



Sunday 23 March
3rd Sunday in Lent

All are welcome

CALL TO WORSHIP

One: Wherever we have wandered, God gathers us together

All: and we will rejoice!

One: However we have wandered, God gathers us together

All: and we will rejoice!

One: Whoever we are and whatever others think about us, God gathers us together

All: and we will rejoice!

HYMN CH4 519

Love divine, all loves excelling,

joy of heaven, to earth come down,
fix in us thy humble dwelling,
all thy faithful mercies crown.
Jesus, thou art all compassion,
pure unbounded love thou art;
visit us with thy salvation,
enter every trembling heart.

Come, almighty to deliver,
let us all thy life receive;
suddenly return, and never,
never more thy temples leave.
Thee we would be always blessing,
serve thee as thy hosts above,
pray, and praise thee, without ceasing,
glory in thy perfect love.

Finish then thy new creation:
pure and spotless let us be;
let us see thy great salvation,
perfectly restored in thee.
Changed from glory into glory,
till in heaven we take our place,
till we cast our crowns before thee,
lost in wonder, love and praise.

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PRAYER AND LORD'S PRAYER

HYMN CH4 180

Give thanks with a grateful heart,

give thanks to the Holy One,
give thanks because He's given Jesus Christ,
His Son.

Give thanks with a grateful heart,
give thanks to the Holy One,
give thanks because He's given Jesus Christ,
His Son.

And now let the weak say 'I am strong!'
let the poor say 'I am rich'
because of what the Lord has done for us!
And now let the weak say 'I am strong!'
let the poor say 'I am rich'
because of what the Lord has done for us!

Give thanks with a grateful heart,
give thanks to the Holy One,
give thanks because He's given Jesus
Christ, His Son.

Give thanks with a grateful heart,
give thanks to the Holy One,
give thanks because He's given Jesus
Christ, His Son.

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ALL AGE TIME

HYMN CH4 549

How deep the Father's love for us,

how vast beyond all measure,
that he should give his only Son
to make a wretch his treasure.
How great the pain of searing loss;
the Father turns his face away,
as wounds which mar the chosen One
bring many souls to glory.

Behold the man upon a cross,
my sin upon his shoulders;
ashamed, I hear my mocking voice
call out among the scoffers.
It was my sin that held him there,
my pardon he accomplished;
his dying breath has brought me life -
I know that 'it is finished'.

I will not boast in anything,
no gifts, no power, no wisdom;
but I will boast in Jesus Christ,
his death and resurrection.
Why should I gain from all of this?
I cannot give an answer;
but this I know with all my heart,
his wounds have paid my ransom.

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SCRIPTURE Luke 15:1-32

Now the tax collectors and sinners were all gathering round to hear Jesus. But the Pharisees and the teachers of the law muttered, 'This man welcomes sinners, and eats with them.' Then Jesus told them this parable: 'Suppose one of you has a hundred sheep and loses one of them. Doesn't he leave the ninety-nine in the open country and go after the lost sheep until he finds it? And when he finds it, he joyfully puts it on his shoulders and goes home. Then he calls his friends and neighbours together and says, "Rejoice with me; I have found my lost sheep." I tell you that in the same way there will be more rejoicing in heaven over one sinner who repents than over ninety-nine righteous people who do not need to repent. 'Or suppose a woman has ten silver coins and loses one. Doesn't she light a lamp, sweep the house and search carefully until she finds it? And when she finds it, she calls her friends and neighbours together and says, "Rejoice with me; I have found my lost coin." In the same way, I tell you, there is rejoicing in the presence of the angels of God over one sinner who repents.' Jesus continued: 'There was a man who had two sons. The younger one said to his father, "Father, give me my share of the estate." So he divided his property between them. 'Not long after that, the younger son got together all he had, set off for a distant country and there squandered his wealth in wild living. After he had spent everything, there was a severe famine in that whole country, and he began to be in need. So he went and hired himself out to a citizen of that country, who sent him to his fields to feed pigs. He longed to fill his stomach with the pods that the pigs were eating, but no one gave him anything. 'When he came to his senses, he said, "How many of my father's hired servants have food to spare, and here I am starving to death! I will set out and go back to my father and say to him: Father, I have sinned against heaven and against you. I am no longer worthy to be called your son; make me like one of your hired servants." So he got up and went to his father. 'But while he was still a long way off, his father saw him and was filled with compassion for him; he ran to his son, threw his arms round him and kissed him. 'The son said to him, "Father, I have sinned against heaven and against you. I am no longer worthy to be called your son." 'But the father said to his servants, "Quick! Bring the best robe and put it on him. Put a ring on his finger and sandals on his feet. Bring the fattened calf and kill it. Let's have a feast and celebrate. For this son of mine was dead and is alive again; he was lost and is found." So they began to celebrate. 'Meanwhile, the elder son was in the field. When he came near the house, he heard music and dancing. So he called one of the servants and asked him what was going on. "Your brother has come," he replied, "and your father has killed the fattened calf because he has him back safe and sound." 'The elder brother became angry and refused to go in. So his father went out and pleaded with him. But he answered his father, "Look! All these years I've been slaving for you and never disobeyed your orders. Yet you never gave me even a young goat so I could celebrate with my friends. But when this son of yours who has squandered your property with prostitutes comes home, you kill the fattened calf for him!" ' "My son," the father said, "you are always with me, and everything I have is yours. But we had to celebrate and be glad, because this brother of yours was dead and is alive again; he was lost and is found." '

SERMON

HYMN CMP 1008

The Lord's my Shepherd, I'll not want,

He makes me lie in pastures green.
He leads me by the still, still waters,
His goodness restores my soul.

And I will trust in You alone,
and I will trust in You alone;
for Your endless mercy follows me,
Your goodness will lead me home.

He guides my ways in righteousness,
and He anoints my head with oil;
and my cup it overflows with joy,
I feast on His pure delights.

And though I walk the darkest path,
I will not fear the evil one;
for You are with me, and Your rod and staff
are the comfort I need to know

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PRAYER OF INTERCESSION

HYMN CH4 153

Great is thy faithfulness, O God my Father,

there is no shadow of turning with Thee;
Thou changest not, Thy compassions they fail not,
as thou has been Thou for ever will be.

*Great is Thy faithfulness! Great is Thy faithfulness
morning by morning new mercies I see;
all I have needed Thy hand hath provided
great is thy faithfulness, Lord unto me!*

Summer and winter, and seed-time and harvest,
sun, moon and stars in their courses above,
join with all nature, in manifold witness
to Thy great faithfulness, mercy and love.

Pardon for sin and a peace that endureth,
Thine own dear presence to cheer and to guide;
strength for today and bright hope for
tomorrow,

blessings all mine, with ten thousand beside!

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BENEDICTION