

# Lenten Service for March 18, 2026

## Unbound: Longing for Wholeness



### Welcome

### Confession and Forgiveness

Blessed be the Holy Trinity, Creator, Redeemer and Sanctifier, who hears our longings and gives us new life. **Amen.**

Loving God, who knows each of our stories, ***we confess that we have sinned against you in our thoughts, actions and inactions. We have been bound by jealousy, shame and hatred. We have not listened to the cries of our siblings. We have participated in dishonest systems and benefited from violence done on our behalf. Forgive us, we pray. In your mercy free us from all that keeps us bound and grant us healing and wholeness.***

Sisters and brothers in Christ, do not be afraid. In the name of Jesus your sins are forgiven. May God speak kindly to you, restore your paths, and look upon you with favor all the days of your life. **Amen.**

**Gathering Hymn**

**God is Here (next page)**



1 God is here! As we your peo - ple meet to of - fer  
 2 Here are sym - bols to re - mind us of our life - long  
 3 Here our chil - dren find a wel - come in the Shep - herd's  
 4 Lord of all, of church and king - dom, in an age of



praise and prayer, may we find in full - er mea - sure  
 need of grace; here are ta - ble, font, and pul - pit;  
 flock and fold; here as bread and wine are tak - en,  
 change and doubt, keep us faith - ful to the gos - pel;



what it is in Christ we share. Here, as in the  
 here the cross has cen - tral place. Here in hon - es -  
 Christ sus - tains us as of old. Here the ser - vants  
 help us work your pur - pose out. Here, in this day's



world a - round us, all our var - ied skills and arts  
 ty of preach - ing, here in si - lence, as in speech,  
 of the Ser - vant seek in wor - ship to ex - plore  
 ded - i - ca - tion, all we have to give, re - ceive;



wait the com - ing of the Spir - it in - to o - pen minds and hearts.  
 here, in new - ness and re - new - al, God the Spir - it comes to each.  
 what it means in dai - ly liv - ing to be - lieve and to a - dore.  
 we, who can - not live with - out you, we a - dore you! We be - lieve!

### Prayer of the Day

Together we pray: ***God who brings us together, our families are complicated by harsh words, failure to recognize one another, and fear of loss. Free us from blame, self-centeredness, and anxiety. Bring those we love to wholeness in your love where all are seen, cared for and forgiven. In Jesus' name we pray. Amen.***

**Word of God: Genesis 42: 1-38**

<sup>42</sup> When Jacob learned that there was grain in Egypt, he said to his sons, “Why do you keep looking at one another? <sup>2</sup> I have heard,” he said, “that there is grain in Egypt; go down and buy grain for us there, that we may live and not die.” <sup>3</sup> So ten of Joseph’s brothers went down to buy grain in Egypt. <sup>4</sup> But Jacob did not send Joseph’s brother Benjamin with his brothers, for he feared that harm might come to him. <sup>5</sup> Thus the sons of Israel were among the people who came to buy grain, for the famine had reached the land of Canaan.

<sup>6</sup> Now Joseph was governor over the land; it was he who sold to all the people of the land. And Joseph’s brothers came and bowed themselves before him with their faces to the ground. <sup>7</sup> When Joseph saw his brothers, he recognized them, but he treated them like strangers and spoke harshly to them. “Where do you come from?” he said. They said, “From the land of Canaan to buy food.” <sup>8</sup> Although Joseph had recognized his brothers, they did not recognize him. <sup>9</sup> Joseph also remembered the dreams that he had dreamed about them. He said to them, “You are spies; you have come to see the nakedness of the land!” <sup>10</sup> They said to him, “No, my lord; your servants have come to buy food. <sup>11</sup> We are all sons of one man; we are honest men; your servants have never been spies.” <sup>12</sup> But he said to them, “No, you have come to see the nakedness of the land!” <sup>13</sup> They said, “We, your servants, are twelve brothers, the sons of a certain man in the land of Canaan; the youngest, however, is now with our father, and one is no more.” <sup>14</sup> But Joseph said to them, “It is just as I have said to you; you are spies! <sup>15</sup> Here is how you shall be tested: as Pharaoh lives, you shall not leave this place unless your youngest brother comes here! <sup>16</sup> Let one of you go and bring your brother, while the rest of you remain in prison, in order that your words may be tested, whether there is truth in you, or else, as Pharaoh lives, surely you are spies.” <sup>17</sup> And he put them all together in prison for three days.

<sup>18</sup> On the third day Joseph said to them, “Do this and you will live, for I fear God: <sup>19</sup> if you are honest men, let one of your brothers stay here where you are imprisoned. The rest of you shall go and carry grain for the famine of your households <sup>20</sup> and bring your youngest brother to me. Thus your words will be verified, and you shall not die.” And they agreed to do so. <sup>21</sup> They said to one another, “Alas, we are paying the penalty for what we did to our brother; we saw his anguish when he pleaded with us, but we would not listen. That is why this anguish has come upon us.” <sup>22</sup> Then Reuben answered them, “Did I not tell you not to wrong the boy? But you would not listen. So now there comes a reckoning for his blood.” <sup>23</sup> They did not know that Joseph understood them, since he spoke with them through an interpreter. <sup>24</sup> He turned away from them and wept; then he returned and spoke to them. And he picked out Simeon and had him bound before their eyes. <sup>25</sup> Joseph then gave orders to fill their bags with grain, to return every man’s money to his sack, and to give them provisions for their journey. This was done for them.

<sup>26</sup> They loaded their donkeys with their grain and departed. <sup>27</sup> When one of them opened his sack to give his donkey fodder at the lodging place, he saw his money at the top of the sack. <sup>28</sup> He said to his brothers, “My money has been put back; here it is in my sack!” At this

they lost heart and turned trembling to one another, saying, “What is this that God has done to us?”

<sup>29</sup> When they came to their father Jacob in the land of Canaan, they told him all that had happened to them, saying, <sup>30</sup> “The man, the lord of the land, spoke harshly to us and charged us with spying on the land. <sup>31</sup> But we said to him, ‘We are honest men; we are not spies. <sup>32</sup> We are twelve brothers, sons of our father; one is no more, and the youngest is now with our father in the land of Canaan.’ <sup>33</sup> Then the man, the lord of the land, said to us, ‘By this I shall know that you are honest men: leave one of your brothers with me, take grain for the famine of your households, and go your way. <sup>34</sup> Bring your youngest brother to me, and I shall know that you are not spies but honest men. Then I will release your brother to you, and you may trade in the land.’ ”

<sup>35</sup> As they were emptying their sacks, there in each one’s sack was his bag of money. When they and their father saw their bundles of money, they were dismayed. <sup>36</sup> And their father Jacob said to them, “I am the one you have bereaved of children: Joseph is no more, and Simeon is no more, and now you would take Benjamin. All this has happened to me!” <sup>37</sup> Then Reuben said to his father, “You may kill my two sons if I do not bring him back to you. Put him in my hands, and I will bring him back to you.” <sup>38</sup> But he said, “My son shall not go down with you, for his brother is dead, and he alone is left. If harm should come to him on the journey that you are to make, you would bring down my gray hairs with sorrow to Sheol.”

## Sermon

### Hymn

### Alas, And Did My Savior Bleed



1 A - las! And did my Sav - ior bleed, and did my sov - 'reign die?  
 2 Was it for sins that I had done he groaned up - on the tree?  
 3 Well might the sun in dark - ness hide and shut its glo - ries in  
 4 Thus might I hide my blush - ing face while his dear cross ap - pears,  
 5 But tears of grief can - not re - pay the debt of love I owe;



Would he de - vote that sa - cred head for sin - ners such as I?  
 A - maz - ing pit - y, grace un - known, and love be - yond de - gree!  
 when God, the might - y mak - er, died for his own crea - tures' sin.  
 dis - solve my heart in thank - ful - ness, and melt my eyes to tears.  
 here, Lord, I give my - self a - way: 'tis all that I can do.

**Prayers**

When we cling to anger and the wounds others have caused,  
***God, lead us toward forgiveness and freedom.***

When hurtful words and broken trust linger in our hearts,  
***Heal us, O God, and make us whole.***

When we are tempted to repay hurt with hurt,  
***Turn us again to your mercy and grace.***

When resentment takes root within us,  
***Soften our hearts and teach us compassion.***

When forgiving feels too hard or too soon,  
***Hold us in your grace and guide us step by step.***

We give you thanks for the story of Joseph and his family, where deep wounds were met with mercy and reconciliation. ***Teach us to forgive as we have been forgiven.***

Shape us through your Word into people of grace, releasing bitterness and choosing love.  
***Set us free to live in your mercy and hope. Amen.***

**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.***

**Blessing**

May the God of dreams and faithful promises, Father, son and Holy Spirit, bless and protect you always. ***Amen.***

**Sending Hymn**

**Give Me Jesus (next page)**

*Lent and Easter at New Salem*

**Final Lenten Midweek Service - March 25 at 6:30 p.m.**

**Holy Week**

**Palm Sunday, March 29 at 9:30 a.m.**

**Maundy Thursday, April 2 at 6:30 p.m.**

**Good Friday, April 3 at 6:30 p.m.**

**Easter Sunday, April 5 at 9:30 a.m.**



1 In the morn-ing when I rise, in the morn-ing when I rise,  
 2 Dark . . . mid-night was my cry, dark . . . mid-night was my cry,  
 3 Just a - bout the break of day, just a - bout the break of day,  
 4 Oh, . . . when I come to die, oh, . . . when I come to die,  
 5 And . . . when I want to sing, and . . . when I want to sing,



in the morn - ing when I rise, give me Je - sus.  
 dark . . . mid - night was my cry, give me Je - sus.  
 just a - bout the break of day, give me Je - sus.  
 oh, . . . when I come to die, give me Je - sus.  
 and . . . when I want to sing, give me Je - sus.

*Refrain*



Give me Je - sus, give me Je - sus.



You may have all the rest, give me Je - sus.