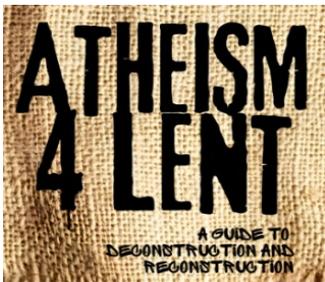




# ATHEISM 4 LENT

A GUIDE TO  
DECONSTRUCTION AND  
RECONSTRUCTION





*Lent is traditionally a time of fasting, reflection, and spiritual honesty. In this series, we create space for deep questioning and unflinching honesty — even doubt. Inspired by the provocative practice of Atheism for Lent (popularized by theologian Peter Rollins), we enter the wilderness of deconstruction — not to lose faith, but to encounter God beyond our idols and illusions. The goal isn't nihilism, but spiritual rebirth. What if we give up idolatry? What if we turn to ash false images of God and embrace the Living Word?*

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*\*Those who are able please stand*

**PRELUDE** "Beneath the Cross of Jesus/Lead Me to Calvary" – arr. Don Wyrzten Cathy Fafarak, Piano

## WELCOME

### \*CALL TO WORSHIP

In the garden, Jesus prayed.

**In the darkness, he waited.**

Not all prayers are answered.

**Not all cups pass.**

Yet God remains present.

**Love does not leave.**

Come, you who are weary of explanations.

**Come, you who long for certainty.**

Come, you who sit in unanswered prayer.

**Let us worship the God who meets us even in the night.**

### \*OPENING HYMN

#### "Called As Partners in Christ's Service"

BEECHER 8.7.8.7.D.

Jane Parker Huber, 1981

John Zundel, 1855



1 Called as part-ners in Christ's ser-vice, called to min-is-tries of grace,  
2 Christ's ex-am-ple, Christ's in-spir-ing, Christ's clear call to work and worth,  
3 Thus new pat-terns for Christ's mis-sion, in a small or glob-al sense,  
4 So God grant us for to-mor-row ways to or-der hu-man life



We re-pond with deep com-mit-ment fresh new lines of faith to trace.  
Let us fol-low, nev-er fal-tering, rec-on-cil-ing folk on earth.  
Help us bear each oth-er's bur-dens, break-ing down each wall or fence.  
That sur-round each per-son's sor-row with a calm that con-quests strife.



May we learn the art of shar-ing, side by side and friend with friend,  
Men and wom-en, rich - er, poor-er, all God's peo - ple, young and old,  
Words of com-fort, words of vi - sion, words of chal-lenge, said with care,  
Make us part-ners in our liv - ing, our com - pas - sion to in - crease,



E - qual part - ners in our car-ing to ful - fill God's cho - sen end.  
Blend-ing hu - man skills to - geth-er gra-cious gifts from God un - fold.  
Bring new power and strength for ac-tion, make us col-leagues, free and fair.  
Mes - sen - gers of faith, thus giv-ing hope and con - fi - dence and peace.

### \*CONFESSION

Let us pray,

Faithful God, we confess how quickly we turn you into a transaction.

We pray in exchange for safety.

We obey in exchange for blessing.

We trust, as long as the outcome feels clear.

We confess our disappointment when the prayers we offer sincerely do not return the results we expected.

We have treated faith like leverage and prayer like a contract.

We have believed that devotion should protect us from suffering.

In the garden, Jesus asked for the cup to pass, and it did not.

Forgive us for the ways we resist that truth.

Teach us how to trust without certainty.

Teach us how to pray without guarantees.

Teach us how to remain when silence is the only answer.

Hear now our silent confessions.

*Silence is kept*

Amen.

ANTHEM "Jesus Loves Me"

Children's Choir

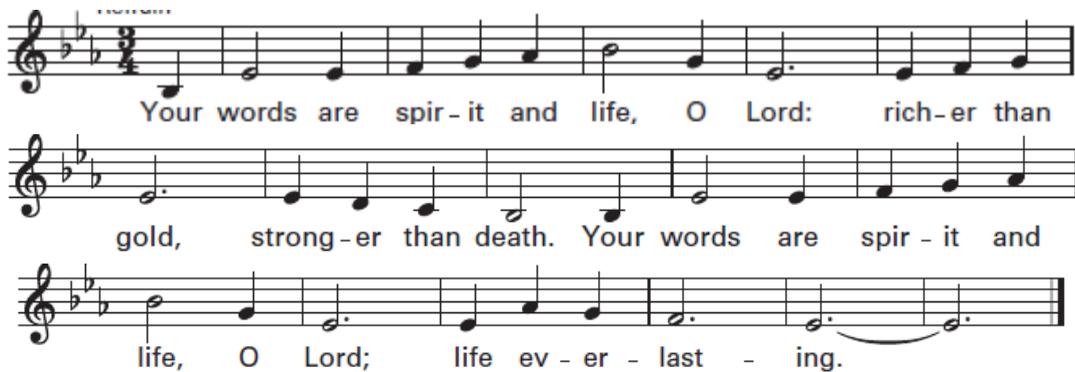
SCRIPTURE *Matthew 27:45-51*

Liturgist

SCRIPTURE RESPONSE

"Your Words are Spirit and Life"

*Text and music © 1993, Bernadette Farrell. Published by OCP. All rights reserved.*



Your words are spir - it and life, O Lord: rich - er than  
 gold, strong - er than death. Your words are spir - it and  
 life, O Lord; life ev - er - last - ing.

**MESSAGE FOR THE WHOLE FAMILY OF GOD**

Stacie Yates

**The Lord's Prayer**

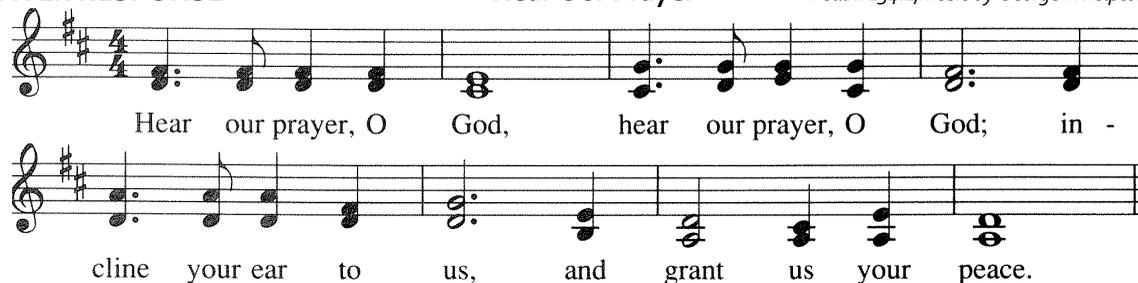
Our Father who art in heaven, hallowed be thy name. Thy kingdom come, thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread and forgive us our debts as we forgive our debtors. And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil, for thine is the kingdom and the power and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

**PRAYERS OF THE PEOPLE** Joys and Concerns, Pastoral Prayer

**\*PRAYER RESPONSE**

**"Hear Our Prayer"**

*Psalm 134:1, Music by George Whelpton, 1897*



Hear our prayer, O God, hear our prayer, O God; in -  
 cline your ear to us, and grant us your peace.

**SERMON** "Vending"

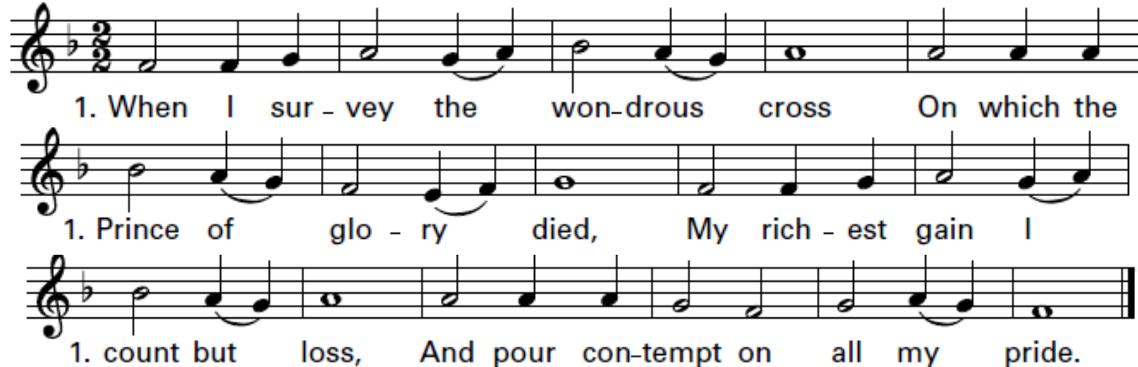
The Rev. Dr. Luke Lindon

**HYMN**

**"When I Survey the Wondrous Cross"**

*Isaac Watts, 1707*

HAMBURG LM  
*Lowell Mason, 1824*



1. When I sur - vey the won - drous cross On which the  
 1. Prince of glo - ry died, My rich - est gain I  
 1. count but loss, And pour con - tempt on all my pride.

## INVITATION TO GENEROSITY

There is an offering plate if you feel led to deposit your envelope or an offering there. You can also give through our Realm app or get the link to give by texting UCCMEDINA to 73256. You can also give through VENMO. Thank you for your prayerful consideration!

UCC Medina

@uccmedina



venmo

### Offertory Invitation

In a world shaped by transaction,  
**giving becomes an act of trust.**  
We give not to secure outcomes,  
**but to loosen our grip on control.**  
We give as a sign that even when answers are unclear,  
**we still choose generosity and hope.**

### \*Doxology (words, Ruth Duck, ©2005, GIA Publications)

Praise God, the Source of life and birth; Praise God, the Word, who came to earth;  
Praise God, the Spirit, holy flame; All glory, honor to God's Name! Amen.

### \*Prayer of Dedication

God of mystery,  
receive these gifts as signs of trust rather than certainty.  
Use them to serve, to heal, and to love  
without guarantees of success or clarity.  
As we offer what we have,  
teach us how to offer our lives with the same open hands.  
Amen.

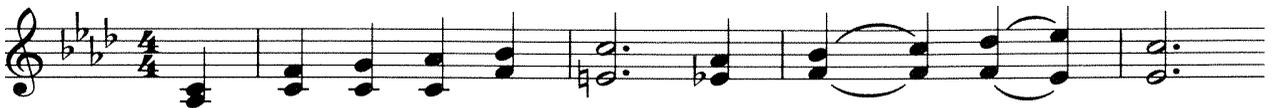
### \*CLOSING HYMN

### "The God of Abraham Praise"

LEONI 6.6.8.4.D.

Moses Maimonides, 12<sup>th</sup> cen.; Versification attrib. to Daniel ben Judah, c. 1400;  
trans. Max Landsberg & Newton, Mann, 1884, alt.

Traditional Yigdal melody, adapt. Meyer Lyon, 1770



1 The God of A - braham praise, all prais - es to God's name,  
2 God's spir - it free - ly flows, high surg - ing where it will;  
3 God has e - ter - nal life im - plant - ed in the soul;  
4 The God of Sar - ah praise, all prais - es to God's name,



who was and is and is to be, for - e'er the same!  
God spoke of old in proph - et's word; that word speaks still.  
God's love shall be our strength and stay, while a - ges roll.  
who was and is and is to be, for - e'er the same!



The one e - ter - nal God, be - fore what now ap - pears;  
 Es - tab - lished is God's law, and change-less it shall stand,  
 All praise the liv - ing God! Ex - tol that hal - lowed name,  
 The one e - ter - nal God, be - fore what now ap - pears;



the First, the Last: be - yond all thought through time - less years!  
 deep writ - ten on the hu - man heart, in ev - ery land.  
 who was, and is, and ev - er shall be still the same!  
 the First, the Last: be - yond all thought through time - less years!

**\*ANNOUNCEMENTS**

**\*BENEDICTION**

Go now into the wilderness of Lent.  
**Do not be afraid of the questions.**  
 Do not rush the answers.  
**May the God who meets us in dust and ashes**  
 strip away what is false,  
**and breathe new life where hope feels thin.**  
 Remember:  
**we are dust, and deeply loved.**  
 Go in peace.  
 Amen.

**\*CONGREGATIONAL RESPONSE "God Be With You"**

**God be with you 'til we meet again; By His counsels guide uphold you;  
 With His sheep securely fold you; God be with you 'til we meet again.**

**\*POSTLUDE "The God of Abraham Praise" – arr. Gordon Young Cathy Fafarak, organ**

\*\*\*\*\*  
 \*\*\*Please join us for Coffee Hour in Fellowship Hall following the service\*\*\*

**Coffee Hour is hosted this week by the Discipleship & Education Leadership Team (DELTs)**

\*\*\*\*\*  
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# THE PILGRIM MESSENGER

## MARCH 15, 2026

**“WELCOMING, LOVING, SERVING, WHERE GOD HAS NO LIMITS.  
MORE THAN CHURCH ON SUNDAY!”**

Live streaming of the 10:30 a.m. Sanctuary service is available at [www.uccmedina.org/live](http://www.uccmedina.org/live)

**March 15 thru March 22, 2026**

### **WEEK AT A GLANCE**

**Sun** Blake Donation Sign-ups Posted  
8:15 am Chapel Worship  
9:00 am Gathering Worship  
9:00 am 3<sup>rd</sup> Grade Bible Class  
9:45 am Chancel Choir Rehearsal  
10:00 am Children’s Choir Rehearsal  
10:30 am Sanctuary Worship  
10:30 am Jesus Vibes  
11:45 am Hospitality Team  
3:00 pm Vibes Video Crew  
4:30 pm Youth Group

**Mon** 1:00 pm Breadmakers

**Tues** **HAPPY ST. PATRICKS DAY!**

**Wed** 10:30 am Quilters  
6:30 pm Gathering Band  
**7:00 pm Trial of Judas-Lenten Series**

**Thurs** 6:30 pm Bible Study

**Fri**

**Sat** **Confirmation Retreat**

**Sun** **Confirmation Retreat**

Blake Donations Due  
8:15 am Chapel Worship  
9:00 am Gathering Worship  
9:45 am Chancel Choir Rehearsal  
10:00 am Children’s Choir Rehearsal  
10:30 am Sanctuary Worship  
10:30 am Jesus Vibes  
10:30 am Teen Church  
11:30 am Teen Council

### **COFFEE HOUR HOSTS NEEDED!**

Please consider signing up to host a coffee hour.  
**May 22<sup>nd</sup>, April 26<sup>th</sup>, May 10<sup>th</sup> & 17<sup>th</sup> is still open to host!! If no one signs up to host, we will not have coffee hour.** Signups are in the East Room Hallway.

**Worship Highlights:** 8:15, 9:00 & 10:30 am

Scripture: Matthew 27: 45-5

Sermon: “Vending” - Rev. Dr. Luke Lindon

**Communion Table Flowers:** The Communion Table flowers are given by Keith Demerest in honor of his daughter, Easley’s 9<sup>th</sup> birthday.

## **ONE GREAT HOUR OF SHARING**

One Great Hour of Sharing is a UCC Church Wider Mission that can help those in need and change the trajectory of their lives! This Lenten offering supports the disaster, refugee, and development ministries of the UCC. When a disaster strikes or people are displaced or made refugees by violence or extreme poverty the wider church ministries provides resources, educated staff, and volunteers to help shelter, calm, uplift and guide others through these devastating times. Immediate help is given along with long-term guidance. Your contributions make a difference! Please consider a generous donation on March 29. Checks should be made payable to our church with “OGHS” noted in the memo. Your donation may also be made online through Realm.

## **DONATION OF THE MONTH**

March donation of the month will be for Cups Collective. Let’s help restock them with paper plates (6 or 9 inch), paper bowls (12oz), to go containers, disposable coffee cups (8oz), napkins and paper towels.

## EASTER FLOWERS

**Order your Easter Flower today!** An assortment of lilies, tulips, daffodils and hyacinths will be used to decorate the Chapel, Fellowship Hall and Sanctuary for Easter services (type of flower claimed will be on a first come, first served basis). If you would like to order a flower, **please plan to take it home after 10:30 worship on Easter Sunday. We no longer have a "flower committee" to deliver flowers.** Flowers are \$10 each. Orders and payment are due no later than March 23<sup>rd</sup>. You may order through [Realm here](#) or by filling out a paper form (available from the ushers) and return it to the office or simply scan the QR code.



## MISSION OPPORTUNITY!



Grab your hammer, work gloves, and safety glasses! On May 9th at 8:00 AM, our church—in partnership with Zion ELC and other local congregations—will join a Habitat for Humanity Wall Build in Valley City.

This is a meaningful chance to help a single mother and her teenage son move closer to a home of their own. Scan the QR code or click the link to sign up - there are a limited number of slots. Please contact Patrick Acurio through the church office if you have any questions. <https://signupgenius.com/habitat>  
Thank you for showing God's love in action to our neighbors!

## EASTER BAG PROJECT

It's time again to make Easter bags for kids with incarcerated parents. If you would like to help, please grab a white bag on March 15<sup>th</sup>, decorate it, fill it up with age-appropriate items and return it by March 29<sup>th</sup> (Palm Sunday) to be blessed. Thanks for helping the Missions Team spread some love to kids whose parents cannot celebrate Easter with them!

## PINWHEEL GARDEN SIGNUP!



We'll be caring for the Medina Library's pinwheel garden for the Children's Center once again this year! All you need to do is stop by with your family to pick up any fallen pinwheels and replace those that are obviously missing or broken. Sign up at <https://tinyurl.com/MedinaPinwheels2026>

## EASTER EGG HUNT

Sunday, April 5<sup>th</sup>

On Easter Sunday, after the 10:30 service, we will have a quick Easter Egg Hunt for the children. The children should bring their Easter Basket or a bag so they can add a few more eggs to their collection. We will have the hunt in the grass area by the pergola. Hope to see you then.

## EASTER CANDY NEEDED

The DELTS will be hosting an Easter Egg Hunt at church after the 10:30 service on Easter Sunday. We are asking for **individually wrapped** Easter Candy donations to stuff the Easter Eggs with. There will be container outside the church office to put your donations in. Thank you in advance, the kids appreciate it!

## BEER 'N HYMNS

Join us at Medina Brewing Company!

Medina UCC Beer 'n Hymns presents 

★ **CABIN FEVER** ★

**MAR 23 7PM** | **Medina Brewing Company**  
Farmer's Exchange  
320 S Court St, Medina

12 05693 3053 4

# HOLY WEEK

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**Palm Sunday** – March 29<sup>th</sup> at 8:00, 9:00 & 10:30 a.m.

Children's Palm Parade at 10:30 a.m. service

**Maundy Thursday** service in Fellowship Hall on April 2<sup>nd</sup> @ 7pm

**Good Friday** we will show a documentary in Fellowship Hall on April 3<sup>rd</sup> @ 7pm

**"Bad Faith"** - *directed by Stephen Ujlaki and Chris Jones.*

## Easter Worship

7:00 am Easter Sunrise Service @ Spring Grove Chapel

8:15 am Chapel Worship

9:00 am Gathering Praise

10:30 am Sanctuary Worship

**11:30 am Easter Egg Hunt**

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**The deadline for submission of articles for NEXT Sunday's Messenger is this Sunday at 11:30 am**

**Please submit articles to the church office at [office@uccmedina.org](mailto:office@uccmedina.org)**

**CHURCH OFFICE HOURS: 9 am – 3 pm MONDAY THRU THURSDAY; FRIDAY 9 am – 12 pm**

## PASTORAL STAFF

Rev. Dr. Luke Lindon, Senior Minister - [luke@uccmedina.org](mailto:luke@uccmedina.org)

Rev. Meghan Malone, Associate Pastor of Youth & Mission - [meghan@uccmedina.org](mailto:meghan@uccmedina.org)

Karen Brocco-Kish, Visitation Pastor – [karenb7777@aol.com](mailto:karenb7777@aol.com)

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Pete Metzloff, Finance Director - [pete@uccmedina.org](mailto:pete@uccmedina.org)

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Tracy Gabrielsen, Director of Music – [tracy@uccmedina.org](mailto:tracy@uccmedina.org)

Cathy Fafrak, Organist & Office Assistant – [cathy@uccmedina.org](mailto:cathy@uccmedina.org)

Jennifer Vilimonovic, Director of Hobby Horse Preschool and Children's Choir – [jen@uccmedina.org](mailto:jen@uccmedina.org)

Jack Sharpe, Maintenance & Custodian

John 9:1-41

## Restored

One of the most haunting questions in John comes when after Jesus restores the sight of a man born blind and the Pharisees begin asking, "Surely, we are not blind?"

From the very beginning of this healing story, there's much debate and misinformed assumptions from the community, including Jesus' disciples, as all wonder whose sin was responsible for the man's affliction: His own or his parents? Curses and blessings pave much of the Old Testament theological road, so it was popular belief that when bad things happened it was because of something you or a family member did or didn't do.

Jesus announces, though, the blindness was no one's sin, and with a little divine spit and saliva rubbed onto the man's eyes, Jesus heals him. The man returns from washing his eyes in the Pool of Siloam, which means "sent," as Jesus instructed him to do. He returns with eyes that see everything vividly, even the truth of who Jesus is — the Holy One of God.

Skepticism prevails, though, and the Pharisees relentlessly question the man. It is then that Jesus makes the comment that he came into the world so that those who do not see may see, and those who do may become blind. He said it loud enough for the educated religious elite to hear. And when they do, they wonder, "Surely, we are not blind?"

Surely, I am not blind. Surely, you are not blind. We can see clearly what is right and what is wrong in the world, correct? Surely, we can see with the restored eyes of the blind man not only the beautiful blues in the sky and the lush greens in the meadows but the power and majesty of Christ among us.

The question of blindness is a haunting one because it reminds us that often we see only what we want to see, and we believe only what we want to believe. Like the Pharisees, none of us are free from misinformed assumptions and inherited prejudices and stymying skepticism.

How then do we gain our spiritual sight? I suppose it starts by allowing this question to haunt us. For only when we begin to ask if we ourselves are blind will we begin to admit that we need corrective spiritual lenses.

*All-knowing and all-seeing God, heal us from our own blindness that keeps us from seeing the world with the eyes of Jesus. May this day we regain our spiritual sight to see those who are hungry, who hurt, and who are lonely. In Jesus' name, we pray. Amen.*