

Fourth Sunday in Lent

March 30, 2025

Prelude Christopher A. McCroskey
(As the Prelude begins, prayerfully prepare your hearts and minds for worship.)

Greetings, Announcements and Prayer

*Call to Worship
Lent is a time to let go.
Heal our wounds, O God.
Lent is a time to pray.
Hear our cries, O God.
Lent is a time to surrender.
Guide our path, O God.
Lent is a time of renewal.
Turn to God who makes all things new!

*Opening Hymn "Sanctuary" TFWS 2164

*Opening Prayer
Gracious and eternal God,
You call us into a new way of being and give us so many chances in life. May your love wash over us as you help us turn from our sinful ways, and lead us into newness of life. Give us the discipline, the faith and the courage that insures our actions may be pleasing in your sight. Mold us as your people in powerful ways, that we may do your will, and your work, living as true disciples of your Son, Jesus Christ, in whose name we pray. Amen.

*Psalter Psalm 32 766
*Affirmation of Faith "The Nicene Creed" 880

*Gloria Patri 70
Glory be to the Father and to the Son and to the Holy Ghost; as it was in the beginning, is now and ever shall be, world without end. Amen. Amen.

Passing of the Peace

"Let the Children Come!" Erin Derrick
(Those 3 years of age through 8 years of age may go to Children's Church.)

Scripture Readings Joshua 5:9-12 Page 193 (O.T.)
2 Corinthians 5:16-21 Page 171 (N.T.)

Gospel Reading Luke 15:1-3, 11b-32 Pages 76-77 (N.T.)

Lenten Homily "Come Home" Rev. Darlene L. Kelley

*Hymn "Softly and Tenderly Jesus Is Calling" (vs. 1-3) 348

Letting Go for Lent Insert
The Lord's Prayer

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 trespasses, as we forgive those who trespass against us. And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil. For thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, forever. Amen.

Presentation of Tithes & Offerings
Offertory "Lord, Be with Us on This Day" Choir 95
*Doxology

Praise God, from whom all blessings flow; praise him all creatures here below; praise him above ye heavenly host; praise Father, Son and Holy Ghost. Amen

The Great Thanksgiving for Later in Lent Insert

*Closing Hymn "Let Us Break Bread Together" 618

*Benediction
*Benediction Response "May the Lord, Mighty God, Bless and Keep You" Choir & Congregation

*Please Stand As You Are Able

Leading in Worship Today

Pastor: Rev. Darlene L. Kelley AV Director: Marie Stiles
Music Director: Christopher A. McCroskey AV Assistant: Chris Derrick
Liturgist: Jeanette Hornsby Time Together: Jack Stevens; Pam Turner

VISITORS ARE WELCOME in the service of worship! Please make use of the visitor's tags (located in the pew backs) to help us better welcome you as a visitor to Trinity this morning.

Today's Lovely Flowers are given to the Glory of God.

“AS MEMBERS OF THIS CONGREGATION, WE WILL FAITHFULLY PARTICIPATE IN ITS MINISTRIES BY OUR PRAYERS ...

Hilda Edwards Patsy Shuler Marilyn Lloyd Tom Lloyd Ruth Frady Christopher McCroskey
Rhett Hook Libby Strickland Diane Muszynski Latson Lewis English Pearcy Hannah Glanz
Kaye Floyd Ray Frady

Shut-Ins: Gillett Hipp; Linda Maloch; Jean Raynor

Family and Friends: James Leonard (previous coworker of Mark Lewis); Kathleen Varnadore (Ted & Ruth Frady's neighbor); Paul Frenzel (friend of Chris Derrick); Sissy Henry (former member of Trinity), Sean & Tucker Smith (cousins of Darlene Kelley); Sonny Hardee (brother of Lynn Martin); Colby Martin (son of Donna Muszynski); Lynne Powell (friend of the Ballentines and Branhams); Ima Thibodeaux (friend of Christopher McCroskey); Keith Jordan (nephew of John & Kay Jordan); Ann Cullum (friend of Bob Strickland); Malcolm Skipper (grandfather of Matthew Skipper); Bryan Collard (brother-in-law of Mary Sue Lewis); Charlyn McNeill, Michael McNeill (sister & brother of Mary Sue Lewis); Missy Abrams (stepdaughter of Lissa Abrams); Mary Davis (daughter of Bob & Libby Strickland); Chuck Hardee (cousin of Lynn Martin); Bruce Beatty, Sandra Hornsby, Gloria Erd (friends of Lynn Martin); Pearl Geddens (mother of Tom Geddens); Ross Deal (grandson of Mary Kamoroff); Nancy Wilson (friend of Jeanette Hornsby); David Turner (brother of Pam Turner); Ernie & Betsey Hendrix, Chip Mixon (friends of Tommy Gleaton); Ron & Janet Walker (friends of Tommy & Chris Gleaton); James Boggs (father of Claire Boggs); Bill Areheart (friend of Bonnie Ramsey); Robert Bradley (Business Associate of Simon Ross); Monnie Tiller (friend of Chris Derrick); Adrin & Linda Hargett (stepfather and stepmom of Christopher McCroskey); Haidee Baehr (friends of Ruth Frady); Denise Paul, Scott & Karen Nelson (cousins of Gale Frady); Dan Conner, Max Johnson (friends of Gale Frady); Janet Beck (friend of Jo Ann Heiting); Adam Lavender (son of Phil Lavender)

If you have a friend or family member on the Prayer List, we ask you to please keep us updated. If no word is received, we will trust that our prayers have been answered and remove the name. To update us, please call the office or e-mail us at trinityumcwc@sc.rr.com.

OUR PRESENCE ...

Attendance 03/23 SS: 10 Worship: 41

OUR GIFTS ...

General Fund 03/23 \$ 19,287.86

OUR SERVICE...

OUR WITNESS.”

Upcoming Events

03/31 Exercise, Class, 10:30 a.m.

04/02 Choir, 6 p.m.

T.a.G., 7 p.m.

04/03 Exercise Class, 10:30 a.m.

04/04 Office Closed

FH Reserved

04/05 FH Reserved



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Jesus Christ

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Next Sunday, April 6

In keeping with the dramatic events told at Easter, the title of our 2025 Easter Cantata is, Over too soon...OR WAS IT?! We'll follow Jesus and his band of followers from his entrance into Jerusalem to the glorious revelations at Easter. Along the way we will look at what made him and his remarkable message memorable. We'll also experience what his disciples thought of his unique approach to what it meant to be part of the Kingdom of God. His death changes everything for them and how resurrection made it possible to share this remarkable message with others.



**The Pines
Next Sunday, April 6
2 p.m.**

We will continue our ministry to **The Pines** on **Sunday, April 6, at 2 p.m.** as we join them for a short worship and communion service. We would love to have you join us as we worship with the residents.



All Community Holy Week Services start at 6 p.m.

Palm Sunday April 13	Mt Hebron UMC - Tom Wall
Monday, April 14	Cayce UMC – Darlene Kelley
Tuesday, April 15	Brookland UMC – Cynthia Taylor
Wednesday, April 16	Trinity - Mark Payne
Thursdy, April 17	Maundy Thursday @ Trinity Communion & Reflection, Starting at 4:30 p.m.



**Saturday, April 19
10:30 a.m. – 12 p.m.**

Join us for a morning of fun as we meet in the Fellowship Hall on Saturday, April 19, at 10:30 a.m. for an Easter Egg Hunt! There will also be crafts and refreshments!

We are in need of small wrapped candy to fill the eggs or donations to purchase the candy. The candy and donations can be dropped off at the Church Office through Thursday, April 17.

He took upon himself our sin and death and offered himself, a perfect sacrifice for the sin of the whole world.

By the baptism of his suffering, death, and resurrection you gave birth to your Church, delivered us from slavery to sin and death, and made with us a new covenant by water and the Spirit.

On the night in which he gave himself up for us, he took bread, gave thanks to you, broke the bread, gave it to his disciples, and said: "Take, eat; this is my body which is given for you. Do this in remembrance of me."

When the supper was over he took the cup, gave thanks to you, gave it to his disciples, and said: "Drink from this, all of you; this is my blood of the new covenant, poured out for you and for many for the forgiveness of sins. Do this, as often as you drink it, in remembrance of me."

And so, in remembrance of these your mighty acts in Jesus Christ, we offer ourselves in praise and thanksgiving as a holy and living sacrifice, in union with Christ's offering for us, as we proclaim the mystery of faith.

Christ has died; Christ is risen; Christ will come again.

Pour out your Holy Spirit on us gathered here, and on these gifts of bread and wine. Make them be for us the body and blood of Christ, that we may be for the world the body of Christ, redeemed by his blood.

By your Spirit make us one with Christ, one with each other, and one in ministry to all the world, until Christ comes in final victory, and we feast at his heavenly banquet. Through your Son Jesus Christ, with the Holy Spirit in your holy Church, all honor and glory is yours Almighty God, now and for ever. **Amen.**



Letting Go for Lent

We come to you Lord, in humility, bringing ourselves, right where we are, as a new starting point, remembering that there is a time for everything – for holding fast and for letting go.

To “Let Go” does not mean to be afraid to make mistakes, it means with God’s grace, I can learn from my mistakes.

To “Let Go” is not to cut myself off from others, it’s the realization I can’t control others.

To “Let Go” is not to try to change or blame others but to be honest and make the most of myself.

To “Let Go” is not to worry over but to care about.

To “Let Go” is not to fix but to be supportive.

To “Let Go” is not to judge but to love and accept.

To “Let Go” is not to deny but to be accountable.

To “Let Go” is not to scold or argue but instead to search out my own shortcomings and correct them.

To “Let Go” is not to adjust everything to my desires but to take each day as it comes, and give thanks.

To “Let Go” is to fear less and love more.

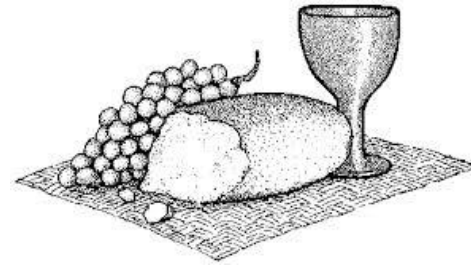
God of hope, send our roots deep and help us to grow strong in Christ. Transform us by stripping away the things of the world that distract and hold us. Hear our confession, dear God, and let us be, in all ways, the new creatures in Christ that You have made us. Letting go of the past, and going forward into the future with faith, we offer thanks for the next part of our Lenten journey that is about to begin. Amen

(Silent Prayer)

Help us, O God of grace, to let go of our past sins and go forward into the future with faith. We come also to repent of the ways in which we have failed to grow
... **for our failure to show mercy to others even when we have been shown mercy**
...**for our failure to forgive others when you, God, have been forgiving toward us**
...**for our failure to be good stewards when you have been so generous to us**
...**for our complacency and inaction in the face of all that you have prepared and called us to do.**

We come to you, dear God, in humility, bringing ourselves, right where we are, as a new starting point, remembering that there is a time for everything – for holding fast and for letting go. Help us to let go of our sin, and to follow Jesus. Amen.

Adapted from Cathy Boyd Byrd, "Seeking Christ in the World", 2018



**THE GREAT THANKSGIVING
FOR LATER IN LENT**

The Lord be with you.
And also with you.
Lift up your hearts.

We lift them up to the Lord.

Let us give thanks to the Lord our God.

It is right to give our thanks and praise.

It is right, and a good and joyful thing,
always and everywhere to give thanks to you,
Almighty God, creator of heaven and earth.
In love you made us for yourself; and when we had fallen
into sin and become subject to evil and death, your love remained steadfast.

**You bid your faithful people cleanse their hearts
and prepare with joy for the Easter feast,
that, renewed by your Word and Sacraments
and fervent in prayer and works of justice and mercy, we may come to the
fullness of grace
that you have prepared for those who love you.**

And so, with your people on earth and all the company of heaven we praise your name
and join their unending hymn:

**Holy, holy, holy Lord, God of power and might,
heaven and earth are full of your glory.
Hosanna in the highest. Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord.
Hosanna in the highest.**

Holy are you, and blessed is your Son Jesus Christ,
whom you sent in the fullness of time to redeem the world.
He emptied himself, taking the form of a servant,
being born in our likeness. He humbled himself and
became obedient unto death, even death on a cross.

Trinity UMC
March 30, 2025
Rev. Darlene L. Kelley

Come Home

The story of the Prodigal Son is familiar to most of us. It's a story that's inspired artwork and become part of our language and culture. It's a story we know we've heard before. It's become like a picture hanging on a wall we pass everyday and forget to stop and look at. Yet it is so rich with images and so full of ideas, you may enjoy reading it—or rereading it—more than you expected.

One of the first things we forget about this story is that it's Jesus' response to what a group of Pharisees consider an insulting accusation. *This fellow welcomes sinners and eats with them*" (Luke 15:2). This guy, Jesus, hangs out with the worst people in town.

If the Pharisees knew more about Jesus—if they understood his message of grace and radical love even a little bit—they'd realize that hanging out with sinners and welcoming the least among us to the dinner party is one of the things Jesus does best. But like most humans, the poor Pharisees miss the point.

And Jesus responds to their remarks with a story. And the story has three main characters.

There's a father and two sons, and the younger son asks for his inheritance early and takes off. He doesn't waste any time getting off the farm either, for Luke tells us: *a few days later the younger son gathered all he had and traveled to a distant country and there he squandered his property in dissolute living* (Luke 15:13). So not only does he leave, he goes as far as he can and cuts loose once he gets there.

And that might be the last we hear from the kid, except that the country he lands in is hit with famine and hard times, and *he began to be in need* (Luke 15:14). He found himself forced to take a job feeding pigs. Now, I've had a few jobs I really hated, but I feel for this poor guy who gets so low he begins to envy the pigs. He's so hungry that Luke remarks: *he would gladly have filled himself with the pods that the pigs were eating; and no one gave him anything* (Luke 15:16).

In his poem, "The Death of the Hired Man", Robert Frost writes: *Home is the place where when you have to go there, they have to take you in.*

And so this younger son, who set off to have a good time, hits bottom. Hungry and alone, sitting with the pigs he envies for their scraps, he decides to go home.

But here's one of the most interesting lines in the passage. Luke tells us: *But when he came to himself he said, How many of my father's hired hands have bread enough and to spare, but here I am dying of hunger!* When he came to himself... How does that translate for you? When he came to his senses? When he took a good look at himself? When he faced reality? When he had one of those long dark nights of the soul?

Our runaway takes his money and leaves the farm to have a grand old time, but he ends up empty and alone, hanging out with pigs before he has a realization—a moment when he gets a hold of himself and feels his heart pounding and says: *I will get up and go to my father, and I will say to him, 'Father, I have sinned against heaven and before you; I am no longer worthy to be called your son; treat me like one of your hired hands* (Luke 15:18).

Sometimes we have to get awfully hungry and hit rock bottom before we come to our senses and find our way home.

But then another character enters the story in a big way. *While the younger son is still far off, his father saw him and was filled with compassion; he ran and put his arms around him and kissed him* (Luke 15:29).

We don't have to stretch our imaginations too far to see that the father in Jesus' parable represents our Father in heaven. While we are still far off, God runs to welcome us. The runaway son repents and is forgiven, and our Lenten theme resounds: Repent and feel God's grace and mercy. Ask God to get you home and you don't even have to tap your ruby slippers—God is waiting to forgive you and welcome you home.

As Paul teaches: *So if anyone is in Christ, there is a new creation: everything old has passed away...All this is from God, who reconciled us to himself through Christ and has given us the ministry of reconciliation* (2 Corinthians 5:17-19).

We could end the story here and know all we need to know. But there is still one more character to deal with.

I confess that when I first heard the parable of the Prodigal Son, I felt sorry for the older son who stayed at home the whole time trying to do the right thing while his little brother took off to have a good time. I understand why he's so upset.

'Listen! For all these years I have been working like a slave for you, and I have never disobeyed your command; yet you have never given me even a young goat so that I might celebrate with me friends. But when this son of yours came back, who has devoured your property with prostitutes, you killed the fatted calf for him!

The older son hears the music playing in the house. He smells the barbeque, and it cuts him like a knife. And he's not about to go to that party!

The indignation and self-righteous anger of the “good son” may look appealing. But before we oversimplify the parable, let's remember that Jesus has much to teach and many insights to reveal.

In an essay on this parable in the *Christian Century*, Professor Katherine Grieb warns us not to make this message too easy: *It is said that there are two kinds of sinners in this world: those who know they're sinners and those who don't. It is tempting to reduce this parable to a lesson that even notorious sinners can come to their senses, repent and find their way home, while those who think they have never left home refuse to see the subtler sins of pride and self-righteousness by which they exclude themselves from communion with God and prodigal brothers and sisters. Jesus' parable requires discernment beyond human ways of thinking,* Grieb continues, *discernment of the new creation that compels the ministry of reconciliation. 1*

How easy it is for most of us to fall into self-righteous judgment. How easy it is for most of us to divide the world between “good” and “bad” without taking time to hear the whole story. Dividing the world between “us” and “them” is a lot easier than listening to one another and working to understand one another.

But if we take Paul's words to heart, we can work to be *new creations*. We can work toward a *ministry of reconciliation*, remembering that we are all sinners standing in the need of grace, remembering that *God makes all things new*.

1A. Katherine Grieb, *The real prodigal: 2 Corinthians 5:16-21; Luke 15:1-3, 11b-32*, *The Christian Century*, March 9, 2004.

As ambassadors of Christ, we will do well to remember that God loves all people and calls us all home. As the great theologian Karl Barth observed: *If Jesus himself had not left the Father and traveled into the far country to share a table with sinners, we would all still be there, eating those pig pods.*²

Will you pray with me?

Dear God, Help us to remember that we are all sinners standing in the need of your grace. Help us to follow your voice and come home to You. Amen.

² *ibid.*