

Christ Hamilton United Lutheran Church
419 Bossardsville Road,
Stroudsburg, PA

Third Sunday in Lent

March 23, 2025

*"I have come
seeking fruit
on this fig tree ..."*

Luke 13:7, ESV



Welcome to Christ Hamilton! Thank you for joining with us in worship in whatever manner you can. This service is also available anytime on Facebook or our website along with a bulletin at www.chrighthamilton.org. Please share in the responses, sing the hymns, and pray the prayers. Call us and connect with us whenever you need. Office hours are Monday through Thursday from 9 a.m. – 12:00 p.m.

Please know that all are welcome at Christ Hamilton! Life is difficult enough and shouldn't be when you come to church. Regardless of how you got here, we are glad you did. If you don't know your neighbor please welcome them. **All are welcome here!** At Christ Hamilton we are an intentional community of faith, gathered in worship, united in fellowship and generous in our outreach.

The service: *The warnings are plentiful and blunt on the third Sunday in Lent. Cut it out or get cut down! The warnings are accompanied by God's invitation to attentiveness: "Incline your ear, and come to me; listen, so that you may live." The landowner's ultimatum is forestalled by the gardener's readiness to till the ground one more year. That is good news for all of us. Thanks be to God!*

During the five Sundays in Lent we ask that instead of sponsoring altar flowers that you prayerfully consider donating to PATH (Pocono Area Transitional Housing) using the envelope in your bulletin or pew.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

PRELUDE

Please stand.

CONFESSION & FORGIVENESS

Minister: In the name of the Father, and of the † Son,
and of the Holy Spirit.

All: Amen.

Minister: Almighty God, to whom all hearts are open, all desires
known, and from whom no secrets are hid:

Cleanse the thoughts of our hearts by the inspiration of
your Holy Spirit, that we may perfectly love you and
worthily magnify your holy name,
through Jesus Christ our Lord.

All: Amen

Minister: If we say we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth
is not in us. But if we confess our sins, God who is
faithful and just will forgive our sins and cleanse us
from all unrighteousness. . . . Most merciful God,

**All: We confess that we are in bondage to sin and cannot free
ourselves. We have sinned against you in thought, word,
and deed, by what we have done and by what we have left
undone.**

**We have not loved you with our whole heart; we have not
loved our neighbors as ourselves. For the sake of your Son,
Jesus Christ, have mercy on us. Forgive us, renew us, and
lead us, so that we may delight in your will and walk in
your ways, to the glory of your holy name. Amen**

Minister: Almighty God, in his mercy, has given his Son to die for us
and, for his sake, forgives us all our sins. As a called and
ordained minister of the Church of Christ, and by his
authority, I therefore declare to you the entire forgiveness of
all your sins, in the name of the Father, and of the † Son,
and of the Holy Spirit.

All: Amen

Before the Waters Nourished Earth

1 Be - fore the wa - ters nour - ished earth or night im -
2 This Love re - mained as time re - vealed the loss of
3 De - spair, so deep it bears no name, or sor - rows
4 The Love that called cre - a - tion good all good - ness

ag - ined morn - ing, a Love con - ceived the
E - den's glo - ry and, griev - ing, holds in
par - a - lyz - ing can - not re - voke Love's
still is bring - ing. This Love turns death a -

u - ni - verse and rev - eled in its form - ing.
mem - o - ry each trag - ic hu - man sto - ry.
faith - ful claim to dwell with - in our dy - ing.
gain to life and si - lence in - to sing - ing.

Text: Jeannette M. Lindholm, b. 1961

Music: ST. COLUMBA, Irish melody

Text © 1996 Jeannette M. Lindholm, admin. Augsburg Fortress

GREETING

Minister: The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, the love of God,
and the communion of the Holy Spirit be with you all.

All: And also with you.

KYRIE

Your Heart, O God, Is Grieved

Leader



Otče nebeský, Svoritel'u sveta, Bo - že, zmi - luj sa nad na - mi.
1 O God, Father in heav - en, have mer - cy up - on us.
2 O Son of God, redeemer of the world, have mer - cy up - on us.
3 O God, Holy Spir - it, have mer - cy up - on us.

All



Vie - me to, Pa - ne Bo - že náš, že sa na
Your heart, O God, is grieved, we know, by ev - 'ry
Your arms ex - tend, O Christ, to save from sting of
O lav - ish Giv - er, come to aid the chil - dren



nás hrieš - nych hne - váš, sved - či o tom smrt'
e - vil, ev - 'ry woe; up - on your cross - for -
death and grasp of grave; your scars be - fore the
that your word has made. Now make us grow and



ne - vin - ná Tvoj - ho je - di - né - ho Sy - na.
sak - en Son our death is laid, and peace is won.
Fa - ther move his heart to mer - cy at such love.
help us pray; bring joy and com - fort, come to stay.

PRAYER

Minister: Let us pray. . . Eternal God, your kingdom has broken into our troubled world through the life, death, and resurrection of your Son. Help us to hear your word and obey it, and bring your saving love to fruition in our lives, through Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever.

All: Amen.

Please be seated.

READING

ISAIAH 55:1-9

Reader: A reading from Isaiah, the 55th chapter:

¹ Ho, everyone who thirsts, come to the waters; and you that have no money, come, buy and eat! Come, buy wine and milk without money and without price. ² Why do you spend your money for that which is not bread, and your labor for that which does not satisfy?

Listen carefully to me, and eat what is good, and delight yourselves in rich food. ³ Incline your ear, and come to me; listen, so that you may live. I will make with you an everlasting covenant, my steadfast, sure love for David. ⁴ See, I made him a witness to the peoples, a leader and commander for the peoples.

⁵ See, you shall call nations that you do not know, and nations that do not know you shall run to you, because of the LORD your God, the Holy One of Israel, for he has glorified you.

⁶ Seek the LORD while he may be found, call upon him while he is near; ⁷ let the wicked forsake their way, and the unrighteous their thoughts; let them return to the LORD, that he may have mercy on them, and to our God, for he will abundantly pardon. ⁸ For my thoughts are not your thoughts, nor are your ways my ways, says the LORD.

⁹ For as the heavens are higher than the earth, so are my ways higher than your ways and my thoughts than your thoughts.

Reader: The word of the Lord. **All: Thanks be to God.**

Spoken responsively.

PSALM

Psalm 63:1-8

Reader: O God, you are my God; eagerly 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.

**All: Therefore I have gazed upon you in your holy place,
that I might behold your power and your glory.**

Reader: For your steadfast love is better than life itself;
my lips shall give you praise.

**All: So will I bless you as long as I live
and lift up my hands in your name.**

Reader: My spirit is content, as with the richest of foods,
and my mouth praises you with joyful lips,

**All: When I remember you upon my bed,
and meditate on you in the night watches.**

Reader: For you have been my helper,
and under the shadow of your wings I will rejoice.

**All: My whole being clings to you;
your right hand holds me fast.**

READING

1 CORINTHIANS 10:1-13

Reader: A reading from First Corinthians, the 10th chapter.

¹ I do not want you to be unaware, brothers and sisters, that our ancestors were all under the cloud, and all passed through the sea, ² and all were baptized into Moses in the cloud and in the sea, ³ and all ate the same spiritual food, ⁴ and all drank the same spiritual drink. For they drank from the spiritual rock that followed them, and the rock was Christ. ⁵ Nevertheless, God was not pleased with most of them, and they were struck down in the wilderness.

⁶ Now these things occurred as examples for us, so that we might not desire evil as they did. ⁷ Do not become idolaters as some of them did; as it is written, “The people sat down to eat and drink, and they rose up to play.” ⁸ We must not indulge in sexual immorality as some of them did, and twenty-three thousand fell in a single day. ⁹ We must not put Christ to the test, as some of them did, and were destroyed by serpents. ¹⁰ And do not complain as some of them did, and were destroyed by the destroyer. ¹¹ These things happened to them to serve as an example, and they were written down to instruct us, on whom the ends of the ages have come. ¹² So if you think you are standing, watch out that you do not fall. ¹³ No testing has overtaken you that is not common to everyone. God is faithful, and he will not let you be tested beyond your strength, but with the testing he will also provide the way out so that you may be able to endure it.

Reader: The word of the Lord.

All: Thanks be to God.

Please stand.

Gospel Acclamation

Lord, let my heart be good soil, o-pen to the seed of your word.

Lord, let my heart be good soil, where love can grow and peace is un-der-stood.

When my heart is hard, break the stone a - way. When my heart is cold,

warm it with the day. When my heart is lost, lead me on your way.

Lord, let my heart, Lord, let my heart, Lord, let my heart be good soil.

GOSPEL

Luke 13:1-9

Minister: The Holy Gospel according to Luke the 13th chapter.

All: Glory to you, O Lord.

¹ At that very time there were some present who told him about the Galileans whose blood Pilate had mingled with their sacrifices.² [Jesus] asked them, “Do you think that because these Galileans suffered in this way they were worse sinners than all other Galileans?”³ No, I tell you; but unless you repent, you will all perish as they did. ⁴ Or 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? ⁵ No, I tell you; but unless you repent, you will all perish just as they did.”

⁶ Then 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. ⁷ So 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?’ ⁸ He replied, ‘Sir, let it alone for one more year, until I dig around it and put manure on it. ⁹ If it bears fruit next year, well and good; but if not, you can cut it down.’”

Minister: The Gospel of our Lord. **All: Praise to you, O Christ.**

Please be seated.

MESSAGE

There Is a Longing in Our Hearts

Refrain — All



There is a long-ing in our hearts, O Lord, for you to re -



veal your - self to us. There is a long-ing in our



hearts for love we on - ly find in you, our God.

Leader or All



1 For jus - tice,	for free - dom,	for mer - cy:
2 For wis - dom,	for cour - age,	for com - fort:
3 For heal - ing,	for whole - ness,	for new life:
4 Lord, save us,	take pit - y,	light in our



hear our prayer.	In sor - row,	in grief:
hear our prayer.	In weak - ness,	in fear:
hear our prayer.	In sick - ness,	in death:
deep - est night.	We call you;	we wait:



be near; hear our prayer, O God.

Refrain

Text: Anne Quigley, b. 1955

Music: LONGING, Anne Quigley

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APOSTLE'S CREED

Minister: Let us confess our faith together.

**All: I believe in God, the Father Almighty,
creator of heaven and earth.**

I believe in Jesus Christ, his only Son, our Lord.

**He was conceived by the power of the Holy Spirit
and born of the virgin Mary.**

**He suffered under Pontius Pilate,
was crucified, died, and was buried.**

He descended into hell.

On the third day he rose again.

**He ascended into heaven,
and is seated at the right hand of the Father.**

He will come again to judge the living and the dead.

I believe in the Holy Spirit,

**the holy catholic Church, the communion of saints,
the forgiveness of sins, the resurrection of the body,
and the life everlasting. Amen**

PRAYERS

Assisting Minister: Led by the Spirit, let us turn to God in prayer for the church, the world, and all those in need.

We pray for the church, called to be a witness to all peoples. Grant humility and wisdom to bishops, pastors, deacons, elders, councils, and congregations, that they may call upon you in making decisions. God, in your mercy,

All: Receive our prayer.

We pray for the earth, called to provide abundantly. Teach your people the goodness of your generosity, that in sharing what we have been given, all life may flourish on the planet that is our shared home. God, in your mercy,

All: Receive our prayer.

We pray for the nations, called to protect their inhabitants and collaborate in the work of justice and peace. Forge bonds of compassion and mutual care across human borders and boundaries, that all the world may have enough to live. God, in your mercy,

All: Receive our prayer.

We pray for those in need, called to receive your compassion especially those we lift to you now Comfort those whose lives have been disrupted through natural disasters and human conflict. Aid communities in coming together to mourn, heal, and rebuild. God, in your mercy,

All: Receive our prayer.

We pray for this assembly, called to welcome its neighbors to the table of your grace. Bless food pantries, community gardens and kitchens, clean water projects, and all ministries that address human hunger and thirst. God, in your mercy,

All: Receive our prayer.

We give thanks for the faithful lives of those who proclaimed your gospel in times of challenge and strife, and for all those whose lives of love and service have ended. May their witness inspire our own. God, in your mercy,

All: Receive our prayer.

Receive the prayers of your people and draw all things together in your love, in the name of Jesus, who leads us from death to life.

All: Amen.

The Peace is shared with one another.

PEACE

Assisting Minister: The peace of Christ be with you always.

All: And also with you.

Please be seated.

OFFERING

Please stand.

OFFERTORY

CREATE IN ME

Cre-ate in me a clean heart, O God, and re-new a right
spir-it with-in me. Cast me not a-way from your pres-ence, and take
not your Ho-ly Spir-it from me. Re-store to me the joy of
your sal-va-tion, and up-hold me with your free Spir-it.

OFFERTORY PRAYER

Assisting Minister: Let us pray. . . Merciful Father,

All: We offer with joy and thanksgiving

what you have first given us—

our selves, our time, and our possessions,

signs of your gracious love.

Receive them for the sake of him who offered himself for us,

Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen

GREAT THANKSGIVING

Minister: The Lord be with you.

All: And also with you.

Minister: Lift up your hearts.

All: We lift them to the Lord.

Minister: Let us give thanks to the Lord our God.

All: It is right to give our thanks and praise.

Minister: In the night in which he was betrayed,

our Lord Jesus took bread, and gave thanks;

broke it, and gave it to his disciples, saying:

Take and eat; this is my body, given for you.

Do this for the remembrance of me.

Again, after supper, he took the cup, gave thanks,

and gave it for all to drink, saying:

This cup is the new covenant in my blood,

shed for you and for all people for the forgiveness of sin.

Do this for the remembrance of me.

The Lord's Prayer

Minister: Let us pray together with confidence in the words our Savior gave us.

All: Our Father, 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 trespasses,

as we forgive those who trespass against us;

and lead us not into temptation,

but deliver us from evil.

For thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory,

forever and ever. Amen

Communion



1 Your on - ly Son, no sin to hide, but you have
2 Your gift of love we cru - ci - fied. We laughed and
3 I was so lost, I should have died, but you have



sent him from your side to walk up - on this guilt - y
scorned him as he died. The hum - ble king we named a
brought me to your side to be led by your staff and



sod and to be - come the Lamb of God. O Lamb of
fraud and sac - ri - ficed the Lamb of God.
rod and to be called a lamb of God.



God, sweet Lamb of God, I love the ho - ly Lamb of God. Oh, wash me



in your pre - cious blood, my Je - sus Christ, the Lamb of God.

We invite all baptized Christians to receive the sacrament of Holy Communion. Those not communing are invited to come forward for a blessing. For those who would prefer not to have wine, pre-filled glasses of grape juice are available in the tray. Gluten-free wafers are available by asking the Pastor.

Please come forward by way of the center aisle, receive the bread from the pastor and move to the chalice. Return by way of the outside aisle as you return to your seat.

Minister: The body of Christ given for you.

Communion Assistant: The blood of Christ shed for you.

COMMUNION BLESSING

Minister: The body and blood of our Lord Jesus Christ
strengthen you and keep you in his grace.

All: Amen.

PRAYER AFTER COMMUNION

Assisting Minister: Let us pray. . . . We give you thanks, almighty
God, that you have refreshed us through the healing power of
this gift of life; and we pray that in your mercy you would
strengthen us, through this gift, in faith toward you and in
fervent love toward one another; for the sake of Jesus Christ
our Lord.

All: Amen.

BLESSING

Minister: Almighty God, Father, † Son, and Holy Spirit,
bless you now and forever.

All: Amen

Rock of Ages, Cleft for Me

1 Rock of A - ges, cleft for me, let me hide my - self in thee;
2 Not the la - bors of my hands can ful - fill thy law's de - mands;
3 Noth - ing in my hand I bring; sim - ply to thy cross I cling.
4 While I draw this fleet - ing breath, when mine eye - lids close in death,

let the wa - ter and the blood, from thy riv - en side which flowed,
could my zeal no res - pite know, could my tears for - ev - er flow,
Na - ked, come to thee for dress; help - less, look to thee for grace;
when I soar to worlds un - known, see thee on thy judg - ment throne,

be of sin the dou - ble cure; cleanse me from its guilt and pow'r.
all for sin could not a - tone; thou must save, and thou a - lone.
foul, I to the foun - tain fly; wash me, Sav - ior, or I die.
Rock of A - ges, cleft for me, let me hide my - self in thee.

DISMISSAL

Assisting Minister: Go in peace. Serve the Lord.

All: Thanks be to God.

POSTLUDE

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Worship Leaders

Minister:	Rev. Steven C. Claycomb
Assisting Minister:	John Balas
Reader:	Beth Ross
Organist:	Beth McElroy
Greeters:	Brian Powers, Beth Ross, Laura Young
Choir Director	Tassy Gilbert
Accompanist	Gail Derrer
Announcements	Amanda Balas, Office Administrator
Videographer:	Steve Metzgar and Anson Cassidy
Coffee Hour:	Rich and Rosanne
	3/30: Phyllis K, Pam V., Pat B.
	4/6: Volunteer Needed

Lenten Prayer Board: Please take a heart from our prayer board in the Narthex and pray for the petition on the heart this coming week. If you would like to add a prayer concern please email Amanda chulcsts@gmail.com.

LARGE PRINT bulletins are now available, please ask an usher if you would like one.

Prayer at the Rail - Stephen Ministers will be available for prayer in front of the stage after the service for any concerns.

Homebound List—If you know of someone who needs to be added to our homebound list please have them, or a family member call the office.

Dinner Out Group – monthly we gather together to enjoy good food and fellowship at a local venue. All are welcome to join with us. Please give the office a call by noon before the meal so we can give the restaurant a heads up for seating arrangements. Upcoming dinners are:

April 16 (Wed) – 5:30 p.m. Mullally’s Clubhouse, Glenbrook Country Club

May 21 (Wed) – 5:30 pm – Sycamore Grill, Delaware Water Gap

June 21 (Fri) – 5:30 pm – Thai Thani (rt 611 - Stroudsburg)

Bulletin Deadlines: The deadline for information being added to the bulletin is Wednesday noon. Bulletins are printed by 10 a.m. THURSDAY mornings. The office is CLOSED on Friday and Saturday.

Wednesday Lenten soup and Service please join us at 6:15 every Wednesday night in Lent for homemade soup and the Holden Evening Prayer service immediately following.

Easter Egg Hunt will be held on April 19th at 11am. Empty eggs to fill are in the Lighthouse, please fill with stickers, washable tattoos and peanut free candy. Anyone who would like to help with this event can email Deb Lamson at ark2dir@ptd.net

Fertilized, Fruitful, and Free

God's word for us today is nutritious and wholesome, though hard to digest. The gospel reading seems oddly brutal alongside the abundance and comfort of the texts from Isaiah ("delight yourselves in rich food") and Psalm 63 ("My spirit is content as with the richest of foods"). Even Paul finds himself using physical sustenance as a metaphor ("they drank from the spiritual rock, . . . and the rock was Christ"). Surrounded by this food imagery, we now find Jesus using some horrific events as illustrations. After the mingled blood and fallen towers, it may be hard to hear the fig-tree parable as the grace-full story it really is. But here is Christ himself as gardener: digging, fertilizing, protecting, and nurturing us. We are fragile creatures, living in a world of tragedy and terror, but God does not punish fragility with death. On the contrary, God sent Jesus to us so that we may live.

Living in that nurtured garden of Christ, tended to and cared for as we grow in that love, how can we keep from blossoming? Live, yes, and live fruitfully, our gospel proclaims! Grow, yes, and grow gloriously! Now the good news of Christ's redeeming mercy becomes clear: we are each treated with boundless mercy, not impartial justice. While the world may want to blame the withering tree for its inability to be productive, our Savior and Lord reaches into our lives, reminds us of our roots, nourishes us with grace, and allows us to bloom, to flourish, to freely share our gifts with the world.