



Matthew 15:21-28 • illustratedministry.com

***St. John's United Church of Christ
Chambersburg, PA
March 8, 2026***

THIRD SUNDAY IN LENT: HOLY CONFRONTATION

*Please stand in body or in spirit

GATHERING SONG

"This is the Day"

UNISON WELCOME

"No matter who you are or where you are on life's journey, you are welcome here"

ANNOUNCEMENTS

CHIMING OF THE TRINITY AND PRELUDE

***CALL TO WORSHIP**

from The Work of Imagination

Come into God's presence, you who imagine and you who seek, you who disrupt and you who repair.

By the Spirit, we gather in hope.

Come into God's presence, you of great faith, and you who grasp at crumbs; you who resist, and you who persist.

In Christ, we gather and are transformed.

Come into God's presence, singing for joy and for justice; bringing prayer and worship, your most faithful acts of resistance.

To God be the glory! We gather to praise!

***HYMN #400**

"Precious Lord, Take My Hand"

CALL TO CONFESSION

from The Work of Imagination

Siblings in Christ, let us confess our sins to God, for God knows our temptation to be cruel to one another, and yet imagines for us a life of mutual blessings.

PRAYER OF CONFESSION

from The Work of Imagination

God of mercy and compassion, we confess we have not always treated our neighbors, friends, or even family members with dignity. **We have used dehumanizing language or stereotypes. We have been critical when we should have been encouraging. We have told lies when we should have been honest with hard truths. We have excluded people when we should have widened the invitation. Forgive us for the ways that we have failed our neighbors, friends, and family with unkind words. Amen.**

KYRIE

Hymnal Companion C-4

ASSURANCE OF PARDON

from The Work of Imagination

Beloved in Christ, God knows how it feels to be frustrated with other people. Yet, God promises the Spirit to replenish our reserves of patience and love when it feels like we cannot spare one more kind thought. Receive the gifts of grace. Receive God's pardon for your sins, and be at peace.

***GLORY BE TO THE FATHER #704**

***PASSING OF THE PEACE**

As we walk through the wild wilderness of Lent, we imagine a world where all creation is at peace. We imagine a world without war, where creation flourishes and children are safe. Let these dreams of peace begin here as we share the peace of Christ with one another. May the peace of Christ be with you. **And also with you.**

SCRIPTURE READING

Numbers 27:1-11

RESPONSIVE READING

"Alone" by Maya Angelou

Lying, thinking last night how to find my soul a home

Where water is not thirsty and bread loaf is not stone

I came up with one thing and I don't believe I'm wrong

That nobody, But nobody, Can make it out here alone.

Alone, all alone

Nobody, but nobody Can make it out here alone.

SACRAMENT OF BAPTISM

(please follow along on the insert/screen)

Makayla Grace Sheele and Thomas Joseph Sheele III

Sabrina Sollenberger and Thomas J. Sheele II, parents

Dwight and Cheryl Sollenberger, sponsors

ANTHEM

CHILDREN'S MESSAGE

Roxanne Davenport

Children's Corner will be offered following the Children's Message

SCRIPTURE READING

Matthew 15:21-28

SERMON

Rev. Caroline E. Saxton

SHARING OF JOYS AND CONCERNS

PRAYERS OF THE PEOPLE AND THE LORD'S PRAYER (DEBTS)

INVITATION TO GIVING

OFFERTORY

***OFFERTORY RESPONSE**

"When I Survey the Wondrous Cross" v. 4

Were the whole realm of nature mine,

that were a present far too small;

love so amazing, so divine

demands my soul, my life, my all.

***PRAYER OF DEDICATION**

from The Work of Imagination

Generous God, we bring our gifts before you and your church like tiny seeds from a

dandelion. Send out these gifts on the mighty wind of your Spirit, bringing growth, bearing fruit, and nourishing both our faith community and our neighbors. May each gift of every size bloom with your holy imagination. Amen.

***HYMN #388** (words on screen)

"Help Us Accept Each Other"

***AFFIRMATION OF FAITH**

adapted from The Work of Imagination

Let us affirm our faith as we participate in the holy work of imagination.

We believe in the dignity of human beings as image bearers and dearly beloved children of God. We believe all people carry God-given dignity – across every age, race, ethnicity, gender, sexual orientation, language, accent, appearance, ability, documentation status, refugee status, possessions, wealth or poverty, religion, or mental health. We believe human dignity is inescapable and irrevocable.

***CHARGE & BENEDICTION**

from The Work of Imagination

POSTLUDE (seated)

The "Nursery Nook in the Narthex" quiet area and infant/toddler space in the Parlor are available for children and families to use during worship. Age-appropriate activity bags are also available.

Birthdays this week: 03/10 Carol Rockwell; 03/12 Holli Burton and Deborah Dilling;
03/14 Margaret (Peg) Marotte and Lee Powell.

Worship Participants:	
Pastor	Rev. Caroline E. Saxton
Organist	Barbara Motichka
Choir Director	Gary Crum
Deacon in Charge	Susan Collier
Lector	Connie Kaiser
Children's Corner	Chani Wolfe
Media Coordinators	Calvin Frantz and Neath Ham
Bulletin cover	"Canaanite Woman" © 2026 Illustrated Ministry

The Flowers at the Foot of the Cross are given in loving memory of William L. Powell and Mary L. Powell by their sons Lee and Bob.

St. John's Mission

To grow in love of God and neighbor

Worship Resources: *"Alone"* by Maya Angelou,

<https://www.journeywithjesus.net/poemsandprayers/291-alone>

"The Work of Imagination" Lenten liturgy & commentary © 2026 Illustrated Ministry

400 Precious Lord, Take My Hand

1. Pre - cious Lord, take my hand, lead me on, help me stand —
 2. When my way grows drear, pre-cious Lord, lin - ger near —

I am tired, I am weak, I am worn;
 when my life is al - most gone;

through the storm, through the night, lead me on to the light —
 hear my cry, hear my call, hold my hand lest I fall —

take my hand, pre-cious Lord, lead me home.
 take my hand, pre-cious Lord, lead me home.

WORDS: Thomas A. Dorsey, 1932

MUSIC: Folk melody; adapt. Thomas A. Dorsey, 1932

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PRECIOUS LORD

Irregular

Baptism of Makayla Sheele and Thomas J. Sheele III
St. John's United Church of Christ
March 8, 2026

Welcome

Members and friends in Christ, we gather now to celebrate the gift of grace in the sacrament of baptism.

There is one body and one Spirit. There is one hope in God's call to us.

There is one Lord, one faith, one baptism, one God and Creator of us all.

Address

The sacrament of baptism is an outward and visible sign of the grace of God. Inasmuch as the promise of the gospel is not only to us but also to our children, baptism with water and the Holy Spirit is the mark of their acceptance into the care of Christ's church, the sign and seal of their participation in God's forgiveness, and the beginning of their growth into full Christian faith and fellowship.

This is the water of baptism. Out of this water we rise with new life, forgiven of sin and one in Christ, members of Christ's body.

We invite Sabrina Sollenberger and Thomas J. Sheele II to bring their children Makayla Sheele and Thomas J. Sheele III forward to be baptized, with sponsors Dwight and Cheryl Sollenberger, family and loved ones, in the presence of this community of faith.

Questions of the Parents and Sponsors

Do you desire to have these children baptized into the faith and family of Jesus Christ?
We do.

Will you encourage these children to renounce the powers of evil and to receive the freedom of new life in Christ? **We will, with the help of God.**

Will you teach these children that they may be led to profess Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior? **We will, with the help of God.**

Do you promise, by the grace of God, to be Christ's disciples, to follow in the way of our Savior, to resist oppression and evil, to show love and justice, and to witness to the work and word of Jesus Christ as best you are able? **We do, with the help of God.**

Do you promise, according to the grace given you, to grow with these children in the Christian faith, to help these children to be faithful members of the church of Jesus Christ, by celebrating Christ's presence, by furthering Christ's mission in all the world, and by offering the nurture of the Christian church so that they may affirm their baptism? **We do, with the help of God.**

Congregational Assent

Jesus Christ calls us to make disciples of all nations and to offer them the gift of grace in baptism. Do you, who witness and celebrate this sacrament, promise your love, support, and care to the ones about to be baptized, as they live and grow in Christ?

We promise our love, support, and care.

Affirmation of Faith

Let us unite with the church in all times and places in confessing our faith in the triune God.

Do you believe in God? **I believe in God.**

Do you believe in Jesus Christ? **I believe in Jesus Christ.**

Do you believe in the Holy Spirit? **I believe in the Holy Spirit.**

Prayer of Baptism

Christ be with you. **And also with you.** Let us pray.

Act of Baptism

By what name shall this child be called? **Makayla Grace Sheele.** Makayla, I baptize you in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit. **Amen.**

By what name shall this child be called? **Thomas Joseph Sheele III.** Thomas, I baptize you in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit. **Amen.**

Prayer for the Baptized

Presentation of the Child

Benediction

Go in the peace of Christ.

Thanks be to God.

NEWS IN THE PEWS March 8, 2026

The Rev. Caroline E. Saxton, pastor@sjucc1811.org (641) 260-1868 (cell)
Tonya Schwartz, Office Administrator, manager@sjucc1811.org (717) 263-8593 (office)
Gary Crum, Music Director | Barbara Motichka, Organist
Roxanne Davenport, Director of Children & Youth
The Rev. Stephen W. Hoffman, Pastor Emeritus

THIS WEEK AT ST. JOHN'S

TODAY: Bible Study on the Book of Esther, Chapter 3, 8 pm, Zoom (link in Friday e-blast)

Monday, March 09

10:00 am Chi Gong/Zazen silent body energy and soulful meditation – Parlor 104
1:30 pm Monday Afternoon Book Study – Conference Room 111 (Chapter 4)
7:00 pm Boy Scouts – Fellowship Hall

Tuesday, March 10

5:00 pm SJUCC Gathering - Neighbors Food Hall (102 S. Main Street Chambersburg, Pa)
5:30 pm Yoga – Room 202
6:00 pm Ladies' Bible Study– Zoom
6:30 pm Cub Scouts – Fellowship Hall/then break into smaller groups

Wednesday, March 11

11:30 am Ladies Luncheon – Hoss's Steak House (20 Falling Spring Road, Chambersburg, 17202)
6:30 pm Children & Youth Meeting – Parlor Room 104
7:00 pm – CMC Lenten Service – Fayetteville Otterbein (61 W Main St. Fayetteville, Pa)

Thursday, March 12

6:00 pm Girl Scouts – Room 116
6:00 pm Bell Choir Practice – Bell Room 117
7:15 pm Choir Rehearsal – Choir Room 103

Sunday, March 15

8:45 am Godly Play Class – Room 119
8:45 am SPARK! Elementary Church School Class – Room 115
8:45 am Teen Discussion Class – Room 206
8:45 am Upper Room Church School Class – Conference Room 111
8:45 am Wired Word Church School Class – Room 116
8:45 am Sunday Morning Caffeine Church School Class – Parlor Room 104
10:00 am Sunday Worship – Sanctuary
8:00 pm Bible Study on the Book of Acts - Zoom

Neighbors Food Hall Join us for a delicious evening of food, fun and community spirit on Tuesday, March 10 from 5p-7pm (each person pays individually). Located at 102 S. Main St Chambersburg. Please RSVP to the church office at 717-263-8593 by Monday, March 9.

Monday Afternoon Book Study We will read chapter 4 of Norman Wirzba's book "Love's Braided Dance: Hope in a Time of Crisis" for our discussion on Monday, March 9, 1:30 pm in Conference Room 111. Come and join the conversation!

Camp Sticky Bun Sale Camp volunteers will be making and selling cinnamon sticky buns for \$12/dozen and \$7/half dozen! Orders and payment will be taken before and after church on Sundays, March 8 and 15. Pick up your "ready to bake" sticky buns on Sunday morning, March 22. Freshly baked sticky buns will also be on sale, after church, on March 22 for \$2 each. Help support St. John's Camp and enjoy a tasty treat! All proceeds support the Camp Fund.

Bible and a Beer is an opportunity to talk about our faith in public. Join us on the 3rd Monday of the month at the Trojan Diner at 6:30 pm. Our next gathering will be March 16.

Nursery School Smith's Chicken Sale is Saturday, March 28, here at SJUCC. Tickets will be sold on March 8 and March 15 before and after church or you can stop by and purchase them from the Nursery School M-F from 9am -2pm.

St. John's Craft Night Monday, March 30, 6 pm, room 202, \$15. Get ready for spring and encourage new life by painting/decorating your own gourd birdhouse! Sign up by 3/23.

Blueberry Bliss Spring Tea Tickets will be held on Saturday, April 25, 1:30 pm in Fellowship Hall. Make sure you're on the VIP list to secure your ticket(s) when they go on sale on March 18! Tickets are \$35, cash or check.

CVAS Collection The Youth will be once again helping St. John's Nursery School in their collection of items for the CVAS by creating wonderful animal displays and signs for the collection sites in the church. We will embark on a delivery of these items on April 11.

Silent Auction: We are planning a showcase of talent beginning March 15 and on display in our lobby, until March 29. Entries by anyone at St. John's and their families must be submitted by the end of February, with a statement of how their entry fits the theme. See Roxanne Davenport or Diana Kongkeattikul for more information.

Little Free Pantry Donations of nonperishable food items can be dropped off at the church office or placed in the grocery cart in the back lobby. Thank you for supporting this project!

March/April Upper Room devotionals are currently available at the Welcome Center. We suggest a donation of \$1 for small print/\$2 for large print copies. If you would like to have a copy mailed to you, please contact the church office.

March First Fruits will support organizations designated as part of the Lenten Projects. This year's recipients are African Mission Healthcare, the Peru School Project, and the United Church of Christ Disaster Emergency Fund. Via these offerings, we will support medical care in Africa, education in Peru, and support in situations where individuals have suffered great loss in multiple locations via flooding, fire, earthquake, etc.