



Jesus: a way in the
WILDERNESS

Sunday, March 30, 2025
Fourth Sunday in Lent



48 Perrin Street, Fairport, NY ~ (585) 223-0634 ~ www.blcfairport.org

PRELUDE

Partita on “Kingsfold”

(I Heard the Voice of Jesus Say)

setting, Charles Callahan

English folk melody / R. Vaughan Williams

ANNOUNCEMENTS

Psalm 32 proclaims: “Happy are they whose transgressions are forgiven, and whose sin is put away!” Happy are those who have “become the righteousness of God” in the merits of Christ Jesus. Happy are those for whom the forgiveness of God has “rolled away . . . the disgrace” of former times. Happy is the father at the return of his prodigal son. Happy are we that our sins are forgiven for Jesus’ sake. Rejoice!

GATHERING

CONFESSION AND FORGIVENESS

Blessed be the holy Trinity, † one God, who forgives all our sin, whose mercy endures forever.

Amen.

Let us return to God, confessing our sin in the assurance of God’s abiding forgiveness.

Silence is kept for reflection.

Forgiving One,

you are slow to anger and abounding in steadfast love, but our lives do not always reflect you and your love for the world. We do not show others the tender compassion you have shown to us. We do not welcome others with the radical hospitality you grant to all people. We oppress others, even though you have set us free again and again. We squander the abundant gifts of the earth. Transform our lives and guide us again in the way of the cross. Amen.

Beloved in Christ, God's arms are always stretched open wide to welcome the wandering ones home. In † Christ your sins are forgiven. You have a place in God's house forever.

Amen.

GATHERING HYMN	In the Cross of Christ I Glory	ELW 324
-----------------------	--------------------------------	---------

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

The musical score for the Kyrie consists of three staves of music in G major (one sharp) and 4/4 time. The first staff is for the Leader and the second for the Assembly. The lyrics are: "Lord, have mer - cy. Lord, have mer - cy." for the first two staves, and "Christ, have mer - cy. Christ, have mer - cy." for the next two staves, and "Lord, have mer - cy. Lord, have mer - cy." for the final two staves. The music is written in treble clef with a key signature of one sharp (F#) and a 4/4 time signature. The notes are: G4 (quarter), A4 (quarter), B4 (quarter), C5 (quarter), B4 (quarter), A4 (quarter), G4 (quarter) for the first staff. The second staff has the same notes. The third staff has the same notes. The fourth staff has the same notes. The fifth staff has the same notes. The sixth staff has the same notes. The seventh staff has the same notes. The eighth staff has the same notes. The ninth staff has the same notes. The tenth staff has the same notes. The eleventh staff has the same notes. The twelfth staff has the same notes. The thirteenth staff has the same notes. The fourteenth staff has the same notes. The fifteenth staff has the same notes. The sixteenth staff has the same notes. The seventeenth staff has the same notes. The eighteenth staff has the same notes. The nineteenth staff has the same notes. The twentieth staff has the same notes. The twenty-first staff has the same notes. The twenty-second staff has the same notes. The twenty-third staff has the same notes. The twenty-fourth staff has the same notes. The twenty-fifth staff has the same notes. The twenty-sixth staff has the same notes. The twenty-seventh staff has the same notes. The twenty-eighth staff has the same notes. The twenty-ninth staff has the same notes. The thirtieth staff has the same notes. The thirty-first staff has the same notes. The thirty-second staff has the same notes. The thirty-third staff has the same notes. The thirty-fourth staff has the same notes. The thirty-fifth staff has the same notes. The thirty-sixth staff has the same notes. The thirty-seventh staff has the same notes. The thirty-eighth staff has the same notes. The thirty-ninth staff has the same notes. The fortieth staff has the same notes. The forty-first staff has the same notes. The forty-second staff has the same notes. The forty-third staff has the same notes. The forty-fourth staff has the same notes. The forty-fifth staff has the same notes. The forty-sixth staff has the same notes. The forty-seventh staff has the same notes. The forty-eighth staff has the same notes. The forty-ninth staff has the same notes. The fiftieth staff has the same notes. The fifty-first staff has the same notes. The fifty-second staff has the same notes. The fifty-third staff has the same notes. The fifty-fourth staff has the same notes. The fifty-fifth staff has the same notes. The fifty-sixth staff has the same notes. The fifty-seventh staff has the same notes. The fifty-eighth staff has the same notes. The fifty-ninth staff has the same notes. The sixtieth staff has the same notes. The sixty-first staff has the same notes. The sixty-second staff has the same notes. The sixty-third staff has the same notes. The sixty-fourth staff has the same notes. The sixty-fifth staff has the same notes. The sixty-sixth staff has the same notes. The sixty-seventh staff has the same notes. The sixty-eighth staff has the same notes. The sixty-ninth staff has the same notes. The seventieth staff has the same notes. The seventy-first staff has the same notes. The seventy-second staff has the same notes. The seventy-third staff has the same notes. The seventy-fourth staff has the same notes. The seventy-fifth staff has the same notes. The seventy-sixth staff has the same notes. The seventy-seventh staff has the same notes. The seventy-eighth staff has the same notes. The seventy-ninth staff has the same notes. The eightieth staff has the same notes. The eighty-first staff has the same notes. The eighty-second staff has the same notes. The eighty-third staff has the same notes. The eighty-fourth staff has the same notes. The eighty-fifth staff has the same notes. The eighty-sixth staff has the same notes. The eighty-seventh staff has the same notes. The eighty-eighth staff has the same notes. The eighty-ninth staff has the same notes. The ninetieth staff has the same notes. The ninety-first staff has the same notes. The ninety-second staff has the same notes. The ninety-third staff has the same notes. The ninety-fourth staff has the same notes. The ninety-fifth staff has the same notes. The ninety-sixth staff has the same notes. The ninety-seventh staff has the same notes. The ninety-eighth staff has the same notes. The ninety-ninth staff has the same notes. The hundredth staff has the same notes.

PRAYER OF THE DAY

Let us pray. God of compassion, you welcome the wayward, and you embrace us all with your mercy. By our baptism clothe us with garments of your grace, and feed us at the table of your love, through Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever.

Amen.

HEARING GOD'S WORD

DISMISSAL TO WORSHIP FOR KIDS

All kids ages 3 through elementary are welcome to a special time of hearing the Word, conversation and activity! Parents can remain in the sanctuary while the kids gather in the room across the hall from the side entrance to the sanctuary. Kids will return during the offering so they can participate in Communion.

READING: 2 Corinthians 5:16-21

One way to describe the gospel is the promise that in Christ everything is transformed into newness. All mistakes, all deliberate sins, all old history is reconciled with Christ's resurrection. This is Paul's strong message to the congregation in the city of Corinth,

¹⁶ From now on, therefore, we regard no one from a human point of view; even though we once knew Christ from a human point of view, we no longer know him in that way. ¹⁷ So if anyone is in Christ, there is a new creation: everything old has passed away; look, new things have come into being! ¹⁸ All this is from God, who reconciled us to himself through Christ and has given us the ministry of reconciliation; ¹⁹ that is, in Christ God was reconciling the world to himself, not counting their trespasses against them, and entrusting the message of reconciliation to us. ²⁰ So we are ambassadors for Christ, since God is making his appeal through us; we entreat you on behalf of Christ: be reconciled to God. ²¹ For our sake God made the one who knew no sin to be sin, so that in him we might become the righteousness of God.

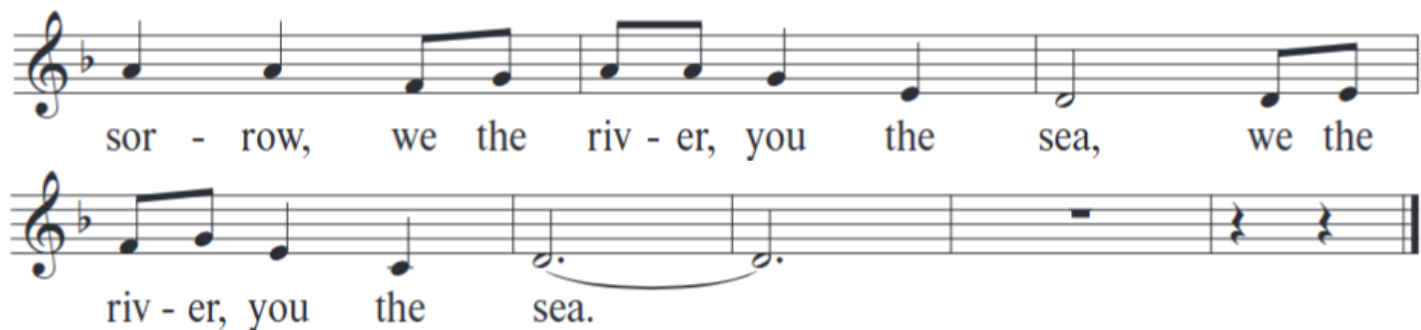
The word of the Lord.

Thanks be to God.

GOSPEL ACCLAMATION



Christ, you lead and we shall fol - low, stum-bling
though our steps may be; one with you in joy and



The holy gospel according to Luke.
Glory to you, O Lord.

GOSPEL: Luke 15:1-3, 11b-32

Jesus tells a parable about a son who ponders his father's love only after he has spurned it. The grace he receives is beyond his hopes. That same grace is a crisis for an older brother who believes it is his obedience that has earned his place in the father's home.

¹ Now all the tax collectors and sinners were coming near to listen to [Jesus.] ² And the Pharisees and the scribes were grumbling and saying, “This fellow welcomes sinners and eats with them.”

³ So he told them this parable: ^{11b} “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. 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. 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.

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 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!’ 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.’ ”
The gospel of the Lord.

Praise to you, O Christ.

SERMON

Take a breath to reflect on God’s Word in silence before we begin to sing the hymn of the day.

HYMN OF THE DAY	Amazing Grace, How Sweet the Sound	ELW 779
------------------------	------------------------------------	---------

RECOGNITION AND THANKSGIVING FOR MINISTRY

THE PRAYERS OF THE PEOPLE

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

Led by the Spirit, let us turn to God in prayer for the church, the world, and all those in need.

A brief silence.

#1 God of faithful promise, make your church a new creation in Christ. As you reconcile us to yourself, guide us also in your way of reconciliation, that through confession and forgiveness, repentance and reparation, your church may bear witness to your love. God, in your mercy,
receive our prayer.

#2 God of new beginnings, restore balance to the earth. Send rain to places of drought and sunshine to places of flooding, that the produce of the land may again support life. God, in your mercy,
receive our prayer.

#3 God of prodigal grace, unite the nations as fellow members of the human family. Give leaders the courage to put aside pride and ego, to cease squandering lives and time, and to work for the well-being of all. God in your mercy,
receive our prayer.

We pray for children, youth, and young adults, called to lead us into your future especially: Emelia, Elizabeth, Emerson, Emmett, and Evan. We pray also for our twinned parish in Shurugwi, Zimbabwe, called to minister to its community in love. God in your mercy,
receive our prayer.

We pray for those in need, called to receive your compassion.

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

- Barbara S., mother of Kathy F's daughter-in-law, who died on 3/25
- Richard S, former husband of Donna B's sister, who died on 3/17
- Jeff, especially his wife, Cynthia. Jeff and Cynthia are long-time friends of Bob and Julie S. Jeff died from cancer on Monday, 3/16

We pray for those in need of healing, especially:

- Dale S, who is recovering from recent hospitalization

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

Silence for individual prayer.

God in your mercy,
receive our prayer.

Receive the prayers of your people and draw all things together in your love, in the name of Jesus, who leads us from death to life.

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

Thank you for your offerings that support the ongoing ministry that we share. 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 or scan the QR (quick response) code on the right and you'll be brought to BLC's mobile giving page.



OFFERING OF MUSIC

I Will Arise and Go to Jesus

(RESTORATION)

text, Joseph Hart

music, arr. Michael Card / Craig Duncan

Southern folk melody / trad. Irish reel

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. Gracious Provider,
you give us all that we need: faithfulness, mercy, compassion, forgiveness, and love and open your heart to the world. As we prepare to feast on your bounty, deepen our commitment to sharing those provisions with others, through our Savior, Jesus Christ. Amen.

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

Here is food and drink for the journey. Take and be filled.

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.

THE COMMUNION

The musical score is written on a single treble clef staff in a key signature of one flat (Bb). It consists of three lines of music with lyrics underneath. The first line has a 3/4 time signature, followed by a 2/4 time signature, and ends with a 4/4 time signature. The second line is marked 'To repeat' and starts with a 4/4 time signature, followed by a 3/4 time signature, and ends with a double bar line and repeat dots. The third line is marked 'Last time' and starts with a 4/4 time signature, followed by a 3/4 time signature, and ends with a double bar line and repeat dots.

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

HYMN FOR COMMUNION

Come, Bring Your Burdens to God

ACS 1009

Cantors: First 2 times

All: Repeat 4 more times

Wo - za nom - thwa - lo wa - kho; wo - za nom -
Come, bring your bur - dens to God; come, bring your

thwa - lo wa - kho; wo - za nom - thwa - lo wa - kho, U -
bur - dens to God; come, bring your bur - dens to God, for

ye - s'a - ka - so - za - thi hayi.
Je - sus will nev - er say no.

HYMN FOR COMMUNION

Kum ba Yah

(Come by here)

African American spiritual

1 ***Kum*** *ba yah, my Lord, kum ba yah. ***Kum*** *ba yah, my Lord, kum ba yah.*
Kum *ba yah, my Lord, kum ba yah. **O** *Lord, kum ba yah.***

2 *Someone's crying, Lord, kum ba yah ...*

3 *Someone's singing, Lord, kum ba yah ...*

4 *Someone's praying, Lord, kum ba yah ...*

TABLE BLESSING

POST-COMMUNION PRAYER

Let us pray. Generous Host, you have shared your feast with us and sustained us with your very self. Send us now to set tables of love and grace in our communities, that your loving presence might nourish the world, in the name of the crucified one, Jesus Christ our Lord.

Amen.

LEAVING TO SERVE

BENEDICTION

May God who calls us to travel along new paths and through unknown perils fill us with faith and courage, and may † Christ's hand lead us in love and support us each step of the way by the power of the Spirit.

Amen.

SENDING HYMN	My Life Flows On in Endless Song	ELW 763
---------------------	----------------------------------	---------

DISMISSAL

Go in peace. Jesus walks with you.

Thanks be to God.

CHORAL BENEDICTION

Lead Me, Lord

text, based on Psalms 4:8 and 5:8
music, Samuel Sebastian Wesley

*Lead me, Lord, lead me in thy righteousness;
make thy way plain before my face.
For it is thou, Lord, thou, Lord only,
that makest me dwell in safety.*

During the season of Lent we omit the Postlude and provide space for silence and reflection following worship. Please honor this time of meditation by moving conversations outside of the sanctuary.

BLC Pastors

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

BLC Musicians

Raelynn Clare, Music Director and Organist

Chrisanne Gates, Chancel Choir Director

Rich Towsley, Director of The Folk Group and BLC Dulcimers

Additional musical leadership provided by:

James Berner, guitar / vocals

Sue Cardinal, flute

Kathy Moragne, cantor / percussion

Rich Towsley, guitar / percussion

Dave Wideman, cantor / percussion

The flowers on the altar . . . are given to the glory of God in honor of Sarah Morrissette in thanks for her ministry at BLC

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 one of the pastors following worship or send an email to volunteersupport@blcfairport.org and we'll follow up!

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.

Augsburg Fortress resources are being livestreamed by permission. All rights reserved.
From *Sundays and Seasons.com*. Copyright 2025 Augsburg Fortress. All rights reserved.
Reprinted by permission under Augsburg Fortress Liturgies Annual License #43732.
Permission to stream and print the music in this service obtained from One License under Annual License #A-724002
NRSVue Bible, copyright 2021, Division of Christian Education
Of the National Council of Churches of Christ in the United States of America.
"Partita on Kingsfold", Tune: English folk melody / Ralph Vaughn Williams
Music: Charles Callahan, © 1997 Concordia Publishing House
"I Will Arise and Go to Jesus / Musical Priest", Text: Joseph Hart, Music: Southern folk melody / traditional Irish reel
Arranger: Michael Card and Craig Duncan, © 1998 Mole End Music (adm. World Music, Inc.) / Craig Duncan Music
"Lamb of God", Music: Marty Haugen, from Mass of Creation, © 1984, 1985, 2010, GIA Publications, Inc.
"Come, Bring Your Burdens to God", Text: South African; English text – B. Clark, M. Munro, and M. Stemerick
Music: South African melody, Arranger: Welile Sigabi, © 2008 WGRG, Iona Community (adm. GIA Publications, Inc.)
"Lead Me, Lord", Text: based on Psalms 4:8 and 5:8, Music: Samuel Sebastian Wesley

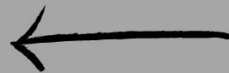
*Join BLC's email list
to receive our weekly
STAR e-newsletter
and other
announcements!*



between sundays 



Find episodes of our
podcast here!



Less Grumbling, More Humbling

Grumbling! The crowd around Jesus—the “in” crowd, that is—was grumbling. Grumbling because Jesus welcomed those who traditionally had been set apart: tax collectors and sinners. Who are those who cause us to grumble? Whose seemingly undeserved handout or unearned status change filled our hearts with resentment this week? Jesus speaks to us today because we too often see life as a game with winners and losers, points and playbooks, offense and defense. Can we open our hearts and minds to hear today’s humbling good news? God’s love is freely shared with all: we cannot earn it, we cannot deserve it. When we attend worship, we do so out of thanksgiving and praise for God’s glory, hunger and thirst for God’s word and sacrament. We do not attend worship to achieve some status within God’s kingdom. When we help a neighbor, share with a stranger, assist the afflicted, or acknowledge the overlooked we do so because Christ first did the same for us. We respond to God’s grace and mercy with our own feeble attempts to emulate God’s perfect love. It is challenging, exhausting, never-ending, perspective-altering, radically humbling work. It’s work that is impossible to do without the inspiration of Christ, the nourishment of wine and bread, and the strength of the saints who have gone before us and with whom we walk Christ’s path today. Let us find those in our world who teach us about Christ’s unending reconciliation, so that we can all celebrate and rejoice as the family of God.