

**Wandering
Heart** *"I'm fixed upon it"*

*Sunday, March 10, 2024
Fourth Sunday in Lent*



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The Rev. Abigail Zang Hoffman and The Rev. Amy Walter-Peterson, co-Pastors

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PRELUDE
THE CALL

Ralph Vaughan Williams
arr. R. S. Clare

ANNOUNCEMENTS

When your world unravels and your beliefs are tested, you may cling to what you know. As Jesus foretells his death and resurrection, Peter protests. Peter is fixed upon the way he thinks things should go; he resists the pain of what will come. But Jesus is fixed upon his calling and calls Peter out. For everyone, there comes a time when your faith is tested and you will have to face difficult and inconvenient truths. We may want to take the easier path, the path with less pain. We may want to cling to easy or simplistic answers. Instead, what does it look like to welcome complexity? Can you stay fixed upon your convictions while also expanding your perspective?

GATHERING

CONFESSION AND FORGIVENESS

Join me in prayer. Holy God,
We often find ourselves moving through a world that does not make sense. Forgive us for the moments when we lead with declarations instead of curiosity. Forgive us for arguing when we could listen. Forgive us for fixating on one truth, when we could open ourselves up to many. Soften our hard edges and teach us how to listen. With hope in our hearts we pray. Amen.

Friends, we worship a God of grace. Nothing can separate us from God's love, not even a stubborn attitude or a tense heart. So hear and believe the good news of the gospel: God's love for us will always be deeper than we can imagine. We are seen. We are loved. † And we are forgiven. **Amen.**

GATHERING HYMN

My Hope Is Built on Nothing Less

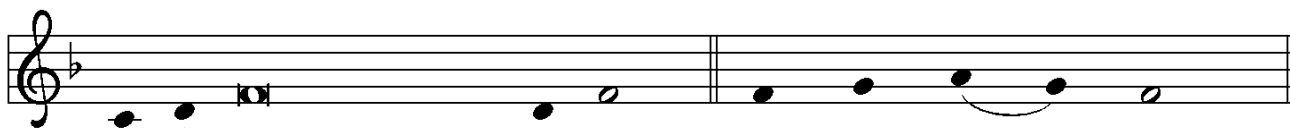
ELW 596

GREETING

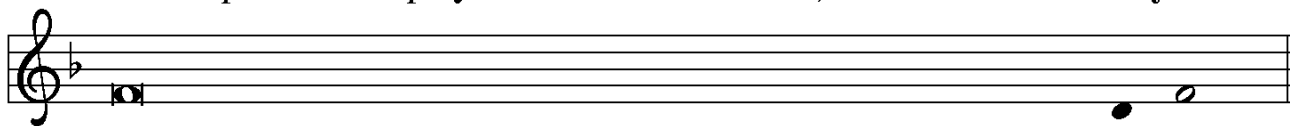
The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, the love of God, and the communion of the Holy Spirit be with you all.

And also with you.

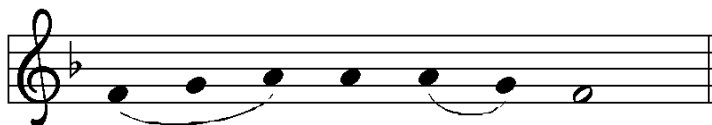
KYRIE



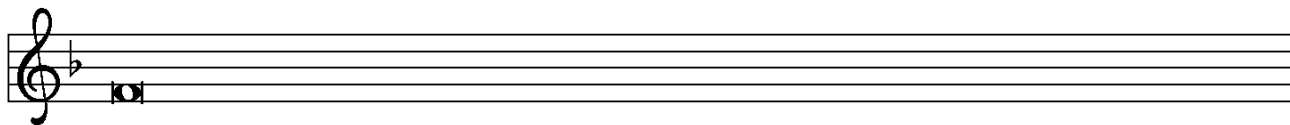
In peace, let us pray to the Lord. **Lord, have mer - cy.**



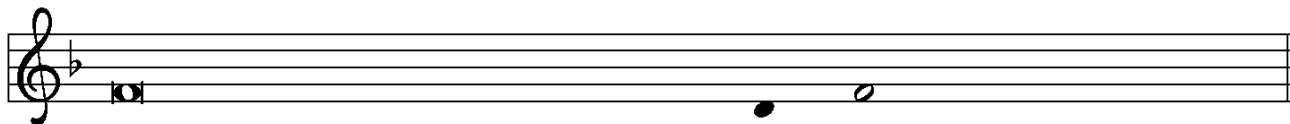
For the peace from above, and for our salvation, let us pray to the Lord.



Lord, have mer - cy.



For the peace of the whole world, for the well-being of the church of God,



and for the unity of all, let us pray to the Lord.



Lord, have mer - cy.

from the east and from the west,
from the north and from the south.

¹⁷Some were sick through their sinful ways,
and because of their iniquities endured affliction;

¹⁸they loathed any kind of food,
and they drew near to the gates of death.

¹⁹Then they cried to the LORD in their trouble,
and he saved them from their distress;

²⁰he sent out his word and healed them,
and delivered them from destruction.

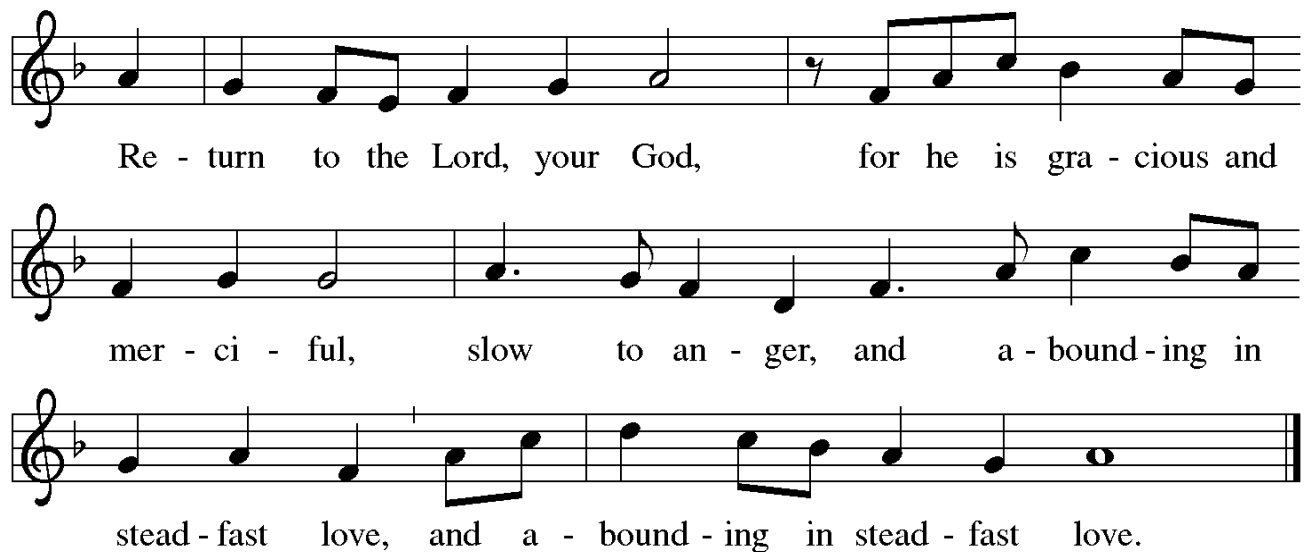
²¹Let them thank the LORD for his steadfast love,
for his wonderful works to humankind.

²²And let them offer thanksgiving sacrifices,
and tell of his deeds with songs of joy.

The word of the Lord.

Thanks be to God.

GOSPEL ACCLAMATION



Re - turn to the Lord, your God, for he is gra - cious and
mer - ci - ful, slow to an - ger, and a - bound - ing in
stead - fast love, and a - bound - ing in stead - fast love.

The holy gospel according to Matthew.

Glory to you, O Lord.

GOSPEL: Matthew 16:13-20

²¹From that time on, Jesus began to show his disciples that he must go to Jerusalem and undergo great suffering at the hands of the elders and chief priests and scribes, and be killed, and on the third day be raised. ²²And Peter took him aside and began to rebuke him, saying, "God forbid it, Lord! This must never happen to you." ²³But he turned and said to Peter, "Get behind me, Satan! You are

a stumbling block to me; for you are setting your mind not on divine things but on human things."

The gospel of the Lord.

Praise to you, O Christ.

SERMON

HYMN OF THE DAY

The Way

The Way

RATHBUN 8.7.8.7



Faith - ful - ly I learned to fol - low
Life was ea - sy, faith ___ was sta - ble
Thread by thread my faith ___ un - rav - eled
Though the way leads through steep can - yons



Step by step and not to stray
Then the path - way climbed up - hill
When the way be - came un - known
I sur - ren - der my con - trol



March - ing on with proud ___ bra - va - do
Life got hard - er past ___ the ___ cra - dle
So - lid ground gave way ___ to ___ gra - vel
Christ is still my sure ___ com - pan - ion

10

Claim - ing Je - sus as the way
 Je - sus Christ I fol - lowed still
 So I cling to Christ a - lone
 As the path be - fore un - folds

THE PRAYERS OF THE PEOPLE

Our prayers are always offered on behalf of the whole community.

Trusting in God's promise to reconcile all things, let us pray for the church, the well-being of creation, and a world in need.

A brief silence.

#1 Loving God, we trust that amid the ups and downs of our lives, that we are loved and strengthened by you. Help us to take a deep breath, perhaps take a step back and look for you and your guidance in all of our life experiences. Hear us. O God.

Your mercy is great.

#2 Creating God, your love enlivens. Restore balance to the earth's fragile habitats. Preserve wilderness lands, rainforests, and wildlife. Cleanse oceans and rivers. Make us good stewards of the earth. Hear us. O God.

Your mercy is great.

#3 Incarnate God, your love enlightens. Open our hearts and minds to fresh understandings of our faith. Deepen our love for you and for one another. Teach us to pray for our enemies. Hear us. O God.

Your mercy is great.

We give thanks that in baptism you form us into community. We pray for these members and friends of Bethlehem and their families: Dwight & Jan, Marcy & Tom, Brian & Melissa (Delaney, Emelia & Noah), Karen & Tom. We also pray for the ministry of our twinned parish in Shurugwi, Zimbabwe. Hear us. O God.

Your mercy is great.

Making yourself known to those struggling in body, mind or spirit, provide for those in any need.

We pray for those who are grieving, especially the family and friends of:

- Don G, who died on 3/4
- Barbara C, the mother-in-law of Linda J's daughter, who died 2/28
- Lisa H, sister of Pastor Lori N, who died 2/26

We pray for those in need of healing, especially:

- Paul A, friend of Carla V, who has entered hospice care at Isaiah House
- Daniel D, son of Susie and Dick D, who is recovering from anticipated brain surgery on 3/5
- Mark L, trombone instructor of James G
- Terri H, friend of Mike J, who has an aggressive tumor that is not responding to treatment

Hear these prayers we raise to you in our hearts or on our voice.

Silence for individual prayer.

Hear us. O God.

Your mercy is great.

Accompany us through all our wanderings, God of grace, and receive the prayers of our hearts, through Jesus Christ, our Savior.

Amen.

SHARING GOD'S MEAL

THE PEACE

The peace of Christ be with you always.

And also with you.

Share the peace in a way that cares for friend and neighbor.

If you worship virtually, share the peace through the comments section or text.

OFFERING

Information about supporting Bethlehem's ministry with your offerings is available in the Welcome insert in your pew rack or by visiting

blcfairport.org/support-our-ministry.

OFFERING OF MUSIC

Agnus Dei
(Lamb of God)

Michael Haydn

The Chancel Choir

OFFERTORY

Cre - ate in me a clean heart, O God, and re - new a right
spir - it with - in me. Cast me not a - way from your
pres - ence, and take not your Ho - ly Spir - it from me. Re -
store un - to me the joy of your sal - va - tion,
and up - hold me with your free Spir - it.

OFFERTORY PRAYER

Let us pray. God our provider,

you have not fed us with bread alone, but with words of grace and life. Bless us and these your gifts, which we receive from your bounty, through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

GREAT THANKSGIVING

The Lord be with you.

And also with you.

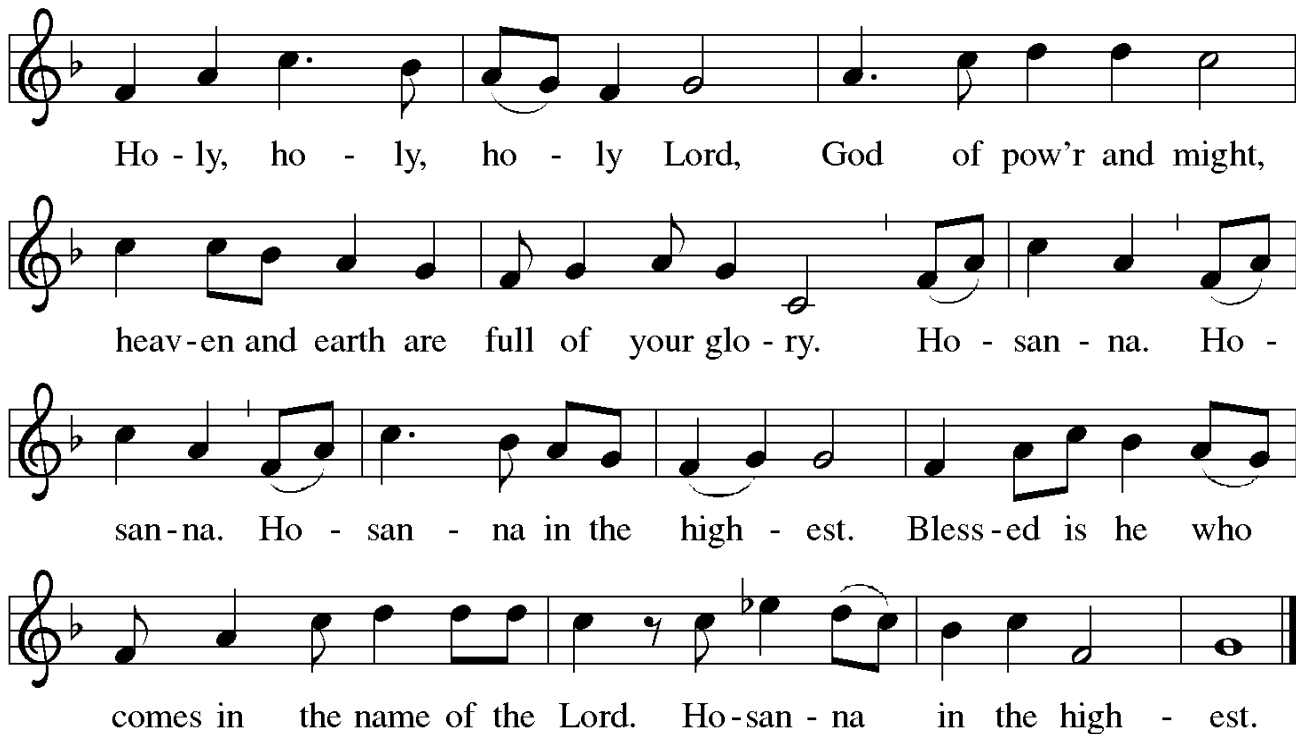
Lift up your hearts.

We lift them to the Lord.

Let us give thanks to the Lord our God.

It is right to give our thanks and praise.

It is indeed right, our duty and our joy . . . we praise your name and join their unending hymn:



Ho - ly, ho - ly, ho - ly Lord, God of pow'r and might,
heav-en and earth are full of your glo - ry. Ho - san - na. Ho -
san-na. Ho - san - na in the high - est. Bless-ed is he who
comes in the name of the Lord. Ho-san - na in the high - est.

WORDS OF INSTITUTION

THE LORD'S PRAYER

We pray as Jesus taught us:

Our Father in heaven,

hallowed be your name,

your kingdom come,

your will be done,

on earth as in heaven.

Give us today our daily bread.

Forgive us our sins

as we forgive those who

**sin against us.
Save us from the time of trial
and deliver us from evil.
For the kingdom, the power,
and the glory are yours,
now and forever. Amen**

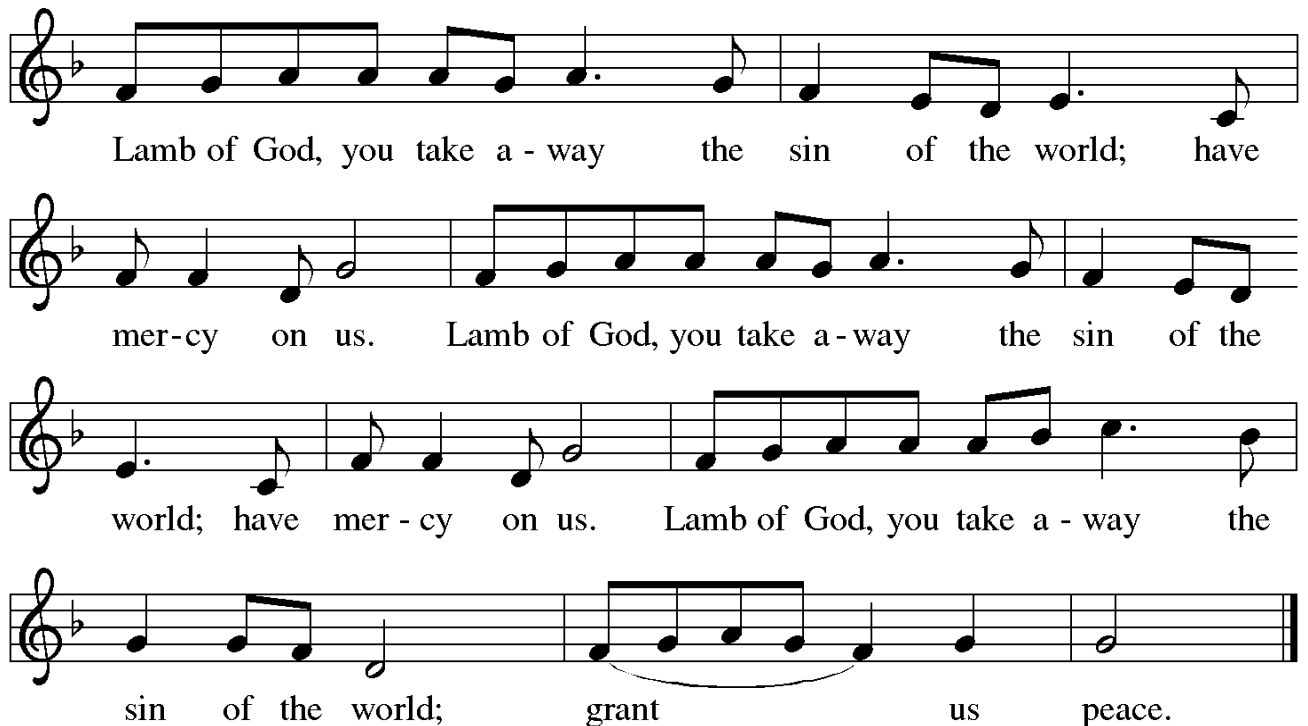
INVITATION TO COMMUNION

Come! Receive bread for the journey; a feast for wandering hearts.
Thanks be to God!

DISTRIBUTION OF COMMUNION

Our communion bread is gluten-free, unless noted by the pastor. Grape juice is available; indicate your need to the communion assistant. If you worship through the Livestream and wish to receive communion, please reach out to one of the pastors.

THE COMMUNION



Lamb of God, you take a - way the sin of the world; have
mer-cy on us. Lamb of God, you take a-way the sin of the
world; have mer - cy on us. Lamb of God, you take a - way the
sin of the world; grant us peace.

Cantor: Refrain/stanza 1

All: Refrain/st. 2, Refrain/st.3, Refrain

Spirit, Open My Heart

Refrain



Spir-it, o - pen my heart to the joy and pain of



liv-ing. As you love may I love, in re - ceiv - ing



and in giv - ing. Spir - it, o - pen my heart.



1 God, re - place my ston - y heart with a heart that's
2 Write your love up - on my heart as my law, my
3 May I weep with those who weep; share the joy of



kind and ten - der. All my cold - ness and
goal, my sto - ry. In each thought, word, and
friend and neigh - bor. As I live from day to

Refrain



fear to your grace I now sur - ren - der.
deed, may my liv - ing bring you glo - ry.
day, love will be my fin - est la - bor.

COMMUNION HYMN
O Jesus, I Have Promised

ELW 810

TABLE BLESSING

POST-COMMUNION PRAYER

Let us pray. Generous God, at this table we have tasted your immeasurable grace. As grains of wheat are gathered into one bread, now make us one loaf to feed the world; in the name of Jesus, the Bread of life.

Amen.

LEAVING TO SERVE

BENEDICTION

Beloved wanderer, you are called. In the name of † Jesus, you are blessed. In both your ups and your downs, you always belong to God. Go now in peace. Go trusting that good news.

Amen.

SENDING HYMN

Take Up Your Cross, the Savior Said

ELW 667

DISMISSAL

Go in peace. Serve the Lord.

Thanks be to God!

POSTLUDE

Postlude on “The Glory of These Forty Days”
(ERHALT UNS, HERR)

setting, Matthew McConnell

BLC Musicians

Raelynn Clare, Music Director and Organist

Dr. Jim Jefferis, Director of The Chancel Choir

Rich Towsley, Director of The Folk Group and BLC Dulcimers

Additional musical leadership provided by:

Olivia Finkbeiner, French horn

Kathy Moragne, cantor

Donna Berner, cantor

Thank you to all those who participated in worship this Sunday! Want to learn more about what roles are needed in worship or sign-up for a pre-scheduled role? Talk with Mark Finke or one of the pastors following worship or contact Mark directly at volunteersupport@blcfairport.org.

Communicate with us: Share more about who you are, request further information, or leave a prayer request or comment through our website - <https://blcfairport.org/share-in-worship/> - scroll down the page to request or share information.

What's happening at BLC this week? Visit the Calendar of Events at www.blcfairport.org. Zoom links for virtual meetings are also found there. If you would like to schedule a meeting or event, please email the church office at office@blcfairport.org or visit <https://blcfairport.org/blc-facility-request/>

Church office hours: Our co-Pastors are available Sunday-Thursday and on-call for emergencies. Contact them directly to schedule an appointment either by calling (585) 223-0634 or emailing pastor.hoffman@blcfairport.org or pastor.amy@blcfairport.org.

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Postlude: Postlude on "The Glory of These Forty Days" Music: Matthew McConnell

Tune: ERHALT UNS, HERR from *Geistliche Lieder*, 1543, © 2017 Lorenz Publishing Co.

About our Theme: Wandering Heart

This Lent, we are focusing on the life and faith of one of Jesus' most famous disciples. In Peter, we see a person who is both steadfast and unsteady, a dear friend and a betrayer, a follower and a wanderer. In Peter, we often see ourselves. By following Peter's journey, we watch the story of Jesus unfold through the eyes of a very normal human trying to figure it all out—just like us.

Each week, a phrase from "*Come, Thou Fount of Ev'ry Blessing*" serves as our theme. It's as if Peter himself wrote this song. As we follow Peter's story, we will sing our way through Lent, binding our wandering hearts to God.

Come, thou Fount of ev'ry blessing, *tune my heart* to sing thy grace;
streams of mercy, never ceasing, call for *songs of loudest praise*.
Teach me some melodious sonnet, sung by flaming tongues above.
Praise the mount—I'm fixed upon it—mount of God's redeeming love.

Here I raise my Ebenezer: "Hither by thy help I've come";
and I hope, by thy good pleasure, safely to arrive at home.
Jesus sought me when a stranger, wand'ring from the fold of God;
he, to *rescue me from danger*, interposed his precious blood.

Oh, to grace how great a debtor daily I'm constrained to be;
let that grace now like a fetter bind my wand'ring heart to thee.
Prone to wander, Lord, I feel it; *prone to leave the God I love*.
Here's my heart, oh, take and seal it; seal it for thy courts above.

(Text: Robert Robinson, 1735-1790)

In this series, we affirm that faith is a constant journey of steadfast pursuit, one that ebbs and flows, seeks and wanders. In Peter's story, we are reminded that God loves imperfect people—in fact, time and again, that's precisely who God claims and calls.