

“The Way Home”

Week Four - March 15, 2026

WE GATHER

Meeting One Another on The Way

PRELUDE

“*The Steadfast Love of the Lord Never Ceases*”

E. McNeil

WELCOME

THRESHOLD MOMENT

We continue our series that invites us to contemplate our journeys in life. Yet even in the midst of journeys, we never lose a desire for “home.” No matter what we call “home” in this world, we yearn for a spiritual home within that offers serenity, acceptance, and belonging. The extravagant acceptance of the father for the son in Jesus’ parable of the wandering son is difficult for us to believe sometimes—that no matter what we have done, who we are, how far we are from what we want to become, we are welcomed home by the Loving Parent.

SONG

“*A Wilderness Wandering People*”

PRAYER FOR THE PATH

Our God who is our Home, be with us. At times we aren’t sure about the relationship of the road we travel and the home we seek. Will we ever feel like we have arrived? We come hoping for the hearth of acceptance in the home that Jesus promises. And whether we are feeling lost or at home, may we know you are always with us. Amen.

* OPENING HYMN

“*He Leadeth Me*”

UMH 128

WE PROCLAIM

Discovering Ourselves on The Way

EXTINGUISHING THE FOURTH LENT CANDLE

As we extinguish this fourth candle, we remember that every journey carries within it a longing for home. No matter how far we wander, no matter how uncertain the road may feel, God’s love is always waiting to welcome us. Even as this light fades, may we trust that the road we walk is leading us home, to grace, to belonging, and to the love that never lets us go.

“*Stillness*”

**Meet me in the stillness, Lord
Be the air I breathe**

Meet me in the stillness, Lord

Free me to receive

PRAYING FOR OTHERS ALONG THE WAY

Leader: Loving God, Home of every wandering heart, we come to you from many roads, some feeling close, others far away. We pray for those whose journeys are difficult in this moment...

Leader: When we chase things that cannot satisfy, guide us back to what truly gives life. Remind us that there is so much good along the journey of life. We give thanks for...

Leader: We pray for those whose journeys are heavy today—those who grieve, those who feel lost, and those longing for belonging... We pray all these things spoken aloud, and the ones lifted in the quiet of our hearts, and conclude our prayers with the one that 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, the power, and the glory, forever. Amen.

THE WORD IN MUSIC

“*O Master, Let me Walk with Thee*”

ARR. S. CURRY

INVITATION TO OFFERING

As we continue on this Lenten way, we give not to earn God’s grace, but because we have already received it along the road. Let us offer our gifts with grateful hearts.

* RESPONSE

“*Praise God, from Whom All Blessings Flow*”

UM Hymnal 94

OFFERTORY PRAYER

READING

Psalm 25:4-10

(NSRV)

SERMON

“THE WAY HOME”

WE RESPOND

Opening to the Holy on The Way

PRAYERS FOR GETTING OUT OF OUR OWN WAY

Leader: Our prayer song in this series asks God to “be the air I breathe.” When God is our very breath, we are always Home, even in the midst of feeling lost. We ask to be freed to receive this sense of home that is Love.

Dear Lord, you have shown us how Love bridges our wild rivers of anger and the deep valleys of mistrust. Love tames guilt and quiets anxiety. It warms without burning, cools without chilling, and holds without crushing. Whenever we may be hungry, Love can fill our emptiness. Whenever we may be wounded, Love can heal us. There are times, though, when Love expects more of us than we have to give. If it is possible, let that cup pass from us. Amen.

“Stillness”

Meet me in the stillness, Lord
Be the air I breathe
Meet me in the stillness, Lord
Free me to receive

Time for Contemplation

Hear this: No matter how worthy you feel of God’s acceptance, you have it because that is just the way Love works. Whether or not you know it, believe it, or feel it, Jesus is with you now because Jesus knows God’s welcome and shared it without hesitation. You are forgiven because Love *is* Home, no matter how far you think you’ve strayed. May it be so.

WE GO FORTH

Continuing with Jesus on The Way

* CLOSING HYMN

“O Love That Wilt Not Let Me Go”

UMH 480

BENEDICTION

The Creator God filled you with breath, inviting you to this journey called Life.

We will follow on The Way.

Jesus, our Guide, showed us what it means to make a new way with Love.

We will follow on The Way.

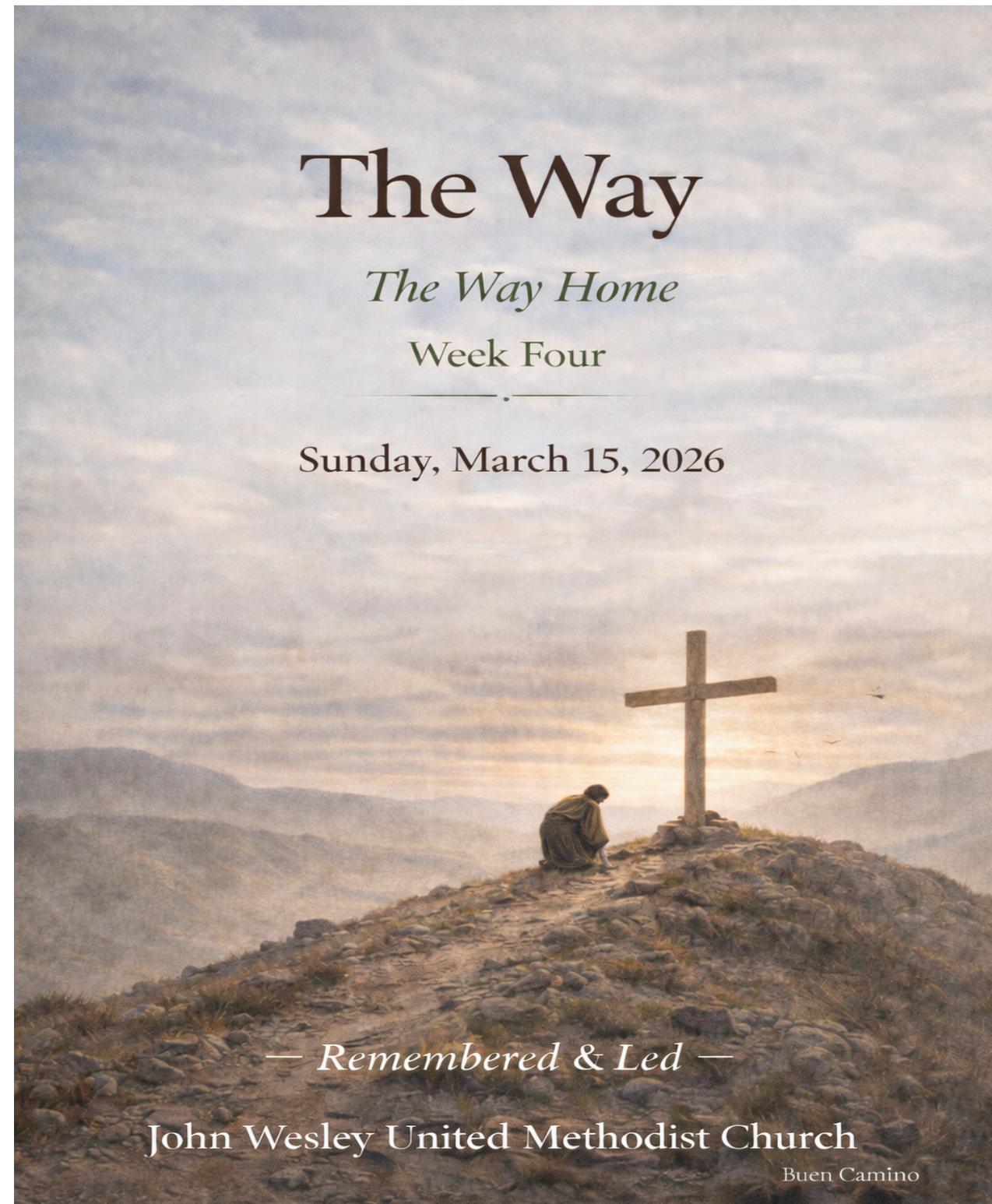
The Spirit gives us strength to move forward with Courage and Compassion for all we meet.

We will follow on The Way.

May this week be filled with opportunities to choose to love in ways you never thought possible, so that Home is anywhere you go. May it be so. Amen. “Buen Camino!”

POSTLUDE

The flowers adorning the altar this morning are donated To the Glory of God in honor of their parents and in celebration of St. Patrick’s Day by Charlie & Helen Bresnahan





WELCOME TO

JOHN WESLEY UNITED METHODIST CHURCH

We are a welcoming and active congregation which seeks to **“LOVE GOD...LOVE OTHERS...SERVE THE WORLD.”**

We invite you to experience meaningful worship services, engaging Bible studies, Sunday school, fellowship, preaching, life-changing local and global mission opportunities and more. We are an active congregation. At John Wesley, there is always room for everyone to become a part of something greater than ourselves. **WE ARE GLAD YOU ARE HERE!**

WEEK AT A GLANCE:

Worship Every Sunday: 10:00 AM

TODAY Sunday 15th

- **LAST DAY FOR THE ART EXHIBITION 11 AM - 3 PM**

Monday 16th

- *Lent In Plain Sight* Book Study 6 PM (Library)

Tuesday 17th

- *Give It Up* Lent Book Study 10:30 AM (Fitzgerald Room)
- Family Team Ministries Meeting 5:15 PM (Youth Room)

Wednesday 18th

- Prayer Meeting 11 AM (Youth Room)
- Outreach and Missions Meeting 2 PM (Fitzgerald Room)
- *The Difficult Words of Jesus* Book 2 PM (DiAngelis Residence. See Pastor for info)
- Handbell Choir Rehearsal 5:45 PM (Sanctuary)
- Choir Rehearsal 7 PM (Sanctuary)

Friday 20th

- Thrift Shop Grand Opening - 10 AM

Pastor René will be away next week participating in the Wesley Heritage Tour in England—a pilgrimage exploring the roots of our Methodist heritage.

Next Sunday, we are delighted to welcome **Rev. Dr. Hope Luckie**, Director of Pastoral Care for the Preachers' Aid Society, as our **guest preacher**.

Please join us in extending a warm John Wesley UMC welcome to Dr. Luckie and in praying for Pastor René's safe travels.

Welcome, friends!

We are thrilled to open the doors of

The Wesley House Thrift Shop on Friday, March 20.

Beginning March 20, the shop will be open **every Friday and Saturday from 10:00 AM – 2:00 PM.**

Come stop by, browse for treasures, and celebrate this exciting new chapter with us!



MAUNDY THURSDAY POTLUCK SUPPER, April 2nd at 6 PM in the Fellowship Hall

Maundy Thursday is believed to be the day when Jesus celebrated his final Passover with His disciples. Here at John Wesley, we commemorate the day with a potluck supper and share communion together.

Pre-registration is helpful, please sign up by scanning the QR Code or at the connection desk.



Good Friday Service – April 3rd, 6:30–7:30 PM

Join us for a reflective Good Friday service as we remember the moment when Jesus walked the most difficult part of the human journey—suffering.

Whatever hardships we may face in our own lives, Jesus understands that pain. Come and share in this meaningful time of reflection, prayer, and remembrance.

All are welcome.

The Family Ministry Bulletin Board posted a new question to stimulate conversation during our Sunday School.

What challenges do you think Jesus faced every day?

Please add your response.

It's Easter Flower Time!



Check your bulletin or stop by the Welcome or Connect Desk to pick up an order form for Easter Flowers. **Deadline: March 22nd.**

For \$15, you can purchase a Lily, Tulips, Daffodil, or Hyacinth in memory or thanksgiving. All dedications will be listed in the Easter bulletin. **Scan the QR Code to submit your form online!**

New Section: “I ASKED AI”

What do United Methodists say about themselves?

When United Methodists talk about themselves, the church tends to describe its identity using a few themes that show up repeatedly in denominational documents, preaching, and Methodist writers. Methodists often claim that their tradition tries to hold together things Christianity sometimes separates: personal faith and social action, heartfelt spirituality and intellectual seriousness, grace and accountability. When Methodists reflect on stereotypes about being indecisive or moderate, many respond by saying that what looks like moderation is actually a theological commitment to **holding tensions faithfully rather than simplifying them**.

Another way United Methodists describe themselves is through the phrase “**open hearts, open minds, open doors**,” which has been used by the United Methodist Church in public messaging. Within the church, that slogan is often interpreted as a reflection of Wesley’s expansive understanding of grace. Methodists frequently emphasize *prevenient grace*—the belief that God’s grace is already at work in every person before they even know it. Because of that theology, many Methodists see themselves as a church that expects God to be active in unexpected places and people.

United Methodists embrace the stereotype that they are **people of action**. Wesley’s line that “there is no holiness but social holiness” often appears in Methodist self-description. The church frequently points to ministries such as disaster response through United Methodist Committee on Relief as examples of a tradition where faith is meant to take visible form in service. In other words, Methodists often say their identity is not only doctrinal but **practical and embodied**.

There is also a self-awareness about the stereotype of being **organized or institutional**. Methodists will sometimes joke about committees and conferences, but they also frame that structure as a theological value. The connectional system—local churches linked through regional and global structures—is seen as a way of practicing shared responsibility for mission rather than leaving congregations isolated.

In recent years, many United Methodists have also acknowledged another reality about themselves: they are **a church that argues because it cares deeply about the gospel and the church’s witness**. Many described the tradition as one committed to discernment in community rather than quick doctrinal sorting.

So when United Methodists speak about themselves, the picture they tend to paint is: *a church rooted in the grace-centered theology of Wesley, committed to both personal and social transformation, structured for shared mission, and willing to live with some tension because they believe the Christian life itself is lived in that space*. Many would say the defining mark of their tradition is not that it lacks conviction, but that it is **trying to follow Jesus with heart, mind, and hands all at once**.

If you listen to United Methodists talk about themselves in less formal settings: you hear some recurring **colloquial ways the church describes itself**. They’re not official slogans, but they capture how many Methodists like to think of their identity.

One common line is: “**We believe your faith should show up in your life.**” Methodists often say this when explaining why the tradition cares so much about mission, justice, and service. The idea goes back to the Wesleyan conviction that faith is visible—how you treat people, how you live, how you love your neighbor. You’ll also hear a playful one: “**If you want to change the world, find a Methodist committee.**” It’s half joke, half pride. Methodists know their connectional system can be slow and structured, but it’s how large-scale mission and accountability happen.

A phrase that shows up a lot in Methodist circles is: “**Personal piety and social holiness.**” In everyday language that usually gets translated into something like, “*We care about your personal walk with God, and we care about the world God loves.*” Methodists tend to resist the idea that those two things should be separated.

Another one you hear in clergy circles is: “**Grace first.**” It reflects the Wesleyan emphasis on grace preceding everything, before repentance, before belief, even before awareness. The idea is that God is already at work in people’s lives. And sometimes the self-description is even simpler: “**We’re the church that sings.**” Methodism inherited a deep hymn tradition through Charles Wesley, and many Methodists still feel that music and congregational singing are central to their spiritual life.

Finally, there’s a phrase that pastors sometimes use when describing the tradition: “**Methodists are practical Christians.**” The sense is that theology matters, but it should ultimately lead somewhere—to compassion, justice, service, and transformation. Put together, these kinds of sayings point to how many United Methodists like to see themselves: thoughtful about faith, committed to grace, grounded in Scripture, and convinced that following Jesus ought to make a real difference in how people live and treat others.