



**COMMUNITY CHURCH OF WALKER
UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST**

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“No matter who you are, or where you are, you are welcome here!”

***Everything [in] Between
Righteousness and Mercy
Fifth Sunday of Lent
April 6, 2025 – 10:00 a.m.***

Worship Leaders:

Pastor: Michael Small

Liturgist: Bev Jorland

Special Music: Community Choir

Greeter:

Keyboard: Sabbastian Wilson-Webb

Tech: Ace Diehl (Video), Esther Covert (Audio)
Spiritual Life, Chancel and Communion Preparation

PRELUDE

WORDS OF WELCOME

† **HYMN**

"I Love to Tell the Story"

#522

CALL TO WORSHIP

One: We come to worship because we long for mercy.

All: We long for community. We long for God.

One: We come to worship because we need a good word.

All: We need connection. We need moral reminders.

One: We come to worship because we are in between:

**All: hope and grief,
faith and doubt,
joy and longing,
curiosity and conviction.**

One: So we come to worship and God meets us here.

**All: Surely, we are not alone. Thanks be to God for meeting us in the middle!
Amen.**

† For those who are able, please stand.

A TIME OF CENTERING

(During this time of centering, open your hearts to God; be in the present, here and now.)

PRAYER OF INVOCATION

One: God meets us in the night—

**All: before the sun rises, before the wound heals,
before there are answers,
before there is closure.**

One: God meets us in the light—

**All: where joy is effervescent,
where laughter is contagious,
where flowers bloom from cracks in the sidewalk,
where people gather around tables.**

One: God meets us in between—

**All: at the edge of the water,
at the beginning of the wilderness,
at the start of something new,
on the edge of faith.**

One: And if God meets us in all those places,

**All: then surely God meets us everywhere—
at the water's edge,
at the start of something new,
after the baptism, and before the call.**

One: We are not alone. God is all around.

All: Let us worship the God of everything.

CALL TO CONFESSION

One: Friends, our faith calls us to live with both mercy and righteousness.

Somewhere along the way, however, we have forgotten that truth.

Somewhere along the way, we began arguing about who deserves mercy and whether or not they had acted with enough righteousness to receive it.

Fortunately, God does not act that way.

No matter what mistakes we have made or wrong turns we've taken, God consistently meets us with mercy and invites us to try again. So let us lean into that good news, and go to God in prayer:

PRAYER FOR TRANSFORMATION AND NEW LIFE

**All: Merciful God,
When we fail to be righteous,**

† For those who are able, please stand.

**show us mercy.
When we fail to be merciful,
show us what is right.
Again and again,
bring us closer to you.
Again and again,
show us the way. Amen.**

MOMENT OF SILENCE

(Each person can take this time to surrender to God privately anything weighing heavy on their heart.)

WORDS OF GRACE

One: Family of faith, hear and believe this good news:
When we fail to be righteous,

All: God is merciful.

One: When we fail to be merciful,

All: God invites us to try again.

One: Again and again,

All: God moves closer to us.

One: Again and again,

All: God shows us the way.

One: Thanks be to God for this unending love.

All: Amen.

† PASSING THE PEACE

One: The Peace of Christ be with you.

All: And also, with you.

SPECIAL MUSIC

PRAYER FOR ILLUMINATION

One: Loving God,

Week after week we return to this space,
because we long to see you.

Like Zacchaeus who climbed a tree

to get a peek at you as you walked by,

we come to this sanctuary hoping to get a peek
of your goodness,

of your joy,

of your light.

So speak to us through these ancient words.

† For those who are able, please stand.

Let us get a peek of the love that lingers here.
Gratefully we pray, amen.

Focus Scripture: Luke 19:1-10 *Priests for Equality. The Inclusive Bible* (pp. 2263-2264). Rowman & Littlefield Publishers. Kindle Edition.

¹ Entering Jericho, Jesus passed through the city. ² There was a wealthy person there named Zacchaeus, the chief tax collector. ³ Zacchaeus was trying to see who Jesus was, but he couldn't do so because of the crowd, since he was short.

⁴ In order to see Jesus, Zacchaeus ran on ahead, then climbed a sycamore tree that was along the route. ⁵ When Jesus came to the spot, he looked up and said, "Zacchaeus, hurry up and come on down. I'm going to stay at your house today." ⁶ Zacchaeus quickly climbed down and welcomed Jesus with delight.

⁷ When everyone saw this, they began to grumble, "Jesus has gone to a sinner's house as a guest."

⁸ Zacchaeus stood his ground and said to Jesus, "Here and now I give half my belongings to poor people. If I've defrauded anyone in the least, I'll pay them back fourfold."

⁹ Jesus said to the tax collector, "Today salvation has come to this house, for this is what it means to be a descendant of Sarah and Abraham. ¹⁰ The Promised One has come to search out and save what was lost."

Luke 19:1-10 *First Nations Version: An Indigenous Translation of the New Testament* (pp. 147-148). Wildman, Terry M. InterVarsity Press. Kindle Edition.

RESTORING PURE OF HEART

¹ Creator Sets Free (Jesus) was walking through Moon Village (Jericho). ² There, a man named Pure of Heart (Zacchaeus), who was a head tribal tax collector with many possessions, ³ was trying to see who was coming but was too short to see over the crowd. ⁴ So he ran ahead and climbed up a tall tree to get a better view.

⁵ When Creator Sets Free (Jesus) came to the tree, he looked up and said, "Pure of Heart (Zacchaeus), come down from there and take me to your house, for I need a place to rest."

⁶ He quickly climbed down the tree and with a glad heart welcomed him into his house. ⁷ But when the people saw this, they shook their heads. "What is he doing?" they grumbled out loud. "Why would he go into the house of an outcast?"

⁸ Pure of Heart (Zacchaeus) stood up to the crowd and said to Creator Sets Free (Jesus), "Hear me, Wisdomkeeper. I will give half my possessions to the ones who have none. If I have cheated anyone, I will give them back four times as much."

⁹ Creator Sets Free (Jesus) smiled and said, "This is a good day, because this man and his family have finally been set free. For he also is a descendant of Father of Many Nations (Abraham) who had lost his way. ¹⁰ The True Human Being has come to find the ones who have lost their way and guide them back again to the good road."

† For those who are able, please stand.

REFLECTION

“Come On Down”

HYMN

"There is a Balm in Gilead"

#553

PRAYERS OF THE PEOPLE/PASTORAL PRAYER

THE LORD'S PRAYER *(Unison, using debts)*

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 debts as we forgive our debtors; and lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil. For Thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory forever. Amen.

SPECIAL MUSIC

INVITATION TO GENEROSITY

One: As we determine how to use our resources, let us consider what we have received and how sharing both supports others and enlarges us. Let us offer our tithes and offerings to God through the work of this church.

MUSICAL INTERLUDE

DOXOLOGY: *(as collection plates come forward)*

Tune #780

**Praise God from whom all blessings flow;
Praise God, all creatures here below;
Praise God for all that love has done;
Creator, Christ, and Spirit One. Amen.**

PRAYER OF DEDICATION AND THANKSGIVING

One: Holy One, bless these gifts and our lives, that we and our offerings may serve your purposes. Amen.

AFFIRMATION OF FAITH

**All: In a world that loves to cast blame
and point fingers,
Jesus loved by different rules.
He offered mercy.
He invited people to dinner.
He told stories of love.
He chose to see the best in others.
We believe that small acts of mercy
and compassion have ripple effects in our lives.**

† For those who are able, please stand.

We believe that small acts of righteousness
and justice are integral to a life of faith.
So like Christ, we believe in
offering mercy,
inviting people to dinner,
telling stories of love,
and choosing to see the best in others.
With God's help, may it be so. Amen

† HYMN

“Righteous Mercy”

Insert

Righteous Mercy

HYFRYDOL 8.7.8.7 D ("Come Thou Long-Expected Jesus")

Words by Anna Strickland, 2023

Music by Rowland H. Prichard, 1830;
harm. Ralph Vaugh Williams, 1906

Since our child - hood you have taught us what is wrong
Though there's wide - ness in your mer - cy, let us not
Far too of - ten we hold on - to an - ger dressed
and what is right Nur - tur - ing our sense of
a - buse that grace Called in - to this Chris - tian
as righ - teous - ness We for - get we serve a
8
jus - tice, fuel - ing us to work and fight Keep that
jour - ney, let our lives re - lect our faith When we
God who calls us to re - la - tion - ship So when
14
fire for jus - tice burn - ing in the sha - dow
fal - ter and fall short of our com - mit - ment
those who caused us harm re - pent and choose a
19
of our fear E - ven there your Spi - rit's stir - ring,
to your will Hold us, wrap - ping us in your love
bet - ter way Spi - rit move our venge - ful hearts
25
light - ing us a path that's clear
as we work toward whole - ness still
to choose love in - stead of wrath

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PARTING WORDS

One: As you leave this place,
may you find God in every messy middle.
May you know that the world is bigger than two sides.
May you trust that you are made in the image of God,
and therefore, you contain multitudes.
So may you move through this world with an open heart,
with a curious mind, and with the confidence that you do not go alone.
God is with you in the mountains, in the valleys,
and everywhere in between.
Believe that good news, and go in peace.

POSTLUDE

WI-FI – “Guest” Scan QR Code for Internet Access



**SANCTIFIED ART EVERYTHING IN BETWEEN
WORDS FOR WORSHIP** by Rev. Sarah A. Speed | A
Sanctified Art LLC | sanctifiedart.org.”

