



**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!”

February 8, 2026 – 10:00 a.m.

Fifth Sunday after Epiphany

Worship Leaders:

Pastor: Michael Small

Liturgist: Deb Farrell

Greeter: Ruth and Earl Niedermann

Special Music: Sue Grage

Keyboard: Sebastian Wilson-Webb

Tech: Ace Diehl (Video), Samuel Batson (Audio)
Spiritual Life, Chancel and Communion Preparation

PRELUDE

WORDS OF WELCOME

WORDS FOR CHILDREN

† HYMN

“For the Healing of the Nations”

#576

CALL TO WORSHIP

One: Shout it out—no holding back!

All: There is truth that needs to be spoken.

One: Let the people rise and hear it.

All: We are listening. We stand ready.

One: Shout to the weary, the overlooked, the worn-thin:

All: With courage, we gather. With voices, we speak words of life.

One: Shout to the hearts carrying hidden weight,

All: The Holy One meets us here in our honesty.

[†] For those who are able, please stand.

One: Shout to the systems that press people down,

All: Their power is not the final word.

One: A new song is rising—

All: A song that frees, A rhythm that restores, A melody of reparation.

One: Shout to the builders, the dreamers, the stubbornly hopeful:

**All: The time has come for burdens to lift, For the grip of harm to loosen,
For the rebuilding what has been broken.**

One: Come, Beloved Community, Come. Bring your resolve, your compassion, your wide-awake faith.

All: Let us worship the God who calls us to remove every yoke.

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: Calling Voice That Won't Be Silenced,

we come into this moment carrying the weight of our days—

the strain we feel in our bodies, the struggle we witness in our neighbors,

the burdens that press on our shared life.

Draw near to us now. Gather our scattered breath.

Steady our trembling places. Kindle in us a courage that does not look away.

You are the One who refuses empty rituals and meets us instead in acts of mercy, in the work of lifting burdens, in the rebuilding of what has been harmed.

Open us now—open our hearts to compassion, open our imaginations to repair, open our hands to the work of freeing one another.

Let this time be honest, let this gathering be brave, and let your Spirit move among us with the power to uproot what harms and to plant what heals.

We are here. Speak to us. Lead us. Remake us for your justice and joy.

Amen.

PRAYER FOR TRANSFORMATION AND NEW LIFE

Calling Presence who knows our hidden places,

we admit that we have not always chosen the path that frees.

We have stayed silent when truth asked for our voice;

we have protected our comfort when compassion asked for our hands;

we have waited for others to do the work you entrusted to us.

[†] For those who are able, please stand.

Loosen our resistance,
lift the habits that keep us from seeing one another clearly,
and break the patterns that bind us to what harms.
Teach us the courage to act with mercy.
Teach us the discipline of repair.
Teach us the way of releasing what we cling to
so that others may breathe more easily.
Let this moment mark a turning—
a turning toward your justice,
a turning toward your tenderness,
a turning toward the shared life you imagine for us.
In your grace, make us new. 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: Hear the good news:

The One who calls us out in truth, meets us not with shame,
but with mercy that lifts what is heavy and compassion that steadies our steps.
When we turn toward justice, God healing begins working in us.
When we loosen what harms, God loosens the weight within us.
When we offer ourselves to repair, God says to us, “Here I am.”
In this promise, receive your freedom. In this grace, begin again. Amen.

† PASSING THE PEACE

One: The Peace of Christ be with you.

All: And also, with you.

SPECIAL MUSIC

Sue Grage

Focus Scripture: Isaiah 58:1-9a (9b-12) Priests for Equality. The Inclusive Bible: The First Egalitarian Translation (p. 255). Bloomsbury Publishing. Kindle Edition.

¹ “Shout for all you are worth,
raise your voice like a trumpet!
Proclaim to the people their faults,

[†] For those who are able, please stand.

tell the house of Leah and Rachel and Jacob their sins!

2 They seek me daily,
they long to know my ways,
like a nation that wants to act with integrity
and not ignore the Law of its God.

They ask me for laws that are just,
they long for God to draw near.

3 Yet they say, 'Why should we fast
if you never see it?
Why do penance
if you never notice?'
Because when you fast, it's business as usual,
and you oppress all your workers!

4 Because when you fast, you quarrel and fight
and strike the poor with your fist!
Fasting like yours today
will never make your voice heard on high!

5 Is that the sort of fast that pleases me—
a day when people humiliate themselves,
hanging their heads like a reed,
lying down on sackcloth and ashes?
Is that what you call fasting,
a day acceptable to YHWH?

6 On the contrary!
This is the sort of fast that pleases me:
Remove the chains of injustice!
Undo the ropes of the yoke!*

Let those who are oppressed go free,
and break every yoke you encounter!

7 Share your bread with those who are hungry,
and shelter homeless poor people!
Clothe those who are naked,
and don't hide from the needs of your own flesh and
blood!

8 Do this, and your light will shine like the dawn—
and your healing will break forth like lightning!
Your integrity will go before you,
and the glory of YHWH will be your rearguard.

9 Cry, and YHWH will answer;
call, and God will say, 'I am here'—
provided you remove from your midst

† For those who are able, please stand.

10 all oppression, finger pointing, and malicious talk!
If you give yourself to the hungry
and satisfy the needs of the afflicted,
then your light will rise in the darkness,
and your shadows will become like noon.

11 YHWH will always guide you,
giving relief in desert places.
God will give strength to your bones
and you will be like a watered garden,
like a spring of water
whose waters never run dry.

12 You will rebuild the ancient ruins,
and build upon age-old foundations.
You will be called Repairer of Broken Walls,
and Restorer of Ruined Neighborhoods.¹

Priests for Equality. The Inclusive Bible: The First Egalitarian Translation (p. 255).
Bloomsbury Publishing. Kindle Edition.

REFLECTION

“Remove the Yoke!”

HYMN

“This Little Light of Mine”

#524

PRAYERS OF THE PEOPLE/PASTORAL PRAYER

THE LORD’S PRAYER

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.

SPECIAL MUSIC

Sue Grage

INVITATION TO GENEROSITY

¹ Many cities in the ancient world were walled and gated for protection of the inhabitants from outside threats; a breach in the wall was a threat to everyone’s security. To be called a repairer of broken walls and a restorer of ruined neighborhoods (or “ruined streets in which to dwell”) is to be dedicated to reclaiming a community’s safety and dignity from those who would steal and destroy it.

† For those who are able, please stand.

One: Faithful Friends of God, The prophets tell us that devotion is revealed in the way we lighten each other's load—right here, in our streets and neighborhoods, where strain is real and hope needs partners. When we give, we join the work of lifting burdens and repairing the places we call home. Let our offering be simple and true: open hands, willing hearts, and commitment to our shared life. Let us give.

MUSICAL INTERLUDE

DOXOLOGY: (as *collection plates come forward*)

**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.**

Tune #780

PRAYER OF DEDICATION AND THANKSGIVING

One: Calling Voice Who Leads Us Toward Freedom, we give thanks for every gift offered today—for open hands, willing hearts, and the courage to imagine a shared life made whole. Bless what we have brought. Let it move where relief is needed, where repair can begin, where dignity can rise. Make these gifts more than generosity—make them instruments of justice, seeds of compassion, signs that your vision is taking root among us. For every burden lifted, for every neighbor tended, for every act of mercy made possible, we give you thanks. Carry us forward in this work with gratitude deep enough to shape the world we are building together. Amen.

† HYMN

“Lead On Eternal Sovereign”

#573

PARTING WORDS

One: May the Way, Truth and Life go with you, the Presence that unsettles what must change and steadies what must endure.

† For those who are able, please stand.

Let the weight on your shoulders grow lighter,
not by forgetting it,
but by letting others walk beside you.

Carry within you a courage that listens deeply,
an imagination wide enough to rebuild ruins,
and a tenderness fierce enough
to unlearn every habit of harm.

And as you go—
into streets that need mending
and neighborhoods aching for breath—
may you hear the Holy murmur “Here I am”
in every shared burden,
in every act of mercy,
in every small unraveling of the yoke.

Go in boldness.

Go in gentleness.

Go in the sacred work of making all things whole.

Amen.

POSTLUDE

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



Remove the Yoke: Service Prayers for Epiphany 5A was written by Rev. Michael Anthony Howard, who serves as the Minister of Faith in Action for the Living Water Association, Ohio NorthEast, of the Heartland Conference, United Church of Christ. Michael's work supports congregations as they weave theology, justice, and place-based ministry into faithful action that bears prophetic witness to God's dwelling among us.

† For those who are able, please stand.