

DENNIS UNION CHURCH

an open and affirming congregation of the United Church of Christ

First Sunday in Lent

February 22, 2026

We claim as our mission the promotion of justice, human dignity, and peace. Thus we bind ourselves to follow where the Spirit of God shall lead, revealing God's will for our lives and the life of the Church.

Bells Toll the Hour

Prelude

"Gabriel's Oboe"
Betsy Doriss, oboe

Morricone

Welcome and Announcements

Centering Prayer and Silent Reflection

*Call to Worship

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 who live in this wide and wild world,
navigating beauty and uncertainty, temptation and trial.

In Christ, we gather as children of God.

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 #211 "Jesus Walked This Lonesome Valley"

*Jesus walked this lonesome valley, he had to walk it by himself;
O, nobody else could walk it for him, he had to walk it by himself.*

*We must walk this lonesome valley, we have to walk it by ourselves;
O, nobody else can walk it for us, we have to walk it by ourselves.*

*You must go and stand your trial, you have to stand it by yourself,
O, nobody else can stand it for you, you have to stand it by yourself.*

*Invocation

**God of the wildness, you claim us and embrace us in love: we are yours.
When we face uncertainties and temptations that cause us to question
your provision, doubt our belovedness, or exploit our faith for worldly gain,
lead us back, again and again, to words of scripture, and to the living Word,
Jesus Christ. May we hold fast in faith and serve you with our whole hearts,
this day and always. Amen.**

Word for the Young

Anthem

“Long Way from Home”

arr. Mark Patterson

Chris Elliot, baritone

Betsy Doriss, oboe

Call and Prayer of Confession

Lord, in your mercy, **hear our prayer:**

Loving God, we confess that when the wildness feels too chaotic, and the earth beneath our feet seems to shift with change, we fall easily into despair.

We forget to hope. We neglect to dream. We imagine paths of doom instead of journeys to glory. We panic, even as your Spirit holds steady within and around us. Help us to trust, to hope, to dream, and to walk forward in faith. And when the fears set in, help us to find support in the strength of community. Amen.

Silence

Assurance of Grace

Character Narrative

Gospel Reading

Matthew 4: 1-11

Homily

*Hymn #69

“How Like a Gentle Spirit”

Verses 1, 2 & 4

How like a gentle spirit deep within God reins our fervent passions day by day, and gives us strength to challenge and to win despite the perils of our chosen way.

Let God be God wherever life may be; let every tongue bear witness to the call; all humankind is one by God’s decree; let God be God, let God be God for all.

When in our vain pretensions we conspire to shape God’s image as we see our own, hark to the voice above our base desire; God is the sculptor, we the broken stone.

Offerings of the People

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.

Offertory

*Doxology

***Praise God from whom all blessings flow,
praise God, all creatures here below;
praise God for all that love has done!
Creator, Christ and Spirit One. Amen.***

Joys and Concerns of the Community

Prayers of the People and Sung Lord's Prayer

Hymn #307

Our Father, which 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.

*Hymn #627

"I Want Jesus to Walk with Me"

***I want Jesus to walk with me. I want Jesus to walk with me.
All along my pilgrim journey, O, I want Jesus to walk with me.***

***In my trials, Lord, walk with me. In my trials, Lord, walk with me.
When my heart is almost breaking, O, I want Jesus to walk with me.***

***When I'm troubled, Lord, walk with me. When I'm troubled, Lord, walk with me.
When my head is bowed in sorrow, O, I want Jesus to walk with me.***

*Sending Forth / Passing of the Peace

May the peace of Christ be with you.

And also with you.

*Benediction

Recessional

The congregation may be seated for the music or depart.

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No matter who you are or where you are on life's journey, you are welcome at Dennis Union Church. Please feel free to contact the church at 508-385-3543 if you have any concerns, prayer requests, or desire a pastoral call.

Deacon of the Day: Kim Seserman
Ushers: Steve Higgins, Ann & Lloyd Swaim
Greeters: Dottie Damon, John & Sue Schofield

Flowers today are given by Judy Black
"In loving memory of Bill Black on his birthday"

Help Dennis Union Church be a warm and welcoming place every Sunday - serve as an usher or greeter for worship services. Sign up on the hallway board -- duties are easy and others will help show you what to do.

NOTES AND ANNOUNCEMENTS

Each week in February, our worship music has included spirituals and songs from the African-American community. DUC has a commitment to honor the people who created this music without recognition or payment, and supports the Rose Conservatory in Brockton in their mission to provide access to exceptional arts, education and musical performance for the Brockton community.

We welcome Greg Fernandes, Executive Director of the Rose Conservatory, to worship today and look forward to hearing from him during Fellowship Hour in the Lower Hall. Donations in support of the Rose Conservatory will be collected today (please use the envelopes in the pews or note "Rose Conservatory" on the memo line of checks).



"Praying from the Heart" Lenten Study
Study materials provided as needed
Tuesdays at 11 am February 24 - March 24

Lenten Simple Suppers
Soup, Salad and Bread Provided
Thursdays at 5:30 pm February 26, March 12 and 26
Contact the church office to sign up or for more information.

"The Work of Imagination" Lenten devotionals are available
in the Church Office for \$5.

Dennis Union Church Open and Affirming Covenant of Welcome

Believing that everyone is a child of God, it is with joy, and in the love of Christ, that we welcome all persons into the full life, ministry and mission of Dennis Union Church. We choose not to turn away anyone whom Christ would welcome. We affirm the dignity and worth of every person including, but not limited to, people of every race, ethnicity, age, gender, gender identity or expression, sexual orientation, physical or mental ability, family structure or economic circumstance. We celebrate God's creative love shown in the wide diversity of humanity and the unique gifts each of us brings to the world. It is our intention to love one another as Christ has loved us.

Dennis Union Church
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Pastor: Rev. Nancy S. McHugh
Director of Music: Margaret Bossi
Director of Faith Formation for Youth & Adults: Doreen Mayer Children's Ministries Coordinator: Evy Nickerson
Finance Secretaries: Elise Gordon and Doreen Mayer Office Administrator: Jane Wilson
Sexton: Dave Crocker