

A Service of Song, Word, & Table
February 22, 2026

* Please rise in body or spirit.

WELCOME

PRELUDE Go Down in the Lonesome Valley H.T. Burliegh Marshal
Hollingsworth, baritone

CALL TO WORSHIP

Today, we follow Jesus into a wilderness full of isolation, fatigue, hunger, thirst, and temptation.

We follow, trusting in God's mercy.

We witness Jesus resist the siren calls of sensationalism, notoriety, and misuse of power for selfish gain.

We recognize God's mercy at work in the face of temptation.

We notice the angels who tend Jesus, messengers of care in a harsh and lonely place.

We pay attention to God's merciful presence that did not abandon Jesus and does not abandon us now.

We come to the wilderness together, clinging to the truth that we are not alone—God is with us.

We gather to worship God, whose unfailing mercy journeys with us into the wildernesses of our lives. Thanks be to God! Amen.

HYMN All Hail the Power of Jesus' Name UMH 154

*** A READING FROM THE GOSPELS**

Matthew 4:1-11

This is the Word of God for the People of God.

Thanks be to God!

(11:00) ANTHEM Gather at the River Susan LaBarr Chancel Choir/Brock
Willard, conductor

HOMILY

MUSICAL RESPONSE Be Still My Soul UMH 534

PRAYER OF CONFESSION & ASSURANCE OF PARDON

Gracious and merciful God,

we confess to you our reluctance to enter the wilderness places

where we are confronted with our true selves.

The places where we are tempted to put worldly values

before our desire for you,
and when our hunger for power and wealth is greater
than our hunger for seeking and doing your will:
Forgive us, O God, and increase our trust in you.
When we are tempted to use the gifts you give us
to benefit ourselves at the expense of serving others:
Forgive us, O God, and increase our trust in you.
When we are tempted to use sensational means to increase people's faith,
rather than being guided by the humility of Christ:
Forgive us, O God, and increase our trust in you.
When we are tempted to use bribery to influence and control people:
Forgive us, O God, and increase our trust in you.
When we are tempted to manipulate you, O God, to satisfy our own needs:
Forgive us, O God, and increase our trust in you.

A time of silence for personal confession

Merciful God,
save us from the time of trial and deliver us from evil.
Forgive us our sins and fill us with the joy and peace of your salvation.
So strengthen us with your Spirit during this Lenten season
that we put our whole trust in you as confidently as Jesus did.
This we pray in Jesus' name. Amen

As the apostle Paul wrote:

"...if you confess with your lips that Jesus Christ is Lord
and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead,
you will be saved." (Romans 10:9)

These words contain the good news
that in Jesus Christ, we are forgiven.
Thanks be to God!

PASSING OF THE PEACE

REGATHERING HYMN Jesus Walked This Lonesome Valley (vs 1,2) TFWS 2112

INVITATION TO OFFERING & CHURCH ANNOUNCEMENTS

OFFERTORY PRAYER

Surprising God of Mercy, you meet us in wilderness places and walk beside us through trial and temptation. Even when we feel alone, your grace is never far, your presence never absent. In this moment of giving, we offer not just our resources, but our trust that you are already at work, shaping us through challenge, strengthening us through sacrifice, and surrounding us with unseen angels. Use these gifts to bring hope where there is hunger, healing where there is pain, and light where there is despair. May what we give reflect our desire to walk more closely with you, even in the hard places.

In Christ's name we pray, Amen.

OFFERTORY

8:30 Dr. Daniel Cummings, piano
11:00 In the Shadow of Your Wings
Handbells

Karen L. Buckwalter Mass ApPeal

DOXOLOGY

UMH 95

Praise God, From Whom All Blessings Flow

THE GREAT THANKSGIVING

TFWS 2257 b,c,d

May the God of discipleship be with you.

And also with you.

Let us begin our Lenten journey with open hearts.

We offer them to the One who walks with us.

Let our voices resound with thanksgiving to the One who shows us faithful care.

We rejoice in our God of hope and love.

You held nothing back,
Gardener of grace,
as the Spirit led creation
into the hinterlands of nothingness:
 spreading rich soil in the valleys,
 planting seedlings and flower bulbs,
 making mountains from river clay,
 sprinkling water over everything.
Mornings came in Eden's beauty,
all that wonder and goodness
given for your children,
 but we listened to evil's whispers,
 believing those lies so easily told.
Like a crew launching in boat
to rescue those who are adrift,
prophets came, counseling us
to let go of our stubbornness
and return to your side,
 but with our eyes wide open,
 we followed that path which
 took us away from the middle of the garden.
So you sent Jesus to us,
that free gift of grace for all.

With the faithful who have gone before us,
with companions through this journey today,
we offer glad songs of deliverance:

Holy, holy, holy Lord, God of power and might,

**Heaven and earth are full of your glory.
Hosanna in the highest! Hosanna in the highest! Hosanna in the highest!
Blest is the one who comes in the name of the Lord.
Hosanna in the highest! Hosanna in the highest! Hosanna in the highest!**

You alone are holy, Hope of our lives,
and Jesus Christ is your blessed righteousness.
When we got what we wanted
in knowing both good and evil,
 he came, so we might receive
 what we need most - your grace.
When we left the garden
to enter the deserts of temptation,
 he came , to show us
 the path back to your heart.
When we had given control
of our lives to sin and death,
 he came, to break their hold on us
 as he was resurrected from the grave.

As we begin to follow him to Jerusalem,
as we would choose to embrace his suffering,
we speak of that free gift called faith:

**Christ has died, Christ is risen, Christ will come again.
Hosanna in the highest! Hosanna in the highest! Hosanna in the highest!**

You hold nothing back from us
as the Spirit comes to rest
on the gifts of the bread and the cup,
so that those gathered might be fed.
Like your heart, the bread is broken,
so we might be made whole and,
 by our healing, go forth
 to bring hope to those around us.
Like your Child, the cup is poured out,
so we might be filled with your grace, and
 go out into the world
 to empty ourselves for others.

And when our journeys in and out
of the wildernesses of the world are ended,
you will gather us around the
great Feast of the Lamb,
where we will sing glad songs of joy to you,

God in Community, Holy in One. Amen.

LORD'S PRAYER (SPOKEN IN YOUR HEART LANGUAGE)

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 trespasses as we forgive those who trespass 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.

Amen response. Amen, amen, amen. Hosanna in the highest! Hosanna in the highest! Hosanna in the highest!

MUSIC AT COMMUNION

Dr. Daniel Cummings

INVITATION TO CHRISTIAN DISCIPLESHIP

* **SENDING HYMN** I've Got Peace Like a River TFWS 2145

BENEDICTION

Go, now, in the comfort and blessing of God's mercy, trusting that wherever you go, God's steadfast love surrounds you, sustains you, and supports you for the journey ahead. Amen.

POSTLUDE

Dr. Daniel Cummings