

**Sunday Worship Service— March 15, 2026**  
**Fourth Sunday in Lent**  
*ELWB* (red book) – Holy Communion – Setting 8 (p.184-192)

**Welcome**

**Land Acknowledgement & Welcome Statement**

**Introduction**

**Lenten Candle Liturgy<sup>1</sup>**

It's Sunday morning. Last week, with all its demands, is over. The coming week, with yet another round of challenges and demands, is not quite here. I invite you to close your eyes and be in the moment. No matter where you are in your thoughts and feelings—relieved about what you have accomplished, anxious about what's left undone, concerned about people or projects—no matter where you are in your journey this day—I encourage you to set all that aside and consider where you are right now. Whatever is true for you right now, in this moment, whether it be joy or sadness, gratitude or anxiety, let it come forward. When it is fully present, then listen for God is present in these moments, too. God meets you where you are and calls you forward, moment by moment, guiding you slowly but surely toward transformation.

As we extinguish these lights, we acknowledge the darkness and pain caused by the lack of basic needs—lack of food, of shelter, of education, of healthcare, of love.

***Loving God, we thank you that you are with us, and that we may call upon you no matter where we are, or what we are feeling. Keep us mindful of your presence and trusting in your promise—that you are working with us in the moment-by-moment unfolding of our lives. Amen.***

**Prayer of Confession\***

***Forgiving God, in a world filled with so much pain, we would rather shut our eyes and be blind than see things as they really are. Grant us the courage to face the reality of our world, and give us the strength to bring your light to those who walk in darkness. Help us see others as you see them, and forgive us when we do not trust you enough to open our eyes to***

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<sup>1</sup> Written by Andrew Schwartz

the possibilities before us. Heal our self-inflicted blindness, O God, and lead us in the footsteps of the Light of the World. Jesus reveals your glory in his life, teachings, and love.

## Words of Forgiveness

### #722 Gathering Hymn “O Christ, Your Heart, Compassionate”

1. O Christ, your heart, compassionate, bore ev’ry human pain.  
Its beating was the pulse of God; its breath, God’s vast domain.  
The heart of God, the heart of Christ combined in perfect rhyme  
to write God’s love in human deeds, eternity in time.
2. As once you welcomed those cast down and healed the sick, the blind,  
so may all bruised and broken lives through us your help still find.  
Lord, join our hearts with those who weep that none may weep alone,  
and help us bear another’s pain as though it were our own.
3. O Christ, create new hearts in us that beat in time with yours,  
that, joined by faith with your great heart, become love’s open doors.  
We are your body, risen Christ; our hearts, our hands, we yield  
that through our life and ministry your love may be revealed.
4. O Love that made the distant stars, yet marks the sparrow’s fall,  
whose arms stretched wide upon a cross embrace and bear us all:  
come, make your church a servant church  
that walks your servant ways,  
whose deeds of love rise up to you, a sacrifice of praise!

### 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.**

## Baptism

### Prayer of the Day\*

*Visionary Creator, give us your vision. Show us our hearts, our homes, our communities, and our world through your eyes. Wash away our blind spots, and help us to see where we do not see. Help us to see creation as you see it now, and as you envision it to become. Helps us realize your vision, and walk the road of life – the way and path of Jesus. Amen.*

**#780 “Shepherd Me, O God” (A sung adaptation of Psalm 23)**

(Congregation sings the Refrain)

**Refrain: Shepherd me, O God, beyond my wants,  
beyond my fears, from death into life.**

1. God is my shepherd, so nothing shall I want,  
I rest in the meadows of faithfulness and love,  
I walk by the quiet waters of peace. *(Refrain)*
2. Gently you raise me and heal my weary soul,  
you lead me by pathways of righteousness and truth,  
my spirit shall sing the music of your name. *(Refrain)*
3. Though I should wander the valley of death,  
I fear no evil, for you are at my side,  
your rod and your staff, my comfort and my hope. *(Refrain)*
4. You have set me a banquet of love in the face of hatred,  
crowning me with love beyond my power to hold. *(Refrain)*
5. Surely your kindness and mercy follow me all the days of my life;  
I will dwell in the house of my God forevermore. *(Refrain)*

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 9:1-41**

*In the gospel reading from John, Jesus heals a man born blind, provoking a hostile reaction that he regards as spiritual blindness to the things of God.*

The holy gospel according to John, the 9<sup>th</sup> chapter. **Glory to you, O Lord.**

As Jesus walked along, he saw a man who was blind from birth. <sup>2</sup> Jesus’ disciples asked, “Rabbi, who sinned so that he was born blind, this man or his parents?”

<sup>3</sup> Jesus answered, “Neither he nor his parents. This happened so that God’s mighty works might be displayed in him. <sup>4</sup> While it’s daytime, we must do the works of him who sent me. Night is coming when no one can work. <sup>5</sup> While I am in the world, I am the light of the world.” <sup>6</sup> After he said

this, he spit on the ground, made mud with the saliva, and smeared the mud on the man's eyes. <sup>7</sup> Jesus said to him, "Go, wash in the pool of Siloam" (this word means *sent*).

So the man went away and washed. When he returned, he could see.

<sup>8</sup> The man's neighbors and those who used to see him when he was a beggar said, "Isn't this the man who used to sit and beg?"

<sup>9</sup> Some said, "It is," and others said, "No, it's someone who looks like him." But the man said, "Yes, it's me!"

<sup>10</sup> So they asked him, "How are you now able to see?"

<sup>11</sup> He answered, "The man they call Jesus made mud, smeared it on my eyes, and said, 'Go to the pool of Siloam and wash.' So I went and washed, and then I could see."

<sup>12</sup> They asked, "Where is this man?"

He replied, "I don't know."

<sup>13</sup> Then they led the man who had been born blind to the Pharisees. <sup>14</sup> Now Jesus made the mud and smeared it on the man's eyes on a Sabbath day. <sup>15</sup> So Pharisees also asked him how he was able to see.

The man told them, "He put mud on my eyes, I washed, and now I see."

<sup>16</sup> Some Pharisees said, "This man isn't from God, because he breaks the Sabbath law." Others said, "How can a sinner do miraculous signs like these?" So they were divided. <sup>17</sup> Some of the Pharisees questioned the man who had been born blind again: "What do you have to say about him, since he healed your eyes?"

He replied, "He's a prophet."

<sup>18</sup> The Jewish leaders didn't believe the man had been blind and received his sight until they called for his parents. <sup>19</sup> The Jewish leaders asked them, "Is this your son? Are you saying he was born blind? How can he now see?"

<sup>20</sup> His parents answered, "We know he is our son. We know he was born blind. <sup>21</sup> But we don't know how he now sees, and we don't know who healed his eyes. Ask him. He's old enough to speak for himself."

<sup>22</sup> His parents said this because they feared the Jewish authorities. This is because the Jewish authorities had already decided that whoever confessed Jesus to be the Christ would be expelled from the synagogue. <sup>23</sup> That's why his parents said, "He's old enough. Ask him."

<sup>24</sup> Therefore, they called a second time for the man who had been born blind and said to him, "Give glory to God. We know this man is a sinner."

<sup>25</sup> The man answered, "I don't know whether he's a sinner. Here's what I do know: I was blind and now I see."

<sup>26</sup> They questioned him: “What did he do to you? How did he heal your eyes?”

<sup>27</sup> He replied, “I already told you, and you didn’t listen. Why do you want to hear it again? Do you want to become his disciples too?”

<sup>28</sup> They insulted him: “You are his disciple, but we are Moses’ disciples. <sup>29</sup> We know that God spoke to Moses, but we don’t know where this man is from.”

<sup>30</sup> The man answered, “This is incredible! You don’t know where he is from, yet he healed my eyes! <sup>31</sup> We know that God doesn’t listen to sinners. God listens to anyone who is devout and does God’s will. <sup>32</sup> No one has ever heard of a healing of the eyes of someone born blind. <sup>33</sup> If this man wasn’t from God, he couldn’t do this.”

<sup>34</sup> They responded, “You were born completely in sin! How is it that you dare to teach us?” Then they expelled him.

<sup>35</sup> Jesus heard they had expelled the man born blind.

Finding him, Jesus said, “Do you believe in the Human One?”

<sup>36</sup> He answered, “Who is he, sir? I want to believe in him.”

<sup>37</sup> Jesus said, “You have seen him. In fact, he is the one speaking with you.”

<sup>38</sup> The man said, “Lord, I believe.” And he worshipped Jesus.

<sup>39</sup> Jesus said, “I have come into the world to exercise judgment so that those who don’t see can see and those who see will become blind.”

<sup>40</sup> Some Pharisees who were with him heard what he said and asked, “Surely we aren’t blind, are we?”

<sup>41</sup> Jesus said to them, “If you were blind, you wouldn’t have any sin, but now that you say, ‘We see,’ your sin remains.

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

## Sermon

### #779 Hymn of the Day *“Amazing Grace”*

1. **Amazing Grace, how sweet the sound, that saved a wretch like me!  
I once was lost, but now am found; was blind, but now I see.**
2. **T’was grace that taught my heart to fear, and grace, my fears relieved;  
how precious did that grace appear the hour I first believed!**
3. **Through many dangers, toils, and snares I have already come;  
’tis grace has brought me safe thus far, and grace will lead me home.**

4. **The Lord has promised good to me; his word my hope secures; he will my shield and portion be as long as life endures.**
5. **When we've been there ten thousand years, bright shining as the sun, we've no less days to sing God's praise than when we'd first begun.**

### **Prayers of Intercession<sup>2</sup>**

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.**"

God, our shepherd, we pray that you guide the church. Lead the people of faith in our community and across the globe in right paths for your name's sake. Hear us, O God. **Your mercy is great.**

God our provider, we cry out for this planet and the life it holds. Rescue endangered animals and plants, preserve threatened ecosystems, and save creatures from natural disasters. Hear us, O God. **Your mercy is great.**

God our sovereign, we plead for your peace on earth. Bring an end to war and violence, and raise up leaders in governments, courts, businesses, schools, and community organizations who seek goodness and mercy. Hear us, O God. **Your mercy is great.**

God our healer, we call to you in our need. Uplift all who are made to feel unimportant, and transform the hearts of all infected by bigotry and prejudice. Care for all in special need this day. Hear us, O God. **Your mercy is great.**

God our friend, we praise you for the diversity of people among us. Awaken us to share and receive the gifts we each possess, and stir up a spirit of understanding, celebration, and welcome for all. Hear us, O God. **Your mercy is great.**

Receive our prayers, O God, through Jesus Christ, in us and with us. **Amen.**

### **Offertory Prayer\***

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<sup>2</sup> <https://members.sundaysandseasons.com/Home/DayTexts/2026-3-15/0>

God of many gifts, **receive our gifts of time, talents, and treasures, that they may bring the goodness of our ministry to your world.**  
**Receive also the gifts of our transformed lives, as we open our hearts to perceive our short-sightedness. Give us the vision to offer our lives in service to you. Light our paths, and shine through our lives, as we follow you. Amen.**

p.190 **Great Thanksgiving**

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.  
 And so with the Church on earth and the hosts of heaven, we praise your  
 name and join your unending hymn:<sup>3</sup>

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 Lent<sup>4</sup>**

Holy are you, O God, and holy is Jesus Christ, who give sight to the blind and  
 fills our hearts with light.

In the night in which he was betrayed,  
 Jesus took bread, and gave thanks;

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

<sup>4</sup> Adapted by Rev Lynn Robertson from *With One Voice: Leaders Edition*, p.68 & Abingdon Worship Annual 2020.

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,  
 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.

God of light and vision, God of mystery and truth, God of love and grace,  
 we praise your saving, gracious name. 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.**

**#614 Communion Hymn "There is a Balm in Gilead"**

*Refrain:*

**There is a balm in Gilead to make the wounded whole,  
there is a balm in Gilead to heal the sin-sick soul.**

1. **Sometimes I feel discouraged and think my work's in vain,  
but then the Holy Spirit revives my soul again. *Refrain***
2. **If you cannot preach like Peter, if you cannot pray like Paul,  
you can tell the love of Jesus and say, "He died for all." *Refrain***
3. **Don't ever be discouraged, for Jesus is your friend;  
And if you lack for knowledge, he'll ne'er refuse to lend. *Refrain***

### **Communion Blessing**

#### **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.**

#### **#793 Sending Hymn "Be Thou My Vision"**

1. **Be thou my vision, O Lord of my heart;  
naught be all else to me, save that thou art:  
thou my best thought both by day and by night,  
waking or sleeping, thy presence my light.**
2. **Be thou my wisdom, and thou my true word;  
I ever with thee and thou with me, Lord.  
Thou my soul's shelter, and thou my high tow'r,  
raise thou me heav'nward, O Pow'r of my pow'r.**
3. **Riches I heed not, nor vain, empty praise,  
thou mine inheritance, now and always:  
thou, and thou only, the first in my heart,  
great God of heaven, my treasure thou art.**
4. **Light of my soul, after victory won,  
may I reach heaven's joys, O heaven's Sun!  
Heart of my own heart, whatever befall,  
still be my vision, O Ruler of all.**

## **Announcements**

### **Blessing\***

Go into the world, carrying the light of Christ into the darkness.

Go with hearts full and eyes open.

Go with eyes reflecting God's light and hands open to share it

Go with God in the name of the + Creator, the Healer,  
and the Comforter. Amen.

### **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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