

Second Sunday of Lent

March 1, 2026

PRELUDE

Becky Retherford

Gathering

CONFESSION AND FORGIVENESS

Blessed be the holy Trinity, † one God, who forgives all our sin,
whose mercy endures forever. **Amen.**

Let us confess our sin to God, and to one another. *(Silence is kept for reflection.)*

**We confess to you, most loving God,
the sins that both bind and scatter us.**

We have knowingly believed dishonest words.

We have questioned your gracious power again and again.

We have given into temptation.

**We have acted out of fear, placing blame on others yet holding ourselves apart.
In our disbelief and confusion we have hurt our neighbors and ourselves.**

Gather us back to you.

**Forgive us, free us, and make us whole
for the sake of your son Jesus Christ. Amen.**

Friends, beloved of God,

Jesus came not to condemn the world but that all might be saved through him.

In the name of + Christ your sins are forgiven.

May God unbind your guilt and shame,

lead you by the Spirit,

and bring you to wholeness in abundant life. **Amen.**

GATHERING HYMN

ELW #401

“Gracious Spirit, Heed Our Pleading”

- 1 Gracious Spirit, heed our pleading,
fashion us all anew.
It's your leading that we're needing,
help us to follow you.

Refrain

Come, come, come, Holy Spirit, come.

Come, come, come, Holy Spirit, come.

- 2 Come to teach us, come to nourish
those who believe in Christ.
Bless the faithful, may they flourish,
strengthened by grace unpriced.

Refrain

**Come, come, come, Holy Spirit, come.
Come, come, come, Holy Spirit, come.**

- 3 Guide our thinking and our speaking
done in your holy name.
Motivate all in their seeking,
freeing from guilt and shame.

Refrain

**Come, come, come, Holy Spirit, come.
Come, come, come, Holy Spirit, come.**

- 4 Not mere knowledge, but discernment,
nor rootless liberty;
turn disquiet to contentment,
doubt into certainty.

Refrain

**Come, come, come, Holy Spirit, come.
Come, come, come, Holy Spirit, come.**

- 5 Keep us fervent in our witness;
unswayed by earth's allure.
Ever grant us zealous fitness,
which you alone assure.

Refrain

**Come, come, come, Holy Spirit, come.
Come, come, come, Holy Spirit, come.**

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.**

PRAYER OF THE DAY

Let us pray. Living God, **we come looking for signs of your heavenly kingdom. When certainty binds our spirits, astonish us and confound our expectations. Bring us through water and Spirit to trust that you speak of what you know. Birth us into the mystery that you desire to give all eternal life. In Jesus' name we pray. Amen.**

Word

BIBLE READING

Genesis 12:1-4a

PSALM (*read in unison*)

Psalm 121

- 1 I lift up my eyes to the hills;
from where is my help to come?**
- 2 My help comes from the LORD,
the maker of heaven and earth.**
- 3 The LORD will not let your foot be moved
nor will the one who watches over you fall asleep.**
- 4 Behold, the keeper of Israel
will neither slumber nor sleep;**
- 5 the LORD watches over you;
the LORD is your shade at your right hand;**
- 6 the sun will not strike you by day,
nor the moon by night.**
- 7 The LORD will preserve you from all evil
and will keep your life.**
- 8 The LORD will watch over your going out and your coming in,
from this time forth forevermore.**

CHILDREN'S MESSAGE

GOSPEL ACCLAMATION TFF #98 "Open Our Eyes, Lord"

Open our eyes, Lord,
We want to see Jesus
To reach out and touch Him
And say that we love Him

Open our ears, Lord
And help us to listen
Open our eyes, Lord
We want to see Jesus

GOSPEL READING

John 3:1-17

SERMON

"Longing for Mystery"

Pastor Julie Brenden

HYMN OF DAY *(tune of "Come Thou Fount of Every Blessing")* "Who On Earth Can Find God's Kingdom"

- 1 Who on earth can find God's kingdom? Who can know God's wondrous reign?
How can we receive the freedom of a people born again?
Can we hear the winds a-blowing — where they come from and return?
Can we see God's kingdom growing? These are things we long to learn.
- 2 Nicodemus said to Jesus, "God must be at work in you!
Rabbi, you're a God-sent teacher; we can see the signs you do!"
Jesus saw his faith and questions, so he spoke these words of love:
"Surely, none can see God's kingdom, till they're born from God above."
- 3 Nicodemus kept on wondering, "How can one be born anew?"
Jesus said, "This is the birthing that God's Spirit brings to you.
If you want to see God's kingdom, do not be at all surprised.
You can't see God's Spirit moving, yet it's working, changing lives."
- 4 God, we see your world around us, and we wonder what will be.
Is your loving reign among us; is it something yet to see?
May we trust your Spirit's moving, giving life and hope and birth.
May we trust what you are doing, joy of heaven, hope of earth.

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 INTERCESSION

Reconciled by God's mercy and sustained by God's presence, let us pray
for the world and its needs.

Responses: Hear us, O God, **your mercy is great.**

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

Meal

OFFERING & HYMN ELW #686 “We Give Thee But Thine Own”

- 1 We give thee but thine own,
whate'er the gift may be;
all that we have is thine alone,
a trust, O Lord, from thee.

- 2 May we thy bounties thus
as stewards true receive,
and gladly, as thou blessest us,
to thee our firstfruits give.

- 3 The captive to release,
to God the lost to bring,
to teach the way of life and peace—
it is a Christlike thing.

- 4 And we believe thy word,
though dim our faith may be:
whate'er we do for thine, O Lord,
we do it unto thee.

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 of bread and wine,
draw us into the death and life of your Son,
who calls us to bear witness to his saving work.
We ask this in Jesus' name. Amen.**

THE 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 God thanks and praise.

WORDS OF INSTITUTION

LORD'S PRAYER

Gathered into one by the Holy Spirit, let us pray as Jesus taught us.

**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.**

DISTRIBUTION AND HYMN ELW#638 "Blessed Assurance"

- 1 Blessed assurance, Jesus is mine!
Oh, what a foretaste of glory divine!
Heir of salvation, purchase of God,
born of his Spirit, washed in his blood.

Refrain

**This is my story, this is my song,
praising my Savior, all the day long:
this is my story, this is my song,
praising my Savior all the day long.**

- 2 Perfect submission, perfect delight,
visions of rapture now burst on my sight;
angels descending bring from above
echoes of mercy, whispers of love. ***To Refrain***
- 3 Perfect submission, all is at rest;
I in my Savior am happy and blest,
watching and waiting, looking above,
filled with his goodness, lost in his love. ***To Refrain***

COMMUNION BLESSING

PRAYER AFTER COMMUNION

Let us pray. Heavenly Father, **you have met us at this table with Christ's body and blood that we might rejoice together in the bread you provide and never be thirsty again. Send us now into the world as signs of your unbound presence, seeking the wholeness of the kingdom of God, and inviting all who hunger to come and see your glory. In Jesus' name we pray. Amen.**

Sending

ANNOUNCEMENTS

BENEDICTION

May God who seeks you by night and by day, in death and in life,
open your senses to the mystery of God's grace,
enfold you through water and Spirit in Christ's love,
and give you confidence in the Spirit's power to unbind and grant new life.
May the Holy Trinity, + Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, Mother of us all,
bless you now and forever. **Amen.**

SENDING HYMN ELW #856- vs. 1, 3, 4 "How Great Thou Art"

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!**

3 But when I think that God, his Son not sparing,
 sent him to die, I scarce can take it in,
 that on the cross my burden gladly bearing
 he bled and died to take away my sin; **To Refrain**

4 When Christ shall come, with shout of acclamation,
 and take me home, what joy shall fill my heart!
 Then I shall bow in humble adoration
 and there proclaim, "My God, how great thou art!" **To Refrain**

DISMISSAL

Go in peace. forgiven, whole and free. **Thanks be to God.**