

Spirit of Grace ELCA UMC



March 17th, 2024
Fifth Sunday in Lent

Prelude

Welcome & Announcements

Call to Worship

Lent calls us to journey, this and every day,
following Jesus wherever he leads us.

**Lent calls us to journey:
to the place where God covenants with us,
to receive the new names we are given.**

Lent calls us to worship together,
to tell future generations the good news.

**Lent calls us to practice justice,
to bring God's hope to all people.**

Lent calls us to faithful living,
to trust the One who gives us life.

**Lent calls each of us to take up our cross,
to trust the One who bears it with us.**

Lent calls us to journey with God.

**Let us worship God, who walks with us,
this and every day.**

Confession & Forgiveness

Blessed be the holy Trinity, † one God,
who writes the law on our hearts,
who draws all people together through Jesus.

Amen.

Held in God's mercy, let us confess our sin
in the presence of God and of one another.
Silence is kept for reflection.

Holy God,
**we confess that we are caught in snares of sin
and cannot break free.
We hoard resources while our neighbors
are hungry and cold.
We speak in ways that silence others.
We are silent when we should speak up.
We keep score in our hearts.
We let hurts grow into hatred.
For all these things and for sins only you know,
forgive us, Lord.**

Amen.

Beloved Siblings in Christ, here is a flood of grace:
Out of love for the whole world,
God draws near to us,
breaks every snare of sin,
washes away our wrongs,
and restores the promise of life through † Jesus Christ.

Amen.

Opening Hymn

My Song is Love Unknown
TFWS 2083 – verses 1, 2, 5

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.

Lord, we know Easter is coming soon and while we anxiously wait to celebrate your triumphant victory over sin and death, there are still difficult days between now and then. And try as we might, we cannot comprehend love and mercy so great as this. There is nothing perfect about us, yet you beckon us with hands that soon will be scarred by betrayal, greed, selfishness, pettiness, pride, and apathy. You see us and our imperfections with compassionate and patient eyes as we struggle to rid our lives of all the worldly things that distort, distract, and entangle us. As the cross looms ahead, our eyes and our focus are on you and you alone for our redemption and salvation.

Amen.

Scripture Acclamation

*Words of life, words of hope
give us strength, help us cope.
In this world where e'er we roam,
ancient words will guide us home.*

*Ancient words, ever true
changing me and changing you.
We have come with open hearts.
O let the ancient words impart.*

First Reading: Jeremiah 31:31-34

Behold, the days are coming, says YHWH, when I will establish a new covenant with the house of Israel and the house of Judah. It will not be like the covenant I made with their ancestors when I took them by the hand to bring them up out of the land of Egypt – a covenant they broke, though I was their spouse, says YHWH. But this is the covenant I will make with the house of Israel after those days, says YHWH: I will put my Law in their minds and on their hearts. I will be their God, and they will be my people.

“No longer will the need to teach one another or remind one another to listen to YHWH. All of them, high and low alike, will listen to me, says YHWH, for I will forgive their misdeeds and will remember their sins no more.”

Word of God, Word of Life

Thanks be to God.

Psalm 51 (from Nan C. Merrill's *Psalms for Praying*)

Have mercy on me, O Gracious One,
according to your steadfast love;
**According to your abundant kindness
forgive me where my thoughts and deeds have hurt others.**
Lead me in the paths of justice,
guide my steps on paths of peace!
**Teach me, that I may know my weaknesses,
the shortcomings that bind me,
the unloving ways that separate me,
that keep me from recognizing your Life in me;**
For, I keep company with fear,
and dwell in the house of ignorance.
**Yet, I was brought forth in love,
and love is my birthright.**

You have placed your truth in the inner being;
therefore, teach me the wisdom of the heart.
**Forgive all that binds me in fear, that I might radiate love;
cleans me that your light might shine in me.**
Fill me with gladness;
help me transform my weakness into strength.
**Look not on my past mistakes,
but on the aspirations of my heart.**

Create in my a clean heart, O Gracious One,
and put a new and right spirit within me.
**Enfold me in the arms of Love,
and fill me with your Holy Spirit.**
Restore in me the joy of your saving grace,
and encourage me with a new spirit.

**Then I will teach others your ways,
and prisoners of fear will return to You.**
Deliver me from the additions of society, O Healer of Souls,
keep me from temptation, that I may tell of your justice and mercy.

O Gracious One, open my lips and my mouth shall sing forth your praise.
For You do not want sacrifice;
You delight in our friendship with You.
**A sacrifice most appropriate is a humble spirit;
a repentant and contrite heart;**
O Merciful One, receive our gratitude and love.

**Let the nations turn from war,
and encourage one another as good neighbors.
O Blessed and Compassionate Friend,
melt our hearts of stone,
break through the fears that lead us into darkness,
and guide our steps toward the way of peace.**

Gospel Reading: John 12:20-33

The Holy Gospel according to John the 12th chapter:

Among those who had come up to worship at the Passover Festival were some Greeks. They approached Philip, who was from Bethsaida in Galilee, and put forth this request: "Please, we would like to see Jesus." Philip went to tell Andrew, and together the two went to tell Jesus.

Jesus replied,

 "Now, the hour has come
 for the Chosen One to be glorified.
 The truth of the matter is,
 unless a grain of wheat falls on the ground and dies,
 it remains only a single grain;
 but if it dies,
 it yields a rich harvest.
 If you love your life
 you'll lose it;
 if you hate your life in this world
 you'll keep it for eternal life.
 Anyone who wants to work for me
 must follow in my footsteps,
 and wherever I am,
 my worker will be there too.
 Anyone who works for me
 will be honored by Abba God.
 Now my soul is troubled.
 What will I say:
 'Abba, save me from this hour?'
 But it was for this very reason
 that I have come to this hour.
 Abba, glorify your name!"

A voice came from heaven: "I have glorified it, and I will glorify it again."

The crowds that stood nearby heard this and said it was a clap of thunder; others said, "It was an angel speaking."

Jesus answered, "It was not for my sake that this voice came, but for yours.

"Sentence is now being passed on this world;
now the ruler of this world will be overthrown.

And when I am lifted up from this earth,
I will draw all people to myself."

By these words, Jesus indicated the kind of death he would die.

Word of God, for the People of God.

Thanks be to God.

Sermon

Rev. Miranda Bermes-Goller

Hymn of the Day

Where He Leads Me
UMH 338 – verses 1-3

Affirmation of Faith: A New Creed

Please stand as you are able as we confess our faith in God together:

We are not alone

we live in God's world.

We believe in God:

who has created and is creating,

who has come in Jesus,

the Word made flesh,

to reconcile and make new,

who works in us and others

by the Spirit.

We trust in God.

We are called to be the Church:

to celebrate God's presence,

to live with respect in Creation,

to love and serve others,

to seek justice and resist evil,

to proclaim Jesus, crucified and risen,

our redeemer and our hope.

In life, in death, in life beyond death,

God is with us.

We are not alone.

Thanks be to God. 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

Trusting in God's promise to reconcile all things, let us pray for the church, the well-being of creation, and a world in need.

A brief silence.

God of the covenant, through the church you draw us into community. We give thanks for the means of grace around which we gather. Inspire writers, musicians, and artists whose creative gifts adorn our worship.

God of grace,

Receive our prayer.

God of all that exists, you lavish the earth with extravagant beauty. Preserve the rich and complex diversity of living things. Support local, national, and international efforts to protect the environment for future generations.

God of grace,

Receive our prayer.

God of the nations, you desire peace and plenty for all people. Defend those who challenge oppression and expose corruption. Support advocates for human rights, social justice, and the welfare of children.

We especially hold in our hearts all advocates, protestors, and relief workers who are supporting and protecting the victims of Genocide in Palestine. Heal the hurt and harm, console the bereaved and afflicted, protect the innocent and helpless, and deliver all who remain in peril. Lead us in the way of solidarity with the oppressed, and let us never remain silent in situations of injustice.

God of grace,

Receive our prayer.

God of every time and place, you are with us. Support ministries of prayer and presence in this congregation. Move us to reach out to any who are homebound, lonely, grieving, in treatment, or ill.

God of grace,

Receive our prayer.

Here other intercessions may be offered.

Since we have such great hope in your promises, O God, we lift these and all of our prayers to you in confidence and faith; through Jesus Christ our Savior. **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](#)

Offertory Prayer

Jesus, you are the bread of life
and the host of this meal.
Bless these gifts that we have gathered
that all people may know your goodness.
Feed us not only with this holy food
but with hunger for justice and peace.
We pray this in your name.
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 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

Invitation to the Table

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

Generous God,
at this table we have tasted your immeasurable grace.
As grains of wheat are gathered into one bread,
now make us one loaf to feed the world;
in the name of Jesus, the Bread of life.
Amen.

Sending Song:

Canto de Esperanza (Song of Hope)
TFWS 2186, sung twice through

Blessing

Beloved Siblings in Christ,
we are God's own people,
holy, washed, renewed.
God bless you and keep you,
shower you with mercy,
fill you with courage,
and ☩ give you peace.
Amen.

Dismissal

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



1140 Tucker Rd. Hood River, OR 97031

541-386-3993

www.hoodriverchurch.org

Church Office Hours

Closed on Fridays

Pastor Miranda Bermes-Goller

M-Th 9-1, or by appointment

spiritofgracepastor@gmail.com

Linda Boris, Pastoral Assistant

Tuesday 10-1

Attributions

Call to Worship: written by Thom Shuman, and posted on Lectionary Liturgies.
<http://lectionaryliturgies.blogspot.ca/>

Prayer of the Day: Written by Cynthia A. Bond Hopson, The Africana Worship Book, Year B (Nashville: Discipleship Resources, 2007), 153.

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