

**“Bonded in Christ’s love, we teach, preach, and equip God’s people for discipleship here and throughout the world.**



## **Lenten Service**

**March 11, 2026**

**Rev. Dr. Renae Koehler**

*For those who are hearing challenged, Zion has digital listening devices for your use during worship. Please ask a council member for one and they will show you how to use it.*

### **Prelude**

### **Greeting**

### **Call to Worship**

P - Come, all who carry heavy burdens of shame.

**C - We come seeking healing and truth.**

P - Come, all who were told that you were unworthy, broken, or beyond repair.

**C - We come to remember that we are loved.**

P - There was a time when shame was used to control the human spirit.

**C - But the Holy Spirit calls us to freedom.**

P - There was a time when people were told they were fundamentally sinful and unworthy.

**C - But Jesus taught that we are beloved and capable of growth.**

P - Shame tried to convince us that we were the mistake.

**C - But God teaches us that we may make mistakes without becoming them.**

P - We gather to remember that love is the path of transformation.

**C - We open our hearts to healing, growth, and new life.**

**Opening Hymn - Joyous Light of Heavenly Glory      ELW #561**

Joyous light of heavenly glory,  
loving glow of God's own face,  
you who sing creation's story,  
shine on every land and race.  
Now as evening falls around us,  
we shall raise our songs to you.  
God of daybreak, God of shadows,  
come and light our hearts anew.

In the stars that grace the darkness,  
in the blazing sun of dawn,  
in the light of peace and wisdom,  
we can hear your quiet song.  
Love that fills the night with wonder,  
love that warms the weary soul,  
love that bursts all chains asunder,  
set us free and make us whole.

You who made the heaven's splendor,  
every dancing star of night,  
make us shine with gentle justice,  
let us each reflect your light.  
Mighty God of all creation,  
gentle Christ who lights our way,  
loving Spirit of salvation,  
lead us on to endless day.

**Prayer**

P - Holy Mystery of Life and Love,

**C - You know the deep places of our hearts. You know the times when we were told that we were not good enough and all**

**the shame we carry. Tonight we lay our shame at your feet, knowing that you do not want us to carry it any longer. Help us build communities where people are uplifted instead of pushed down, where healing replaces humiliation, and where love becomes the soil in which real change grows. May we learn to see ourselves as you see us; worthy, capable, and loved. Amen.**

**Scripture Luke 15:11-24 The Prodigal Son**

**Hymn - Amazing Grace ELW #779 vs 1**

Amazing Grace, how sweet the sound, that saved a wretch like me. I once was lost, but now, I'm found. Was blind, but now, I see.

**Homily**

**Offering Hymn - Further Along**

Tempted and tried we're oft made to wonder,  
Why it should be thus all the day long;  
While there are others living about us,  
Never molested though in the wrong.

Refrain:

Farther along we'll know all about it,  
Farther along we'll understand why;  
Cheer up, don't worry, live in the sunshine,  
We'll understand it all by and by.

When death has come and taken our loved ones,  
It leaves our home so lonely and drear;  
Then do we wonder why others prosper,  
Living so wicked year after year. [Refrain]

Faithful till death said our loving Master,  
A few more days to labor and wait;  
Toils of the road will then seem as nothing,  
As we sweep through the beautiful gate. [Refrain]

When we see Jesus coming in glory,  
When He comes from His home in the sky;  
Then we shall meet Him in that bright mansion,  
We'll understand it all by and by. [Refrain]

Offering Sung Response - Doxology

**Praise God, from whom all blessings flow; Praise Him, all creatures here below; Praise Him above ye heav'nly host; Praise Father, Son, and Holy Ghost. Amen**

**Offering Blessing**

P- Loving God,

**C - we dedicate our offering, our lives, and all that we have to the work of compassion and grace. Receive our gifts and lead us in wisdom and courage. Amen**

Hymn - Nearer My God to Thee vs 1

**Nearer, my God, to thee, nearer to thee! E'en though it be a cross, that raiseth me, still all my song shall be, nearer, my God to Thee; nearer, my God to Thee, nearer to Thee!**

**Prayer for Healing from Shame**

P- Spirit of Life,

**C - Some of us carry wounds that cannot be seen. Harsh words spoken long ago still echo in our minds. Moments of failure still haunt our memories. Voices of judgment still whisper that we are not enough. Tonight we bring those burdens into the light. Now we know that growth does not come from humiliation, It comes from courage and**

**love. Therefore, we now release the lie that we are unworthy. We acknowledge our mistakes without destroying ourselves. We have begun to love ourselves as you love us. And the truth has set us free. Amen.**

Hymn - God Be with You Till We Meet Again ELW #536 vs 3  
**God be with you till we meet a-gain; when life's per-ils thick con-found you, put un-fail-ing arms a-round you; God be with you till we meet a-gain. Till we meet, till we meet, till we meet at Je-sus feet; till we meet, till we meet, God be with you till we meet a-gain.**

**Benediction/Blessing** (*Read responsively*)

P - Go into the world remembering this: You are a living soul capable of growth, healing, and goodness.

**C- I will walk with the courage to admit my mistakes, and the wisdom to know they do not define me.**

P - May you treat others with the same compassion that you are learning to give yourself.

**C - I will see others with the eyes of Jesus; loving, healing and welcoming.**

P - You are blessed in the name of the Creator, Christ, and Holy Spirit

**C - Amen**

**Sending Hymn - God, Who Made the Earth and Heaven ELW #564**

God, who made the earth and heaven,  
darkness and light:

you the day for work have given,  
for rest the night.

May your angel guards defend us,  
slumber sweet your mercy send us,  
holy dreams and hopes attend us  
all through the night.

And when morn again shall call us  
to run life's way,  
may we still, whate'er befall us,  
your will obey.  
From the pow'r of evil hide us,  
in the narrow pathway guide us,  
never be your smile denied us  
all through the day.

Guard us waking, guard us sleeping,  
and, when we die,  
may we in your mighty keeping  
all peaceful lie.  
When the last dread call shall wake us,  
then, O Lord, do not forsake us,  
but to reign in glory take us  
with you on high.

Holy Father, throned in heaven,  
all-holy Son,  
Holy Spirit, freely given,  
blest Three in One:  
grant us grace, we now implore you,  
till we lay our crowns before you  
and in worthier strains adore you  
while ages run.

**P -Go in Peace and Serve the Lord**  
**C - Thanks Be to God!**

Postlude