



Venice  
UNITED CHURCH  
OF CHRIST  
God is still speaking,

*Turn Around  
and See God*

*...How Stories help save us*

*Listen and See*

*Listen and See*

**Fourth Sunday in Lent  
March 15, 2026**

**Rev. Barbara Dickason, BCC**

*United in Christ's love, a just world for all.*

# Fourth Sunday in Lent

March 15, 2026

Singing Prelude

*Open the Eyes of My Heart*

Smith

Open the eyes of my heart, Lord, open the eyes of my heart,  
I want to see you, I want to see you.

Open the eyes of my heart, Lord, open the eyes of my heart,  
I want to see you, I want to see you.

## Open the Eyes of My Heart

Michael Smith

Refrain E2 Bsus/D#

O-pen the eyes of my heart, Lord, o-pen the eyes of my heart,

I want to see you, I want to see you;

see you.

CCLI License #11176734

## **Welcome and Announcements**

Good morning, Venice United Church of Christ.

Grace and Peace to you in the name of Jesus who welcomes each and every one of us into this sacred space. I am Pastor Barb, and Ellen Schleicher will be our liturgist. Barbara Allaire, Jeff Cook, Harold Steindam, Sara Stafford, Lauri Sanford, Patty Fjetland, Phillip Munsey, Jane Chittick, Gary Leidheiser, Mer Zovko, and Paul Chebator will be assisting with our reading today. As always, many thanks to all our staff and volunteers who make sharing this time together possible.

Beautifying our sanctuary today, we have flowers given by ...

For those of us who are worshipping online, whether today or some point in the future, I invite you to like us, share us, and let your presence be known in the comments so that we can keep each other in prayer.

For those of us here in this space of stained glass and compassionate friendship, if you have a prayer request or a joy to share, please make sure that you let the office know, as I want to make sure that we can lift up everyone's prayers as we worship.

For some of you, this is your first time joining us. I hope that you have been warmly greeted and have notated your presence either at our welcome table or through the QR codes found in the pews. We are excited to get to know you. We also have an exciting new gift for you, these gorgeous blue stainless steel water bottles.

For in this holy, wonderful, ordinary space,  
as Venice United Church of Christ,  
we empower and invite everyone  
to join us in this divine place  
that we share on line and in person.

For when we gather, everyone is invited,  
no matter who you are  
or where you are on life's journey,  
and no one is turned away.

There are a few special announcements this morning.

It is time to purchase the Peace Lilies to beautify our sanctuary for Easter. Plants may be in Memory, Honor, or Celebration of someone or something. Forms are in your bulletin today, in the Narthex, and in Naar Hall. There will also be a link to an order form in Next Friday's Connect. *(There will be a form on the pulpit for you to use as a prop!)*

There are also many ways to be a part of the work of the church this week.

Whether virtual or here in Venice, On Monday and Wednesday there are two opportunities to explore our ancient texts and talk about how they apply to today's world and our lives. On Tuesday, we are planning to wear green and celebrate St Patrick's Day with an 11:30 soup luncheon here at the church.

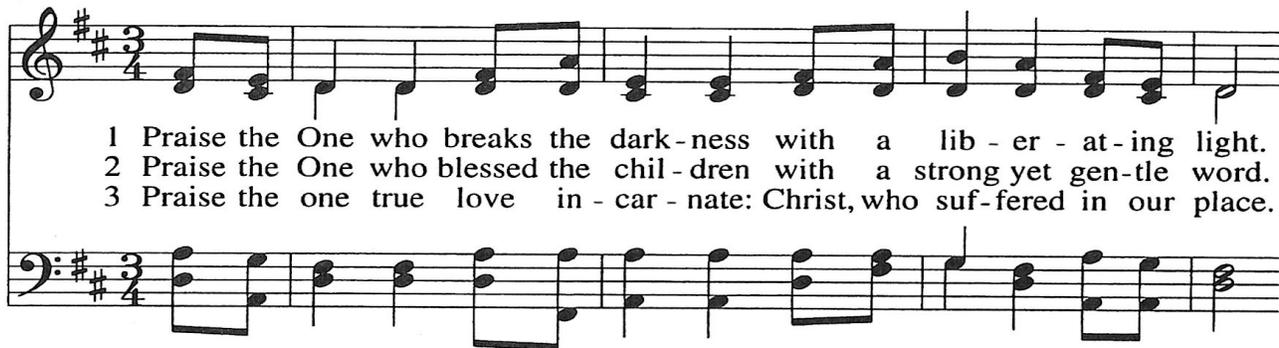
On Friday, the men are meeting at Panera and everyone is invited to a book discussion of *The Measure* by Nikki Erlick — 1:00 in the Parlor. Sign ups and more information are available at the information table, in the connect, and through the app.

There is also still time to donate to Immokalee. There are envelopes in the pews, and our website's giving page is open for contributions to both Immokalee and all of our various ministries year-round.

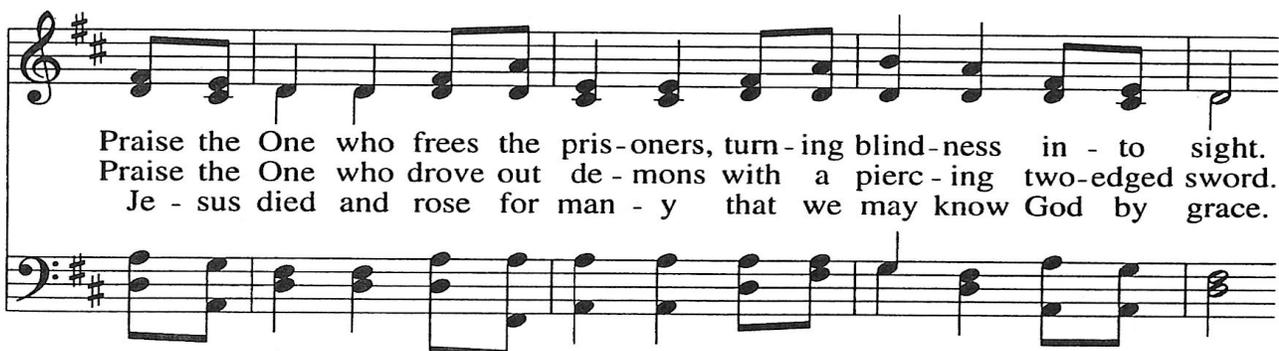
And now, we come to worship our extravagantly generous, steadfastly loving God. May our worship align us again with God's holy purpose — to love one another as Christ loves us.

So Come, beautifully authentic, humbly transforming, faithfully Good-news following body of Christ, and let us Worship God!

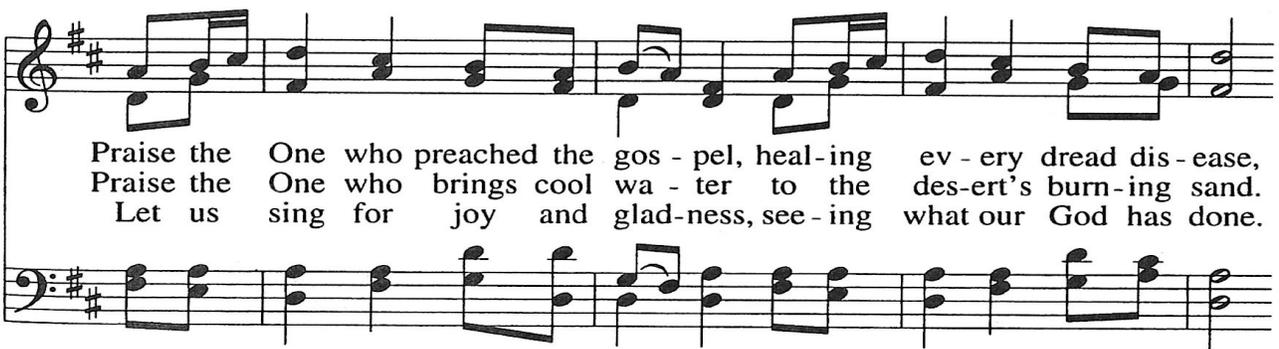
# Praise the One Who Breaks the Darkness



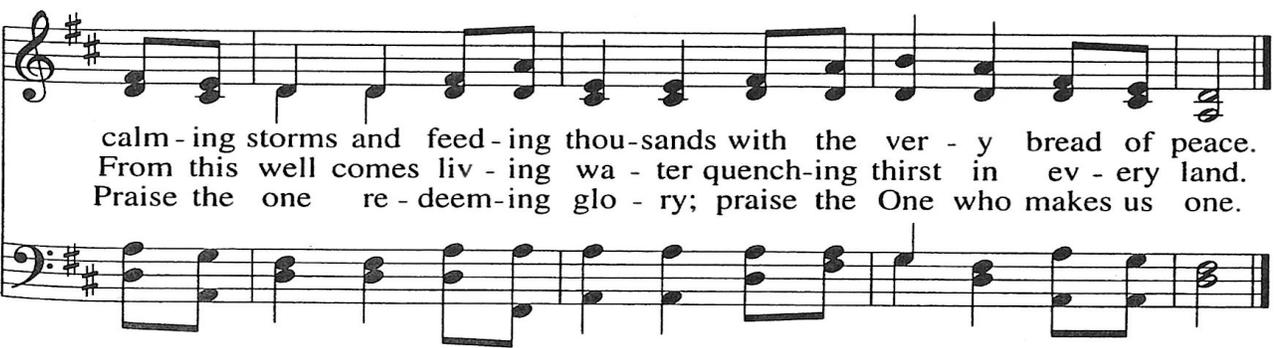
1 Praise the One who breaks the dark-ness with a lib - er - at - ing light.  
2 Praise the One who blessed the chil - dren with a strong yet gen - tle word.  
3 Praise the one true love in - car - nate: Christ, who suf - fered in our place.



Praise the One who frees the pris - oners, turn - ing blind - ness in - to sight.  
Praise the One who drove out de - mons with a pierc - ing two - edged sword.  
Je - sus died and rose for man - y that we may know God by grace.



Praise the One who preached the gos - pel, heal - ing ev - ery dread dis - ease,  
Praise the One who brings cool wa - ter to the des - ert's burn - ing sand.  
Let us sing for joy and glad - ness, see - ing what our God has done.



calm - ing storms and feed - ing thou - sands with the ver - y bread of peace.  
From this well comes liv - ing wa - ter quench - ing thirst in ev - ery land.  
Praise the one re - deem - ing glo - ry; praise the One who makes us one.

WORDS: Rusty Edwards (1955- )  
MUSIC: John Wyeth's *Repository of Sacred Music*, 1813  
Words © 1987 Hope Publishing Company

NETTLETON  
8.7.8.7.D.

## We Approach God's Presence

### **Bringing in the Light of Christ**

*Be Thou My Vision*

Trad. Irish Melody

### **Introit**

*40 Days in the Desert*

Peters

Bella Handbell Choir

### **Responsive Call to Worship**

In a world quick to judge and slow to listen, God invites us to pause.

**We come to listen for God's voice among us.**

In a world where we think we already know the story,

Christ invites us to hear it again.

**We come with open minds and humble hearts.**

Sight does not come all at once;

it grows through questions, stories, and the courage to listen.

**Turn us around.**

**Teach us to listen with curiosity and see with compassion.**

Come, people of God—Come and see God. Here with us. Standing among us. All this time.

**Turn us around again.**

**We come to worship the One who opens our ears  
and teaches our hearts to see.**

**\*Hymn**    *Praise the One Who Breaks the Darkness*    Edwards/Wyeth

## **\*Prayer for Transformation and New Life**

Let us pray:

God of light and truth,

you know how easily we mistake certainty for wisdom.

We assume we understand the world before we have truly listened.

We decide who is right and who is wrong  
before we have heard the whole story.

Like the crowds in the gospel story,

we sometimes argue about what we think we see  
while missing the person standing right in front of us.

**Turn us around, Holy One.**

Teach us the humility of listening.

Teach us the patience to sit with questions  
instead of rushing toward judgment.

Teach us to hear the testimonies of others  
with curiosity rather than suspicion.

**Open our eyes to the ways you are already at work  
in lives different from our own.**

**And as we listen—  
to our neighbors,  
to the wounded,  
to the stranger—**

**Open our hearts to the deeper sight  
that comes only from your grace. Amen**

## **\*Words of Grace**

Hear the Good News:

God is not finished opening our eyes.

God is not finished writing our stories.

In Christ, we are forgiven, renewed, and invited to see again.

**Thanks be to God. Amen.**

**\*Response**

*Amazing Grace*

Newton/Walker

**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.**

## We Encounter God in the Word

### **Contemporary Lesson<sup>1</sup>** *Between the Listening and the Telling* Mark Yaconelli

Hear these words of contemplation:

“Storytelling is the most intimate form of communication. It’s a way of inviting the listener to enter into what we have known, what we have suffered, what we have overcome. When we listen well to another’s story, it blooms within the body, creating an intimate connection between teller and listener — heart races, eyes well with tears, the belly shakes with laughter. And when we share something we have lived, a joy or suffering from our own lives, the listener is invited into our very being: to see what we have seen, hear what we have heard, touch and feel what we have known. In this way, story telling is a sacred transaction. The stories of our lives are an offering. A kind of confession, an intimate revelation. And when they are received, we find the story has become a tether, binding us to one another.”

God is Still Speaking. **Thanks be to God!**

**Anthem**

*Gentle Shepherd*

Gaither

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<sup>1</sup> Mark Yaconelli. *Between the Listening and the Telling: How Stories Can Save Us*. Broadleaf Books: Minneapolis, MN, 2022. Pp 15-16

**Narrator**                      **Pharisee 1****Disciples**                      **Pharisee 2****Jesus**                              **Parents****Neighbor 1****Neighbor 2****Neighbor 3**

**Narrator:** <sup>1-2</sup> As he went along, Jesus saw a man blind from birth.

**Disciples:** “Rabbi, who sinned, this man or his parents, that he was born blind?”

**Jesus:** <sup>3-5</sup> “Neither this man nor his parents sinned, but this happened so that the works of God might be displayed in him. As long as it is day, we must do the works of God who sent me. Night is coming, when no one can work. While I am in the world, I am the light of the world.”

**Narrator:** <sup>6</sup> After saying this, he spit on the ground, made some mud with the saliva, and put it on the man’s eyes.

**Jesus:** <sup>7</sup> “Go, wash in the Pool of Siloam”

**Narrator:** [The word ‘Siloam’ means “Sent”]. So the man went and washed, and came home seeing. His neighbors were surprised, for they had often seen him begging.

**Neighbor 1:** <sup>8</sup> “Isn’t this the same man who used to sit and beg?”

**Neighbor 2:** <sup>9</sup> (ad lib in character) Yes, most definitely.

**Neighbor 3:** “No, he only looks like him.”

**Man:** “I am the man.”

**Neighbors:** <sup>10</sup> “How then were your eyes opened?”

**Man:** <sup>11</sup> “The man they call Jesus made some mud and put it on my eyes. He told me to go to Siloam and wash. So I went and washed, and then I could see.”

**Neighbors:** <sup>12</sup> “Where is this man?”

**Man:** “I don’t know,” he said.

**Narrator:** <sup>13-15</sup> They brought to the Pharisees the man who had been blind. Now the day on which Jesus had made the mud and opened the man’s eyes was a Sabbath. Therefore the Pharisees also asked him how he had received his sight.

**Man:** “He put mud on my eyes, and I washed, and now I see.”

**Pharisee 1:** <sup>16</sup> “This man is not from God, for he does not keep the Sabbath.”

**Pharisee 2:** “How can a sinner perform such signs?”

**Narrator:** So the Pharisees were divided.

**Pharisees:** <sup>17</sup> “What have you to say about him? It was your eyes he opened.”

**Man:** “He is a prophet.”

**Narrator:** <sup>18</sup> They still did not believe that he had been blind and had received his sight until they sent for the man’s

parents.

**Pharisee 1:** <sup>19</sup> “Is this your son?”

**Pharisee 2:** “Is this the one you say was born blind?  
How is it that now he can see?”

**Parents:** <sup>20-21</sup> “We know he is our son, and we know he was born blind. But how he can see now, or who opened his eyes, we don’t know. Ask him. He is of age; he will speak for himself.”

**Narrator:** <sup>22-24</sup> His parents said this because they were afraid of the Jewish leaders, who already had decided that anyone who acknowledged that Jesus was the Messiah would be put out of the synagogue. That was why his parents said, “He is of age; ask him.”

After the Pharisees spoke with the man’s parents, they summoned him a second time.

**Pharisee 2:** “Give glory to God by telling the truth,”

**Pharisee 1:** “We know this man is a sinner.”

**Man:** <sup>25</sup> “Whether he is a sinner or not, I don’t know. One thing I do know. I was blind but now I see!”

**Pharisees:** <sup>26</sup> “What did he do to you?  
How did he open your eyes?”

**Man:** <sup>27</sup> “I have told you already and you did not listen. Why do you want to hear it again?  
Do you want to become his disciples too?”

The Word of God. **Thanks be to God!**

Let us pray:

For the wisdom revealed through story,  
for the courage to listen deeply,  
and for the Spirit who opens our eyes to the Word of God,  
we give you thanks and praise.

Amen.

It was early in the morning. The subway car was relatively quiet. Some people were reading newspapers. Others were scrolling on their phones or staring out the windows.

At one stop, a father stepped onto the train with his children. Almost immediately the atmosphere changed. The children were loud and restless, running up and down the aisle, grabbing the poles and bumping into passengers. What made it worse was that the father sat silently staring blankly ahead, seemingly unaware of the chaos.

Finally a passenger spoke up. “Sir, your children are disturbing everyone. Could you please do something?”

The father awareness slowly returned. “I guess I should,” he said quietly. “We just came from the hospital. Their mother died about an hour ago. I don’t know what to do. I guess they don’t either.”

In that moment, everything changed. The children were still restless. The train was still crowded. But now the passengers saw something different. They no longer saw careless parenting. They saw grief. And compassion began to replace irritation.

Nothing about the situation had changed. But the story had changed, deepening how people saw the moment.

And that movement — from assumption to understanding — sits at the heart of the story we just heard from John.

—

Jesus and his disciples encounter a man who born blind. And immediately the disciples begin trying to explain what they see.

“Rabbi,” they ask, “who sinned, this man or his parents, that he was born blind?”

In other words, they are trying to place the man’s life inside a story they already understand. Someone must be at fault. Someone must be responsible. Suffering, in their worldview, always had a cause.

But Jesus interrupts that narrative. “Neither this man nor his parents sinned,” Jesus said.

And instead of explaining the man’s condition, Jesus, the light sent by God to illuminate the world, choose to restore light to the man’s sight. Jesus knelt down. He spit in the dirt, mixing it through until he made a mud sticky enough to put on the man’s eyes. Then Jesus told him to ‘Go, and wash in the pool of Siloam’.

The man went. He washed, and he came back able to see.

Yes, for the first time in his life — he could see.

But that act of healing —the miracle that restored the man’s sight —is just the beginning of today’s story.

For the neighbors begin asking questions.

“Isn’t this the man who used to sit and beg?”

Some said yes. Others insisted it only looked like him. They argued back and forth without stopping to listen as the man kept repeating the simple truth: “I am he.”

Soon, the argument grew big and loud enough that the neighbors took the man to the Pharisees to see if their religious leaders could sort it out. And the questioning began again — same questions, just different people.

“How were your eyes opened?”

So the man repeated himself again, telling exactly what happened.

“A man named Jesus put mud on my eyes. I washed, and now I see.”

But the Pharisees were not satisfied. They kept questioning him. Again. And again. And as they did, they became divided. Yet, the man’s understanding only deepened. He grew in courage and clarity with each retelling.

“He is a prophet,” the man said.

His neighbors doubted him. The Pharisees tried to discredit him. His own parents refused to answer for him, distancing themselves for fear they would be cast out of their community. Yet, the more resistance he encountered, the more clearly the man spoke.

And while the religious leaders debated whether Jesus could possibly be from God, at the center of all those conversations stood one man simply telling his story — his simple testimony becoming the most powerful voice in the room.

He may not have an opinion on the Pharisee’s theology, but he knows what he sees.

“I was blind, but now I see.”

By the end of the story he has recognized something even greater than what his eyes could see. His physical sight restored, his spiritual acuity had also grown: He turns around, and sees Jesus, the Word of God; thus proclaiming, “I believe”.

Now, researchers at the *Greater Good Science Institute* have spent years studying how listening shapes human relationships. One of their findings is that **deep listening can transform the emotional climate of a conversation**. When people feel heard, their defensiveness decreases. Their empathy increases. Their openness to consider new perspectives grows.<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>2</sup> Greater Good Listening link.

Listening creates space for understanding.

But in John's story, both the man's neighbors and the Pharisees struggle to listen. They cling to cultural structures and interpretations of law that help them feel secure — even when those structures prevent them from Listening, Turning, and Seeing God. The man's parents struggle, too. They do not deny their son's healing, but they are afraid to say too much.

So, while some listened with curiosity.

More listened with doubt.

And many refuse to listen at all.

And the Pharisees? Well, they are not really interested in deepening their understanding. Instead, they defend their certainty. For they face a difficult dilemma. If the man's story is true, then something extraordinary has happened. But, accepting that possibility would challenge their assumptions about who God is and how God works. And that they would not allow.

After all, the man was healed on a Sabbath. When asked, the man told them: Jesus spat into the dirt, and worked his saliva through that dirt until it made mud. And for the Pharisees, the keepers of the laws, that was enough. Jesus may not have been doing the work of kneading dough, but the process that made the mud was the same. The verdict was clear. Jesus was working on the Sabbath, a direct violation of the law.

So instead of exploring the possibility that God might be doing something new, they focus on discrediting the witness.

They question the man.

They question his parents.

And they decide that by performing the work of making mud on the Sabbath, Jesus is a sinner. Their certainty prevents them from seeing the glory of God revealed by the man standing right in front of them.

Meanwhile, the man who was healed grows increasingly bold.

At first he simply answers questions.

But as the interrogation continues, his responses become sharper.

“Here is an astonishing thing,” he says to the Pharisees. “You do not know where Jesus comes from, yet he opened my eyes.”  
In other words: How can you miss the obvious?

Still they press him: What did he do to you? How did he open your eyes?”

And boldly, with his physical and spiritual vision made whole, the man replies: “I have told you already and you did not listen. Why do you want to hear it again? Do you want to become his disciples too?”

Remarkable. A man who once sat by the roadside begging is now challenging the most powerful religious authorities in his community.

What gives him that courage? The answer is simple.

His vision restored, he opened his eyes and saw God.

And when we take the time to listen closely to the good news in John's story, we, too begin to discover something important.

The miracle in this story is not only about the restoration of sight. The deeper miracle is the transformation of understanding. A man, once invisible to his community, becomes a clear witness to God's presence among us. A voice, once ignored, is courageously raised to reveal the Word made flesh who dwells among us. And through his testimony, everyone around him is invited to reconsider the story they have been living inside.

I wonder if this is what Mark Yaconelli is getting at when he calls storytelling a sacred transaction. After all, each of us have a story or two, and some of us have accumulated more: stories of illness and recovery, stories of grief and resilience, stories of doubt, stories of transformation..

Some of our stories are shared openly. Others remain hidden. But each one has the potential to change how we see one another. And when we take the time to listen — to truly listen — we begin to discover the sacred depth of the lives around us. For when stories are shared and received with care, something holy happens between people.

We become connected.

Our lives begin to intertwine.

And we begin to see the world — and one another — in new ways.

Now, in both of these stories this morning, observers have made an assumption about what they see, and are telling the story out of their own experience. Those on the subway car choose a story of irritation and blame. The neighbors and Pharisees choose to tell a story of fear, confusion, and control. But telling others' stories in these ways are usually just a prelude to another type of story: one of judgement, persecution, and exclusion.

And in this parable, Jesus is inviting us to listen in a way that invites compassion and gives glory to God. For when we stop to listen and allow another's story to challenge our assumptions, we begin becoming the type of disciples and community that Christ is inviting us to be.

A place where people can speak honestly about their lives.

A place where we resist the temptation to reduce people to labels or assumptions.

A place of welcome.

When the church becomes that kind of community, something beautiful happens.

Not only are we able to receive the offer of healing and words of instruction to wash and be whole, as our eyes open to the wonder of Christ with us, we also begin to see each other as Jesus sees us.

So, as we again ponder this week what it might mean for us to Turn again, and See God, our focus on reframing invites us to practice three things.

First, we can practice deep listening. When someone begins sharing their story, pause. Slow down our rush to fit someone else into our own story. Like the disciples, we often rush to explain what we see. But Jesus reminds us that the world is more complex — and more grace-filled, than our assumptions allow. So, Turn again. Give them and their story your full attention. Allow their experience to unfold without rushing to respond. And as we listen more deeply, remember that each person we encounter carries a story we cannot see at first glance. And sometimes the act of listening itself becomes an act of healing.

Second, honor and share your own stories. Your experiences of loss, healing, faith, and doubt may be exactly what someone else needs to hear. The healed man’s testimony is simply: “I was blind, and now I see.” But that simple testimony carried extraordinary power. Because stories of transformation help others imagine new possibilities for their own lives.

Third, remain open to seeing God in unexpected places. Joy often appears where we least expect it. At the end of John’s story, the man who once lived in darkness stands in front of the light of the World, the light in his own eyes now keen.

Yes, he has lost the approval of powerful people. And yes, he has been kicked out of his place of worship. But he has gained something far greater.

He can see.

And more importantly, he has been seen.

Seen by Jesus.

Seen by God.

Seen as a human being whose life matters. And in seeing and been seen, the man whose miraculous healing revealed the presence of God, worships.

That is what happens when stories are told and heard.

They open our eyes. They connect our lives. They help us recognize the quiet presence of God already moving among us.

So this week, wherever you go—whether on a walk through the neighborhood, a trip to a grocery store, at a kitchen table, or in yet another waiting room —stop, and listen.

Listen carefully to the stories around you.

Because somewhere in those stories, God may be inviting you to turn around, to listen.... ...and finally see. Amen.

## We Respond to God's Grace

### Congregational Prayers

### Joys

**Harold Steindam preached at Village on the Isle (VOTI) this week. Our Bella Handbell Choir members also played at VOTI and were enthusiastically received.**

What a wonderful world with God in it. English butter toffee, sisters, our volunteers, healthy family, being here, for moms, this church, phone calls with loved ones, friends, lovely holidays, beautiful weather, getting up each morning, grateful to learn about life from my grandma, fellowship, thankful that the Lord listens to prayers whatever they might be, waking up to spouses and loved ones, for heartfelt messages of joy, belief in God, for everyone gathered in our sacred space this morning

Music, kindness, our volunteers who do so much, my healthy family, to be alive, those who light up our lives, love, my belief in God, wonderful friends, visiting family far away and the joy of coming home, grateful for learning to live a life of joy, coffee and baked goods, playing golf, a place to live, good health, everyone who is here today, the awe of each new day.

Sunshine, rain, quiet still mornings, family, healthy family, wonderful friends, church friends, fog turned to sunshine, friends and neighbors who are like family, sisters, being able to come to church, my dog, being alive, beautiful weather, lovely holiday, getting up in the morning, health, spouse, place to live, the love between spouses and soulmates, grapes and fellowship, belief in God, being able to express ourselves to God, a van that works, love, everything, the beauty of the palms, sunrise, banyan trees, diversity of the congregation, God's new morning painting, the

awe of the moon shining through the clouds and pointing to the star, music, kindness, learning to walk backwards, sunshine through the window and a peaceful household

Each beautiful new day, slow mornings, gorgeous sunsets, that we are able to celebrate our joys — for celebrating joy reminds us that we share the same source of our joy, the depth of human creativity and spirit, skilled medical professionals, friendship, safe travels, gathering together to study God’s word, rebirth and recreation in communities that empower and hold us as we ask tough questions of God and each other, those who pitch in and help out, birthdays, anniversaries, milestones...

When we pray for our loved ones, we have a duty of care to not spread their business without explicit permission. Instead, as we pray, we hold our loved ones close to our heart and lift them up to God, trusting that the Spirit intercedes in all of our prayers, especially those too deep for words.

**Intercessions:**

|   |                                      |           |       |
|---|--------------------------------------|-----------|-------|
| Laura   | Ryan                                 | Sally     |       |
| Eric (Debbie)   | Serenity                             |           |       |
| Nicole, and the friends and family of Spencer                 |                                      |           |       |
| Bob   | Joyce                                | Noah      | Helen |
| Gail  | Bob                                  | Jim       |       |
| Rosetta   | FA (joy?)                            | Ami       |       |
| Nancy   | Sheree                               | Pam       |       |
| Tiff’s family   | Stacy                                |           |       |
| The family and friends of Carol                               |                                      | Barbara T |       |
| (John and) Barb   | The family and friends of Kristopher |           |       |
| Rev. Ryan’s her family  | Mark                                 | Rick      |       |
| Jimmy, Christine, Gay, Vicki, Pam, Jack, Clark, Pastor Attila |                                      |           |       |

**We pray for those people who have lost their jobs and their means of supporting their families, ... pets that need homes**  
**We pray for everyone to be healthy,**  
**Everyone impacted by the decisions of governments that choose violence and war instead of diplomacy;** all essential workers and all frontline healthcare workers; everyone impacted by **recent** hurricanes, fires, **tornadoes**, and flooding;  
and

The staff and participants of Word Made Flesh in Sierra Leone, **Immokalee Farm Workers**, black and brown fathers and their sons, everyone living through domestic violence, people of all religions who are being persecuted because of their faith, all who struggle with or are affected by mental illness and depression. We also pray for law enforcement officers, service men and women, missionaries and rescue workers doing God's work in dangerous places.

(Third Sunday: trespasses)

## **Silent Prayer**

### **Prayers of the People and our Lord's Prayer**

God of listening hearts and open eyes,

You are the One who sees what others overlook and hears the voices others dismiss. You move through the stories of our lives—through questions, through testimony, through conversation—drawing us toward deeper understanding of one another and of You.

Teach us to listen as Christ listens. Not to argue. Not to prove we are right. But to understand. Help us listen with humility and

curiosity, so that the stories we hear may widen our vision and help us recognize You even in the most unexpected places.

We pray this morning for those who are grieving, for those who are suffering, for those who are sitting in that place of waiting and not knowing. Soothe our fears, nourish our bodies, and feed our souls with the bread and cup of your compassion and mercy.

We praise you for your vision of a new heaven and a new earth, in which everyone treats each other as your beloved children, as together we sing the prayer that you have 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.  
Amen.**

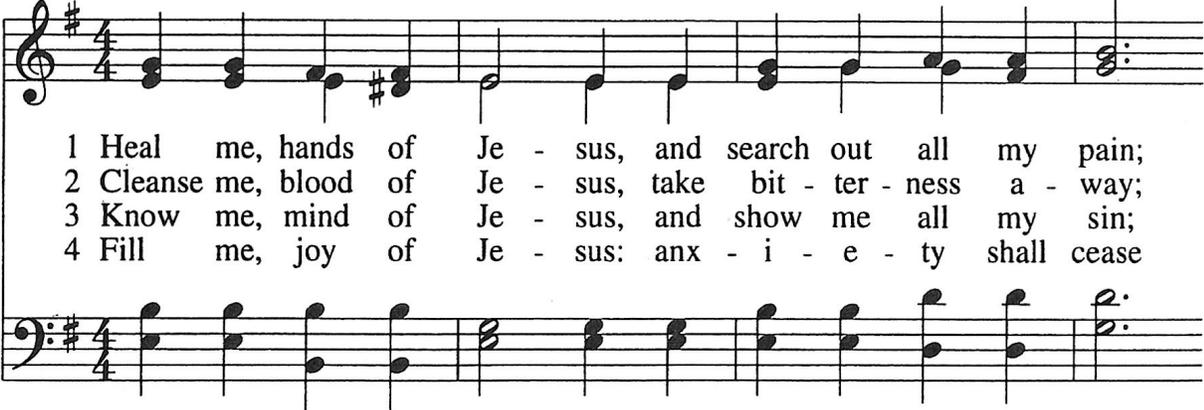
**Musical Response** *Heal Me, Hands of Jesus vs. 1,4* Perry/Irons

**Heal me, hands of Jesus, and search out all my pain;**

restore my hope, remove my fear and bring me peace again.

Fill me, joy of Jesus: anxiety shall cease  
and heaven's serenity be mine, for Jesus brings me peace!

## Heal Me, Hands of Jesus



1 Heal me, hands of Je - sus, and search out all my pain;  
2 Cleanse me, blood of Je - sus, take bit - ter - ness a - way;  
3 Know me, mind of Je - sus, and show me all my sin;  
4 Fill me, joy of Je - sus: anx - i - e - ty shall cease



re - store my hope, re - move my fear and bring me peace a - gain.  
let me for - give as one for - given and bring me peace to - day.  
dis - pel the mem - o - ries of guilt, and bring me peace with - in.  
and heaven's se - ren - i - ty be mine, for Je - sus brings me peace!

WORDS: Michael Perry (1942-1996)  
MUSIC: Herbert S. Irons (1834-1905), alt.

SOUTHWELL  
S.M.

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## We Share God's Love

### **Invitation to Generosity**

In today's gospel story, the man who was healed becomes a witness. He tells his story again and again—and through his testimony others are invited to see God for themselves.

In the same way, the generosity of this community tells a story.

It tells the story of compassion.

It tells the story of justice.

It tells the story of hope.

Like the man born blind, this church continues to bear witness. And today, through our offerings, we add our own chapter to God's unfolding story.

*(The offering plates are found by each doorway for your use. For those of us online, please follow the QR code.)*

### **\*Song of Gratitude**

*Doxology*

**Praise God from whom all blessings flow,  
praise God all creatures here below,  
Praise God above, ye heavenly host,  
Creator, Christ, and Holy Ghost. Amen.**

### **\*Unison Prayer of Thanksgiving and Dedication**

**God of vision and hope,**

**Receive these gifts as signs of our gratitude as they witness to the story you are still writing among us.**

**May they support communities where people are truly heard.**

**May they strengthen voices that speak truth and justice.**

**May they help others discover that their lives and stories matter.**

**Use these offerings—and use us—to listen more deeply, to see more clearly, and to share the good news of your transforming love. Amen.**

## We Go to Carry the Light

\*Hymn

*Speak, I Am Listening*

Bible

*Choir sings first, then choir and congregation sing together.*

**I see the stars that flood the skies, a thousand at a glance,  
and wonder that You guide them all as simply as a dance.  
Creator God, I know your love won't leave my life to chance.**

**Speak, I am list'ning.**

**Speak, I am list'ning.**

**Speak, I am list'ning to You.**

## **\*Blessing and Benediction**

The story does not end here.

Beyond these walls are voices waiting to be heard and stories waiting to be told.

So go as people who listen.

Listen with curiosity.

Listen with humility.

Listen with compassion.

And as you listen,

may your eyes be opened to the ways God is already at work in the world.

Turn around and See God.

For the One who opened the eyes of the blind

is still revealing truth among us today.

Go and share what you see. Amen.

**\*Sending Blessing**      *Blessed Assurance*      Crosby

**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.**

**\*Postlude**      *Largo from Xerxes*      Handel

**Please remain seated in silence for the Postlude as the  
Light of Christ is carried into the world.  
The worship has ended; our service begins.**

## **Supporting Our Service Today**

**Liturgist:** Ellen Schleicher

**Welcome Table:** George Ikeda

**Greeters:** Fred and Cyndi Carley

**Acolyte:** Bella Clapham

**Head Usher:** Linda Newton

**Usher Team:** Jim Daugherty,

Kathy Hare, Steve Hemping,

Nancy Knudson, Char Raitt, Dick  
Schleicher

### **Technology Team**

Gary Woodrum, Debra Mosely,

Maria Groody, David Jack,

Linda Newton, Wally Davis,

Patty Fjetland

The **Lord's Table** was decorated  
by Victoria Augustine

The **Sanctuary Flowers** are given  
by a friend of VUCC

The **Church Sign** was changed by  
Faye Newton & Lisa Sclafani

**Sunday Librarian:**

Sherry Howe



## **Senior Minister**

**Rev. Barbara Dickason, BCC**

## **Staff**

**Gary Leidheiser:** *Custodian*

**Barb Quinn:** *Office Assistant*

## **Music Staff**

**Barbara Quinn:** *Music Director*

**Lynda Weston:** *Bella Handbell  
Director*

## **This Week at a Glance**

### **Monday, March 16**

#### **SpiritFed at noon**

Pack a lunch and join us **on ZOOM** for prayer, study and connecting with each other. It's a come-as-you-are space designed to help us confront the loneliness epidemic while growing closer to God.

Click on the link below to join.

<https://us06web.zoom.us/j/83576594637?pwd=U2024sKmOPiy3CyMqV4OarYUtofaom.1>

Meeting ID: 835 7659 4637

Passcode: 913882

6:00 PM Bridge — P

### **Tuesday, March 17**

9:00 AM Staff Meeting

11:30 AM Soup Luncheon - NH

1:30 PM Leadership Council—  
CR

6:00 PM Girl Scouts

### **Wednesday, March 18**

9:00 AM - Noon Library Hours

10:00 AM Bible Study—CR

1:00 PM Cut-Ups —CR

6:30 Choir Rehearsal

### **Thursday, March 19**

2:00 Human Resources — P

4:00 PM Baby Basics — NH

4:00 Bell Choir Rehearsal

6:00 Daisies

### **Friday, March 20**

8:30 AM Men's Coffee—Panera

1:00 PM Book Discussion — P

### **Saturday, March 21**

10:30 AM VADC — NH

### **Sunday, March 22**

#### **Fifth Sunday in Lent**

9:00 AM Choir Rehearsal — S

9:00-9:45 AM Library Hour

10:00 AM Worship

Fellowship Time Follows

11:00-11:15 AM Library Time

#### **Coming Events**

The church office is open

M-Th, 9-1.

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VUCC online?

Use this link:

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Or...Use your Smart Phone  
to scan the QR code:

and it will take you  
directly to our  
donations page.

It is really easy!

