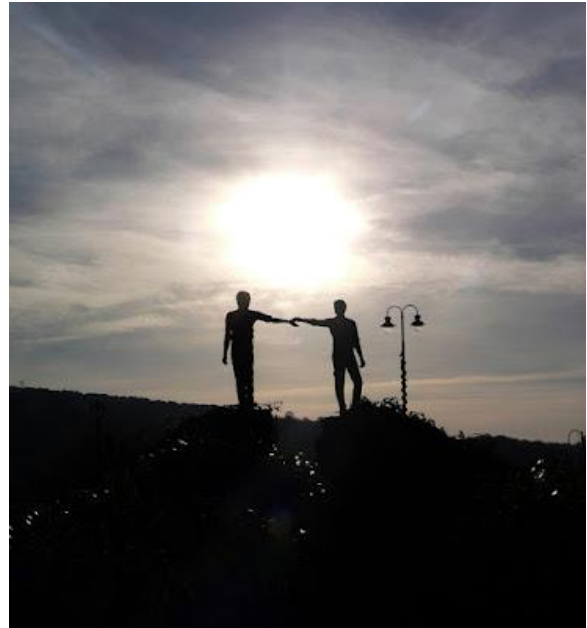


**Fourth Sunday in
Lent**
March 30, 2025



Hands Across the Divide by Maurice Harron

We Gather in Response to God's Invitation

THE GIFT OF MUSIC TO GATHER US

WELCOME, ANNOUNCEMENTS AND AFFIRMATION OF MISSION

We declare ourselves to be a Christ-centered Open and Affirming Congregation, welcoming persons into full membership and participation in the Body of Christ regardless of race, age, gender, sexual orientation, gender identities and expressions, ability, culture, economic status, ethnicity, or family composition.

We recognize that there are differences among us, but believe that we can love alike even though we may not think alike. We proclaim this covenant of welcome to all who have known the pain of exclusion or discrimination in church and society. We invite all people to join us in our faith journey toward greater love, understanding, and mutual respect.

*CALL TO WORSHIP (*RESPONSIVE*)

**An asterisk indicates when the people stand in body or spirit.*

One: When we struggle to live as you teach us, and we fail to answer your call...

All: **God, your steadfast love surrounds us.**

When the truth clogs up in our throat, and we fear what will happen if we speak and if we keep silent...

God, your steadfast love surrounds us.

When we open our hearts and let the truth of our sorrows, our sin, our joys, and our doubts flow freely...

God, your steadfast love surrounds us.

Because of who YOU are and where YOU are on life's journey, YOU ARE WELCOME HERE!

2173 Stoverstown Rd. / Spring Grove, PA 17362 / 717-225-6357

When our stubborn hearts encounter the grace that teaches and guides us into a life of trust and joyful obedience...

**God, your steadfast love surrounds us today and every day. Thanks be to God!
Amen.**

Written by Dr. Lisa Hancock

***OPENING PRAYER (TOGETHER)**

Loving God, it was said of the Prodigal Son that he “came to himself.” Help us to wake up to ourselves, and to You. Set us free from the illusion of trying to be perfect so that we might be more fully human. Help us not to chase after an imaginary life, and to find satisfaction in our real lives. And turn us away from our self-rejection so that we might notice Your arms open in welcome. Amen.

Adapted from Ann Siddall, in Lent to Easter liturgies: Year C. Posted on the website of the Stillpoint Spirituality Centre, <https://stillpointcentre.com.au/>. Re-posted on the re:Worship blog at <https://re-worship.blogspot.com/2013/02/prayer-prodigal-son.html>.

***SINGING TOGETHER:**

“God Is Truly with Us” Black #68

**God is truly with us; sing we and adore now:
praise the One we come before now.
Here within this temple, here in sound and silence,
worship God in deepest reverence.
You alone, God, we own,
you, our God and Savior; praise to you forever.
God is truly with us; loud our praise resounding!
Echoes of the saints surrounding! “Holy, holy, holy,”
hear the hymn ascending, angels, saints, their voices blending!
Bow your ear to us here;
hear, O Christ, the praises
that your Church now raises.**

**Source of every blessing, bless the ones who name you,
let our words and deeds proclaim you.
Like the saints and angels praising you in glory,
may your servants sing your story.
And in all, great and small, may we do most nearly
what you love more dearly.**

Because of who YOU are and where YOU are on life’s journey, YOU ARE WELCOME HERE!

We Pray for Transformation and New Life

INTRODUCTION

God delights in forgiving us and covering our sins.

PRAYER FOR TRANSFORMATION AND NEW LIFE (TOGETHER)

Dear God, your gifts are generous and yet we often fail to appreciate what we have been given. We demand more, but squander what we have received. Forgive us for taking for granted what we receive from you. When we fail to accept what you offer, or fail to steward those gifts, bring us back to awareness of you. Amen.

Time of silent reflection...

WORDS OF GRACE:

However far we wander, God is always ready to receive us, to enfold us in love and grace. In the name of Jesus, you are forgiven.

*PASSING OF THE PEACE

This Lent we're reminded that Jesus tells the story of a child who demands half his father's wealth, leaves him for dead, and squanders this wealth. Hungry, the child returns home hoping that his father will hire him on so he can eat. But when his father sees him, he is filled with compassion, compassion that makes for peace and celebration. This is God's love and peace. This is Christ's love and peace. The peace of Christ be with you.

And also with you!

(As a sign of our deep fellowship and communion with God and with one another, let us greet one another with a handshake or peace sign and bless one another with the peace that comes from being in Christ.)

SUNG RESPONSE

"Don't Be Afraid"

Don't be afraid, My love is stronger, My love is stronger than your fear

Don't be afraid, My love is stronger,

And I have promised, promised to be always near.

Graham Maule, John L. Bell © Words: 1995 WGRG, c/o Iona Community, Glasgow, Scotland; Music: 1995 WGRG, c/o Iona Community, Glasgow, Scotland; CCLI Song #1531247

We Listen for God's Word

MINISTRY THROUGH MUSIC

"The Blessing Riddle"

by P. Choplin

PRAYER FOR ILLUMINATION

Holy God, reveal your presence to us this day as we journey this path with your Son. Through all of life's trials and tribulations your Word sustains us for the journey ahead. Send your Spirit upon us that we might listen, discern, and take heart. Be near us this day and may your Word with us stay and dwell with us forevermore. Amen.

Because of who YOU are and where YOU are on life's journey, YOU ARE WELCOME HERE!

The joy of forgiveness. Our responsive reading begins.

¹ Happy are those whose transgression is forgiven, whose sin is covered.

**² Happy are those to whom the Lord imputes no iniquity
and in whose spirit there is no deceit.**

³ While I kept silent, my body wasted away through my groaning all day long.

**⁴ For day and night your hand was heavy upon me;
my strength was dried up as by the heat of summer. *Selah***

⁵ Then I acknowledged my sin to you, and I did not hide my iniquity;

**I said, "I will confess my transgressions to the Lord,"
and you forgave the guilt of my sin. *Selah***

⁶ Therefore let all who are faithful offer prayer to you;

at a time of distress, the rush of mighty waters shall not reach them.

**⁷ You are a hiding place for me; you preserve me from trouble;
you surround me with glad cries of deliverance. *Selah***

⁸ I will instruct you and teach you the way you should go;

I will counsel you with my eye upon you.

**⁹ Do not be like a horse or a mule, without understanding,
whose temper must be curbed with bit and bridle, else it will not stay near you.**

¹⁰ Many are the torments of the wicked,

but steadfast love surrounds those who trust in the Lord.

**¹¹ Be glad in the Lord and rejoice, O righteous,
and shout for joy, all you upright in heart.**

LETTER READING

2 CORINTHIANS 5:13-19 (CEB)

Paul writes to the conflicted Corinthian church about the new thing that God is doing in Christ.

The Hebrew "Selah" responses have been added. Our reading begins.

¹³ If we are crazy, it's for God's sake. If we are rational, it's for your sake. ¹⁴ The love of Christ controls us, because we have concluded this: one died for the sake of all; therefore, all died. ¹⁵ He died for the sake of all so that those who are alive should live not for themselves but for the one who died for them and was raised.

Selah

¹⁶ So then, from this point on we won't recognize people by human standards. Even though we used to know Christ by human standards, that isn't how we know him now. ¹⁷ So then, if anyone is in Christ, that person is part of the new creation. The old things have gone away, and look, new things have arrived!

Selah

¹⁸ All of these new things are from God, who reconciled us to himself through Christ and who gave us the ministry of reconciliation. ¹⁹ In other words, God was reconciling the

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world to himself through Christ, by not counting people's sins against them. He has trusted us with this message of reconciliation.

Selah

PLAIN AND SIMPLE

“Hands Across the Divide”

Pastor Dave

GOSPEL READING

LUKE 15:1-3, 11B-32

The parable of the prodigal and his brother. The Hebrew “Selah” responses have been added. Hear the Good News.

Now all the tax collectors and sinners were coming near to listen to him. ² And the Pharisees and the scribes were grumbling and saying, “This fellow welcomes sinners and eats with them.”

Selah

³ So he told them this parable:

¹¹ Then Jesus said, “There was a man who had two sons. ¹² The younger of them said to his father, ‘Father, give me the share of the wealth that will belong to me.’ So he divided his assets between them. ¹³ A few days later the younger son gathered all he had and traveled to a distant region, and there he squandered his wealth in dissolute living. ¹⁴ When he had spent everything, a severe famine took place throughout that region, and he began to be in need. ¹⁵ So he went and hired himself out to one of the citizens of that region, who sent him to his fields to feed the pigs. ¹⁶ He would gladly have filled his stomach with the pods that the pigs were eating, and no one gave him anything.

Selah

¹⁷ But when he came to his senses he said, ‘How many of my father’s hired hands have bread enough and to spare, but here I am dying of hunger! ¹⁸ I will get up and go to my father, and I will say to him, ‘Father, I have sinned against heaven and before you; ¹⁹ I am no longer worthy to be called your son; treat me like one of your hired hands.’” ²⁰ So he set off and went to his father.

Selah

But while he was still far off, his father saw him and was filled with compassion; he ran and put his arms around him and kissed him. ²¹ Then the son said to him, ‘Father, I have sinned against heaven and before you; I am no longer worthy to be called your son.’ ²² But the father said to his slaves, ‘Quickly, bring out a robe—the best one—and put it on him; put a ring on his finger and sandals on his feet. ²³ And get the fatted calf and kill it, and let us eat and celebrate, ²⁴ for this son of mine was dead and is alive again; he was lost and is found!’ And they began to celebrate.

Selah

²⁵ “Now his elder son was in the field, and as he came and approached the house, he heard music and dancing. ²⁶ He called one of the slaves and asked what was going on. ²⁷ He replied, ‘Your brother has come, and your father has killed the fatted calf because he has

Because of who YOU are and where YOU are on life’s journey, YOU ARE WELCOME HERE!

got him back safe and sound.’²⁸ Then he became angry and refused to go in. His father came out and began to plead with him.²⁹ But he answered his father, ‘Listen! For all these years I have been working like a slave for you, and I have never disobeyed your command, yet you have never given me even a young goat so that I might celebrate with my friends.’³⁰ But when this son of yours came back, who has devoured your assets with prostitutes, you killed the fatted calf for him!’

Selah

³¹ Then the father said to him, ‘Son, you are always with me, and all that is mine is yours.’³² But we had to celebrate and rejoice, because this brother of yours was dead and has come to life; he was lost and has been found.’ ”

Selah

God’s Good News for the people of God.

Thanks be to God.

MEDITATION:

“Breathing in God’s Steadfast Love”

Pastor Dave

SINGING TOGETHER

“O God, How We Have Wandered”

Black #202

**O God, how we have wandered and hidden from your face;
In foolishness have squandered your legacy of grace.
But how, in exile dwelling, we turn with fear and shame,
As distant but compelling, you call us each by name.**

**And now at length discerning the evil that we do,
By faith we are returning with hope and trust in you.
In haste you come to meet us, and home rejoicing bring,
In gladness there to greet us with calf and robe and ring.**

**O God of all the living, both banished and restored,
Compassionate, forgiving, our peace and hope assured.
Grant now that our transgressing, our faithlessness may cease.
Stretch out your hand in blessing, in pardon, and in peace.**

We Respond to God’s Word

A TIME FOR PRAYER

SHARING OF JOYS AND CONCERNS

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You are invited to share joys and concerns we can pray for together. Let our sharing itself be an act of prayer.

ENTERING INTO PRAYER

“Nothing Can Trouble”

Black #772

**Nothing can trouble, nothing can frighten.
Those who seek God shall never go wanting.
Nothing can trouble, nothing can frighten.
God alone fills us.**

PRAYERS ON BEHALF OF THE PEOPLE

THE PRAYER OF OUR SAVIOR

**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 sins as we forgive those who sin 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.**

ENCOURAGEMENT TO SHARING OUR TITHES AND OFFERINGS

*You are invited to place your gifts in the offering basket as you arrive or depart from our worship together.
Remembering the gifts we have received, let us make our offerings to God’s work
through this church.*

DEDICATING OUR OFFERING (TOGETHER)

Gracious God, bless these gifts and our lives to your service. Amen

We Go Out to Serve

*SINGING TOGETHER

“Come, O Fount of Every Blessing”

Black #459

**Come, O Fount of every blessing, tune my heart to sing your grace;
streams of mercy, never ceasing, call for songs of endless praise.
Teach me some melodious sonnet, sung by flaming tongues above.
Praise the mount; I’m fixed upon it, mount of God’s unfailing love.

Here I pause in my sojourning, giving thanks for having come,
come to trust, at every turning, God will guide me safely home.
Jesus sought me when a stranger, wandering from the fold of God,
Came to rescue me from danger, blessed body, precious blood.

O to grace how great a debtor daily I am drawn anew!
Let that grace now, like a fetter, bind my wandering heart to you.
Prone to wander, I can feel it, wander from the love I’ve known:
Here’s my heart, O take and seal it, seal it for your very own.**

*GOOD WORDS FOR GOING FORTH

*May you trust that God’s unfailing love and blessings go with you this day and always.
Amen.*

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*BENEDICTION RESPONSE

“Every Step of the Way”

Sing! #66

Help me do the justice to be done today. ---

Help me love kindness--- in all I do and say.--

Help me walk humbly with you,-- O God I pray--

ev-'ry step of the way,-- ev-'ry step of the way.--- (repeat)

TAKE WITH YOU GOD'S GIFT OF MUSIC

WE RETURN TO THE WORLD

RENEWED AND EMPOWERED BY GOD'S SPIRIT

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Much of this liturgy is adapted from Squandered: Service Prayers for the Fourth Sunday in Lent by the Rev. Ruth Garwood, a transitional pastor in the Heartland Conference, a certified facilitator of Sacred Conversations to End Racism, and a certified InterPlay leader.

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