



**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!”

March 22, 2026

 **Fifth Sunday in Lent** | John 8:2-11; Matthew 23:23
**the good news is... rooted in justice, mercy, and
faithfulness**

Worship Leaders:
Pastor: Michael Small
Liturgist: Dan Batson
Greeter: Joanne Detwiler
Special Music: Sue Grage
Keyboard: Sabbastian Wilson-Webb

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

PRELUDE

WORDS OF WELCOME

† **HYMN** **"God, Speak to Me, That I may Speak"** #531

CALL TO WORSHIP

One: Welcome to the weary and the worn.

All: Welcome to the wiggly and the eager.

One: Welcome to the skeptical and the seeking.

All: Welcome to the early risers and those still trying to wake up. Welcome to the rule followers and the rule breakers.

One: Welcome to those hungry for justice and those desperate for mercy. Welcome to the sinners and the saints.

All: This is God's house.

† For those who are able, please stand.

One: You can make yourself at home here.

All: Let us worship our just, merciful, and faithful God!

A TIME OF CENTERING

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

CALL TO CONFESSION

PRAYER OF CONFESSION

Holy God,

we love to live our lives by the rules.

We love clear answers.

We love right and wrong.

We love swift justice.

We love to pick up stones,

but you show us another way.

You welcome shades of gray and nuanced conversation.

You prioritize mercy over legality.

You prioritize people over tradition.

You prioritize love over everything.

Forgive us for losing sight of what truly matters.

Forgive us for clinging tighter to laws than to each other or to you. Forgive us. Soften our hearts.

Root us in mercy, justice, and love.

With hope for a better tomorrow, we pray. 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: Church family, . . . So hear and believe the good news of the gospel:

All: Our God is a God of mercy.

Our God is a God of compassion.

Our God is a God of grace.

We are forgiven, loved, and invited to choose another way.

Thanks be to God for yet another second chance.

Amen.

† PASSING THE PEACE

One: The Peace of Christ be with you.

All: And also, with you.

† For those who are able, please stand.

PRAYER FOR ILLUMINATION

Focus Scripture: John 8:2-11 *Priests for Equality. The Inclusive Bible: The First Egalitarian Translation* (p. 700). Bloomsbury Publishing. Kindle Edition.

² At daybreak, he reappeared in the Temple area, and when the people started coming to him, Jesus sat down and began to teach them.

³ A couple had been caught in the act of adultery, though the scribes and Pharisees brought only the woman, and they made her stand there in front of everyone. ⁴ “Teacher,” they said, “this woman has been caught in the act of adultery. ⁵ In the Law of Moses, the punishment for this act is stoning. What do you say about it?” ⁶ They were posing this question to trap Jesus so that they could charge him with something.

Jesus simply bent down and started tracing on the ground with his finger. ⁷ When they persisted in their questioning, Jesus straightened up and said to them, “Let the person among you who is without sin throw the first stone at her.” ⁸ Then he bent down again and wrote on the ground.

⁹ The audience drifted away one by one, beginning with the elder. This left Jesus alone with the woman, who continued to stand there. ¹⁰ Jesus finally straightened up again and said, “Where did they go? Has no one condemned you?”

¹¹ “No one, Teacher,” came the reply. “I don’t condemn you either. Go on your way—but from now on, don’t sin any more.”

Matthew 23:23 *Priests for Equality. The Inclusive Bible: The First Egalitarian Translation* (p. 655). Bloomsbury Publishing. Kindle Edition.

²³ “Woe to you religious scholars and you Pharisees, you frauds! You pay your tithes on mint, dill and cumin while neglecting the weightier matters of the Law—justice, mercy and faithfulness! These you should have practiced, without neglecting the others.

REFLECTION

“The Woman Saved from Stoning”

HYMN

“Let Us Remember”

Insert

† For those who are able, please stand.

Let Us Remember

ADELAIDE 5.4.5.4 D (“Have Thine Own Way”)

Words: Anna Strickland (2025)

Music: George C. Stebbins (1907)



What is im - por - tant? What mat - ters more?
We've been shown mer - cy all of our lives
Fol - low - ing Je - sus, liv - ing in truth
What does the Lord re - qui - re of us?



Hu - man con - nec - tion or keep - ing score?
By the cre - a - tor of hu - man - kind
We re - main faith - ful to our roots
To re - main hum - ble, lov - ing, and just



In our pur - suit of jus - tice and truth
So when we're in a po - si - tion to judge
When those roots lead us out - side the lines
Keep - ing the heart of the gos - pel in mind



Let us re - mem - ber: we fall short, too
Let us re - mem - ber: they're just like us
Let us re - mem - ber: faith is a - live
Let us re - mem - ber: do what is right

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

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

AFFIRMATION OF FAITH

I believe in the good news of Jesus Christ.
It sounds like welcome and feels like home.
It sounds like laughter and feels like mercy.
It sounds like love and feels like a seat at the table,
so I believe in the good news of Jesus Christ.
I have seen it alive in the world.
And even when my heart aches, even when wars rage,
even when mercy feels out of reach,
I remember the one who welcomed the children
and led with nonviolence.
I remember the one who cared for the vulnerable
and inspired those around him.
I remember that the good news really is good news, for I have seen it alive
in the world. Thanks be to God! Amen.

†HYMN

“Amazing Grace”

#547

PARTING WORDS

† For those who are able, please stand.

One: As you leave this place,
when you meet anger, speak with love.
When you meet fear, speak with hope.
When you meet pain, speak with gentleness.
But no matter what, speak this good news.
For the good news of the gospel is
love and justice for all.
It is joy that surprises,
and nonviolence that transforms.
The good news of the gospel is alive in the world,
so go forth speaking.
For if you won't, then who will?
Thanks be to God
for this good, good news.
Amen.

POSTLUDE

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

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