

Westhampton Congregational United Church of Christ  
an Open and Affirming Congregation  
1st Sunday of Lent - February 22, 2026

 **Reflection** - *In the midst of depression, I once asked my spiritual director how I could be feeling such despair when not long before depression hit I had been feeling so close to God. "Simple," she said. "The closer you get to the light, the closer you get to the darkness." The deepest things in life come not singly, but in paradoxical pairs, where light and dark intermingle. ~ Parker Palmer, *The Active Life: Wisdom for Work, Creativity, and Caring**

 **Piano Prelude**

 **Announcements / Lighting the Candle / Welcome to Worship**

 **Piano Introit**

 **Call to Worship**

One: From the garden to the wilderness,

**Many: we have wandered.**

One: The journey is difficult.

**Many: Christ is our companion.**

One: The path is uncertain.

**Many: The Spirit is our guide.**

One: Come, let us worship God.

**All: We worship together  
with hope for the journey ahead.**

 **Hymn NC #202 O God, How We Have Wandered**

O God, how we have wandered and hidden from your face;  
In foolishness have squandered your legacy of grace.  
But how, in exile dwelling, we turn with fear and shame,  
As distant but compelling, you call us each by name.

And now at length discerning the evil that we do,  
By faith we are returning with hope and trust in you.  
In haste you come to meet us, and home rejoicing bring,  
In gladness there to greet us with calf and robe and ring.

O God of all the living, both banished and restored,  
Compassionate, forgiving, your peace and hope assured.  
Grant now that our transgressing, our faithlessness may cease.  
Stretch out your hand in blessing, in pardon, and in peace.



**Unison Prayer of Invocation**

Loving God, today we begin our Lenten journey, a season of anticipation and holy wonder, marked by the shadow of the cross. As we gather in your name, strengthen us for the road ahead, and walk with us through the trials and wilderness places of our lives. Guide us with your wisdom and your steadfast love as we travel once more with Jesus toward the cross. Send your Spirit to lead us where we need to go, ever and always drawing us closer to you and more deeply into your ways. Amen.

 **Gloria SL #9**

 **Anthem** *He Has Done Marvelous Things*

 **Moment for All Ages**

 **Scripture Readings** Genesis 2:15-17, 3:1-7  
Matthew 4:1-11

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p. 3

 **Message**

 **Hymn NB #D-2 Jesus, Tempted in the Desert**

Jesus, tempted in the desert, lonely, hungry, filled with dread;  
"Use your power," the tempter tells him; "turn these barren rocks to bread!"  
"Not alone by bread," he answers, "can the human heart be filled.  
Only by the Word that calls us is our deepest hunger stilled!"

Jesus, tempted at the temple, high above its ancient wall;  
"Throw yourself from lofty turret; angels wait to break your fall!"  
Jesus shuns such empty marvels, feats that fickle crowds request;  
"God, whose grace protects, preserves us, we must never vainly test."

Jesus, tempted on the mountain by the lire of vast domain;  
"Fall before me! Be my servant! Glory, fame, you're sure to gain!"  
Jesus sees the dazzling vision, turns his eyes another way;  
"God alone deserves our homage! God alone will I obey!"

When we face temptation's power, lonely, struggling, filled with dread,  
Christ, who knew the tempter's hour, come and be our living bread.  
By your grace, protect, preserve us lest we fall, your trust betray.  
Yours, above all other voices, be the Word we hear, obey.

 **Prayers of the People – Help/Thanks/Wow**  
One: Now we come to the time where we lift up our prayers of Help, Thanks, and Wow. Lift up your hearts.

**Many: We lift them up to God.**

One: Does anyone have any prayers they would like to lift up?  
*After each individual prayer request...*

One: Loving and beloved God; **Many: Hear our prayer.**

#### **Prayer List**

One: Let us read the first names of those on our prayer list.

#### **Prayers of healing and hope for...**

**AMANDA & SKYLAR** Ghali, niece & grandnephew of Kevin O'Keefe

**ANITA** Hickey, member of the congregation

**MARGERY** Shaw, friend of the congregation

**BRIAN** Cooper, son of Lynn Cooper

**BILL**, friend of Pastor Carol and Mary

**MARIA** Yorgakopoulou, friend of the congregation

#### **Pastoral Prayer**

**The Lord's Prayer** using any version you wish

 **Response:** Hear our prayer O Lord, hear our prayer O Lord,  
Incline Thine ear to us, and grant us Thy peace.

#### **Offerings of the People – Time, Talents, Treasures, and Testimonies**

##### **Piano Offertory**

##### **Response SL #40 We Praise Thee, O God**

We praise Thee, O God, our Redeemer, Creator;  
In grateful devotion our tribute we bring.  
We lay it before Thee, we kneel and adore Thee.  
We bless Thy holy name; glad praises we sing.

##### **Unison Prayer of Dedication**

**Faithful God, as Jesus was sustained in the wilderness, we trust that you sustain us still. Bless and transform all that we offer: our resources, our time, our talents, and our hearts, that they may become food for the hungry, hope for the weary, and strength for those tested by life's challenges. Free us from the illusion that security comes from what we own. Lead us instead into the freedom of belonging to you. Use us, and these offerings to bring healing and compassion into your world. In the spirit of Christ, we pray. Amen.**

  **Hymn NC #211 Lord Jesus, Who Through Forty Days**  
Lord Jesus, who throughout these forty days for us did fast and pray,  
Teach us with you to mourn our sins, and close by you to stay.  
  
As you with Satan didst contend, and didst the victory win,  
O give us strength to persevere, in you to conquer sin.  
  
And through these days of penitence, and through this Passion-tide,  
Yes, evermore, in life and death, O Christ, with us abide.  
  
Abide with us, till when this life of suffering shall be past,  
An Easter of unending joy we may attain at last.

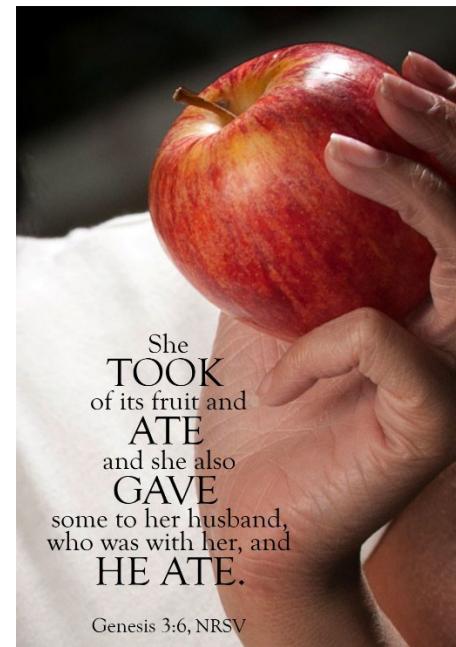
##### **Benediction / Passing of the Peace**

##### **Cong Response SL #785 God Be With You**

God be with you till we meet again, by his counsels guide, uphold you;  
With His sheep securely fold you; God be with you till we meet again.

##### **Piano Postlude**

 *Indicates you are invited to stand if you are comfortable doing so.*





*Jesus  
was led by the  
Spirit  
into the  
wilderness.*

Matthew 4:1

**Welcome** to the Westhampton Congregational United Church of Christ, an open and affirming church. **To join online via Zoom: Press Ctrl and [CLICK HERE](#)** or visit [zoom.us](https://zoom.us) and click Join a Meeting, then enter Meeting ID 321 069 9076; Passcode 248423. To join by phone dial 646-558-8656, then meeting ID and Passcode.

**Pastor and Church Contact Info**

Rev. Carol Smith's cell phone and email:  
860-798-7771; [carolbsmith12@gmail.com](mailto:carolbsmith12@gmail.com)

Office Hours – Tuesdays/Fridays 9 – 12. Pastoral needs anytime.

Julie Holt church secretary – church phone and email:  
413-527-4204; [westhamptonchurchucc@comcast.net](mailto:westhamptonchurchucc@comcast.net)

**Worship Participants**

Ministers -	People of the church
Minister -	Rev. Carol Smith
Greeters -	↑ Lorraine and Kevin O'Keefe ↓ Pat Miller
Lay Reader -	Dolores Thornhill
Pianist -	Michele Feldheim
Zoom Tech-	Bob Miller
Coffee Hour -	Maureen Dempsey and Rick Tracy
Flowers -	Paul Aloisi

**This Week at the Church...**

Mon 7pm -	Council
Wed/Fri/Sat -	Food Pantry – Wed @ 5, Fri @ 11, Sat @ 9
Wed 3:15pm -	Good Works
Thurs 7pm -	Choir
Friday 7pm -	AA

**Birthdays and Anniversaries...**

February 25 ★ -	Todd Blakesley
February 26 ★ -	Grace Pringle
February 27 ★ -	Michell Linscott
February 28 ★ -	Jackie Miller
February 24 ♥ -	Mark and Diane Gould



**The rosebud on the altar is in honor of the birth of Sophia Louise Clark, born on January 31, 2026 to Seth and Denise Clark. Her big sister Evelyn is already in love with her, and her joyful grandparents are John and Luanne Clark and George and Geana Delisle. Welcome, little one!**