



# COMMUNITY CHURCH OF WALKER UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST

P.O. Box 267, Walker, MN 56484 (218) 547-1093

[www.uccwalker.com](http://www.uccwalker.com) [commchurchucc@gmail.com](mailto:commchurchucc@gmail.com)



*“No matter who you are, or where you are, you are welcome here!”*

**CCOWUCC Update and News**  
**By Michael Small**  
**For The Week of: [February 5 2024](#)**



Photo Credit: Courtney Smith

## WORD FOR THE DAY - FROM GRATEFUL.ORG

*“Life is a gift that is given and will be taken. How we choose to spend our time here is our gift to life. It is our way of saying “thank you life” for the gift.”*

— IMUETINYAN UGIAGBE

## DAILY QUESTION

*What is asking for my wholehearted attention today?*

You may subscribe to the daily “Word for the Day” by going to <https://grateful.org>.

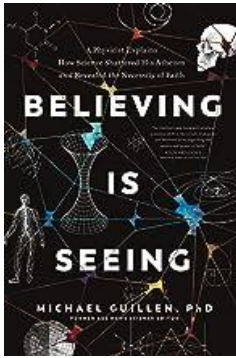
- ❖ **Sunday February 4<sup>th</sup> – The Fifth Sunday after Epiphany:** The Psalmist and Isaiah remind us that God lifts us up! Hear the music of Celebrate (Ken and Linda Barber and Chris Kolp). Thanks for sharing your time and talent with us! The service may be viewed at [www.uccwalker.com](http://www.uccwalker.com) or by clicking the QR code.



- ❖ **A SPECIAL NOTE OF APPRECIATION AND THANKS!** for those who provided lunch with a “structured potluck” served after worship. The food was plentiful, creative, homemade, and delicious to eat. **Thank You!** – And thanks for the conversation!

- ❖ **Constitutional Revision Task Force – meets Wednesday 2/7 at 4:00 p.m.**
- ❖ **Book Conversation will begin – Wednesday, 7<sup>th</sup> at 6:00 p.m.** for soup and then the conversation addressing the book.

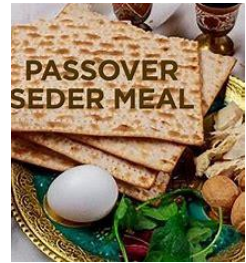
***This conversation will be in-person and virtual!*** Join Zoom Meeting by using link below  
<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/82457978032?pwd=ajlXR1I5TWNaaW1wMVZwZbksrV1NPUT09>  
Meeting ID: 824 5797 8032, Passcode: 613246



In *Believing Is Seeing*, Dr. Guillen recounts the fascinating story of his journey from Atheism to Christianity, citing the latest discoveries in neuroscience, physics, astronomy, and mathematics to pull back the curtain on the mystery of faith as no one ever has.

Is it true that “seeing is believing?” Or is it possible that reality can be perceived most clearly with the eyes of faith—and that truth is bigger than proof? Let Dr. Guillen be your guide as he brilliantly argues for a large and enlightened worldview consistent with both God and modern science.

- ❖ **Ecumenical Seder Meal Planning** meeting at Union UCC in Hackensack on Thursday, 2/8 at 10:00 a.m. Participating faith communities are Union UCC, St. Paul’s Lutheran, The Light House and CCOWUCC. They will begin their planning for a Seder Meal to be held on the evening of Maundy Thursday – March 28, 2024. Watch for more details and reservation information.



## ❖ **February 11<sup>th</sup> Worship Information – TRANSFIGURATION SUNDAY**

- **Theme:** *Rising*
- **Scripture:** • 2 Kings 2:1-12 • Psalm 50:1-6 • 2 Corinthians 4:3-6 • Mark 9:2-9
- **Focus Prayer:** In the reading of the scripture, may your word be heard. In the reflections of our hearts, may your word be known. In the faithfulness of our lives, may your work be shown. Amen.
- **Focus Reading:** Psalm 50:1-6 in conversation with 2 Kings 2:1-12

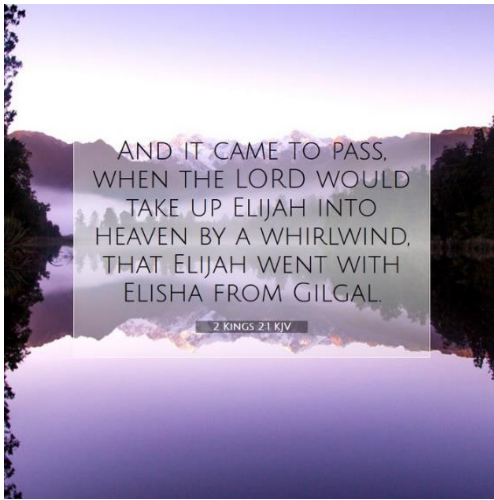
### **Psalm 50:1-6**

- 1 YHWH our God speaks and summons the earth from the rising of the sun to its setting.
- 2 Out of Zion, the perfection of beauty, God shines forth.
- 3 YHWH comes and won't be silent: a devouring fire goes before God, while storms rage all around.
- 4 God summons heaven and earth to the trial of God's people:
- 5 “Gather to me my faithful ones, who make their covenant with me by sacrifice!”
- 6 The heavens affirm God's justice because it is God who is the judge!



### **2 Kings 2:1-12**

- 1 When YHWH was about take Elijah up to heaven in a whirlwind, Elijah and Elisha were on their way from Gilgal. 2 Elijah said to Elisha, “Stay here. YHWH is sending me to Bethel.” “As YHWH lives, and you live,” said Elisha, “I will not leave you.”



So they departed together for Bethel. <sup>3</sup> The disciples of the prophets in Bethel approached Elisha, asking, “Do you know that YHWH is going to take Elijah from you today?”

“Yes, I know,” Elisha replied, “now be silent.”

<sup>4</sup> Then Elijah spoke, “Stay here, Elisha. YHWH is sending me to Jericho.” And Elisha replied, “As YHWH lives, and as you live, I will not leave you.”

So they went to Jericho.

<sup>5</sup> The disciples of prophets in Jericho approached Elisha, asking, “Do you know that YHWH is going to take Elijah from you today?”

“Yes, I know,” he said, “now be silent.” <sup>6</sup> Then Elijah said to Elisha, “Stay here. YHWH is sending me to the Jordan.”

“As YHWH lives and as you live,” said Elisha, “I will not leave

you.”

So the two of them walked on. <sup>7</sup> Fifty disciples of prophets stood off at a distance, facing the place where Elijah and Elisha stopped at the Jordan. <sup>8</sup> Elijah took his cloak, rolled it up and struck the water with it. The water divided to the right and to the left, and the two of them crossed over on dry land.

<sup>9</sup> Once across, Elijah said to Elisha, “Tell me, what can I do for you before I am taken from you?”

Elisha replied, “Let me inherit two-thirds of your spirit,” he said.

<sup>10</sup> “You ask a difficult thing,”

Elijah said. “If you see me when I am taken from you, it will be yours—otherwise not.”<sup>11</sup>

<sup>11</sup> As they were walking along and chatting with each other, suddenly a chariot of fire and horses of fire appeared and separated the two, and Elijah went up to heaven in a whirlwind. <sup>12</sup> Elisha saw this and cried out, “My father! My father! The chariots and cavalry of Israel!” And Elisha saw nothing more. Then he took hold of his clothes and tore them apart.

### ➤ Focus Questions:

- What do you make of the ancient tradition of ‘spiritual senses?’ Does it give you helpful language for trying to describe what may be hard to describe?
  - The scriptures this week indicate that God speaks to us. How have you heard God speaking? What has God said? How did you have the assurance it was God?
  - On the mountain top, the disciples have a vision. Have you had a vision of God, or another mountain-top experience? What was it like?
- ✓ As you discuss, think about using a Circles of Trust model taught by the Quaker educator Parker Palmer. Attempt to allow each person to speak, uninterrupted, without cross talk or questioning, or without a person sharing their own associated story (each person will get their turn to speak). This process teaches us patient listening. Once the person has spoken, there can be a time when others ask clarifying questions, i.e. ‘what was that like for you,’ ‘can you explain the chronology?’ The intent is to listen to the other person’s story without judgement, or without needing to analyze but simply to hear and to hold it.

### ➤ Special Music to be done by *Leisa Bragg*

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<sup>1</sup> Two-thirds, or a double portion, of an inheritance goes to the firstborn of the family. Elisha’s inheritance *Priests for Equality. The Inclusive Bible* (p. 632). Rowman & Littlefield Publishers. Kindle Edition.



## Faith and Uncertainty

Who knows? Perhaps [God] will give you a reprieve,  
sending you a blessing instead of this curse.

*Joel 2:14a (NLT)*

**KENNETH L. SAMUEL** | On this Ash Wednesday we are called to remember the dust of our humanity. And on this Valentine's Day we are obliged to express our love to all—especially to our significant others.

The concurrence of Ash Wednesday and Valentine's Day hasn't occurred since 1945 and has happened only two other times in the last century. These two special observances today have me wondering if our human mortality and our loving relationships have anything in common.

The prophet Joel helps me recognize that Ash Wednesday and Valentine's Day are both connected by degrees of uncertainty.

The ashes many of us wear today are symbolic reminders of our human frailty and our eventual physical demise. And what could be more uncertain than human fragility and imminent death? The brittle threads of our lives are spun and spread through so much instability. Where will the partisan gridlock in Washington lead us? When will new home buyers get a break? Is a war with Russia and China impending?

And the uncertainties of romance may be less cosmic but nonetheless real. Will I grow spiritually and intellectually with my partner, or will we grow apart? Am I expressing love and receiving love with consistent reciprocity? When do the compromises I make to keep a relationship intact become acts of complacency?

When the ancient children of Israel were invaded by an army of locusts that left wreckage and uncertainty throughout their land, and with no word of certainty from God as to when their crisis would relent, Joel pointed to the uncertainty and highlighted its possibility ... and the Israelites found the faith to renew their trust in God's goodness and to rebuild their devastated nation.

**PRAYER** *Lord, thank you for faith that transcends uncertainty and for love that sustains through all of life's vacillations.*

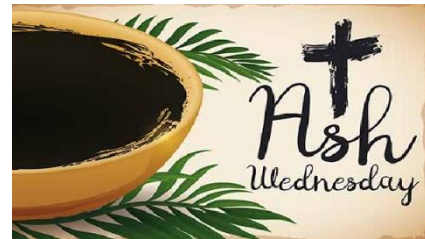
4 **Bend** | 2024 Lent Devotional

## Lenten Schedule and Resource

○ **UCC Lenten Daily Devotional Book** "**Bend**" may be picked up at the church.

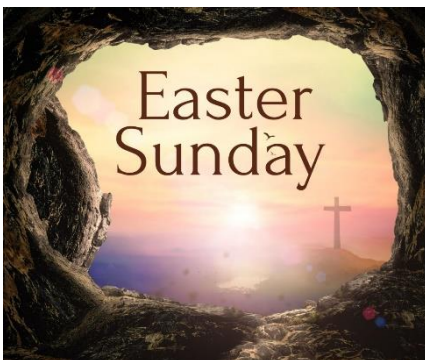
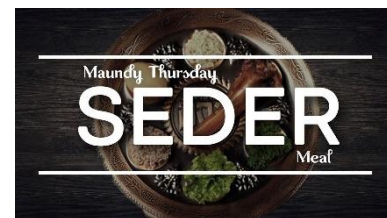
▪ **Sample of "Ash Wednesday" reflection is to the left.**

○ **Ash Wednesday Service** – Holy Communion and Imposition of the Ashes at CCOWUCC on Wednesday, February 14<sup>th</sup> at 6:00 p.m.



○ **Maundy Thursday – Ecumenical Seder Meal** at Union UCC – March 28<sup>th</sup>. More details to come.

○



**Easter Sunday – March 31<sup>st</sup> worship at 10:00 a.m.**

### ❖ **Prayers:**

- For the healing of the nations
- For peace among all earthlings
- For abundance to be shared
- For love to abound
- For forgiveness to be practiced
- For restoration of soul, land, and all of God's people
- For the tears of mourning to end – and tears of joy and laughter to emerge.
- For those who struggle with illness
  - Debbie, Duane, Sue (s), Kevin
- For caregivers who stand with, sometimes growing weary



- For those who struggle, physically, mentally, emotionally, financially . . . may there be hope, wholeness, healing, relationship along the way
- May we all set aside our disappointment, bitterness, anger and instead focus on reconciliation and restoration – becoming thankful for creation, for miracle, and for possibility.

❖ *“<sup>16</sup> Rejoice always, <sup>17</sup> pray constantly, <sup>18</sup> and give thanks for everything—for this is God’s will for you in Christ Jesus.” (1<sup>st</sup> Thessalonians 5:16-18).*

❖ **Birthdays**

- 2/5 Ruth Niedermann
- 2/25 Dawn Canada
- 2/26 Bev Meyer
- 2/27 Erika Rand



❖ **Anniversaries**

- 2/3 Bob and Ann Winegar

❖ **Church Council will meet** on **Tuesday, February 20<sup>th</sup>** at 6:00 pm. This meeting will be **in-person and virtual via zoom**. Zoom access.

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/89680314539?pwd=QTIUQ0dKR21JQ3JUMHNzZnRkZFF5UT09>

Meeting ID: 896 8031 4539, Passcode: 858735

❖ **Information for bulletin** needs to be at the church by Tuesday morning  
[commchurchucc@arvig.net](mailto:commchurchucc@arvig.net).

❖ **A Reminder!!!** – current bulletins, Churchly Happenings, and **Good News, Good News** - our monthly newsletter, and the **Weekly Update** may be found on the church website –  
[www.uccwalker.com](http://www.uccwalker.com)

❖ **St. Mark’s WELS meets at CCOWUCC** serving as a “Worship Station”. They will continue to meet on the second and fourth Monday of each month between 6:30 – 8:30 pm.

❖ Addresses – You are invited to be in touch.

Meryle O’Connor  
Waterford Estates  
6288 Louisiana N. #111  
Brooklyn Park, MN 55428

Sue and Duane Grage  
309 Birch Court  
Park Rapids MN 56470

Linda and Ken Barber  
9234 Crooks Loop NW  
Walker MN 56484

Sue Standeven  
203 Ross Pl. N. #105  
Walker MN 56484

Betty Fisher  
4222 Larch Street NE  
Bemidji MN 56601

Gay Jacobson  
P.O. Box 521  
Walker MN 56484

Alison Koch  
1803 South Court Street  
Fergus Falls MN 56537

Beth Alderson  
8058 Onigum Road NW  
Walker MN 56484

Kevin Wedel  
107 Highland Ave. W.  
Apartment 102  
Walker MN 56484

- ❖ **Democracy works best if we speak with one another. Whatever your opinion, I encourage each of you to be in contact with your representatives. Communicating is an on-going and two-way process of sharing gratitude and wisdom.**

***Below is listed state and national elected leadership for the Walker Area.***

***If you do not reside in the Walker area, go to <https://www.gis.lcc.mn.gov/iMaps/districts/> to obtain information on the elected state leadership for your location.***

Senator Steve Green (R) (Dis.02)  
95 University Avenue W.  
Minnesota Senate Bldg., # 2319  
St. Paul, MN 55155  
651-297-8063

E-mail:  
sen.steve.green@senate.mn  
<https://www.house.mn.gov/members/profile/15458>

Office of Governor Tim Walz  
130 State Capitol  
75 Rev Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. Blvd.  
St. Paul, MN 55155  
<https://mn.gov/governor/connect/contact-us/contact-form.jsp>

Senator Amy Klobuchar (DFL) MN  
425 Dirksen Senate Building  
Washington, DC 20510  
phone: 202-224-3244  
fax: 202-228-2186

<https://www.klobuchar.senate.gov/public/>

Rep. Matt Bliss (R) District: 02B  
311 State Office Building  
St. Paul, MN 55155  
651-296-5516  
Toll Free: 877-838-5537

E-mail:  
rep.matt.bliss@house.mn.gov  
<https://www.house.mn.gov/members/profile/15458>

Rep. Pete Stauber (R) U.S. House # 8  
145 Cannon HOB  
Washington, DC 20515  
Phone: (202) 225-6211  
<https://stauber.house.gov/>

Senator Tina Smith (DFL) U.S. MN  
720 Hart Senate Office Building  
Washington, DC 20510  
Phone: (202) 224-5641  
<https://www.smith.senate.gov/>

***Prayers and Blessings – Pastor Michael***