

# Woden Valley Uniting Church



15 March 2026

Lent 4

*Jesus practised radical inclusion! All are welcome here.*



## **WE GATHER AS PEOPLE OF GOD**

**The Gong is struck three times.** *The gong calls us to gather, to be present in this time of worship.*

**Prelude** *(a time for quiet preparation).*

**Acknowledgement of First Peoples**

**Lighting the Community Candle**

**Come light, light of hope and love, give light to creation  
Enlighten our hearts and show us your truth.**

May this candle be to us a tangible reminder of the spirit that is here with us today. **Amen**

## A Lenten Call to Worship<sup>1</sup>

And the table will be wide.

**And the welcome will be wide.**

And the arms will be opened wide to gather us in.

**And our hearts will be opened wide to receive.**

And we will come as children who trust there is enough.

**And we will come unhindered and free.**

And our aching will be met with bread.

**And our sorrow will be met with wine.**

And we will open our hands to the feast without shame.

**And we will turn to each other without fear.**

And we will give up our appetite for despair.

**And we will taste and know delight.**

And we will become bread for a hungering world.

**And we will become drink for those who thirst.**

And the blessed will become the blessing.

**And everywhere will be the feast. Amen**

## Song: Come and find the quiet centre<sup>2</sup>

1. Come and find the quiet centre  
in the crowded life we lead,  
find the room for hope to enter,  
find the frame where we are freed:  
clear the chaos and the clutter,  
clear our eyes, that we can see  
all the things that really matter,  
be at peace, and simply be.

2. Silence is a friend who claims us,  
cools the heat and slows the pace,  
God it is who speaks and names us,  
knows our being, touches base,  
making space within our thinking,  
lifting shades to show the sun,  
raising courage when we're shrinking,  
finding scope for faith begun.

3. In the Spirit let us travel,  
open to each other's pain,  
let our loves and fears unravel,  
celebrate the space we gain:  
there's a place for deepest dreaming,  
there's a time for heart to care,  
in the Spirit's lively scheming  
there is always room to spare.

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<sup>1</sup> And the Table is wide © Jan Richardson. janrichardson.com

<sup>2</sup> Shirley Erena Murray

## Welcome and Introduction

### Passing the Peace

In love, hope and unity, with vision and service, let us greet each other with a sign of peace. May the peace of the Lord be always with you. **And also with you.**

### Christ be our light...Bernadette Farrell<sup>3</sup>

1. Longing for truth, we turn to you.  
Make us your own, your holy people,  
light for the world to see.

**Refrain:** Christ, be our light! Shine in our hearts.  
Shine through the darkness.  
Christ, be our light!  
Shine in your church gathered today.

2. Longing for hope, many despair.  
Your word alone has pow'r to save us.  
Make us your living voice. **Refrain**
3. Longing for water, many still thirst.  
Make us your bread, broken for others,  
shared until all are fed. **Refrain**
4. Longing for warmth, many are cold.  
Make us your building, sheltering others,  
walls made of living stone. **Refrain**
5. Many the hearts that yearn to belong.  
Let us be servants to one another,  
making your kingdom come.

**Refrain:** Christ, be our light! Shine in our hearts.  
Shine through the darkness.  
Christ, be our light!  
Shine in your church gathered today.

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<sup>3</sup> <https://www.songlyrics.com/bernadette-farrell/christ-be-our-light-lyrics/>

## WE REFLECT ON WORDS FOR OUR TIME

### 1 Samuel 16:1-13

And the Lord said unto Samuel, How long wilt thou mourn for Saul, seeing I have rejected him from reigning over Israel? fill thine horn with oil, and go, I will send thee to Jesse the Bethlehemite: for I have provided me a king among his sons.

<sup>2</sup> And Samuel said, How can I go? if Saul hear it, he will kill me. And the Lord said, Take an heifer with thee, and say, I am come to sacrifice to the Lord.

<sup>3</sup> And call Jesse to the sacrifice, and I will shew thee what thou shalt do: and thou shalt anoint unto me him whom I name unto thee.

<sup>4</sup> And Samuel did that which the Lord spake, and came to Bethlehem. And the elders of the town trembled at his coming, and said, Comest thou peaceably?

<sup>5</sup> And he said, Peaceably: I am come to sacrifice unto the Lord: sanctify yourselves, and come with me to the sacrifice. And he sanctified Jesse and his sons, and called them to the sacrifice.

<sup>6</sup> And it came to pass, when they were come, that he looked on Eliab, and said, Surely the Lord's anointed is before him.

<sup>7</sup> But the Lord said unto Samuel, Look not on his countenance, or on the height of his stature; because I have refused him: for the Lord seeth not as man seeth; for man looketh on the outward appearance, but the Lord looketh on the heart.

<sup>8</sup> Then Jesse called Abinadab, and made him pass before Samuel. And he said, Neither hath the Lord chosen this.

<sup>9</sup> Then Jesse made Shammah to pass by. And he said, Neither hath the Lord chosen this.

<sup>10</sup> Again, Jesse made seven of his sons to pass before Samuel. And Samuel said unto Jesse, The Lord hath not chosen these.

<sup>11</sup> And Samuel said unto Jesse, Are here all thy children? And he said, There remaineth yet the youngest, and, behold, he keepeth the sheep. And Samuel said unto Jesse, Send and fetch him: for we will not sit down till he come hither.

<sup>12</sup> And he sent, and brought him in. Now he was ruddy, and withal of a beautiful countenance, and goodly to look to. And the Lord said, Arise, anoint him: for this is he.

<sup>13</sup> Then Samuel took the horn of oil, and anointed him in the midst of his brethren: and the Spirit of the Lord came upon David from that day forward. So Samuel rose up, and went to Ramah.

## Psalm 23 (Responsive) *(Please remain seated)*

by Bobby McFerrin, adapted

The musical score is written for two staves, Treble and Bass clef, in 4/4 time. The lyrics are: "The Lord is my shepherd I have all I need She makes me ... meadows Beside the still wa-ters She will lead." The score is divided into four parts: "People:" (first two measures), "Cantors:" (next two measures), "People:" (next two measures), and "Cantors:" (last two measures). The melody is simple and repetitive, with a consistent bass line.

*People:* **The Lord is my Shepherd,**  
*Cantor:* I have all I need;  
**She makes me lie down in green meadows**  
beside the still waters, She will lead.

**She restores my soul,**  
She rights my wrongs,  
**She leads me in a path of good things,**  
and fills my heart with songs.

**Even though I walk,**  
through a dark and dreary land,  
**There is nothing that can shake me,**  
She has said She won't forsake me, I'm in her hand.

**She sets a table before me,**  
in the presence of my foes  
**She anoints my head with oil**  
and my cup overflows.

**Surely goodness and kindness will follow me**  
all the days of my life,  
**and I will live in her house forever**  
for ever, and ever.

## Ephesians 5:8-14

<sup>8</sup> For you were once darkness, but now you are light in the Lord. Live as children of light<sup>9</sup> (for the fruit of the light consists in all goodness, righteousness and truth)<sup>10</sup> and find out what pleases the Lord. <sup>11</sup> Have nothing to do with the fruitless deeds of darkness, but rather expose them. <sup>12</sup> It is shameful even to mention what the disobedient do in secret. <sup>13</sup> But everything exposed by the light becomes visible—and everything that is illuminated becomes a light. <sup>14</sup> This is why it is said:

“Wake up, sleeper,  
rise from the dead,  
and Christ will shine on you.”

## **John 9:1-41**

### **Jesus Heals a Man Born Blind**

As he went along, he saw a man blind from birth. <sup>2</sup> His disciples asked him, “Rabbi, who sinned, this man or his parents, that he was born blind?”

<sup>3</sup> “Neither this man nor his parents sinned,” said Jesus, “but this happened so that the works of God might be displayed in him. <sup>4</sup> As long as it is day, we must do the works of him who sent me. Night is coming, when no one can work. <sup>5</sup> While I am in the world, I am the light of the world.”

<sup>6</sup> After saying this, he spit on the ground, made some mud with the saliva, and put it on the man’s eyes. <sup>7</sup> “Go,” he told him, “wash in the Pool of Siloam” (this word means “Sent”). So the man went and washed, and came home seeing.

<sup>8</sup> His neighbors and those who had formerly seen him begging asked, “Isn’t this the same man who used to sit and beg?” <sup>9</sup> Some claimed that he was. Others said, “No, he only looks like him.” But he himself insisted, “I am the man.”

<sup>10</sup> “How then were your eyes opened?” they asked. <sup>11</sup> He replied, “The man they call Jesus made some mud and put it on my eyes. He told me to go to Siloam and wash. So I went and washed, and then I could see.”

<sup>12</sup> “Where is this man?” they asked him. “I don’t know,” he said.

### **The Pharisees Investigate the Healing**

<sup>13</sup> They brought to the Pharisees the man who had been blind. <sup>14</sup> Now the day on which Jesus had made the mud and opened the man’s eyes was a Sabbath. <sup>15</sup> Therefore the Pharisees also asked him how he had received his sight. “He put mud on my eyes,” the man replied, “and I washed, and now I see.”

<sup>16</sup> Some of the Pharisees said, “This man is not from God, for he does not keep the Sabbath.” But others asked, “How can a sinner perform such signs?” So they were divided.

<sup>17</sup> Then they turned again to the blind man, “What have you to say about him? It was your eyes he opened.” The man replied, “He is a prophet.”

<sup>18</sup> They still did not believe that he had been blind and had received his sight until they sent for the man's parents. <sup>19</sup> "Is this your son?" they asked. "Is this the one you say was born blind? How is it that now he can see?"

<sup>20</sup> "We know he is our son," the parents answered, "and we know he was born blind. <sup>21</sup> But how he can see now, or who opened his eyes, we don't know. Ask him. He is of age; he will speak for himself." <sup>22</sup> His parents said this because they were afraid of the Jewish leaders, who already had decided that anyone who acknowledged that Jesus was the Messiah would be put out of the synagogue. <sup>23</sup> That was why his parents said, "He is of age; ask him."

<sup>24</sup> A second time they summoned the man who had been blind. "Give glory to God by telling the truth," they said. "We know this man is a sinner."

<sup>25</sup> He replied, "Whether he is a sinner or not, I don't know. One thing I do know. I was blind but now I see!"

<sup>26</sup> Then they asked him, "What did he do to you? How did he open your eyes?"

<sup>27</sup> He answered, "I have told you already and you did not listen. Why do you want to hear it again? Do you want to become his disciples too?"

<sup>28</sup> Then they hurled insults at him and said, "You are this fellow's disciple! We are disciples of Moses! <sup>29</sup> We know that God spoke to Moses, but as for this fellow, we don't even know where he comes from."

<sup>30</sup> The man answered, "Now that is remarkable! You don't know where he comes from, yet he opened my eyes. <sup>31</sup> We know that God does not listen to sinners. He listens to the godly person who does his will. <sup>32</sup> Nobody has ever heard of opening the eyes of a man born blind. <sup>33</sup> If this man were not from God, he could do nothing."

<sup>34</sup> To this they replied, "You were steeped in sin at birth; how dare you lecture us!" And they threw him out.

## **Spiritual Blindness**

<sup>35</sup> Jesus heard that they had thrown him out, and when he found him, he said, "Do you believe in the Son of Man?"

<sup>36</sup> "Who is he, sir?" the man asked. "Tell me so that I may believe in him."

<sup>37</sup> Jesus said, "You have now seen him; in fact, he is the one speaking with you."

<sup>38</sup> Then the man said, "Lord, I believe," and he worshiped him.

<sup>39</sup> Jesus said, <sup>[a]</sup> "For judgment I have come into this world, so that the blind will see and those who see will become blind."

<sup>40</sup> Some Pharisees who were with him heard him say this and asked, "What? Are we blind too?" <sup>41</sup> Jesus said, "If you were blind, you would not be guilty of sin; but now that you claim you can see, your guilt remains."

## Reflection

### Music for Reflection

## WE RESPOND TO THE WORD

Hymn: TIS 410 – Holy Spirit, ever dwelling

### Offerings

**The Care Candle Song - Aaron Harper** (*please remain seated; the care candle is lit*)

We take a match,  
And light a spark,  
To show the want within our hearts,  
To share each joy,  
To bear each pain,  
We take a spark,  
And light a flame.

We take a flame,  
And light a fire,  
To represent our heart's desire,  
To share our hopes,  
To bear our shames,  
We take a spark and light a flame,  
We light a flame.

**Prayers of the People** (*Please remain seated*)

God of grace and truth,  
**We give thanks for life in all its fullness.**

For a life full of support and encouragement, given and received, to  
confront difficulties and challenges.

For a life full of love and care to comfort and be comforted in suffering

God of grace and truth,  
**We give thanks for life in all its fullness.**

For a life with enough to meet our needs and for a life free from fear and  
with boundless hope for our future.

For a life full of wonder to delight in each day as we celebrate and respect  
the miracle of our existence on our precious planet

God of grace and truth,  
**We give thanks for life in all its fullness.**

For a life with meaning, with being needed and knowing that we are not taken for  
granted. For a life full of passion for justice, reconciliation and acceptance of the  
differences that make us part of a wonderful whole

God of grace and truth,  
**We give thanks for life in all its fullness.**

We give thanks for the fullness of life that is open to us,  
And as we pray for ourselves, we pray for all people to be able to share the same  
freedoms and bounty, and for all people to be able to know life in all its fullness.

God of grace and truth,  
**We give thanks for life in all its fullness. Amen**

### **The Lord's Prayer**

**All Gracious Spirit,  
Who loves us like a mother and provides for us like a father,  
Whose realm is blooming among and within us now.  
We pray that your compassion guide us in every action.  
Give us what we need for each day,  
and help us to be satisfied with the miracle of that alone.  
Forgiver, whose embrace brings us to wholeness without our asking,  
May we reconcile ourselves to one another in humility.  
And may we cancel the crushing debts that imprison our neighbours  
So that communities of joy and health may flourish.  
May we neither profit from nor ignore evil.  
But ever work to thwart it with non-violence  
As we co-create the realm of peace in this world.  
Now and each day. Amen.**

### **WE GO OUT INTO THE WORLD**

#### **Song: Precious Lord, take my hand<sup>4</sup>**

- |   |  |
|---|--|
| 1. Precious Lord, take my hand<br>Lead me on, let me stand<br>I'm tired, I'm weak, I'm lone<br>Through the storm, through the night<br>Lead me on to the light<br>Take my hand, precious Lord<br>Lead me home | 2. When my way grows drear<br>Precious Lord, linger near<br>When my light is almost gone<br>Hear my cry, hear my call<br>Hold my hand, lest I fall<br>Take my hand precious Lord<br>Lead me home |
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<sup>4</sup> Thomas A. Dorsey at <https://www.songlyrics.com/thomas-a-dorsey/precious-lord-take-my-hand-lyrics/>

3. When the darkness appears  
And the night draws near  
And the day is past and gone  
At the river, I stand  
Guide my feet, hold my hand  
Take my hand precious Lord  
Lead me home

4. Precious Lord, take my hand  
Lead me on, let me stand  
I'm tired, I'm weak, I'm lone  
Through the storm, through the night  
Lead me on to the light  
Take my hand precious Lord  
Lead me home

## Words of Blessing<sup>5</sup>

### If there is righteousness in the heart

If there is righteousness in the heart,  
there will be beauty in the character.  
If there is beauty in the character,  
there will be harmony in the home.  
If there is harmony in the home,  
there will be order in the nation.  
If there is order in the nation,  
there will be peace in the world.  
**So let it be.**

**So let it be. Amen**

**Postlude** – *(Please remain seated)*

## Notices & Sharing

### Acknowledgements:

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<https://www.churchofscotland.org.uk/worship/weekly-worship/weekly-worship-2026-march/15-march-fourth-sunday-of-lent-year-a>; <https://www.songlyrics.com/bernadette-farrell/christ-be-our-light-lyrics/>; <https://www.songlyrics.com/thomas-a-dorsey/precious-lord-take-my-hand-lyrics/>; Scottish Blessing accessed at [https://www.faithandworship.com/Celtic\\_Blessings\\_and\\_Prayers.htm#gsc.tab=0](https://www.faithandworship.com/Celtic_Blessings_and_Prayers.htm#gsc.tab=0).

**Leader:** David Cran

**Music:** Brendan O'Loughlin

**Reader:** Libby Osborn

**Prayers:** Libby Coates

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<sup>5</sup> Scottish Blessing accessed at [https://www.faithandworship.com/Celtic\\_Blessings\\_and\\_Prayers.htm#gsc.tab=0](https://www.faithandworship.com/Celtic_Blessings_and_Prayers.htm#gsc.tab=0)