



Stone Mountain First United Methodist Church

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Gathered in Grace February Bible Series Week 2—Compassion February 11, 2026

Opening Prayer

Merciful and compassionate God,
You see us fully and love us completely. As we gather in this season of Epiphany, reveal to us the depth of Your compassion and shape our hearts to reflect it. Soften what has become hardened. Stir what has grown indifferent. Teach us to love as Christ loves—with courage, mercy, and grace. Prepare us for the journey toward Lent, that we may walk it with tender and transformed hearts. In Jesus' name we pray. Amen.

Moving toward Lent

As we move toward Lent, this season becomes an invitation. Lent is a time of self-examination, repentance, and spiritual renewal. The weeks leading up to it encourage us to reflect on how Christ has been revealed to us—and how we are called to reflect Christ in the world. Compassion is central to that calling.

Before we enter the wilderness of Lent, we ask:
Where has my heart grown tired?
Where has compassion faded into judgment or indifference?
How is God inviting me to love more deeply?

Today's Theme: Healing and the Many Ways God Restores

Compassion is more than kindness. The word itself suggests “to suffer with.” In Scripture, compassion is active, embodied love. It moves beyond feeling to faithful action.

Biblical compassion includes:

- **God's mercy toward human weakness**
- **Jesus' tenderness toward the marginalized**
- **Forgiveness instead of condemnation**
- **Practical care for those in need**
- **A transformed heart that mirrors God's character**

Compassion is not passive. It sees pain and responds. It listens deeply. It interrupts routine. It costs something. As we prepare for Lent, compassion becomes both a mirror and a measure: Are our hearts aligned with the heart of Christ?

Scriptures That Speak of Healing (NRSV)

- **Psalm 103:8**
“The Lord is merciful and gracious, slow to anger and abounding in steadfast love.”
→ Compassion begins with who God is.
- **Lamentations 3:22–23**
“The steadfast love of the Lord never ceases, his mercies never come to an end; they are new every morning.”
→ God’s compassion is constant and renewing.
- **Matthew 9:36**
“When he saw the crowds, he had compassion for them, because they were harassed and helpless, like sheep without a shepherd.”
→ Jesus sees deeply and responds with care.
- **Luke 10:33 (The Good Samaritan)**
“But a Samaritan while traveling came near him; and when he saw him, he was moved with pity.”
→ Compassion crosses boundaries and takes action.
- **Colossians 3:12**
“As God’s chosen ones, holy and beloved, clothe yourselves with compassion, kindness, humility, meekness, and patience.”
→ Compassion is something we intentionally “put on.”
- **Hosea 11:8**
“My heart recoils within me; my compassion grows warm and tender.”
→ God’s compassion is emotional, relational, and restorative.

Faith-Building Discussion Questions

1. When have you most clearly experienced God’s compassion in your life?
2. What is the difference between feeling sorry for someone and showing compassion?
3. In what areas of your life might compassion need to grow—at home, at church, in the community?
4. What barriers (fear, exhaustion, bias, busyness) make compassion difficult?
5. How might practicing compassion prepare your heart for the season of Lent?

Closing Prayer

Compassionate God,
Thank You for loving us with a steadfast and tender love. As we approach Lent, refine our hearts. Remove indifference. Replace judgment with mercy. Teach us to suffer with others, to serve with humility, and to love without condition. May our lives reveal Christ’s compassion to a world in need. In the name of Jesus, who sees, who cares, and who saves, we pray. Amen.