

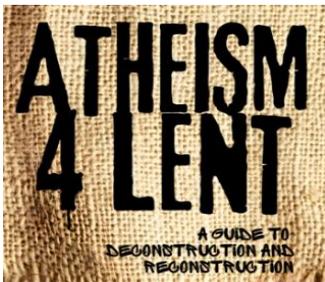
NATIONALISM



**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?

**Those who are able please stand*

PRELUDE “Go to Dark Gethsemane” – arr. Brian Glyncannon

Cathy Fafrak, Organ

WELCOME

***CALL TO WORSHIP**

Are prophets accepted in their hometown?

We might just find out.

How shall we measure the success of this worship?

If we don't want to throw our preachers off a cliff, it shall be a failure.

May we listen today with open hearts and minds

to the guidance of our Still-Speaking God.

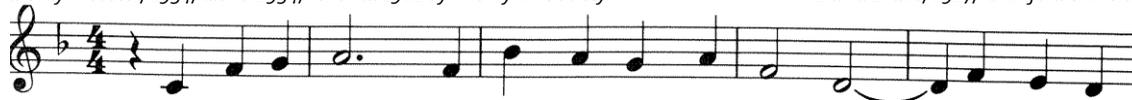
***OPENING HYMN**

“O Jesus Christ, May Grateful Hymns”

CHARTERHOUSE 11.10.11.10

Bradford Gray Webster, 1954; alt. © 1954, renewal 1982 by The Hymn Society

David Evans, 1927; © Oxford University Press



1 O Je-sus Christ, may grate-ful hymns be ris-ing, in ev-ery
 2 Grant us new cour-age, nev-er proud, but hum-ble, strong in your
 3 Show us your Spir-it, brood-ing o'er each cit-y, as you once



cit-y for your love and care; In-spire our wor-ship, grant the
 strength to ven-ture and to dare; To lift the fall-en, guide the
 wept a-bove Je-ru-sa-lem, Seek-ing to gath-er all in



glad sur-pris-ing that your blessed Spir-it rous-es ev-ery-where.
 ones who stum-ble, seek out the lone-ly and God's mer-cy share.
 love and pit-y, and heal-ing those who touch your gar-ment's hem.

*CONFESSION

Let us pray,

Holy God, we confess that we prefer a God who belongs to us rather than a God who belongs to the whole world.

We want prophets who flatter our identity, who bless our borders, who confirm our innocence.

We confess that when your good news stretches beyond our tribe, our nation, our comfort, we grow uneasy.

We have wrapped faith in flags, mistaken power for blessing, and called exclusion "faithfulness."

Like the crowd in Nazareth, we celebrate until your grace becomes too wide, until mercy reaches the wrong people, until truth costs us something.

Forgive us for the ways we resist your freedom. Forgive us for the walls we defend in your name. Forgive us for forgetting what is written in John 3:16: "For God so loved the world..." Free us from small visions of your reign.

Turn our hearts outward again, toward justice, mercy, and love that knows no borders.

Hear now our silent confessions.

Silence is kept

Amen.

ANTHEM "Thy Word Is a Lantern" – Franklin Ashdown

Chancel Choir

SCRIPTURE *Luke 4:16-30*

Kimberly Gallagher, Liturgist

SCRIPTURE RESPONSE

"Your Words are Spirit and Life"

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

Three staves of musical notation in 3/4 time, key of B-flat major. The lyrics are: "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."

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

"Stay With Me"

Matthew 26:36-42; Taizé Community; © 1984 Les Presses de Taizé, GIA Publications, Inc., agent

Jacques Berthier, 1923-1994

Stay with me, re - main here with me. Watch and
 pray, watch and pray.

SERMON "Nationalism"

The Rev. Dr. Luke Lindon

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

As we give today, we loosen our grip on what we think belongs to us.

Our money, our security, our sense of deserving.

These gifts are an act of trust,
a way of saying that God's abundance
 is not confined to one people or one place.

Let us give, not to protect what we have, but to participate in the wide mercy of God.

*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

Let us pray.

God of all people and all places, receive these gifts,
and with them, receive our willingness to let go of narrow loyalties.

Use what we offer to break down walls that divide, to feed those we have been taught to fear, and to proclaim a gospel that cannot be contained by nation, culture, or power.

Shape us into a people who do not throw prophets off cliffs,
but who listen when truth unsettles us, and follow when love leads us beyond ourselves.

We dedicate these gifts, and we dedicate our lives, to your boundless reign. Amen.

*CLOSING HYMN

James Montgomery, 1825; alt.

"Go To Dark Gethsemane"

REDHEAD 76 7:7-7:7-7.

Richard Redhead, 1853



1. Go to dark Geth - sem - a - ne, all who feel the
2. Fol - low to the judg - ment hall; view the Lord of
3. Cal - v'ry's mourn - ful moun - tain climb; there, a - dor - ing
4. Ear - ly hast - en to the tomb where they laid his



temp - ter's pow'r; your Re - deem - er's con - flict see,
life ar - raigned, O the worm - wood and the gall!
at his feet, mark that mir - a - cle of time,
breath - less clay; all is sol - i - tude and gloom.



watch with him one bit - ter hour: turn not from his
O the pangs his soul sus - tained! Shun not suf - f'ring,
God's own sac - ri - fice com - plete: "It is fin - ished!"
Who has tak - en him a - way? Christ is ris'n! He



griefs a - way; learn of Je - sus Christ to pray.
shame, or loss; learn of him to bear the cross.
hear the cry; learn of Je - sus Christ to die.
meets our eyes; Sav - ior, teach us so to rise.

***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 "Concerto in A minor, 1st movt."- Vivaldi-Bach/arr. V.D. Thompson Cathy Fafrak, organ**

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

Coffee Hour is hosted this week by John & Kathi Kavouras

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THE PILGRIM MESSENGER

MARCH 8, 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

March 8 thru March 15, 2026 WEEK AT A GLANCE

Sun	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
	11:45 am Mission Team
	2:30 pm Confirmation Class
	Trip to Islamic Center
Mon	6:00 pm Stewardship/Finance Team
Tues	7:00 pm Worship Team
Wed	10:30 am Quilters
	5:00 pm Bell Choir
	6:00 pm Choir Rehearsal
	6:30 pm Gathering Band
	7:00 pm Trial of Judas-Lenten Series
Thurs	6:30 pm Bible Study

Fri

Sat

Sun	Blake Donation Sign-ups Posted
	8:15 am Chapel Worship
	9:00 am Gathering Worship
	9:00 am 3 rd 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

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

Scripture: Luke 4: 16-30

Sermon: "Nationalism" - Rev. Dr. Luke Lindon

Communion Table Flowers: The Communion Table flowers are given by Jane Langol in honor of the birthday of her daughter, Beth Waugh.

WEDNESDAYS DURING LENT "Trial of Judas"

March 11th - March 25th

Join us every Wednesday evening at 7 pm during Lent for an Interactive Readers Theatre. We will meet in Fellowship Hall along with members of St. Matthew and St. Paul for our Lenten Study, "The Trial of Judas".

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 23rd. 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.



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.

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 15th, decorate it, fill it up with age-appropriate items and return it by March 29th (Palm Sunday) to be blessed. Thanks for helping the Missions Team spread some love to kids whose parents cannot celebrate Easter with them!

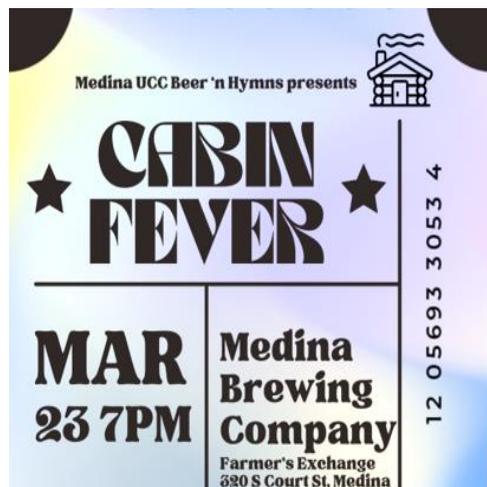
PINWHEEL GARDEN SIGNUP!



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>

BEER 'N HYMNS

Join us at Medina Brewing Company!



SPIRIT MOVES YOGA CLASS

Gather every Monday from 6-7pm for Spirit Moves Yoga. This free weekly class is offered to individuals of all ages and ability levels including chair yoga. The class will be held in the Fellowship Hall and is offered to members, non-members and open to the community.

SIGN UP TO SPONSOR COMMUNION TABLE FLOWERS

We have several spots open to sponsor Communion Table flowers. Please sign up in the East Room hallway if you would like to sponsor a week.

FINANCIAL UPDATE

Through February we received \$64,257 in pledges, contributions, or other receipts. We have had expenses of \$80,474, for a deficit of \$16,216. Utility costs are always higher in the first few months of the year and 2026 is certainly no exception. The shortfall is consistent with the 2026 budget.

Pete Metzloff, Director of Finance

HOLY WEEK

Palm Sunday – March 29th 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 2nd @ 7pm

Good Friday we will show a documentary in Fellowship Hall on April 3rd @ 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

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

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

Rev. Meghan Malone, Associate Pastor of Youth & Mission - meghan@uccmedina.org

Karen Brocco-Kish, Visitation Pastor – karenb7777@aol.com

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Pete Metzloff, Finance Director - pete@uccmedina.org

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Tracy Gabrielsen, Director of Music – tracy@uccmedina.org

Cathy Fafrak, Organist & Office Assistant – cathy@uccmedina.org

Jennifer Vilimonovic, Director of Hobby Horse Preschool and Children's Choir – jen@uccmedina.org

Jack Sharpe, Maintenance & Custodian

John 4:5-42

Thirsty Voices

There's an old stone well on my Vermont property dating back to the eighteenth century. It's no longer operational as it ran dry years ago. A deeper well has since been drilled. Still, there's something spiritually powerful about that old well. Each time I walk by the stone relic I find myself pausing for a blessed second, imagining Jesus offering me water in which I would never thirst again.

It was the same offer he extended to the Samaritan woman in the village near Shechem at Jacob's well, believed to have been built around 1906 B.C.

Jesus encounters the woman in the noontime sun. After getting past the societal faux pas of a Jew asking a Samaritan for water, and after disregarding the red flag waving that this woman is an outcast among her own people — after all, who draws water when the sun is the highest and the hottest — Jesus has the water conversation.

He doesn't talk about the refreshing liquid that quenches parched throats, but the refreshing Word of God that saturates souls that have become spiritual wastelands.

Sir, how do I get this water? It's a question we should all ask, for what will satiate our thirsting for acceptance and wholeness?

Soon after moving to my fledgling farm that I named "Old Stone Well Farm," in honor of that well that captivated me, I began a Lenten spiritual practice. I would rise early in the morning and sit on the old rock slab covering the well's opening. I would then picture Jesus right beside me sharing all the beautiful things he sees in the world, and all the beauty he still sees in me just as he saw in the Samaritan woman.

My friends, although you can't physically join me at my old Vermont well this Lent, there is a well for you sit by this day. It is a place to retreat to and to close your eyes and to whisper to your Friend and Savior, "Jesus, I would very much like this water that you offer."

Thirst-quenching God, may we find ourselves asking Your Son boldly for the water in which we will never thirst for anything ever again. May this be the day we take a big holy gulp of hope, of love, of forgiveness, and of peace. In Jesus' name, we pray. Amen.