

DENNIS UNION CHURCH

an open and affirming congregation of the United Church of Christ

Seventh Sunday after the Epiphany

February 23, 2025

In essentials, unity. In nonessentials, liberty. In all things, charity. (Early disciples' motto, attributed to Rupertus Meldenius)

Bells Toll the Hour

Prelude

“Andante in D”

J.L. Krebs (1713-1780)

Welcome and Announcements

Call to Silence

*Call to Worship

Filled with curiosity and wonder, we lift our voices in praise and joy.

Sidling up to friend and stranger, we trust that you are here, O God.

Hear the prayer of our hearts this morning.

Fill us with your gentle spirit

And help us to see the promises of new possibilities

That spring forth from a life rooted and grounded in your love.

*Hymn #284

“Gather Us In”

Verses 1 & 4

Here in this place, the new light is streaming, shadows of doubt are vanished away.

See in this space our fears and our dreamings,

brought here to you in the light of this day.

Gather us in, the lost and forsaken; gather us in; our spirits inflame.

Call to us now, and we shall awaken; we shall arise at the sound of our name.

Not just in buildings, small and confining, not in some heaven, light years away,

here in this place the new light is shining;

now is God present, and now is the day.

Gather us in and hold us forever; gather us in and make us your own;

gather us in, all peoples together, fire of love in our flesh and our bone.

*Invocation

Great God of love, we praise you, for you wash away the dust of death,

you kiss away the shame of sin and anoint us with your Holy Spirit.

Pour out your blessing in this place and let your grace flow through our lives

as we spread the news of your saving love; through Jesus Christ our Lord.

Amen.

Word for the Young

Call to Confession:

O Lord, by your mercy,
Hear our prayer:

Prayer of Confession:

**Gracious God, you know what kind of people we are.
We judge others harshly and fail to see our own sin.
We look with suspicion and fear, and neglect to show hospitality to strangers.
We treasure things that are worthless and squander your precious gifts.
We withhold the grace and love that you give us so freely.
Forgive us.
Pour out your grace upon us that we might welcome the life you give. Amen.**

Silent Reflection

Assurance of Grace

I have been crucified with Christ; and it is no longer I who live, but Christ who lives in me!
The life we now live in the flesh we live by faith in the Son of God who loves us and gives himself for us.
Hear the good news!
**In Christ Jesus we are forgiven.
Thanks be to God!**

Reception of New Members

Leslie Dealy, Aubrey Egan, Annmarie Gavin, Susan & William Schirmacher,
Margaret & Philip Tyndale-Biscoe

Introduction and Questions to the Candidates

Litany of Ministry¹ (responsive)

Blessed are those who yearn for deepening more than escape;
who are not afraid to grow in spirit.

Blessed are those who take seriously the meaning of being in covenant with one another and with God and who regularly join in the celebration and learning; who come as much to minister as to be ministered unto.

Blessed are those who bring their children; who invite their friends to come along, to join in fellowship, service, learning and growth.

Blessed are those who support the church and its work by their regular, sustained, and generous giving through time, talent and resources.

Blessed are those who know that the church is often imperfect, yet are willing to constructively work and talk through with compassion the concerns that surface in living together in community.

Blessed are those who, when asked to serve, do it gladly, who realize that change is brought about through human meeting, who do the work of committees, and stay till the end.

Blessed are those who speak their minds in meetings, who can take and give constructive feedback, who keep alive their sense of humor.

Blessed are those who know that the work of the church is transformation of society; who have a vision of God's love made known in the Beloved Community transcending the present, and who do not shrink from hard work, sacrifice or change.

Blessed are they, indeed! Amen.

*Congregational Welcome

Alex Scopeletis, Board of Deacons

We welcome you with joy into the common life of this church. We promise you our friendship and prayers as we share the hopes and labors of the church of Jesus Christ. By the power of the Holy Spirit may we continue to grow together in God's knowledge and love and be witnesses of that love in the world.

Prayer

Welcome and Right Hand of Fellowship

Anthem
Colligan

"O, Christ, Surround Me"

R.B.

Gospel Reading

Luke 7: 36-50

Homily

"Great Love"

*Hymn #352

"Spirit Song"

O let the Son of God enfold you with his Spirit and his love.

Let him fill your heart and satisfy your soul.

O let have the things that hold you, and his Spirit like a dove will descend upon your life and make you whole.

Jesus, O Jesus, come and fill your lambs. Jesus, O Jesus, come and fill your lambs.

O come and sing this song with gladness as your hearts are filled with joy.

Lift your hands in sweet surrender to his name.

O give him all your tears and sadness; give him all your years of pain, and you'll enter into life in Jesus' name.

Jesus, O Jesus, come and fill your lambs. Jesus, O Jesus, come and fill your lambs.

Offerings of the People

Offertory

“Fughetta”

J.S. Bach

*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.***

Joys and Concerns of the Community

Prayers of the People and Lord's Prayer

**+O Holy One, 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. Lead us not into temptation,
but deliver us from evil. For thine is the kingdom, the power,
and the glory forever. Amen.** (+Our Father/Creator)

*Hymn #699

“Rejoice, the Lord is King”

Verses 1 & 3

***Rejoice, the Lord is King! The risen Christ adore! Rejoice, give thanks, and sing,
and triumph evermore: lift up your heart, lift up your voice!
Rejoice, again I say, rejoice!***

***Rejoice in glorious hope! For Christ, our Judge, shall come to glorify the saints
for their eternal home: lift up your heart, lift up your voice!
Rejoice, again I say, rejoice!***

*Sending Forth

The Spirit of God is upon us.

**God has anointed us to bear good news to the afflicted
and to bind up the broken hearted**

To proclaim freedom to the captives.

To open the prisons of those who are bound.

Before we leave this time of worship let us greet one another
with the peace of Jesus the Christ, who seeks peace in broken relationships,
who seeks healing in alienated persons, who seeks justice in oppressive structures.
Let us share in this shalom with one another.

May the peace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you.

And also with you. (Please turn and acknowledge those around you).

*Benediction

Recessional

“Rhosymedre”

arr. Wilbur Held

The congregation may be seated for the music or depart.

***Please rise in body or spirit.** Music for the service today reproduced with permission: One License #8-730116. Portions of our liturgy this morning are from *Feasting on the Word*, K. Bracken Long ed.

We welcome new members to the DUC congregation today and invite everyone to greet them during Fellowship Hour downstairs in the Lower Hall.

No matter who you are or where you are on life’s journey, you are welcome at Dennis Union Church. Please feel free to contact the church at 508-385-3543 if you have any concerns, prayer requests, or desire a pastoral call.

Deacon of the Day: Al Fisk

Ushers and Greeters: Betty Boothe, Bob Bullard, Paul & Barbara Gray, Elise & Jeff Gordon, Steve Higgins

Flowers are given today by Bev Miller and Ellen Sheetz
“In celebration of all the generous support and prayers given us in the past year”

everything [in] between

meeting God in the midst of extremes

Our Lenten series this year follows the Gospel of Luke through the weeks of Lent -- stories of how Jesus’ ministry disrupted the established social, political and religious divides of his time.

The theme of *everything [in] between* invites us to think about parallels between Jesus’ time and the cultural and political divides many of us experience in our families and communities today – and whether ideas such as **righteousness & mercy, stranger & neighbor, shouting & silence** are truly opposite ideas or if there is an answer to be found in considering the nuance and complexity in supposed opposites.

This Lent, we invite you to explore the space between the end points, polarities and easy answers to imagine where God might be meeting us beyond the categories we create. We’re trusting that God will show up in shades of gray, rainbow hues -- and everywhere in between.

Ash Wednesday Service March 5 at 7 pm

Lenten Book Study – “Cherished Belonging” by Gregory Boyle
Tuesdays March 11 – April 8 at 11 am

Lenten Soup Supper and Conversation
Thursday March 13, March 27 and April 10 at 6 pm
Maundy Thursday Service April 17 at 7 pm
Easter Sunday services April 20 at 6 am and 10 am

Dennis Union Church Open and Affirming Covenant of Welcome

Believing that everyone is a child of God, it is with joy, and in the love of Christ, that we welcome all persons into the full life, ministry and mission of Dennis Union Church. We choose not to turn away anyone whom Christ would welcome. We affirm the dignity and worth of every person including, but not limited to, people of every race, ethnicity, age, gender, gender identity or expression, sexual orientation, physical or mental ability, family structure or economic circumstance. We celebrate God's creative love shown in the wide diversity of humanity and the unique gifts each of us brings to the world. It is our intention to love one another as Christ has loved us.



Dennis Union Church
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Ministers: All the people
Pastor: Rev. Nancy S. McHugh
Director of Music: Margaret Bossi
Director of Faith Formation for Youth & Adults: Doreen Mayer
Children's Ministries Coordinator: Evy Sirignano
Finance Secretaries: Elise Gordon and Vicki Marchant
Office Administrator: Jane Wilson
Sexton: Dave Crocker
Crib Room Attendant: Laura Sears