

WELCOME

Grace and Peace be with you in the name of our Creator, Christ and Holy Spirit.

Thank you for coming! We're so glad you've chosen to worship with us today.

It gives me great joy to tell you that
First United Church of Christ and Conference Center Second Life is
a church with full real life standing in the
Southern California Nevada Conference of the
United Church of Christ (UCC).

Our service will be in voice and text.
Music will be on the media viewer, so be sure that you have your voice and media
turned on.

If you don't know how to do that, let someone know and we'll try to help.
There will be a link in Nearby Chat so you can watch it in your browser if the
viewer isn't working for you.

If you would like a bulletin for today's service you can find it in the red binder
in the back along with a donation bowl.

And as a real UCC church, we'd like you to know that
"No matter who you are, or where you are on life's journey,
You are welcome here.

One of the blessings and responsibilities that come with
our being a real church with real standing is that we, like all UCC churches,
support the work of the national church not only with prayer
but financially.

So we greatly appreciate any offering you can make to support this ministry.
If you prefer, donations can be made on our website, firstuccsl.org.

My name is Rev. Yadi Martínez-Reyna, I am one of the Pastors in this community.
And anyone you see with a "Minister" tag is an ordained UCC minister in real life.

This March we enter the season of Lent.
Today is the Third Sunday of Lent.
And the United Church of Christ has made available a resource for Lent
filled with spiritual substance to meet us where we are.
Here is the link if you would like to download a copy and follow along:

Link: <https://jointhemovementucc.org/jtm-resources/lent-2025/>

This Sunday, I will be doing things a bit different.
I'm going to invite you to be part of the conversation and show you a bit of what we
do in the early morning of Meditation.

It is a form of Lectio Divina where you read something and return to read it again while seeing if there is word or phrase that jumps at you.

The goal is to see what might the spirit lead you to think about, ponder, discern, pray about and wonder.

Please know that this service will not be recorded.
That means that you can enter your response on chat or not.
I will give us space to ponder and then move along.

So think about this as a sermon that invites you to enter text into chat and open the conversation or sit back and meditate on the words as we move on.

There is no right or wrong on how to do this.
And we start with a simple phrase today.

I am human. I am always arriving.

Will you pray with me?

Come Holy Spirit and fill this place and the homes of your people with your presence.
Tonight we invite you to touch our minds, our hearts, our souls and guide us to a place of peace, joy, and love. Help us see the text, ponder what it means to us and accept what is ours and let go of what serves no purpose.
May your holy spirit guide us and embrace us in our times of needs and in our times of gratefulness.

Amen.

GATHERING MUSIC

Matt Maher - The Lord's Prayer (It's Yours) (Official Music Video)
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=36hBlBGVFSs&list=RDMM0ghypOJ6XW8&index=27>

SCRIPTURES

Today's reading come from the Book of Wisdom Proverbs 36:5-11 NRSV

Your steadfast love, O Lord, extends to the heavens, your faithfulness to the clouds.

Your righteousness is like the mighty mountains; your judgments are like the great deep; you save humans and animals alike, O Lord.

How precious is your steadfast love, O God!
All people may take refuge in the shadow of your wings.

They feast on the abundance of your house, and you give them drink from the river of your delights.

For with you is the fountain of life; in your light we see light.

O continue your steadfast love to those who know you and your salvation to the upright of heart!

Do not let the foot of the arrogant tread on me or the hand of the wicked drive me away.

The Word of God for the people of God,

Thanks be to God

Meditation:

At the beginning of our service I mentioned that we will be doing something different.

I am reading today's meditation from the book of Living Resistance: An Indigenous Vision for Seeking Wholeness Everyday by Kaitlin Curtice.

Today's scripture invites us to remember how precious God's love is in our lives. Because of such love I believe we embody what resistance means by our very own existence.

I will read from the introduction of this book as we begin:

"Where does resistance begin, and where does it end?

Perhaps we need to stop thinking of our processes as linear and embrace the time.

The best you can do is be present to the moment, be open to the unlearning and the learning, and trust that you're doing the work of Love."

This book was titled Living in Resistance for many reasons but the two that stuck out to me was that our bodies seek freedom and wholeness is resisting. How hard is it to get out of bed sometimes?

Or how hard is it sometimes to stop doing too much because we are trying to keep up?

The second part is living and choosing everyday to to start again and keep moving. That is what being human is.

The subtitle of this book, An Indigenous Vision for Seeking Wholeness Every Day, reflects what it means to seek wholeness, dig deeper and search for peace.

As we enter Lent I wonder about the different religious and spiritual backgrounds of what their Lent and their time of reflecting looks like.

For example, "As humans, we are to practice kinship, belonging, and love—we are wired for resistance, for activism, for the work of shaping spaces and movements that ask for peace and hope.

In Judaism, the values of loving kindness, of respect for one another's humanity, and of shalom, or the pursuit of wholeness in the world, are widely held as tenants of the faith.

Sikhism values things like equality between men and women, community service, and diversity.

Humanists gather their values from love and hope in humanity itself, not by following any supernatural being but by being present to the life we have on Earth

Christians hold to the value of loving neighbor as self, a command given by Jesus in the New Testament Gospel of Mark (12:31).

Potawatomi ancestors believed in the Seven Grandfather Teachings—love, respect, bravery, honesty, truth, humility, and wisdom—among other things, and we follow these teachings today to know what it means to live in a good way, to honor ourselves, our ancestors, each other, Earth, and all who come after us.”

In this Lent season what are your values that you hold on to that were pass on to you or that you want to pass on to your own youngling?

As I read this next part I want to invite you to think about it and see what might speak to you or catches your attention.

Radical self love is resistance.

I want to experience my authentic self in the absence of external expectations. Maybe you need this motto too. Maybe I'm not alone in it.

Except, what happens when external expectations are the way you breathe and live and have your being?

What if you've shaped your entire life, and even your idea of God, around an external expectation that you can never outlive?

What if God doesn't want our authentic selves and we are stuck washing dishes that never seem to get clean? What if?

Radical self-love is not the same as self-care.

REFLECTION

What words or phrases in this passage shimmer for you?

What thoughts or emotions does this passage evoke in you?

I will play a song and let this play again slowly read, and see watch word, or phrase might catch your attention.

STAR WARS -Yoda's Theme // The Danish National Symphony Orchestra
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=geelCnh1EuA>

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Feel free to type in your nearby chat. (This service is NOT being recorded)

Can you begin to pack up and clear out the room of self-hatred and start entering a different room where you are fully your beloved self?

It will require time, patience, and grief, but it's worth it to start living a new reality.

Self-love is one of the most important forms of resistance because it is what we begin everything from.

If we are doing amazing work in the world yet neglecting ourselves, it's all going to catch up to us sooner or later.

We are building something here, building toward a way of being in the world in which we connect and incorporate all parts of who we are into the vision we hold for a better way.

That is, indeed, resistance.

Amen

PRAYER PREPARATION:

We have come to the time where we come together in prayer.

Let us give thanks for the gift of this day
and pray for the life of the world.

If you have a prayer of joy or concern that you wish to lift to God, and have supported by the energy of those gathered here, we invite you to share.

As this song plays, in the silence of our hearts or type your request in the nearby chat.

Lauren Daigle - You Say (Official Music Video)
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=sIaT8Jl2zpI>

COMMUNITY PRAYER

If there was a prayer inside of you that you couldn't quite get out, it's ok.

Because the Psalmist tells us that God knows what we are going to say before the words can even form on our tongues.
And so we know.

We know that God has heard our prayers.
Those spoken out loud, those typed into SL chat, and those spoken only in the silence of our hearts.

PASTORAL PRAYER -

It is our trust in you of Holy-One that we hold on to your steadfast love.
We hold on to your mercy and grace.
Thank you for not seeing us for our faults,
for not leaving us in our time of needs but staying with us in our darkest hours.
Holy-One sustain us that we may be restored to the joy of your heart and that may see ourselves as you see us with such love and compassion.
May our hearts be open in joy and gladness in Jesus Christ we pray.
Amen

BLESSING FOR THE JOURNEY

Our worship is over
our ministry to the world is just beginning.
The world is waiting.
Go in peace, come again in hope.
Amen.

Now lets dance!

MUSIC FOR THE JOURNEY

Grace Got You
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=JmerCfxIqAc&list=RDMM0ghypOJ6XW8&index=35>