

Sunday Worship Service– March 1, 2026
Second Sunday in Lent
ELWB (red book) – Holy Communion – Setting 8 (p.184-192)

Welcome

Land Acknowledgement & Welcome Statement

Introduction*

God is with us no matter what – when we are called to go to an unknown place, (as Abraham and Sarah were), when we are troubled and searching (as Nicodemus was), when we have assurance of faith, when we experience Jesus in and with us. All these things are blessings from God: the doubt, the searching, the yearning, and the faith we come to. It is reassuring to know that no matter where we are, or where we find ourselves on our spiritual journeys, God is there welcoming and walking with us.

Lenten Candle Liturgy¹

On Sunday morning, for a brief space of time, we leave behind the world of home and work and school—the world where we have our lists of things to do, activities to participate in, tasks to complete. We come here this morning seeking something else. We come here seeking a shift—from the ordinary to the sacred, from doing to being. I invite you to close your eyes. Let go of your list. Recall that it is the season of Lent. Remember the parable of the sower. The sower throws the seed . . . and where it lands determines if it will grow or not grow. Think of it this way: think of the season of Lent as the sower, the time when seeds of faith are thrown with special intensity, as a time when God calls to us in a low, urgent voice. Listen. Jesus is being drawn to Jerusalem. Where is God calling you to? What is God calling you to do? (*Silence*)

As we extinguish this light, we acknowledge the darkness and pain of injury done to the Earth and its ecosystems.

Let us pray:

Loving God, as we journey through this holy season of Lent, may we be open to your presence. Give us the strength to make the changes that are needed in our lives and the courage to take on the work of transforming the world. Amen.

¹ Written by Andrew Schwartz

Prayer of Confession*

God of abundant love, you shower our lives and our world with love, yet we too often turn away from your blessing. It is just so easy to complain!

There are little annoyances each day, but they pile up into a mountainous burden that becomes a curse on our lives.

Free us from our unwise choices, O God.

When we are distracted and confused, redirect our attention to the abundant opportunities to experience your love.

During this Lenten journey, focus our hearts on you, that we may choose the blessings you offer us each day through Jesus Christ, in whom we pray. Amen. *(silence for reflection)*

Words of Assurance

God did not send Jesus into the world to condemn it, but that the world might be saved through him. Through the saving love of Jesus Christ, you are forgiven and blessed! In the name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit. Amen.

#666 Gathering Hymn “What Wondrous Love Is This”

1. **What wondrous love is this, O my soul, O my soul,
What wondrous love is this, O my soul!
What wondrous love is this that caused the Lord of bliss
to bear the dreadful curse for my soul, for my soul,
to bear the dreadful curse for my soul?**
2. **When I was sinking down, sinking down, sinking down,
when I was sinking down, sinking down,
when I was sinking down beneath God’s righteous frown,
Christ laid aside his crown for my soul, for my soul,
Christ laid aside his crown for my soul.**
3. **To God and to the Lamb, I will sing, I will sing;
to God and to the Lamb, I will sing;
to God and to the Lamb who is the great I AM,
while millions join the theme, I will sing, I will sing;
while millions join the theme, I will sing.**
4. **And when from death I’m free, I’ll sing on, I’ll sing on;**

and when from death I'm free, I'll sing on;
 and when from death I'm free, I'll sing God's love for me,
 and through eternity, I'll sing on, I'll sing on;
 and through eternity I'll sing on.

p. 184 **Greeting**

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

#152 Kyrie

Lord, have mercy. Lord, have mercy.
 Christ, have mercy. Christ, have mercy.
 Lord, have mercy. Lord, have mercy. Lord, have mercy, have mercy.

Prayer of the Day*

God of amazing compassion, you bring to birth a pilgrim people, and call us to be a blessing for ourselves and all the world. We pray for grace to take your generous gift and step with courage on this holy path, confident in the radiant life that is your intention for us, made known and given in Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

Scripture Reading: Genesis 12:1-4a

In the Old Testament reading from Genesis we hear that God's call of Abram and Sarai has a clear purpose—that through them all the families of the earth would gain a blessing. As they set out on their journey, they are accompanied by promises of land, nation, and a great reputation.

A reading from Genesis, beginning with the 12th chapter:

God said to Abram, "Leave your land, your family, and your parent's household for the land that I will show you. I will make of you a great nation and will bless you. I will make your name respected, and you will be a blessing. I will bless those who bless you, those who curse you I will curse; all the families of the earth will be blessed because of you."
 Abram left just as God told him, and Lot went with him. Now Abram was 75 years old when he left Haran.

Word of God, word of life. **Thanks be to God.**

Psalm 121

I raise my eyes toward the mountains. Where will my help come from?

My help comes from God, the maker of heaven and earth.

God won't let your foot slip. Your protector won't fall asleep on the job.

No! Israel's protector never sleeps or rests!

God is your protector; God is your shade right beside you.

The sun won't strike you during the day; neither will the moon at night.

God will protect you from all evil; God will protect your very life.

**God will protect you on your journeys—whether going or coming—
from now until forever from now.**

Scripture Reading: Romans 4:1-5,13-17

In the letter of the apostle Paul written to the church in Rome, we hear that in the person and example of Abraham we discover that a right relationship with God does not involve earning a reward from God but entails trusting God's promises. Abraham is the forebear and model for both Jews and Gentiles, because we too trust that ours is a God who gives life to the dead.

A reading from the letter of the apostle Paul to the Romans, the 4th chapter, from *The Message*, a paraphrase of the Bible:

So how do we fit what we know of Abraham, our first father in the faith, into this new way of looking at things? If Abraham, by what he *did* for God, got God to approve him, Abraham could certainly have taken credit for it. But the story we're given is a God-story, not an Abraham-story.

What we read in Scripture is, "Abraham entered into what God was doing for him, and *that* was the turning point. Abraham trusted God to set him right instead of trying to be right on his own."

If you're a hard worker and do a good job, you deserve your pay; we don't call your wages a gift. But if you see that the job is too big for you, that it's something only *God* can do, and you trust God to do it—you could never do it for yourself no matter how hard and long you worked—well, that trusting-God-to-do-it is what gets you set right with God, *by* God. Sheer gift.

That famous promise God gave Abraham—that Abraham and his children would possess the earth—was not given because of something Abraham did

or would do. It was based on God's decision to put everything together for him, which Abraham then entered when he believed. If those who get what God gives them only get it by doing everything they are told to do and filling out all the right forms properly signed, that eliminates personal trust completely and turns the promise into an ironclad *contract*!

That's not a holy promise; that's a business deal. A contract drawn up by a hard-nosed lawyer and with plenty of fine print only makes sure that you will never be able to collect. But if there is no contract in the first place, simply a *promise*—and God's promise at that—you can't break it.

This is why the fulfillment of God's promise depends entirely on trusting God and God's way, and then simply embracing God and what God does.

God's promise arrives as pure gift. That's the only way everyone can be sure to get in on it, those who keep the religious traditions *and* those who have never heard of them. For Abraham is father of us all. Abraham is not our racial father—that's reading the story backward. Abraham is our *faith* father. We call Abraham "father" not because Abraham got God's attention by living like a saint, but because God made something out of Abraham when he was a nobody. Isn't that what we've always read in Scripture, God saying to Abraham, "I set you up as father of many peoples"? Abraham was first named "father" and then *became* a father because he dared to trust God to do what only God could do: raise the dead to life, with a word make something out of nothing. When everything was hopeless, Abraham believed anyway, deciding to live not on the basis of what he saw he *couldn't* do but on what God said God *would* do. And so Abraham was made father of a multitude of peoples. God said to Abraham, "You're going to have a big family!"

Word of God, word of life. **Thanks be to God.**

p.189 **Gospel Acclamation for Lent**

Let your steadfast love come to us, O Lord.

Let your steadfast love come to us, O Lord.

Save us as you promised; we will trust your word.

Let your steadfast love come to us, O Lord.

Gospel Reading: John 3:1-17

In the gospel reading from John a curious Pharisee visits Jesus by night to learn from the teacher his friends reject. Jesus speaks to him about life in the Spirit and the kingdom of God.

The holy gospel according to John, the 3rd chapter. **Glory to you, O Lord.**

There was a Pharisee named Nicodemus, a Jewish leader. He came to Jesus at night and said to him, "Rabbi, we know that you are a teacher who has come from God, for no one could do these miraculous signs that you do unless God is with him."

Jesus answered, "I assure you, unless someone is born anew, it's not possible to see God's kingdom."

Nicodemus asked, "How is it possible for an adult to be born? It's impossible to enter the mother's womb for a second time and be born, isn't it?"

Jesus answered, "I assure you, unless someone is born of water and the Spirit, it's not possible to enter God's kingdom. Whatever is born of the flesh is flesh, and whatever is born of the Spirit is spirit. Don't be surprised that I said to you, 'You must be born anew.' God's Spirit blows wherever it wishes. You hear its sound, but you don't know where it comes from or where it is going. It's the same with everyone who is born of the Spirit."

Nicodemus said, "How are these things possible?"

Jesus answered, "You are a teacher of Israel and you don't know these things? I assure you that we speak about what we know and testify about what we have seen, but you don't receive our testimony. If I have told you about earthly things and you don't believe, how will you believe if I tell you about heavenly things? No one has gone up to heaven except the one who came down from heaven, the Human One. Just as Moses lifted up the snake in the wilderness, so must the Human One be lifted up so that everyone who believes in him will have eternal life. God so loved the world that God gave his only Son, so that everyone who believes in him won't perish but will have eternal life. God didn't send his Son into the world to judge the world, but that the world might be saved through him.

The gospel of our Lord. **Praise to you, O Christ.**

Sermon

#323 Hymn of the Day *“God Loved the World”* (v.1-3,5)

1. **God loved the world so that he gave
his only Son the lost to save,
that all who would in him believe
should everlasting life receive.**
2. **Christ Jesus is the ground of faith,
who was made flesh and suffered death;
all who confide in Christ alone
are built on this chief cornerstone.**
3. **If you are ill, if death draws near,
this truth your troubled heart can cheer:
Christ Jesus rescues us from death;
that is the firmest ground of faith.**
5. **All glory to the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, Three in One!
To you, O blessed Trinity, be praise now and eternally!**

Apostles' 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 Intercession²

Reconciled by God's mercy and sustained by God's presence, let us pray for the world and its needs. Prayer petitions will end with "Hear us, O God" and the congregation responds by praying **"Your mercy is great."**

² <https://members.sundaysandseasons.com/Home/DayTexts/2026-3-01/0>

Faithful One, you renew us by grace. As you have inspired faith through the work of church artists and hymnwriters throughout the ages, give your church the means to praise your beauty today.

Hear us, O God. **Your mercy is great.**

Living One, you delight in this world. The sun and moon, the wind and the water declare your goodness. Preserve this earth, and protect conservationists, scientists, and all who labor in service to creation.

Hear us, O God. **Your mercy is great.**

Ruling One, you bless us to be a blessing. Open the hearts of all leaders to seek the flourishing of every person and lend your help to all who wait for justice, deliverance, and peace. Hear us, O God. **Your mercy is great.**

Compassionate One, you send your Son to save. Declare your word of acceptance to any who feel condemned and lift up any brought low by hatred and exclusion. Tend to all who are struggling with illness or loss.

Hear us, O God. **Your mercy is great.**

Guiding One, you watch over our going out and coming in. Bless newcomers and new members in this assembly. Hear us, O God. **Your mercy is great.**

Receive our prayers, O God, through Jesus Christ, our strength and salvation.
Amen.

Sharing of the Peace

Offertory Prayer*

Generous God, you shower us with gifts, including the greatest gift of all, your own Son, Jesus Christ. In thanksgiving and praise, we offer you our time, our money, our very selves. In these actions, we proclaim our intention to be a blessing in your world. Amen.

p.190 Great Thanksgiving

L The Lord be with you. **And also with you.**
Lift up your hearts. **We lift them to the Lord.**
Let us give thanks to the Lord our God.

It is right to give our thanks and praise.

It is a right, good and joyful thing, always and everywhere,
to give thanks to you.

You invite us to return to you with all our hearts and live with joy.
Renew our enthusiasm in faith and life and bring us to the fullness of grace
that belongs to all of us, your beloved children.
An so with the Church on earth and the hosts of heaven, we praise your
name and join your unending hymn:³

p.190 **Holy, holy, holy Lord, God of pow'r and might,
heaven and earth are full of your glory, full of your glory.
Hosanna, hosanna, hosanna in the highest.
Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord.
Hosanna, hosanna, hosanna in the highest.**

Eucharistic Prayer D – The Season of Lent⁴

Holy God, our living water and gracious guide,
together with rivers and seas, wells and springs we give you thanks.
You led your people Israel through the desert,
And provided them water from the rock.
We praise you for Christ, our Rock and our Water,
who joined us in our desert, pouring his life for the world.

In the night in which he was betrayed,
Jesus took bread, and gave thanks;
broke it, and gave it to his disciples, saying:
Take and eat, this is my body, given for you.
Do this for the remembrance of me.

Again, after supper, Jesus took the cup,
Gave thanks, and gave it for all to drink, saying:
This cup is the covenant in my blood,

³ Adapted by Rev Lynn Robertson from *With One Voice: Leaders Edition*, p.22A-22D

⁴ Adapted by Rev Lynn Robertson from *With One Voice: Leaders Edition*, p.68

Shed for you and for all people for the forgiveness of sin.
 Do this for the remembrance of me.
 Pour out your Spirit on this holy food
 and on all gathered for this meal of love and forgiveness.
 Strengthen us that we may be revived for our journey by the love of Christ.

Through Christ all glory and honour is yours, gracious God,
 with the Holy Spirit, in your holy Church, both now and forever. Amen.

p.191 **The Lord's Prayer**

**Our Father in heaven, hallowed be your name,
 your kingdom 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 the kingdom, the power, and the glory are yours, now and forever.
 Amen.**

Communion Distribution

p.191 ***Lamb of God***

**Lamb of God, you take away the sin of the world; have mercy on us.
 Lamb of God, you take away the sin of the world; have mercy on us.
 Lamb of God, you take away the sin of the world;
 grant us peace, grant us peace, Lamb of God.**

#464 Communion Hymn "*Bread of Life, Our Host and Meal*"

- 1. Bread of life, our host and meal, Jesus, feed us.
 Christ, by faith, to see and feel, feed us with your love.**
- 2. Bread now break and wine now pour, Jesus, feed us.
 Make us one, our hope restore; feed us with your love.**
- 3. Grant forgiveness in the feast -- Jesus, feed us --
 for the greatest and the least; feed us with your love.**
- 4. Thank you for this gift we share. Jesus, feed us.
 Save God's children ev'rywhere; feed us with your love.**

Communion Blessing

May the love and forgiveness of God, that is present in this meal of bread and wine, strengthen you and nourish you in your journey of faith, confident in God's unconditional love for you.

Prayer after Communion

Compassionate God, you have fed us with the bread of heaven. Sustain us in our Lenten journey: may our fasting be hunger for justice; our giving, a making of peace; and our prayer, the song of grateful hearts, in Jesus' name we pray. **Amen.**

Announcements

Blessing

May the Lord bless you and keep you
 May the Lord's face shine on you and be gracious to you.
 May the Lord look upon you with favour
 and + give you peace. Amen.

#803 Sending Hymn "When I Survey the Wondrous Cross" (v.1,3-4)

- 1. When I survey the wondrous cross on which the prince of glory died,
 my richest gain I count but loss and pour contempt on all my pride.**
- 3. See, from his head, his hands, his feet, sorrow and love flow mingled down.
 Did e'er such love and sorrow meet, or thorns compose so rich a crown?**
- 4. Were the whole realm of nature mine, that were a present far too small;
 love so amazing, so divine, demands my soul, my life, my all.**

Sending

Go in peace, to love and serve God through word and deed.
Thanks be to God!

Sources:

Bible passages (except where otherwise indicated) from Common English Bible (CEB) and adapted for inclusive language.

Those parts of this worship service marked with an asterisk (*) are adapted from:

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