

FIRST SUNDAY

of LENT

The First Church in Belfast
United Church of Christ
An Open and Affirming Congregation
March 10, 2019

10:00 a.m.

WE ARE GATHERED IN

GATHERING MUSIC

WELCOME TO THE LIFE OF THE CHURCH

PRELUDE

BRINGING IN THE LIGHT

OPENING SEQUENCE

Opening Call

ONE VOICE

As winter hearts begin to thaw
and Lenten days begin,
come to the well of God's great love
to speak the truth within.

ALL

**Be not afraid to gather here
when cherished dreams have died.
Receiving and absorbing grief,
the well is deep and wide.**

A Gathering at the Well

Invitation to Name our Grief

Prayer by the Well

***OPENING HYMN** “Be Not Afraid” (insert)

YOUNG PEOPLE’S MESSAGE AND MINISTRY

**Love, love, love, love, people this is your call.
Love your neighbors as yourself,
for God loves all!**

CHORAL ANTHEM

LENTEN MEDITATION by Henri Nouwen in *Spiritual Direction:
Wisdom for the Long Walk of Faith*

As a Christian, I am firmly convinced that the decisive moment of Jesus’s public life was his baptism, when he heard the divine affirmation, “You are my Beloved on whom my favor rests.” In this core experience, Jesus is reminded in a deep, deep way of who he really is.

There is in each of us an inner voice of Love that says: “You are the Beloved of God!” I want you to claim your Belovedness. You don’t have to get in searches that lead to nowhere. Neither do you have to become the victim of a manipulative world or get trapped in any kind of addiction. You can choose to reach out now for that inner freedom and find it ever more fully...

“You are God’s beloved!” I hope you can hear these words as spoken to you with all the tenderness and force that love can hold. My only desire is to make these words reverberate in every corner of your being – “You are the Beloved.”

PRAYER OF DEDICATION

All blessings come from you, Holy God, so we return a portion to you now. May we use it as you would will, caring for your people, for your creation, and for proclaiming the good news until all know your glory, in Jesus' name we pray. Amen.

WE ARE SENT AND BLESSED

***CLOSING HYMN** “Precious Lord, Take My Hand” #472

***BENEDICTION**

POSTLUDE

*With thanks to our Lenten Worship Team –
Isaac Bray, Katelyn Parker Bray, Andrea Giddings,
Deb Jenks, Cathie Jorgenson, Pat Kaplan,
Joel Krueger, Joy Longfellow, Kate Winters*