

# *Spirit of Grace* ELCA UMC



March 19th, 2023  
*Fourth Sunday of Lent*

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## *- Gathering -*

Prelude

Welcome & Announcements

Call to Worship

With dust of the earth and stars in our bones,  
**we gather in the presence of the One who formed us in their image.**

We name the brokenness of your world,  
**and acknowledge the fragmentations of our souls.**

Throughout these 40 days, O God, call us back to you,  
**that we might find the forgiveness we so desperately seek.**

As Jesus followed the Spirit into the Wilderness,  
**we too trust your Divine Presence to lead us where we must go.**

Confession & Forgiveness

Blessed be the holy Trinity, † one God,  
who journeys with us these forty days,  
and sustains us with the gift of grace.  
**Amen.**

Let us acknowledge before God and one another  
our need for repentance and God's mercy.

*Silence is kept for reflection.*

Holy God,  
**we confess to you our faults and failings.**  
**Too often we neglect and do not trust your holy word;**  
**we take for ourselves instead of giving to others;**  
**we spoil rather than steward your creation;**  
**we cause hurt though you call us to heal;**  
**we choose fear over compassion.**  
**Forgive us, renew us, and lead us,**  
**as we seek to follow in your way of life.**  
**Amen.**

Hear the good news:  
God so loved the world that God gave the only Son,  
so that all may receive life.  
This promise is for you!  
God embraces you with divine mercy,  
✠ forgives you in Christ's name,  
and revives you in the Spirit's power.  
**Amen.**

Opening Hymn

Open My Eyes, That I May See  
*UMH 454 – verses 1+2*

Greeting & Prayer of the Day

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.**

Let us pray.  
God of restoration, and reconciliation – you created us to be in community – to dwell in relationship with one another. And yet, we let differences divide us, leaving your people isolated and alone. Call us back to you, and through you to one another, that we may be united as one people in your love and grace. Through Jesus Christ, who heals our wounds of body, heart, mind, and soul, we pray.  
**Amen.**

## - Word -

First Reading: 1 Samuel 16:1-13

YHWH said to Samuel, "How long will you grieve for Saul since I rejected him as ruler of Israel? Fill your horn with oil, and be on your way. For I am sending you to Jesse in Bethlehem, for I have chosen my ruler from among his children.

But Samuel replied, "How can I go? For if Saul learns about it, I will be murdered."

YHWH replied, "Take a heifer with you: I am sending you to Jesse. Tell him that you came to offer a sacrifice to YHWH, and invite Jesse to the sacrifice. Then I will show you what to do. You are to anoint for me my selection."

Samuel did what YHWH said. When he arrived at Bethlehem, the elders of the town trembled when they met Samuel. They asked, "Do you come in peace?"

Samuel said, "Yes, in peace; I have come to sacrifice to YHWH. Consecrate yourselves and come to the sacrifice with me." Then he consecrated Jesse and his children and invited them to the sacrifice.

When they arrived, Samuel saw Eliab, and said to himself, "Surely, God's anointed stands here before YHWH."

But YHWH said to Samuel, "Pay no attention to appearances and height; I have rejected him. YHWH does not see what mortals see; mortals see only appearances, but YHWH sees into the heart."

Then Jesse called Abinadab to pass before Samuel, who said, "No. YHWH has not chosen this one."

Next came Shammah, but Samuel said, "Not this one either."

Seven sons were presented to Samuel by Jesse, who said, "YHWH has not chosen any of these."

Samuel asked, "Are these all the sons you have?"

"There is still the youngest," Jesse said, "but he is tending the sheep."

Samuel said, "Send for him; we will not begin the sacrificial banquet until the lad arrives."

So they sent for the boy, a ruddy youth with bright eyes, and handsome to behold.

YHWH said, "Rise and anoint this one."

Then Samuel took the horn of oil and anointed the boy in the presence of his brothers, and from that day forward the Spirit of YHWH came upon David and was with him.

Word of God, Word of Life

**Thanks be to God.**

Psalm 23

YHWH, you are my shepherd –  
I want nothing more.  
**You let me lie down in green meadows;  
you lead me beside restful waters:**  
you refresh my soul.  
You guide me to lush pastures  
for the sake of your Name.  
**Even if I'm surrounded by shadows of Death,  
I fear no danger, for you are with me.**  
**Your rod and your staff –  
they give me courage.**  
You spread a table for me  
in the presence of my enemies,  
and you anoint my head with oil –  
my cup overflows!  
**Only goodness and love will follow me  
all the days of my life,  
and I will dwell in your house, YHWH,  
for days without end.**

Gospel: John 9:1-41

The Holy Gospel according to John the 9th chapter.

As Jesus walked along, he saw someone who had been blind from birth. The disciples asked Jesus, “Rabbi, was it this individual’s sin that caused the blindness, or that of the parents?”

“Neither,” answered Jesus,

“It wasn’t because of anyone’s sin –  
not this person’s, nor the parents’.

Rather, it was to let God’s works shine forth  
in this person.

We must do the deeds of the One who sent me  
while it is still day –

for night is coming,

when no one can work.

While I am in the world,

I am the light of the world.”

With that, Jesus spat on the ground, made mud with his saliva and smeared the blind one's eyes with the mud. Then Jesus said, "go, wash in the pool of Siloam" – "Siloam" means "sent." So the person went to wash off, and came back able to see.

Neighbors and those who had been accustomed to seeing the blind beggar began to ask, "Isn't this the one who used to sit and beg?" Some said yes; others said no – the one who had been healed simply looked like the beggar.

But the individual in question said, "No – it was me."

The people then asked, "Then how were your eyes opened?"

The answer came, "The one they call Jesus made mud and smeared it on my eyes, and told me to go to Siloam and wash. When I went and washed, I was able to see." "Where is Jesus?" they asked.

The person replied, "I have no idea."

They took the one who had been born blind to the Pharisees. It had been on a Sabbath that Jesus made the mud paste and opened this one's eyes. The Pharisees asked how the individual could see. They were told, "Jesus put mud on my eyes. I washed it off, and now I can see."

This prompted some Pharisees to say, "This Jesus cannot be from God, because he doesn't keep the Sabbath." Others argued, "but how could a sinner perform signs like these?" They were sharply divided.

Then they addressed the blind person again: "Since it was your eyes he opened, what do you have to say about this Jesus?"

"He's a prophet," came the reply.

The Temple authorities refused to believe that this one had been born blind and had begun to see, until they summoned the parents. "Is this your child?" they asked, "and if so, do you attest that your child was blind at birth? How do you account for the fact that now your child can see?"

The parents answered, "We know this is our child, blind from birth. But how our child can see now, or who opened those blind eyes, we have no idea. But don't ask us – our child is old enough to speak without us!" The parents answered this way because they were afraid of the Temple authorities, who had already agreed among themselves that anyone who acknowledged Jesus as the Messiah would be put out of the synagogue. That was why they said, "Our child is of age and should be asked directly."

A second time they summoned the one who had been born blind and said, "Give glory to God instead; we know that this Jesus is a sinner."  
"I don't know whether he is a sinner or not," the individual answered. "All I know is that I used to be blind, and now I can see."  
They persisted, "Just what did he do to you? How did he open your eyes?"  
"I already told you, but you won't listen to me," came the answer. "Why do you want to hear it all over again? Don't tell me you want to become disciples of Jesus too?"  
They retorted scornfully, "You're the one who is Jesus' disciple. We're disciples of Moses. We know that God spoke to Moses, but we have no idea where this Jesus comes from."  
The other retorted, "Well, this is news! You don't know where he comes from, yet he opened my eyes! We know that God doesn't hear sinners, but that if people are devout and obey God's will, God listens to them. It is unheard of that anyone ever gave sight to a person blind from birth. If this one were not from God, he could never have done such a thing!"  
"What!" they exclaimed, "You're steeped in sin from birth, and you're giving us lectures?" With that, they threw the person out.

When Jesus heard of the expulsion, he sought out the healed one and asked, "Do you believe in the Chosen One?"  
The other answered, "Who is this One, that I may believe?"  
"You're looking at him," Jesus replied. "The Chosen One is speaking to you now."  
The healed one said, "Yes, I believe," and worshiped Jesus.  
And Jesus said, "I came into this world to execute justice – to make the sightless see and the seeing blind."  
Some of the Pharisees who were nearby heard this and said, "You're not calling us blind, are you?"  
To which Jesus replied. "If you were blind, there would be no sin in that. But since you say, 'We see,' your sin remains."

Word of God for the people of God.  
**Thanks be to God.**

Sermon

Rev. Miranda Bermes-Goller

Hymn of the Day

Tree of Life and Awesome Mystery  
*ELW 334 – verses 1, 3, + Lent 4*

## Affirmation of Faith – The Apostles Creed

*Please stand as you are able as we confess our faith in God together using the words of our common creed:*

**I believe in God, the Father almighty,  
creator of heaven and earth.**

**I believe in Jesus Christ, his only Son, our Lord.  
He was conceived by the power of the Holy Spirit  
and born of the Virgin Mary.  
He 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,  
and is seated at the right hand of the Father.  
He will come again 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.**

## Joys & Concerns

*If you have any joys, concerns, or prayer requests to share, please type them into the comment section of the livestream so that we may lift them up together as a community.*

## Prayers of the People

Sustained by God's abundant mercy, let us pray for the church, the world, and all of creation.

*A brief silence.*

*(sung by all)*

***Lord, listen to your children praying,  
Lord, send your Spirit in this place;  
Lord, listen to your children praying,  
send us love, send us power, send us grace.***

Creating God, by your word you have made all things, and you hate nothing you have made. Teach us to perceive the beauty of the breadth of your creation, from the grandest mountain range to the smallest springtime bud.

Merciful God,

**Receive our prayer.**

Eternal God, you seal us by the Holy Spirit and mark us with the cross of Christ forever in baptism. Inspire us by your love as together we strive for justice and peace in all the earth.

Merciful God,

**Receive our prayer.**

God our host, you fill us at your table with more than we could ever ask. Feed us with hunger for justice. Equip the feeding ministries of this congregation and community, especially the work of the FISH Food Bank, in our immediate and surrounding communities. Nourish us so we can nourish our neighbors

Merciful God,

**Receive our prayer.**

Shepherding God, you lead us beside still waters and restore our souls. Keep watch over those who weep; tend all who are sick and comfort those who grieve.

Merciful God,

**Receive our prayer.**

*Here other intercessions may be offered.*

*(sung by all)*

***Lord, listen to your children praying,  
Lord, send your Spirit in this place;  
Lord, listen to your children praying,  
send us love, send us power, send us grace.***



Pondering the mystery of eternal love made flesh in Christ Jesus, we commend all for whom we pray to the mercy of God.

**Amen.**

Offering

*At this time, if you are willing and able, please consider giving to Spirit of Grace Church to support our ongoing ministry.*

*Checks can be mailed to 1140 Tucker Road, Hood River OR, 97031.*

*Online Donations can be made through the link below:*

[Spirit of Grace Church](#)

Offering Prayer

God of good gifts,  
receive these and all our offerings  
as we present them in faithful service  
for the sake of your gospel.  
Prepare our hearts to receive you  
as you pour out your very presence  
through Christ Jesus, the wellspring of eternal life.

**Amen**

**The Great Thanksgiving**

**Preface - TFWS 2257-a**

It is right, and a good and joyful thing,  
always and everywhere to give thanks to you,  
Almighty God, creator of heaven and earth.  
In love you made us for yourself;  
and when we had fallen into sin and become subject to evil and death,  
your love remained steadfast.  
You bid your faithful people cleanse their hearts  
and prepare with joy for the Easter feast,  
that, renewed by your Word and Sacraments  
and fervent in prayer and works of justice and mercy,  
we may come to the fullness of grace  
that you have prepared for those who love you.

And so, with your people on earth and all the company of heaven  
we praise your name and join their unending hymn:

**Sanctus - TFWS 2257-b**

Holy are you, and blessed is your Son Jesus Christ,  
whom you sent in the fullness of time to redeem the world.  
He emptied himself, taking the form of a servant,  
being born in our likeness.  
He humbled himself and became obedient unto death,  
even death on a cross.  
He took upon himself our sin and death and offered himself,  
a perfect sacrifice for the sin of the whole world.

By the baptism of his suffering, death, and resurrection  
you gave birth to your Church,  
delivered us from slavery to sin and death,  
and made with us a new covenant by water and the Spirit.

On the night in which he gave himself up for us, he took bread,  
gave thanks to you, broke the bread, gave it to his disciples, and said:  
"Take, eat; this is my body which is given for you.  
Do this in remembrance of me."

When the supper was over he took the cup,  
gave thanks to you, gave it to his disciples, and said:  
"Drink from this, all of you; this is my blood of the new covenant,  
poured out for you and for many for the forgiveness of sins.  
Do this, as often as you drink it, in remembrance of me."

And so, in remembrance of these your mighty acts in Jesus Christ,  
we offer ourselves in praise and thanksgiving  
as a holy and living sacrifice, in union with Christ's offering for us,  
as we proclaim the mystery of faith.

#### **Memorial Acclamation - TFWS 2257-c**

Pour out your Holy Spirit on us gathered here,  
and on these gifts of bread and wine.  
Make them be for us the body and blood of Christ,  
that we may be for the world the body of Christ, redeemed by his blood.

By your Spirit make us one with Christ,  
one with each other, and one in ministry to all the world,  
until Christ comes in final victory, and we feast at his heavenly banquet.

Through your Son Jesus Christ, with the Holy Spirit in your holy Church,  
all honor and glory is yours, almighty Father (God), now and forever.

## Great Amen - TFWS 2257-d

Gathered together by the Holy Spirit, let us pray as Jesus taught us, using the language you are most familiar with - the language of your heart.

**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.**

### *Instructions for Communion*

This table of bread and wine has now been made ready.  
So come to this table,  
You who have much faith  
and you who would like to have more;  
you who have been here often  
and you who have not been here long  
you who have tried to follow Jesus,  
and you who have failed;  
Come and eat. It is Christ who invites us all to meet him here.

### *Communion Distribution*

Prayer after Communion

Embodied God,  
at your table, we have tasted the goodness of Jesus.  
With the eyes of our hearts open to your promise,  
empower us to hear the needs of our neighbors  
and touch the world with your love.  
**Amen.**

## - Sending -

Sending Song:

Amazing Grace, How Sweet the Sound  
*ELW 779 – verses 1, 2, 3*

Benediction & Dismissal

God, the giver of love,  
✠ Christ, the resurrection and the life,  
and the Holy Spirit of rebirth  
bless you in this Lenten journey.  
**Amen.**

Go in peace. The Spirit of God is alive in you!  
**Thanks be to God!**



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**Church Office Hours**

**Closed on Fridays**

**Pastor Miranda Bermes-Goller**

M-Th 9-1, or by appointment

[spiritofgracepastor@gmail.com](mailto:spiritofgracepastor@gmail.com)

**Linda Boris, Pastoral Assistant**

Tuesday 10-1

**Attributions**

Call to Worship: *written by Rev. Bermes-Goller*

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Opening Hymn:

Prayer of the Day: *written by Rev. Bermes-Goller*

Hymn of the Day:

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