

**Stewardship 2025
United in Christ**



**Yesterday,
Today and
Tomorrow**

Psalm 46:7 "The Lord of hosts is with us; the God of Jacob is our stronghold."

**WELCOME TO WORSHIP
Fourth Sunday in Lent
March 30, 2025
9:15 AM Worship Express**

Pastor: Paula Geister-Jones **Lay Ministry Administrator:** Jenny Hoffman

Organist/Pianist: Linda Kunz

Lector: Kyla Betts

Acolytes: Lila Yellowbird and Addy Swain

Ushers: Dana and Justin Melby and Royson Yellowbird

Technical Support: Thomas Lehr, Roger Slack

Today the gospel reading is one of the most well-known stories in the New Testament, "The Prodigal Son." Each year we look at the oldest son and the youngest son and ask ourselves, "Which one are we?" when the focus should really be on the loving father. He will forgive anything. All he wants is his boys home, sitting at his table and enjoying a delicious feast.

CALL TO WORSHIP: "Bound for Jubilee" Men's Choir

Words to meditate on...

Hallelu, Hallelu, I am on my way, bound for Jubilee!

Oh, my brother, won't you come with me?

Oh, sister, you must come today.

Oh, my brother, won't you come with me?

Or the Devil might come and take you away,

'fore you get to Jubilee!

CONFESSION

P: Blessed be God The Father, + Son and Holy Spirit who forgives all our sins, whose mercy endures forever.

C: Amen

P: Let us return to God, confessing our sin sure of God's love and forgiveness.
Compassionate One,

Right Side: you are slow to anger and abounding in steadfast love, but our lives do not always reflect you and your love for the world.

Left Side: *We do not show others the tender compassion you have shown us.*

Right Side: We do not welcome others with the radical hospitality you grant to all people.

Left side: *We oppress others, even though you have set us free again and again.*

Right Side: We squander the abundant gifts of the earth.

Left Side: *Transform our lives and guide us again in the way of the cross.*

All: Amen.

FORGIVENESS

P: Beloved in Christ, God's arms are always stretched open wide to welcome the wandering home. In + Christ your sins are forgiven. You have a place in God's house forever.

C: Amen.

Stand

GATHERING SONG: "I'm So Glad Jesus Lifted Me"

vs. 1: I'm so glad Jesus lifted me. (3 times)

Singing glory, Hallelujah!

Jesus lifted me.

vs. 2: Satan had me bound, Jesus lifted me. (3 times)

Singing glory, Hallelujah!

Jesus lifted me.

Vs. 3: When I was in trouble, Jesus lifted me. (3 times)

Singing glory, Hallelujah!

Jesus lifted me.

WELCOMING GOD'S PEOPLE

P: God gathers God's People together to encourage them with the WORD and strengthen them with the bread and wine of Holy Communion.

LITANY

P: The word is near you,

C: on your lips and in your heart.

P: If you confess with your lips that Jesus is Lord,

C: and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved.

P: Faith comes from what is heard,

C: and what is heard comes through the word of Christ.

SONG OF PRAISE: "O How He Loves You and Me"

O, how He loves you and me,
O, how He loves you and me,
He gave His life,
What more could he give:
O, how He Loves me,
O, how He loves me,
O, how He loves you and me.

PRAYER OF THE DAY

P: Let us pray.

All: The youngest Son is not the only "prodigal" in the scripture reading for today. "Prodigal" means reckless and extravagant. Lord, you are reckless and extravagant in your love for us. Help us to be "prodigal" in our love for one another. In Jesus name we pray. Amen.

GOSPEL SONG: "For God So Loved the World

For God so loved the world
He gave His only Son
To die on Calv'ry's tree,
From sin to set me free.
Someday He's coming back
What glory that will be!
Wonderful His love to me.

Lector: The Good News according to Luke the 15th chapter.

All: Glory to you, O Lord.

GOOD NEWS READING: Luke 15:11b - 32

Lector: By this time a lot of men and women of questionable reputation were hanging around Jesus, listening intently. The Pharisees and religion scholars were not pleased, not at all pleased. They growled,

Pharisee and religion scholars (All): He takes in sinners and eats meals with them, treating them like old friends.

Lector: Their grumbling triggered this story. Then he said, “There was once a man who had two sons.” The younger said to his father,

Younger Son (Men and Boys): Father, I want right now what’s coming to me.

Lector: So the father divided the property between them. It wasn’t long before the younger son packed his bags and left for a distant country. There, undisciplined and dissipated, he wasted everything he had. After he had gone through all his money, there was a bad famine all through that country and he began to feel it. He signed on with a citizen there who assigned him to his fields to slop the pigs. He was so hungry he would have eaten the corn-cobs in the pig slop, but no one would give him any. That brought him to his senses. He said,

Younger Son (Men and Boys): All those farmhands working for my father sit down to three meals a day, and here I am starving to death. I’m going back to my father. I’ll say to him, “Father, I’ve sinned against God, I’ve sinned before you; I don’t deserve to be called your son. Take me on as a hired hand.”

Lector: He got right up and went home to his father. When he was still a long way off, his father saw him. His heart pounding, he ran out, embraced him, and kissed him. The son started his speech:

Younger Son (Men and Boys): Father, I’ve sinned against God, I’ve sinned before you; I don’t deserve to be called your son ever again.

Lector: But the father wasn’t listening. He was calling to the servants,

Father (All): Quick. Bring a clean set of clothes and dress him. Put the family ring on his finger and sandals on his feet. Then get a prize-winning heifer and roast it. We’re going to feast! We’re going to have a wonderful time! My son is here—given up for dead and now alive! Given up for lost and now found!

Lector: And they began to have a wonderful time. All this time his older son was out in the field. When the day's work was done he came in. As he approached the house, he heard the music and dancing. Calling over one of the houseboys, he asked what was going on. He told him, 'Your brother came home. Your father has ordered a feast—barbecued beef!—because he has him home safe and sound.' The older brother stomped off in an angry sulk and refused to join in. His father came out and tried to talk to him, but he wouldn't listen. The son said,

Older Son (Women and Girls): 'Look how many years I've stayed here serving you, never giving you one moment of grief, but have you ever thrown a party for me and my friends? Then this son of yours who has thrown away your money on whores shows up and you go all out with a feast!

Lector: His father said,

Father (All): Son, you don't understand. You're with me all the time, and everything that is mine is yours—but this is a wonderful time, and we had to celebrate. This brother of yours was dead, and he's alive! He was lost, and he's found!

Lector: The Good News of the Lord.

All: Praise to you, O Christ!

Sit

CHILDREN'S WORD/THE WORD

Stand

SONG OF THE WORD: "Softly and Tenderly" ELW #608

**Vs. 1 Softly and tenderly Jesus is calling,
calling for you and for me.**

**See, on the portals he's waiting and watching,
watching for you and for me.**

**Refrain: "Come home, (Come home,
come home! (come home!)**

You who are weary, come home."

**Earnestly, tenderly, Jesus is calling,
calling, "O sinner, come home!"**

Vs. 2 Why should we tarry when Jesus is pleading,

pleading for you and for me?
Why should we linger and heed not his mercies,
mercies for you and for me? *Refrain...*

Vs. 3 Oh, for the wonderful love he has promised,
promised for you and for me!
Though we have sinned, he has mercy and pardon,
pardon for you and for me. *Refrain...*

Apostles Creed

P: Do you believe in God the Father?

All: I believe in God, the Father almighty,
creator of heaven and earth.

P: Do you believe in Jesus, God's Son?

All: I believe in Jesus Christ, God's only Son, our Lord,
who was conceived by the Holy Spirit,
born of the virgin Mary,
suffered under Pontius Pilate,
was crucified, died, and was buried;
he descended to the dead.
On the third day he rose again;
he ascended into heaven,
he is seated at the right hand of the Father,
and he will come to judge the living and the dead.

P: Do you believe in God's Holy Spirit?

All: I believe in the Holy Spirit,
the holy catholic Church,
the communion of saints,
the forgiveness of sins,
the resurrection of the body,
and the life everlasting. Amen.

Prayers of the People: "Standin' in the Need of Prayer:

We will sing the refrain to "Standin' in the Need of Prayer between petitions...

P: God of prodigal grace, unite the nations as fellow members of the human family.
Give leaders the courage to put aside pride and ego, to cease squandering lives

and time, and to work for the well-being of all/ **Lord, it's me, standin' in the need of prayer...**

***Refrain: It's me, it's me, it's me O Lord,
Standin' in the need of prayer. (2 times)***

P: God of boundless love, receive with open arms any in need of compassion. Embrace all who are far from home or estranged from loved ones, and all who live with regret. Embolden your people to offer and receive forgiveness. **Lord, it's me, standin' in the need of prayer...**

***Refrain: It's me, it's me, it's me O Lord,
Standin' in the need of prayer. (2 times)***

P: God of radical inclusion, widen human circles to welcome all who are excluded. Bless the work of disability ministries, ministries by and with neurodivergent people, and multicultural and ethnic specific ministries; that the welcome of Jesus be extended to all. Lord, it's me, standin' in the need of prayer...

***Refrain: It's me, it's me, it's me O Lord,
Standin' in the need of prayer. (2 times)***

GOD'S PEOPLE SHARE THE PEACE

P: The peace of the Lord be with you all!

All: And also with you.

Sit

OFFERING SONG: "Just a Closer Walk with Thee"

***Refrain: Just a closer walk with thee,
grant it Jesus, is my plea;
daily walking close to thee,
let it be, dear Lord, let it be.***

**vs. 1: I am weak but thou art strong:
Jesus, keep me from all wrong;
I'll be satisfied as long as I walk,
let me walk close to thee. *Refrain***

vs. 2: Through this world of toil and snares,
If I falter, Lord who cares?
I'll be satisfied as long as I walk,
Let me walk close to thee. *Refrain...*

THE LORD'S PRAYER

Our Father, who 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 trespasses,
as we forgive those who trespass against us;
and lead us not into temptation,
but deliver us from evil.
For thine is the kingdom,
and the power, and the glory,
forever and ever. Amen.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

Stand

BENEDICTION

P: God our tender parent, God the crucified one, God the reconciling Spirit, + bless
you now and forever.

All: Amen.

Dismissal

P: Go in peace! Care for others as God cares for you.

All: Thanks be to God!

POSTLUDE