

ST. JOHN UNITED CHURCH
A UNITED METHODIST/PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH (USA) COMMUNITY
WILDE LAKE INTERFAITH CENTER • COLUMBIA, MARYLAND
UNITED IN LOVE – UNITED FOR SERVICE

March 23, 2025

THIRD SUNDAY OF LENT // IN-PERSON & LIVESTREAM SERVICE

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Liturgist: Pastor Steve Nofel

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WE GATHER IN GOD’S NAME

PRELUDE

Patricia Hammer
Accompanist

WELCOME AND ANNOUNCEMENTS

OPENING SONG

“Great Is Thy Faithfulness”

GTG #39

Great is thy faithfulness, O God my Father;
there is no shadow of turning with thee.
Thou changest not; thy compassions they fail not.
As thou hast been thou forever wilt be.

Refrain:

*Great is thy faithfulness! Great is thy faithfulness!
Morning by morning, new mercies I see.
All I have needed thy hand hath provided.
Great is thy faithfulness, Lord unto me!*

Summer and winter and springtime and harvest,
sun, moon, and stars in their courses above
join with all nature in manifold witness
to thy great faithfulness, mercy, and love.

Refrain

Pardon for sin and a peace that endureth,
thine own dear presence to cheer and to guide,
strength for today and bright hope for tomorrow:
blessings all mine, with ten thousand beside!

Refrain

CALL TO WORSHIP

Children of God, what has God done for you?

God saves, provides, and holds us in God’s steadfast love.

Consider and remember: in the joyful times and in the sorrowful times, what has God done for you?

God covers us and lifts us up, protecting and empowering us with steadfast love.

When you have been like the fig tree in Jesus’ story that seems unable to produce and that everyone has given up on, what has God done for you?

God tends the soil and waters the ground, nurturing us into life with steadfast love.

Children of God, come, let us worship God who never gives up on us!

We come to worship and cling to God, for God’s steadfast love never fails!

OPENING PRAYER

**O Lord Jesus Christ, the Way, the Truth, and the Life:
Do not let us stray from you, the Way, nor to distrust you, the Truth, nor to rest in
anything other than you, the Life. Amen.**

MOMENT OF REFLECTION

ASSURANCE OF GRACE

SCRIPTURE READING #1 Psalm 63:1 – 8

¹ O God, you are my God, I seek you, my soul thirsts for you; my flesh faints for you,
as in a dry and weary land where there is no water.

² **So I have looked upon you in the sanctuary, beholding your power and
glory.**

³ Because your steadfast love is better than life, my lips will praise you.

⁴ **So I will bless you as long as I live; I will lift up my hands and call on your
name.**

⁵ My soul is satisfied as with a rich feast, and my mouth praises you with joyful lips

⁶ when I think of you on my bed, and meditate on you in the watches of the night;

⁷ **For you have been my help, and in the shadow of your wings I sing for joy.**

⁸ **My soul clings to you; your right hand upholds me.**

ANTHEM

“All Things Are Mine Since I Am Yours”
(David Lantz III)

SJU Women’s Choir

All things are mine since I am yours:
Newfound peace through trust in you.
Strength to soar on high with wings,
and joy to see my life anew.

All things are mine since I am yours:
Living for your glory, Lord,
free to drink the water of life,
no more to thirst is my reward.

All things are mine since I am yours,
and I am yours forevermore.

All things are mine since I am yours:
Full forgiveness of my sin.
Pure redemption by your blood,
no matter where in life I’ve been.

All things are mine since I am yours:
My life eternal after death.
God gave his Son that I might live
forever, past my earthly breath.

All things are mine since I am yours
And I am yours forevermore.
Lord, I am yours forevermore.

SCRIPTURE READING #2 Luke 13:1 – 9

TIME WITH YOUNG DISCIPLES

Pastor Steve Nofel

MESSAGE

“WOWZA!”

Pastor Steve Nofel

SHARING JOYS AND CONCERNS

THE LORD'S PRAYER

**Our God in heaven, hallowed be your name.
Your kingdom come, your will be done, on earth as in heaven.
Give us today our daily bread.
Forgive us our sins as we forgive those who sin against us.
Save us from the time of trial and deliver us from evil.
For the kingdom, the power, and the glory are yours now and forever. Amen.**

INVITATION AND CALL TO GENEROSITY

Pastor Steve Nofel

OFFERTORY SONG
OF REFLECTION

“Softly and Tenderly Jesus Is Calling”

GTG #418

Softly and tenderly Jesus is calling,
calling for you and for me.
See, on the portals he's waiting and watching,
watching for you and for me.

Refrain:

***"Come home, come home! You who are weary, come home."
Earnestly, tenderly, Jesus is calling,
calling, "O sinner, come home!"***

Why should we tarry when Jesus is pleading,
pleading for you and for me?
Why should we linger and heed not his mercies,
mercies for you and for me?

Refrain

O for the wonderful love he has promised,
promised for you and for me!
Though we have sinned, he has mercy and pardon,
pardon for you and for me.

Refrain

PRAYER OF GENEROSITY

Loving God, in our giving, may we reflect the love that sustains us, and may we lift one another up in times of need. Use these offerings to bring comfort to the weary and hope to the brokenhearted, just as you draw near to us in our struggles. Strengthen us to be a source of love in this world, reflecting your compassion in all we do. In Christ's name, we pray. Amen.

CLOSING SONG

“Shout to the Lord”

TFWS #2074

My Jesus, my Savior, Lord, there is none like you.
All of my days, I want to praise the wonders of your mighty love.
My comfort, my shelter, tower of refuge and strength.
Let every breath, all that I am never cease to worship you

Refrain:

*Shout to the Lord, all the earth, let us sing
power and majesty, praise to the King.
Mountains bow down and the seas will roar at the sound of your name.
I sing for joy at the work of your hands,
forever I'll love you, forever I'll stand.
Nothing compares to the promise I have in you.*

BENEDICTION

Go out into the world in peace;
have courage;
hold on to what is good;
return no one evil for evil;
strengthen the fainthearted;
support the weak and help the suffering;
honor all people;
love and serve the Lord,
rejoicing in the power of the Holy Spirit.

POSTLUDE

Patricia Hammer
Accompanist

CALENDAR: SCHEDULED FOR WEEK OF MAR 23 – MAR 30

All meetings are via Zoom (unless otherwise noted).

All meetings are open to the members and affiliates of SJU unless otherwise noted. Members are encouraged to connect to, engage, and invest in the life and leadership of this Body of Christ, the church! Contact SJUColumbia@gmail.com if you wish to receive meeting and contact information on anything below:

Sun, 3/23	8:30 am	CHRISTIAN APPLICATION
	10:30 am	WORSHIP SERVICE (<i>in-person and livestream</i>) (<i>Liturgist: Pastor Steve Nofel</i>)
	7:00 pm	SUNDAYS AT SEVEN (PM!) FELLOWSHIP
Mon, 3/24	1:15 pm	LENT BIBLE STUDY
Tue, 3/25	7:30 pm	PASTOR NOMINATING COMMITTEE
Thu, 3/27	6:00 pm	A/V TECH TEAM REHEARSAL (<i>Room 4</i>)
	7:30 pm	CHANCEL CHOIR REHEARSAL (<i>Room 4</i>)
Sat, 3/29	9:00 am	SJU MEN'S GROUP
Sun, 3/30	7:30 am	ASP SHARE SALES (<i>Room 1 lobby</i>)
	8:30 am	CHRISTIAN APPLICATION
	10:30 am	WORSHIP SERVICE (<i>in-person and livestream</i>) (<i>Scheduled liturgist: Pamela Brown</i>)
	7:00 pm	SUNDAYS AT SEVEN (PM!) FELLOWSHIP

Readings are NRSV unless otherwise noted. CEB=Common English Bible; CEV=Contemporary English Version; KJV=King James Version; MSG=The Message; NIV=New International Version; NLT=New Living Translation; TIB=The Inclusive Bible

Luke 13:1 – 9

¹At that very time there were some present who told him about the Galileans whose blood Pilate had mingled with their sacrifices. ²He asked them, 'Do you think that because these Galileans suffered in this way they were worse sinners than all other Galileans?' ³No, I tell you; but unless you repent, you will all perish as they did. ⁴Or those eighteen who were killed when the tower of Siloam fell on them—do you think that they were worse offenders than all the others living in Jerusalem? ⁵No, I tell you; but unless you repent, you will all perish just as they did.'

⁶Then he told this parable: 'A man had a fig tree planted in his vineyard; and he came looking for fruit on it and found none. ⁷So he said to the gardener, "See here! For three years I have come looking for fruit on this fig tree, and still I find none. Cut it down! Why should it be wasting the soil?" ⁸He replied, "Sir, let it alone for one more year, until I dig round it and put manure on it. ⁹If it bears fruit next year, well and good; but if not, you can cut it down.'"

