

Order of Worship

March 8, 2026

Third Sunday of Lent



Gathering and Announcements *Beneath thee Cross of Jesus*

Prelude *Jesus Walked This Lonesome Valley/Nobody Knows the Trouble I've Seen* – arr. Anthony Giamonco

Jessye Whitis, pianist; Carol Tyson, organist

***Call to worship** (Psalm 95:1-7a)

O come, let us sing to the Lord; let us make a joyful noise to the rock of our salvation!

Let us come into God's presence with thanksgiving; let us make a joyful noise to God with songs of praise!

For the Lord is a great God, and a great ruler above all gods. In God's hand are the depths of the earth; the heights of the mountains are God's also.

The sea is the Lord's, for God made it, and the dry land, which God's hands have formed.

O come, let us worship and bow down; let us kneel before the Lord, our Maker!

For the Lord is our God, and we are the people of God's pasture, and the sheep of God's hand.

Opening Hymn # 246 *Christ Is Alive!

***Call to confession**

As we wander through the wilderness of Lent, we come closer and closer to confronting human sin, both our own sin and our collective sin. It is with honesty about how we have hurt others, and hurt ourselves, that we can move closer to the healing that God wills for us. Confession allows us to exercise such honesty, knowing that the God who hears us is the God who already loves us. Therefore, we need not fear confession, but draw near to the love is God, in honesty and candor, first together, and then in silence...

***Prayer of confession**

God of endless renewal, God who calls us to lives restored, God who rescues the lost and saves the afflicted, there are times when our way grows confused. We struggle to know what to do. Or worse, we know what needs to be done and find it easier to stay on the wrong path. Forgive us for failing to heed opportunities to follow a better way. Remind us that you stand more ready to forgive than we are to confess those aspects of our lives that stand in need of your grace. And thus forgiven, help us to lean in to what you would teach us about how we are to be. We pray all these things in Jesus' name, and for his sake. Amen.

(Silence is kept)

Assurance of pardon (Romans 8:34)

Who is to condemn?

It is Christ Jesus, who died, yes who was raised, who is at the right hand of God who indeed intercedes for us.

Believe the promise of the gospel:

In Jesus Christ, we are forgiven.

Choral Anthem *Jesus, My All, To Heaven Is Gone* – arr. Howard Helvey
Jessye Whitis, Music Director; pianist

Prayer for illumination

May the words of my mouth, and the meditations of all of our hearts, be acceptable, even pleasing in your sight, O Lord, our strength and redeemer. Amen.

Scripture readings Romans 5: 1 - 8; John 4: 5 - 15

Sermon *Take a Little Time with Jesus* Rev. Kathy Vineyard, H.R.

***Affirmation of faith (Excerpted from the Confession of 1967)**

God's sovereign love is a mystery beyond the reach of the human mind. Human thought ascribes to God superlatives of power, wisdom and goodness. But God reveals divine love in Jesus Christ by showing power in the form of a servant, wisdom in the folly of the cross, and goodness in receiving sinful men and women.

The power of God's love in Christ to transform the world discloses that the Redeemer is the Lord and Creator who made all things to serve the purpose of God's love.

Hymn # 8 *Eternal Father, Strong to Save

Call for the offering

From the dust of the earth, God made our mortal bodies, and with God's breath, life was instilled in us. There is nothing that we have that is not a gift from God. Remembering all of God's manifold blessings, let us worship God with our tithes and our offerings.

Offertory *Be Thou My Vision* – arr. Don Hustad

Jessye Whitis, pianist; Carol Tyson, organist

Doxology # 606 *Praise God, from Whom All Blessings Flow

Prayer of dedication

Holy God, from abundance upon abundance, you have said that we may freely take, and freely share. As we return to you what is already your own, we ask that you would bless these gifts and multiply them. May we, in turn, be blessed, as we see your reign unfolding before us, through Christ our Lord, Amen.

Prayers of the people and the Lord's Prayer

Eternal God, you have reached out to us so often, so persistently, we know of your love for us from so many sources, that we know as well that we may draw near to you with the needs of our hearts. And so we do, not as distant followers held at arms-length, but as beloved children, held close.

So it is that we pray to you this morning with our concerns. For world affairs beyond our control, we pray for your mercy. We pray for peace, knowing that you alone are the source of *Shalom*, the peaceable kingdom. Where there are those in harm's way, we pray for protection. Where we harbor enmity and prejudice, we pray for awareness and grace for ourselves that we may learn forgiveness. Teach us how we may serve you more fully in ways we cannot even imagine.

We pray for needs closer to home, for our own community. Through this season of Lent, we ask that you would open our eyes to the needs that are on our very doorstep. May we see those and others whose names are known to you, and offer compassion and goodwill. We pray for victims of violence, and gun violence in particular. We pray for all who practice the healing arts, for their endurance and for their safety.

We pray as well for ourselves, our own material and spiritual needs. Where our members suffer from illness and affliction, grant your healing touch, bringing wholeness. For any in our midst who suffer from depression or addiction, give us understanding and compassion. For those who are lonely, may we be a place of friendship, a warm haven where love is shared.

We make this and all of our prayers in the name of Jesus Christ our Lord, who taught us to pray together, saying, “**Our Father ...**”

Hymn of Sending # 775 *I Want Jesus to Walk with Me

Charge and benediction

By our endurance, may we gain character, and may the character Christ has given us carry us to abundant hope, that as we know Christ, we might make him known. And as we go, may the love, grace and communion of our triune God go before us to show us the way. **Amen.**

Postlude *Jesus Keep Me Near the Cross* Jessye Whitis, pianist

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Liturgy written by Baron Mullis

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