

Columbiana First United Methodist
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(330) 482-2382

March 1st, 2026

2nd Sunday of Lent

Prelude:

***Enter the Light of Christ**

Pastor's Welcome

Announcements:

- **Soup Sale for March, deadline for pre-orders is March 8th. Pick-up will be on March 12, 3:30 – 4:30 pm. This will be the last Soup Sale for the year.**
- **To order Easter lilies in honor or memory of loved ones, fill out the bulletin form and submit it to the offering plate or Miranda, our church secretary. Deadline for orders will be March 30th. Thank you.**

***Opening Prayer:**

Holy God, in this Lenten season, You call us to follow Jesus with trust and courage.

Quiet our hearts, open us to Your Word, and lead us in Your steadfast love. Renew us by Your Spirit and draw us closer to Christ, in whose name we pray. Amen.

***Opening Hymn: Lift High the Cross 1, 2, & 3 #159**

Call to Worship:

L: Children of God, in Lent we remember that our salvation is an unearned gift, that new life is a matter of faith, not of works.

P: We gather to lay down the burden of trying to earn our salvation.

L: Like Nicodemus, who met Jesus in the dark of night, we struggle to accept that new life is not just possible but given as a free gift of grace.

P: We gather to bring our struggles into the light and embrace God's grace with open arms.

L: Like Paul writing to the Romans, we remember that God's promise of new life has always rested on grace.

P: We gather to receive the promise of salvation by grace through faith.

L: Like the many who have followed, questioned, and grown in the faith, we submit ourselves to be formed by grace as we work out our salvation day by day.

P: We gather as people guided by the promise of new life, a promise fulfilled by Christ, whose path we follow.

Pastoral Prayer

The Lord's Prayer

Offertory:

*Doxology

#95

*Prayer of Dedication

Faithful God of New Beginnings, You call us—as You called Abraham—to trust in what we cannot yet see, to follow where You lead, even when the road is unclear.

In the shadows of our questions and the uncertainty of our understanding, You meet us with grace, not condemnation.

As Nicodemus discovered, Your love is not earned but freely given.

Receive now these gifts we offer—not as payment or proof, but as signs of our belief, our hope, and our gratitude.

Use them to share Your transforming love with a world still searching in the dark. In the name of Your Son, given in love, we pray. Amen.

Hymn of Preparation: In Christ Alone (all) (see insert)

Celebration of Communion

Apostle's Creed

Old Testament Reading: Genesis 12:1-4

Gospel Reading: John 3:1-17

Gloria Patri

#70

Message: "Stepping into the Unknown"

Pastor Cyndi

***Closing Hymn: Lead On, O King Eternal (all) #580**

*Benediction

***Sending: "God Be with You"**

*Postlude

**Indicates for the congregation to stand if you are able*

Dear Heavenly Father,

It is good to be in Your house this morning, gathered with the church family You have drawn us to. Thank You for stirring our hearts with the desire to worship, to praise, and to sit quietly before You—opening ourselves to the love, wisdom, hope, and encouragement You long to pour into us.

You are such an awesome God. You extend mercy and grace to us every single day—not because we have earned it, but because we belong to You.

We pray that we have seen Your hand in the moments of this past week:

- Your intervention when situations were unclear.
- Your healing when doctors were unsure of the cause of our pain or sickness.
- Your wisdom when decisions needed to be made.

And if we missed Your presence in those moments, open our eyes now as we pause to listen for Your voice.

Thank You for always being there making a way when the path seemed blocked, opening our eyes to solutions when anxiety clouded our vision, and surrounding us with peace when life took unexpected turns.

Thank You for being with those who needed medical care this week. We are grateful for medical teams who listened carefully and followed the wisdom You placed within them. We thank You for the technologies that help diagnose, treat, and sustain us so we can continue the journey You have set before us.

We continue to lift before You: Catlynn, Bob McMurray, Becky McMurray, Inez Corey, Judy Stouffer, Don Leonard, Betty Ruppenthal, Cora, Pastor Cyndi, and Cory.

We praise Your name for all You have done and all You are doing in each life. Continue to bring healing, comfort, and peace as we walk through our struggles and trust—fully and wholeheartedly—that You will take care of us. May it all be for Your glory.

We praise Your name for allowing Ellen to return home, and we ask that You continue to walk with her through the rest of her recovery.

We join Steve in bringing before You the student who recently felt so overwhelmed by life that they attempted to take their own life. Lord, we ask that You draw near to this individual and to all who find themselves in similar places of deep despair. Comfort them, remind them that their lives are precious and worth living, and let Your presence be felt powerfully in their hearts.

Surround them with caring people who can reflect Your love and compassion. May those who cross their paths help them see their true worth through Your eyes, bringing encouragement, hope, and understanding. We trust that You will provide support and healing for all those who are struggling, so they may rediscover the value and purpose You have placed in their lives.

We also ask for traveling mercies for Anne's nephew, placing a hedge of protection around him so he reaches his destination and returns safely.

Lord, our world heard the word war again this past weekend. Our hearts grow heavy knowing that families will be affected, and lives will be lost on both sides. We ask for Your intervention where intervention is needed. We ask for Your peace in the midst of this storm. We ask that You be seen—and that those who see You be changed—so that the evil driving this conflict will flee, and that the violence will be cut short to spare as many lives as possible.

Help us, Your Church, to have the right words when people question Your presence in times like these. May we reflect Your light in the darkness, pointing to the hope that only You can give.

In Jesus' name we pray. Amen.