



"Word of Life" by Millard Sheets, 1907-1989.

# Christ Church **UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST**

Rev. Dan Stark, pastor  
and Matthew Lawrenz, musician  
[www.uccmke.org](http://www.uccmke.org)

*In this second week after the Pentecost, we continue our sermon series, UNordinary Times. We explore the story of the Genesis story of Abraham and Sarah and the three unexpected strangers. When she is told she will have a baby, Sarah laughs. The story shows us how God can show up in unexpected people and ways. In Matthew's Gospel, Jesus speaks some difficult and unexpected words. His commissioning of his unlikely crew to carry on his mission speaks some difficult truths into our world of COVID-19, racism and prejudice, and worldwide protests and unrest. In many ways Matthew's Gospel is so poignant that it begs the question, "Where do we begin?" Regardless, the good news for us today is that anywhere where hope or justice seems laughable, the Spirit is at work already.*

**Words of Welcome**

**A Song for Today**

**The King of Love My Shepherd Is**

arr. Willan  
Musician, Matthew Lawrenz

**Opening Litany**

**UCC Worship Ways**

Strangers visit Abraham and Sarah,  
and they welcome them with a feast!

**People: How wonderful!**

Strangers promise Sarah and Abraham  
a child in their old age!

**People: Too wonderful!?**

Strangers leave Abraham and Sarah  
To wait and ponder:

**People: "Is anything to wonderful for God?"**

Let us worship our Wonder-full God!



*"Abraham, Sarah, and the Angel" by Jan Provoost.*

**Prayer for Today**

Lord, Jesus Christ  
who reached across the ethnic boundaries  
between Samaritan, Roman and Jew  
who offered fresh sight to the blind and freedom to captives,  
help us to break down the barriers in our community,  
enable us to see the reality of racism and bigotry,  
and free us to challenge and uproot it  
from ourselves, our society and our world.

**John Buckey**

## Old Testament

## [Genesis 18:1-15; 21:1-7](#)



The book of Genesis is a book of new beginnings. In our reading today, we hear how Abraham and Sarah, two ancestors of our faith, began their family. Abraham shows kindness and hospitality to three strangers, or messengers, on the road, and invites them to stay with his wife and him. The strangers tell the elderly couple that they will have a son. When Sarah hears this, she laughs, because of her age. She gives birth to a son and names him Isaac, which means Laughter.

### Prayer of Repentance and Lament

Carol Penner

*"Abraham and the Three Angels" by Jan Polack, 1490-1519.*

You are the God who hears:  
hear our prayer today for all who lament or  
repent.

For those among us who face discrimination  
every day  
because of their skin colour,  
we lament.

For those among us with white skin who  
benefit  
from racist systems sometimes even without  
realizing it,  
we repent.

For those among us who have struggled and  
waited so long  
for the Promised Land of freedom and  
equality,  
we lament.

For those among us who have acted in racist  
ways and have hurt people of colour,  
we repent.

For those protesting injustice who face police  
brutality  
and a justice system rigged against them,  
we lament.

For those who think racism is someone else's  
problem,  
and not a problem for humanity,  
we repent.

God of hope, show us how to work for justice  
together,  
standing up for what is right,  
stepping in when something's wrong,  
shouldering each other's burdens,  
holding each other accountable,  
righting the wrongs we've done,  
speaking truth to power.

We pray for change, lasting change,  
for protection for protesters,  
for a de-escalation of violence  
and for government leaders who listen.

Deliver us from evil, within and without,  
in Jesus' name we pray, Amen

## New Testament

The Gospel of Matthew tells the story of Jesus the Messiah whose lineage and miraculous birth are the sign that “God is with us.” In this reading from Matthew, Jesus has compassion for the crowds who come to him. The laborers are few for the harvest, so Jesus sends his disciples to minister among the people. They take nothing with them but rely on the hospitality of others while they perform miracles of healing and mercy. Jesus knew they would not always be welcomed, but to not dwell on it – to shake the dust off their sandals and move on. Jesus warned them about persecutions and how there will always be another place for them to go before the Son of Man comes.

[Matthew 9:35-10:8 \(9-23\)](#)



*"Harvest in Provence" by Vincent van Gogh, 1853-1890.*

**Homily**

**UNordinary Times: Unexpected and Unlikely**

**Rev. Dan Stark**

**Song of Response**

**Festive Scherzo**

**arr. Archer**

**Organist, Matthew Lawrenz**

**Prayers of the People**

**The Lord's Prayer**

**Passing the Peace**

Although we cannot be physically close to one another at this time, we can be relationally close. This Sunday morning, you are invited to pass the peace with your church family and loved ones by taking a moment to text, write, call, or message the people in your church family to let them know you are thinking of them. May the peace of Christ be with you.

**Closing Song**

**He's Always Been Faithful**

**arr. Sara Groves**

**Soloist, Nancy Charles**

**Pianist, Pam Kothrade**

**Sending**

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If you should need to contact Pastor Stark, please email [pastor@uccmke.org](mailto:pastor@uccmke.org).  
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You can make your offering to Christ Church through [PayPal](#) or by mailing a check to Christ  
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915 East Oklahoma Ave, Milwaukee, WI, 53207.

