



Central Congregational United Church of Christ

WEEK 2 OF LENT: BREAD FOR GROWTH

March 16, 2025

Ministers / **All of us**
Pastor / **Rev. Gage Church**
Worship Leader / **Bonnie Walker**
Music Director and Accompanist / **Linda Smith**
Song Leaders / **Gayle Hassler and Janice Ayers**
Musical Guest / **Carlos Cabezas**

Music for Gathering

“The Old Rugged Cross”

Greetings & Announcements

Call to Worship

Calling all who are hungry for the goodness of life!

The bread of life satisfies our hunger and thirst.

Come with empty pockets and open hands!

The bread of life loves us and knows our needs.

Let us gather from all walks of life,
celebrating in unity our common needs and singular purpose.

The bread of life has come to sustain us.

Believing this promise, let us worship together!

**God, our mother hen,
we gather beneath your ever-expanding wings
to see how you will meet us today.
Though we grow and mature, we cannot outgrow your love.
Though our belief grows more complex,
your mysteries always outpace our imaginations.
Help us grow and mature today as we worship,
delighting in new understanding and greater depth of meditation.
Cause our hearts, empowered by your Spirit,
to expand like dough becoming bread. Amen.**

** indicates to rise in body or spirit.*

***Bold** indicates to speak or sing in unison.*

Litany of Membership

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 bonds of community,
who regularly join in celebration and learning,
who come as much to minister as to be ministered to.**

Blessed are those who understand that the church is often imperfect,
yet rather than harbor feelings of anger or disappointment,
bring their concerns and needs to the church family.

**Blessed are those who support the church and its work through their giving,
and who give of themselves as well as their material goods.**

Blessed are those who, when asked to serve, do so gladly.

Blessed are those who know that the work of the church is
the transformation of individual and society,
who have a vision of the Beloved Community transcending the present,
and who do not shrink from controversy, sacrifice or change.

They are blessed indeed. Amen.

Questions for New Member

Do you desire to join in the faith and family of Jesus Christ?

(I do.)

Do you renounce the powers of evil
and desire the freedom of new life in Christ?

(I do.)

Do you look to Jesus Christ as exemplar and leader of the church?

(I do.)

Do you promise, by the grace of God, to be Christ's disciple,
to follow in the way of our Savior,
to resist oppression and evil, to show love and justice,
and to witness to the work and word of Jesus Christ as best you are able?

(I promise, with the help of God.)

Do you promise, according to the grace given you, to grow in the Christian faith
and to be a faithful member of the church of Jesus Christ,
celebrating Christ's presence and furthering Christ's mission in all the world?

(I promise, with the help of God.)

Do you promise to participate in the life and mission of this family of God's people,
sharing regularly in the worship of God and enlisting in the work
of this local church as it serves this community and the world?

(I promise, with the help of God.)

***Welcoming Our New Member**

**We worship and adore God,
source, essence and aim of all things,
spirit that enlivens all beings.**

**We follow the way of Jesus, who found God in himself
and shared a way for others to find God in themselves.**

He was born through love.

He lived for love.

He suffered for love.

He died for love.

But love never dies.

**We submit ourselves to the leadings of the love that is God,
that we may be compassionate to all beings,
that we may live and serve in community with others,
that we may ask for and offer forgiveness,
that we may praise and enjoy God forever. Amen!**

***Congregational Hymn**

“Now the Green Blade Rises”

**Now the green blade rises from the buried grain;
wheat that in the dark earth for many days has lain;
Love lives again, that with the dead has been:
Love is come again like wheat that rises green.**

**When our hearts are wintry, grieving or in pain,
Christ’s warm touch can call us back to life again,
fields of our hearts that dead and bare have been:
Love is come again like wheat that rises green.**

Prayer of Affirmation

**We believe the Kin-dom of God is like baker’s yeast,
thorough and unstoppable, spreading and rising over time.**

**We believe the bread of life is enough for all creation,
enough for the hungry, the weak and the poor.**

**We believe Jesus is the bread of life,
broken and shared with all who will receive it.**

We believe the bread of life cannot be limited to our finite imaginations.

The bread of life is making all things new. Thanks be to God!

Amen.

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Prayer of Confession

God Most High, who knows the highest heights
and deepest valleys of this universe,
we confess we have limited your work because of our small thinking.
While you long for the bread of life to expand and nourish all creation,
our fears and worries keep us contained.
While you long to create kin-doms of peace and reconciliation,
we draw lines between us.
While you make space for everyone,
we worry about sharing too much or being too vulnerable.
While you search tirelessly for lost lambs,
we focus our concern inward on our own issues.
Forgive us for our small perspective
and open our minds to the big ideas you have for our future.
Amen.

Assurance of Pardon

Passing the Peace

The Reading

Luke 13:18-21

Jesus continued, “What does the kingdom of God resemble? To what will I liken it? It’s like a mustard seed which a gardener took and planted in the garden. It grew and became a large shrub, and the birds of the air nested in its branches.”

Then he went on, “To what will I compare the kingdom of God? It’s like the yeast which a baker added to three measures of flour and kneaded until the whole ball of dough began to rise.”

Special Music

Carlos Cabezas

Message

“Yeasty Beasty”

Rev. Gage Church

*Congregational Hymn

“For the Fruit of All Creation”

For the fruit of all creation, thanks be to God.
For God’s gifts to every nation, thanks be to God.
For the plowing, sowing, reaping,
silent growth while we are sleeping,
future needs in earth’s safe-keeping, thanks be to God.

In the just reward of labor, God’s will be done.
In the help we give our neighbor, God’s will be done.
In our worldwide task of caring
for the hungry and despairing,
in the harvests we are sharing, God’s will be done.

For the harvests of the Spirit, thanks be to God.
For the good we all inherit, thanks be to God.
For the wonders that astound us,
for the truths that still confound us,
most of all that love has found us, thanks be to God.

Joys and Concerns

We respond with “Lord, hear our prayer.”

Time of Silence

Pastoral Prayer

The Prayer of Jesus

Please pray any version you wish. Here is one version:

Our Father, who art in heaven, hallowed be thy name.
Thy Kin-dom come, thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven.
Give us this day our daily bread,
and forgive us our sins,
as we forgive those who sin against us.
And lead us not into temptation but deliver us from evil,
for thine is the Kin-dom, the power and the glory forever. Amen.

Offering

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***Doxology**

**Praise God, from whom all blessings flow;
Praise God, all creatures high and low;
Praise God, in Jesus fully known;
Creator, Word and Spirit One.**

***Prayer of Dedication**

**Generous and gracious God,
help us steward these gifts with imagination
and a spirit of abundance.**

**May a little go a long way as you inspire us
to share what we have with those in need.
Teach us how to use the resources we have
to thrive in this world of scarcity. Amen.**

***Closing Hymn**

“Let Us Talents and Tongues Employ”

**Let us talents and tongues employ,
reaching out with a shout of joy:
bread is broken, the wine is poured,
Christ is spoken and seen and heard.
Jesus lives again, earth can breathe again,
pass the Word around: loaves abound!
Jesus lives again, earth can breathe again,
pass the Word around: loaves abound!**

**Jesus calls us in, sends us out
bearing fruit in a world of doubt,
gives us love to tell, bread to share:
God, Immanuel, everywhere!
Jesus lives again, earth can breathe again,
pass the Word around: loaves abound!
Jesus lives again, earth can breathe again,
pass the Word around: loaves abound!**

***Benediction**

Music for Sending

“In the Cross of Christ I Glory”

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