CHOIR ANTHEM

“ Lord of the Dance”

adapted by S. Carter

INTRODUCTION TO SCRIPTURE READING:

Before we hear today's Gospel, a brief word about what we're about to read.

John chapter 11 tells the story of the raising of Lazarus. It is one of the longest and most powerful narratives in the Gospels. In it we see grief, confusion, waiting, faith, and ultimately the power of Jesus to bring life where everyone else sees only finality.

As we listen, notice the different responses people have to Jesus—questions, tears, hope, even doubt. And notice especially this: Jesus does not stand far away from human sorrow. He enters it.

So let us listen now for God's word to us in John chapter 11.

FIRST SCRIPTURE READING John 11

Now a certain *man* was sick, Lazarus of Bethany, the town of Mary and her sister Martha. ² It was *that* Mary who anointed the Lord with fragrant oil and wiped His feet with her hair, whose brother Lazarus was sick. ³ Therefore the sisters sent to Him, saying, "Lord, behold, he whom You love is sick."

⁴ When Jesus heard *that*, He said, "This sickness is not unto death, but for the glory of God, that the Son of God may be glorified through it."

⁵ Now Jesus loved Martha and her sister and Lazarus. ⁶ So, when He heard that he was sick, He stayed two more days in the place where He was. ⁷ Then after this He said to *the* disciples, "Let us go to Judea again."

⁸ *The* disciples said to Him, "Rabbi, lately the Jews sought to stone You, and are You going there again?"

⁹ Jesus answered, "Are there not twelve hours in the day? If anyone walks in the day, he does not stumble, because he sees the light of

- this world. ¹⁰ But if one walks in the night, he stumbles, because the light is not in him.” ¹¹ These things He said, and after that He said to them, “Our friend Lazarus sleeps, but I go that I may wake him up.”
- ¹² Then His disciples said, “Lord, if he sleeps he will get well.” ¹³ However, Jesus spoke of his death, but they thought that He was speaking about taking rest in sleep.
- ¹⁴ Then Jesus said to them plainly, “Lazarus is dead. ¹⁵ And I am glad for your sakes that I was not there, that you may believe. Nevertheless let us go to him.”
- ¹⁶ Then Thomas, who is called the Twin, said to his fellow disciples, “Let us also go, that we may die with Him.”
- ¹⁷ So when Jesus came, He found that he had already been in the tomb four days. ¹⁸ Now Bethany was near Jerusalem, about two miles away. ¹⁹ And many of the Jews had joined the women around Martha and Mary, to comfort them concerning their brother.
- ²⁰ Then Martha, as soon as she heard that Jesus was coming, went and met Him, but Mary was sitting in the house. ²¹ Now Martha said to Jesus, “Lord, if You had been here, my brother would not have died. ²² But even now I know that whatever You ask of God, God will give You.”
- ²³ Jesus said to her, “Your brother will rise again.”
- ²⁴ Martha said to Him, “I know that he will rise again in the resurrection at the last day.”
- ²⁵ Jesus said to her, “I am the resurrection and the life. He who believes in Me, though he may die, he shall live. ²⁶ And whoever lives and believes in Me shall never die. Do you believe this?”
- ²⁷ She said to Him, “Yes, Lord, I believe that You are the Christ, the Son of God, who is to come into the world.”
- ²⁸ And when she had said these things, she went her way and secretly called Mary her sister, saying, “The Teacher has come and is calling for you.” ²⁹ As soon as she heard *that*, she arose quickly and came to Him. ³⁰ Now Jesus had not yet come into the town, but was in the place where Martha met Him. ³¹ Then the Jews who were with her in the house, and comforting her, when they saw that Mary rose up

quickly and went out, followed her, saying, “She is going to the tomb to weep there.”

³² Then, when Mary came where Jesus was, and saw Him, she fell down at His feet, saying to Him, “Lord, if You had been here, my brother would not have died.”

³³ Therefore, when Jesus saw her weeping, and the Jews who came with her weeping, He groaned in the spirit and was troubled. ³⁴ And He said, “Where have you laid him?”

They said to Him, “Lord, come and see.”

³⁵ Jesus wept. ³⁶ Then the Jews said, “See how He loved him!”

³⁷ And some of them said, “Could not this Man, who opened the eyes of the blind, also have kept this man from dying?”

³⁸ Then Jesus, again groaning in Himself, came to the tomb. It was a cave, and a stone lay against it. ³⁹ Jesus said, “Take away the stone.”

Martha, the sister of him who was dead, said to Him, “Lord, by this time there is a stench, for he has been *dead* four days.”

⁴⁰ Jesus said to her, “Did I not say to you that if you would believe you would see the glory of God?” ⁴¹ Then they took away the stone *from the place* where the dead man was lying. And Jesus lifted up *His* eyes and said, “Father, I thank You that You have heard Me. ⁴² And I know that You always hear Me, but because of the people who are standing by I said *this*, that they may believe that You sent Me.” ⁴³ Now when He had said these things, He cried with a loud voice, “Lazarus, come forth!” ⁴⁴ And he who had died came out bound hand and foot with graveclothes, and his face was wrapped with a cloth. Jesus said to them, “Loose him, and let him go.”

⁴⁵ Then many of the Jews who had come to Mary, and had seen the things Jesus did, believed in Him. ⁴⁶ But some of them went away to the Pharisees and told them the things Jesus did. ⁴⁷ Then the chief priests and the Pharisees gathered a council and said, “What shall we do? For this Man works many signs. ⁴⁸ If we let Him alone like this, everyone will believe in Him, and the Romans will come and take away both our place and nation.”

⁴⁹ And one of them, Caiaphas, being high priest that year, said to them, “You know nothing at all, ⁵⁰ nor do you consider that it is expedient for us that one man should die for the people, and not that the whole nation should perish.” ⁵¹ Now this he did not say on his own *authority*; but being high priest that year he prophesied that Jesus would die for the nation, ⁵² and not for that nation only, but also that He would gather together in one the children of God who were scattered abroad.

⁵³ Then, from that day on, they plotted to put Him to death. ⁵⁴ Therefore Jesus no longer walked openly among the Jews, but went from there into the country near the wilderness, to a city called Ephraim, and there remained with His disciples.

⁵⁵ And the Passover of the Jews was near, and many went from the country up to Jerusalem before the Passover, to purify themselves. ⁵⁶ Then they sought Jesus, and spoke among themselves as they stood in the temple, “What do you think—that He will not come to the feast?” ⁵⁷ Now both the chief priests and the Pharisees had given a command, that if anyone knew where He was, he should report *it*, that they might seize Him.

Leader: The Word of God for the People of God

All: Thanks be to God

SERMON

Where the Cross Goes

Big Idea: The cross reveals a God who does not avoid death and sorrow—but enters them and begins something new.

INVITATION TO OFFERING

As we follow Christ, who walks even into the hard places of the world bringing life and hope, we now offer our gifts so that His love may continue to reach those who need it most.

OFFERTORY

“Lenten Meditation”

Stairs

DOXOLOGY

UMH 95
OLD HUNDREDTH

Praise God, from whom all blessings flow;
Praise him, all creatures here below;
Praise him above, ye heavenly host;
Praise Father, Son, and Holy Ghost. Amen.

***PRAYER OF DEDICATION**

Gracious God, receive these gifts as signs that our trust rests not in appearance or applause, but in Your power made known through Christ crucified. Use them in ways that may seem small to the world, yet strong in Your hands.

HYMN

“Now the Green Blade Riseth”

UMH 311
NOW THE GREEN BLADE RISETH

PRAYERS OF THE PEOPLE,

Leader: Lord, in your Mercy

All: Hear our prayer.

Pastor:

Trusting the God who meets us in our sorrow, who calls life out of places that seem finished, and who reveals His mercy through the cross, let us pray for the Church, the world, and all who are in need.

For the Church

Faithful God, strengthen Your Church to follow Christ wherever the cross leads. Help us bear witness to hope, compassion, and truth in a world that longs for new life.

Lord, in Your mercy, hear our prayer.

For the World

God of peace, where war and violence bring suffering and fear, guide leaders toward wisdom, restraint, and reconciliation. We pray for peaceful resolution to conflicts in Europe, the Middle East, and wherever lives are threatened by war.

Lord, in Your mercy, hear our prayer.

For Justice and Wisdom in Public Life

God of mercy and justice, grant wisdom to those shaping policies that affect the vulnerable, especially concerning immigration and the movement of peoples. Help nations act with fairness, compassion, and respect for the dignity of every human life.

Lord, in Your mercy, hear our prayer.

For Our Churches and Denomination

Steadfast Lord, guide Your Church in every place and across every tradition. Strengthen our congregations and leaders with humility, unity, and courage as we seek to follow Christ faithfully.

Lord, in Your mercy, hear our prayer.

For Our Community and Congregation

Good Shepherd, walk with our community through every joy and every valley. Help us care for one another with patience, generosity, and hope.

Lord, in Your mercy, hear our prayer.

For Those in Need

Compassionate Christ, draw near to all who suffer in body, mind, or spirit. Bring healing to the sick, comfort to the grieving, and courage to those who feel surrounded by darkness.

Lord, in Your mercy, hear our prayer.

For Ourselves

Gracious God, when we feel surrounded by uncertainty, remind us that Your voice still calls life out of every tomb. Strengthen our faith and renew our hope.

Lord, in Your mercy, hear our prayer.

Pastor:

Into Your hands, O Lord, we place all for whom we pray, trusting not in our goodness but in Your mercy; through Jesus Christ our Lord, who taught us to pray:

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 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. Amen.

ANNOUNCEMENTS – March 22, 2026

Save the Date

Sun., Mar. 29th – Palm Sunday

Thur., Apr. 2nd – Maundy Thursday, 6:30pm at Algonquin UMC

Fri., Apr. 3rd – Good Friday Community Services at the
Presbyterian Church is (tentatively 1:00pm)

Sun., Apr. 5th – Easter Sunday breakfast will be at CUMC in the Fellowship Hall @ 9:15 AM.

Mon., Apr., 20th – Rebecca Circle meeting at 1:30pm

Wed., Apr. 15th - Family Night at CUMC Fellowship Hall @ 5:30 PM – 7 PM. Come enjoy a tasty dinner, fun activities, and a meaningful lesson for all ages. Bring the whole family—everyone is welcome!

The Mission/Outreach in coordination with our children will be making **Blessing Bags** for homeless. We will also include a note of encouragement from United Methodist Church. The Salvation Army will be keeping them to offer anyone who may need them.

Here are some ideas for items we wish to include.

Examples: (please buy travel or small sizes) deodorant, ChapStick, shaving cream and razors, band aids, instant oatmeal, trail mix, wool socks, hat, scarf, travel mug. If you wish to donate a gift card, we can purchase the items needed. Please pass that to either Kathy (in office), or Diane Bell....thank you.

We already have toothbrushes and toothpaste graciously donated

There will be a white basket for the items donated located upstairs outside the office, under the Church bulletin board.

**Join us for Bible Study, led by Raymond Bell,
every Sunday at 9:30 AM in the CUMC lounge
We are presently studying "The Chosen" - season 5**

Central Birthday/Anniversary

Mar., 11th – Mallory Baier **Mar., 17th** – Kathy Bankson
Mar., 21st – Paul Aikens **Mar., 23rd** – Tom Brown
Mar., 18th – Kathy & Kevin Larson (31st)



Nursery is available for infants through age 3 during worship with Mallory Baier. The nursery is located downstairs, and ushers will be happy to assist you.

***CLOSING HYMN**

“The Old Rugged Cross”

UMH 504
THE OLD RUGGED CROSS

BENEDICTION

CHORAL BENEDICTION

“Hear My Prayer O God”

Daw / Hopson

POSTLUDE

“Voice of Praise”