

Sunday, March 1, 2026

Second Sunday in Lent

The Good News is... great love for God and neighbor

PRELUDE

WELCOME AND ANNOUNCEMENTS

CALL TO WORSHIP

Tell me something good!

God loves you more than you could imagine.

Tell me something good!

God loves all of creation more than you could imagine.

Tell me something good!

God's love meets us in this service of worship. We are not alone.

This is good news indeed!

Let us worship our compassionate God.

KYRIE (Call Us Home,)

CONFESSION AND FORGIVENESS

Family of faith, we long to love others as God loves us, but that work is easier said than done. We lose our way. We become distracted. We grow fearful. We need God's grace. Fortunately for us, God's grace is freely and abundantly given.

So join me in the Prayer of Confession. Join me in being transformed.

Silence is kept for reflection.

Friends, let us pray:

Merciful God,

Did we see you hungry and give you something to eat?

Did we see you thirsty and give you something to drink?

Did we see you alone and offer you compassion?

Or did we cross the street?

Did we avert our eyes?

**Did we come up with every excuse in the book?
God, we long to be people who love our neighbors with the same
overwhelming love that you have for them.
But we must admit, we have a long way to go.
Forgive us for the times when we let bias, scarcity, or fear get in the
way of love. Wash us clean and give us the courage to try again.
With hope for a better tomorrow we pray, amen.**

Faith family, even when we act with judgment, even when we are guided by fear, even when we turn our back on a neighbor in need, God does not turn God's back on us. So join me in this good-news declaration:

**We are seen.
We are forgiven.
We are invited to try again.
Thanks be to God for this unending love.**

GATHERING HYMN ELW 723 Canticle of the Turning vs 1 & 4

PRAYER OF THE DAY

Let us pray:

Good news God, speak louder than the news updates. Speak louder than our mental distractions. Speak louder than our anger and louder than our fear. God, speak loudly to us today, because we long to hear your good news once more. With hope we pray, amen.

KIDS SERMON

HOPE FOUND AROUND US: *The Little Dog* (Adapted from fable by John Aikin)

Let us listen for God's hope and grace as it comes to us from unexpected sources.

Our hearts and minds are open to the spirit.

One day a little puppy took a walk around his master's farm. When he came to the pen where the horse was fed he heard the great animal call to him. "You must be new here," the horse cried. "You will soon find out that the master loves me more

than all other animals because I carry large loads for him. I suspect that an animal of your size is of no value to him at all."

The little dog hung his head and was about to walk away when he heard the cow in an adjoining stall. "I have the most honored position on the farm because the lady makes butter and cheese from my milk. You, of course, provide nothing of value to the family."

"Cow, your position is no greater than mine," called the sheep. "I lend the master wool to make his clothes. I provide warmth to the entire family. You are correct, however, about the dog," the sheep concluded. "He gives the master nothing."

One by one the animals joined in the conversation, telling about their honored positions on the farm. The chicken told how she produced eggs, and the cat, famous for her quickness, how she rid the house of mice. All the animals did agree on one thing: the little dog provided no service of value to the farm family.

Stung by the criticism of the other animals, the puppy found a secluded place away from the animals and began to cry. An old dog heard the sobs and paused to listen to the little one tell his story. "They are right," he sobbed. "I provide no service to any-one."

"It is true," the old dog began, "that you are too small to pull the wagon. And you will never produce eggs, milk, or wool. But it is foolish to cry about what you cannot do. You must use the ability the Creator gave you to bring laughter and cheer."

That night, when the master came home exhausted from long hours in the hot sun, the little puppy ran to him, licked his feet and jumped into his arms. Falling to the ground, the master and puppy romped in the grass. Finally, holding him close to his chest and patting his head, the master said, "No matter how tired I am when I get home, I feel better when you greet me. I wouldn't trade you for all the animals on the farm."

"... and the greatest of these is love."

God, be in our understanding.

Let the Spirit be heard.

I invite you to stand in body or spirit as we prepare our hearts for the scriptures:

RETURN TO THE LORD (Call Us Home, 7)

HOPE FOUND IN THE SCRIPTURE

Let us listen for God's hope and grace as it comes to us in scripture.

Our hearts and minds are open to the spirit.

Luke 7:36-50

One of the Pharisees invited Jesus to dinner. Jesus went to his house and reclined at table. A woman who had a low reputation in that town came to the house. She had learned that Jesus was dining with the Pharisee, so she brought with her an alabaster jar of perfumed oil. She stood behind Jesus, crying, and her tears fell on his feet. Then she dried his feet with her hair, kissed them, and anointed them with the oil.

When the Pharisee saw this, he said to himself, "If this fellow were the Prophet, he'd know who this woman is that is touching him, and what a low reputation she has."

In answer to the Pharisee's thoughts Jesus said, "Simon, I have something to tell you."

"Tell me, Teacher," he said.

"Two people owed money to a creditor. One owed the creditor the equivalent of two years' wages; the other, two months' wages. Both were unable to pay, so the creditor wrote off both debts. Which of them was more grateful to the moneylender?" Simon answered, "I suppose the one who owed more." Jesus said, "You are right."

Turning to the woman, he said to Simon, "See this woman? I came into your house and you gave me no water to wash my feet, but she has washed them with her tears and dried them with her hair. You gave me no kiss of greeting, but she covered my feet with kisses. You didn't anoint my head with oil, but she anointed my feet with oil. For this reason, I tell you, her sins, which are many, have been forgiven—see how much she loves! But the one who is forgiven little, loves little."

Then Jesus said to the woman, "Your sins are forgiven." Those also sitting at the table began to ask among themselves, "Who is this who even forgives sins?"

Meanwhile Jesus said to her, "Your faith has saved you. Go in peace."

Matthew 25:34-40

"The ruler will say to those on the right... For I was hungry and you fed me; I was thirsty and you gave me drink. I was a stranger and you welcomed me; naked and

you clothed me. I was ill and you comforted me; in prison and you came to visit me.'

Then these just will ask, 'When did we see you hungry and feed you, or see you thirsty and give you drink? When did we see you as a stranger and invite you in, or clothe you in your nakedness? When did we see you ill or in prison and come to visit you?'

The ruler will answer them, 'The truth is, every time you did this for the least of my sisters or brothers, you did it for me.'

The word of God for the people of God,
Thanks be to God.

SERMON

HYMN OF THE DAY I Come with My Devotion

We will now take a moment of reflection, to listen to the spirit. This is also a time to prepare our hearts for the offering. We all have so much to share: time, talent, tithe. In the bulletins, there is a piece called Joyful Giving to share what you will give the community this week. Those slips can be placed in the offering basket.

TIME OF REFLECTION

OFFERING The Bread of Life (Call Us Home, 12)

OFFERING PRAYER

Let us pray.

O God, maker of heaven and earth, your steadfast love embraces all creation. You send rain and sunshine to nourish the earth and bring forth its bounty. Through these gifts we offer today, let us share your hope and grace with all the world. We ask this in Jesus' name. Amen.

AFFIRMATION OF FAITH

**I believe in the good news of Jesus Christ.
It sounds like welcome and feels like home.**

**It sounds like laughter and feels like mercy.
It sounds like love and feels like a seat at the table,
so I believe in the good news of Jesus Christ.**

**I have seen it alive in the world.
And even when my heart aches, even when wars rage,
even when mercy feels out of reach,
I remember the one who welcomed the children
and led with nonviolence.
I remember the one who cared for the vulnerable
and inspired those around him.
I remember that the good news really is good news,
for I have seen it alive in the world.
Thanks be to God! Amen.**

PRAYER SONG ELW 752 Lord, Listen to Your Children Praying

PRAYERS OF THE PEOPLE

Jesus of Nazareth,
your love for this world is so strong.
It's like a jar of perfume broken in a crowded room—
it permeates everything it touches.

God, we long to love like that.
We long to love you with the same extravagant abundance
that the woman with the alabaster jar displayed.
However, we often get in our own way.

Holy God, today we pray:
when it comes to our neighbors, give us eyes to see as you see.
Give us hands to serve as you serve.
Give us arms to hold.
Give us feet to journey alongside.
Give us hearts of compassion, just like yours.

We also ask that you be with those we name aloud or quietly in our hearts, especially (PRAYER LIST)...

God, our love does not stop with our neighbor. We also long to love you. So when we pass a quiet field, remind us to say thank you. When we hear the sound of laughter, remind us that there is good in this world. When music or birdsong moves our soul, remind us that you are always present with us. In all of these moments, turn our hearts toward you.

May we be the next ones to love boldly, to sing praise, to say thank you.
Amen.

PRAYER SONG ELW 752 Lord, Listen to Your Children Praying

PASSING OF THE PEACE

The peace of Christ be with you always.
And also with you.

GREAT THANKSGIVING (Call Us Home, 13)

PREFACE

Truly it is right and joyous... we raise our voices with this never-ending hymn of praise:

Holy, Holy, Holy (Call Us Home, 14)

EUCCHARISTIC PRAYER

CALL US HOME (Call Us Home, 16)

THE LORD'S PRAYER

Gathered into one by the Holy Spirit, let us pray as Jesus taught us, in the language or version of our hearts:

Heavenly God, giver of life, holy is your name. Your realm come, your will be done, on earth as in heaven. Give us today our daily bread.

Forgive us our sins as we forgive those who sin against us. Save us from the time of trial and deliver us from evil. For you reign in power and glory, now and forever. Amen.

Distribution

Communion Hymns Lamb of God - Call Us Home
 ELW 487 What Feast of Love

Prayer after Communion

Let us pray:

God of our salvation, we give you thanks for this meal that restores our souls, reconciles us to you, and strengthens us for the journey. Let us be strengthened to become Christ's body in the world, bearing witness to your love for all creation, through Jesus Christ, our Savior and Redeemer. Amen.

Blessing

As you leave this place,
when you meet anger, speak with love.
When you meet fear, speak with hope.
When you meet pain, speak with gentleness.
But no matter what, speak this good news.
For if you won't, then who will?
Remember, the good news of the gospel is
love and justice for all.
It is joy that surprises,
and nonviolence that transforms.

The good news of the gospel is alive in the world,
so go forth speaking, knowing the Creator, + Redeemer
and Sustainer are with you always.
Amen.

Sending Song ACS 991 Go to the World vs 1 & 2

Dismissal

Go in peace, share the good news!

Thanks be to God.