

**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
8:00 AM Traditional Worship

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

Organist/Pianist: Linda Kunz

Lector: Colby Smith

Acolytes: Lainey Conant & Ellie Gross

Ushers: Jim Lunde, Dan Matson, Myron Sime

Technical Support: Thomas Lehr, Roger Slack

The psalm sets the tone this day: "Happy are they whose transgressions are forgiven, and whose sin is put away!" Happy are those who have "become the righteousness of God" in the merits of Christ Jesus. Happy are those for whom the forgiveness of God has "rolled away . . . the disgrace" of former times. Happy is the father at the return of his prodigal son. Happy are we that our sins are forgiven for Jesus' sake. Rejoice!

CALL TO WORSHIP "O Living Breath of God" set by Shields

CONFESSION AND FORGIVENESS

All may make the sign of the cross, the sign that is marked at baptism, as the presiding minister begins.

P: Blessed be the holy Trinity, ✚ one God, who forgives all our sin,
whose mercy endures forever.

C: Amen

P: Let us return to God, confessing our sin in the assurance of God's abiding love.
Silence is kept for reflection.

P: Compassionate One,

C: **you are slow to anger and abounding in steadfast love,
but our lives do not always reflect you and your love for the world.
We do not show others the tender compassion you have shown to us.
We do not welcome others with the radical hospitality you grant to all
people. We oppress others, even though you have set us free again and
again. We squander the abundant gifts of the earth. Transform our lives and
guide us again in the way of the cross.**

C: Amen.

P: Beloved in Christ,

God's arms are always stretched open wide to welcome the wandering ones
home. In \dagger Christ your sins are forgiven. You have a place in God's house
forever.

C: Amen.

Stand

HYMN: "Come, Thou Fount of Every Blessing" ELW #807

Vs. 1 Come, thou Fount of ev'ry blessing,
tune my heart to sing thy grace;
streams of mercy, never ceasing,
call for songs of loudest praise.
While the hope of endless glory
fills my heart with joy and love,
teach me ever to adore thee;
may I still thy goodness prove.

Vs. 2 Here I raise my Ebenezer:
"Hither by thy help I've come";
and I hope, by thy good pleasure,
safely to arrive at home.
Jesus sought me when a stranger,
wand'ring from the fold of God;
he, to rescue me from danger,
interposed his precious blood.

Vs. 3 Oh, to grace how great a debtor
daily I'm constrained to be;
let that grace now like a fetter

**bind my wand'ring heart to thee.
Prone to wander, Lord, I feel it;
prone to leave the God I love.
Here's my heart, oh, take and seal it;
seal it for thy courts above.**

GREETING

P: The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, the love of God, and the communion of the Holy Spirit be with you all.

C: And also with you.

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.

HYMN OF PRAISE: "How Great Thou Art" ELW #856

**Vs. 1 O Lord my God, when I in awesome wonder
consider all the works thy hand hath made,
I see the stars, I hear the mighty thunder,
thy pow'r throughout the universe displayed;**

**Refrain: Then sings my soul, my Savior God, to thee,
how great thou art! How great thou art!
Then sings my soul, my Savior God, to thee,
how great thou art! How great thou art!**

SALUTATION

P: The Lord be with you.

C: And also with you.

PRAYER OF THE DAY

P: Let us pray.

C: God of compassion, you welcome the wayward, and you embrace us all with your mercy. By our baptism clothe us with garments of your grace, and feed us at the table of your love, through Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. Amen.

Sit

Anthem: "Bound for Jubilee" Men's Choir

FIRST READING: Joshua 5:9-12

GOD said to Joshua, "Today I have rolled away the reproach of Egypt." That's why the place is called The Gilgal. It's still called that.¹⁰ The People of Israel continued to camp at The Gilgal. They celebrated the Passover on the evening of the fourteenth day of the month on the plains of Jericho.¹¹⁻¹² Right away, the day after the Passover, they started eating the produce of that country, unraised bread and roasted grain. And then no more manna; the manna stopped. As soon as they started eating food grown in the land, there was no more manna for the People of Israel. That year they ate from the crops of Canaan.

P: The Word of the Lord.

C: Thanks be to God.

Stand

GOSPEL CANTICLE: "O Lord, Throughout These Forty Days" ELW #319

**Vs. 1 O Lord, throughout these forty days
you prayed and kept the fast;
inspire repentance for our sin,
and free us from our past.**

**Vs. 2 You strove with Satan, and you won;
your faithfulness endured;
lend us your nerve, your skill, and trust
in God's eternal word.**

The Gospel is announced...

P: The Holy Gospel according to Luke the 15th Chapter.

C: Glory to you, O Lord.

GOSPEL: Luke 15:1-3, 11b-32

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, “He takes in sinners and eats meals with them, treating them like old friends.” Their grumbling triggered this story.

Then he said, “There was once a man who had two sons. The younger said to his father, ‘Father, I want right now what’s coming to me.’¹²⁻¹⁶ “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.¹⁷⁻²⁰ “That brought him to his senses. He said, ‘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.’ He got right up and went home to his father.²⁰⁻²¹ “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: ‘Father, I’ve sinned against God, I’ve sinned before you; I don’t deserve to be called your son ever again.’²²⁻²⁴ “But the father wasn’t listening. He was calling to the servants, ‘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!’ And they began to have a wonderful time.²⁵⁻²⁷ “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.’²⁸⁻³⁰ “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, ‘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!’³¹⁻³² “His father said, ‘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!"

P: The gospel of the Lord.

C: Praise to you, O Christ.

Sit

SERMON

Stand

HYMN: "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...***

**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...***

APOSTLE'S CREED

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

**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.**

**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 INTERCESSION

P: Led by the Spirit, let us turn to God in prayer for the church, the world, and all those in need.

A Brief Silence

P: God of faithful promise, make your church a new creation in Christ. As you reconcile us to yourself, guide us also in your way of reconciliation, that through confession and forgiveness, repentance and reparations, your church may bear witness to your love. God, in your mercy,

C: receive our prayer.

P: God of new beginnings, restore balance to the earth. Send rain to places of drought and sunshine to places of flooding, that the produce of the land may again support life. God, in your mercy,

C: receive our prayer.

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. God, in your mercy,

C: receive our prayer.

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 to seek forgiveness. God, in your mercy,

C: receive our prayer.

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. God, in your mercy,

C: receive our prayer.

P: God of resurrection life, welcome home all who have died. We thank you for their lives and entrust them into your keeping, where true reconciliation and eternal peace are found. God, in your mercy,

C: receive our prayer.

P: Receive the prayers of your people and draw all things together in your love, in the name of Jesus, who leads us from death to life.

C: Amen.

THE SHARING OF THE PEACE

P: The peace of the Lord be with you always.

C: And also with you.

Sit

OFFERTORY “There is a Longing in Our Hearts” Quigley

*“There is a longing in our hearts, O Lord, for you to reveal yourself to us.
There is a longing in our hearts for love we only find in you, our God.”*

OFFERTORY PRAYER

P: Gracious Provider, you set your immense treasures among us, opening your heart to the world. As we prepare to feast on your bountiful love, deepen our commitment to sharing those treasures with others, through our Savior, Jesus Christ.

C: Amen.

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

BLESSING

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

C: Amen.

DISMISSAL

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

C: Thanks be to God.

SENDING HYMN: "My Life Flows On in Endless Song" ELW #763

**Vs. 1 My life flows on in endless song;
above earth's lamentation,
I catch the sweet, though far-off hymn
that hails a new creation. *Refrain...***

***Refrain* No storm can shake my inmost calm
while to that Rock I'm clinging.
Since Christ is Lord of heaven and earth,
how can I keep from singing?**

**Vs. 2 Through all the tumult and the strife,
I hear that music ringing.
It finds an echo in my soul.
How can I keep from singing? *Refrain...***

**Vs. 4 The peace of Christ makes fresh my heart,
a fountain ever springing!**

**All things are mine since I am his!
How can I keep from singing? *Refrain...***

POSTLUDE: "Lord of All Hopefulness" set by Kosche