

Macon United Methodist Church
190 W Bell Street, Macon, IL 62544; (217) 764-5133
March 1, 2026 **Second Sunday in Lent**

THOUGHT FOR THE DAY

The season of lent; going into the wilderness with Jesus!

RINGING OF THE CHURCH BELL

PRELUDE

GATHERING **Welcome, Announcements,**
Celebrations



***SHARING THE PEACE OF CHRIST**

***CALL TO WORSHIP**

Children of God, in lent we remember that our salvation is an unearned gift, that new life is a matter of faith, not of works.

We gather to lay down the burden of trying to earn our salvation.

Like Nicodemus, who met Jesus in the dark of night, we struggle to accept that new life is not just possible but given as a free gift of grace.

We gather to bring our struggles into the light and embrace god’s grace with open arms.

Like Paul writing to the Romans, we remember God’s promise of new life has always rested on grace.

We gather to receive the promise of salvation by grace through faith.

Like the many who have followed, questioned, and grown in the faith, we submit ourselves to be formed by grace as we work out our salvation day by day.

We gather as people guided by the promise of new life, a promise fulfilled by Christ, whose path we follow.

***OPENING HYMN** **“God Will Take Care of You”** **(UMH # 130)**

1. Be not dismayed whate’er betide; God will take care of you.
Beneath His wings of love abide; God will take care of you.
God will take care of you, through ev’ry day, o’er all the way.
He will take care of you; God will take care of you.

2. Through days of toil when heart doth fail, God will take care of you.
When dangers fierce your path assail, God will take care of you.

God will take care of you, through ev'ry day, o'er all the way.
He will take care of you; God will take care of you.

3. All you may need He will provide; God will take care of you.
All strength you need will be supplies; God will take care of you.
God will take care of you, through ev'ry day, o'er all the way.
He will take care of you; God will take care of you.

4. No matter what may be the test, God will take care of you.
Lean, weary one, upon His breast; God will take care of you.
God will take care of you, through ev'ry day, o'er all the way.
He will take care of you; God will take care of you.

OPENING PRAYER

Loving God, help us when we have run away, when we have turned our backs on love, when we have sought immediate satisfaction and not long term healing, help us. Merciful God, forgive us when we have been selfish, when we have been mean when we have neglected the cries of others. Forgive us powerful God, heal us when we are so broken, we cannot move. When we don't know how to stop the bleeding of our wounds. When we are too ashamed to seek community heal us. Give us the courage, the strength, and the hope to accept your grace and embrace your call in Christ. Amen

COMMUNITY PRAYERS (pastor)

SILENT PRAYER (pastor)

THE LORD'S PRAYER (all)

SCRIPTURE READING

I raise my eyes toward the mountains. Where will my help come from? ² My help comes from the Lord, the maker of heaven and earth. ³ God won't let your foot slip. Your protector won't fall asleep on the job. ⁴ No! Israel's protector never sleeps or rests! ⁵ The Lord is your protector; the Lord is your shade right beside you. ⁶ The sun won't strike you during the day; neither will the moon at night. ⁷ The Lord will protect you from all evil; God will protect your very life. ⁸ The Lord will protect you on your journeys—whether going or coming—from now until forever from now.

Psalm 121



*The Lord
watches over you ...*

Psalm 121:6, NIV

GOSPEL READING

John 3: 1-17

There was a Pharisee named Nicodemus, a Jewish leader. ² He came to Jesus at night and said to him, “Rabbi, we know that you are a teacher who has come from God, for no one could do these miraculous signs that you do unless God is with him.”

³ Jesus answered, “I assure you, unless someone is born anew, it’s not possible to see God’s kingdom.”

⁴ Nicodemus asked, “How is it possible for an adult to be born? It’s impossible to enter the mother’s womb for a second time and be born, isn’t it?”

⁵ Jesus answered, “I assure you, unless someone is born of water and the Spirit, it’s not possible to enter God’s kingdom. ⁶ Whatever is born of the flesh is flesh, and whatever is born of the Spirit is spirit. ⁷ Don’t be surprised that I said to you, ‘You must be born anew.’ ⁸ God’s Spirit blows wherever it wishes. You hear its sound, but you don’t know where it comes from or where it is going. It’s the same with everyone who is born of the Spirit.”

⁹ Nicodemus said, “How are these things possible?”

¹⁰ “Jesus answered, “You are a teacher of Israel and you don’t know these things? ¹¹ I assure you that we speak about what we know and testify about what we have seen, but you don’t receive our testimony. ¹² If I have told you about earthly things and you don’t believe, how will you believe if I tell you about heavenly things? ¹³ No one has gone up to heaven except the one who came down from heaven, the Human One. ¹⁴ Just as Moses lifted up the snake in the wilderness, so must the Human One be lifted up ¹⁵ so that everyone who believes in him will have eternal life. ¹⁶ God so loved the world that he gave his only Son, so that everyone who believes in him won’t perish but will have eternal life. ¹⁷ God didn’t send his Son into the world to judge the world, but that the world might be saved through him.



“No one can enter the kingdom of God without being born of water and Spirit.” John 3:5, NRSV

MESSAGE

“Our Journey Continues”

Beverly J. Matthews, PsyD
Certified Lay Minister, Supply Pastor

HYMN

“Blessed Assurance”

(UMH # 369)

1. Blessed assurance, Jesus is mine! O what a foretaste of glory divine!
Heir of salvation, purchase of God, born of his Spirit, washed in his blood.
Refrain: This is my story, this is my song, praising my Savior all the day long;
this is my story, this is my song, praising my Savior all the day long.
2. Perfect submission, perfect delight, visions of rapture now burst on my sight;
angels descending bring from above echoes of mercy, whispers of love.
This is my story, this is my song, praising my Savior all the day long;

this is my story, this is my song, praising my Savior all the day long.

3. Perfect submission, all is at rest; I in my Savior am happy and blest,
watching and waiting, looking above, filled with his goodness, lost in his love.
This is my story, this is my song, praising my Savior all the day long;
this is my story, this is my song, praising my Savior all the day long.

PRESENTATION OF OUR TITHES AND OFFERINGS

***DOXOLOGY**

(UMH # 95)

**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.**

***PRAYER OF DEDICATION (unison)**

Faithful God of new beginnings, you call us-as you called Abraham-to trust in what we cannot yet see, to follow where you lead, even when the road is unclear. In the shadows of our questions and the uncertainty of our understanding, you meet us with grace, not condemnation. As Nicodemus discovered, your love is not earned but freely given. Receive now these gifts we offer--not as payment or proof, but as signs of our belief, our hope, and our gratitude. Use them to share your transforming love with a world still searching in the dark. In the name of your son, given in love, we pray. Amen.

HOLY COMMUNION

Table I, (UMH # 9)

The Great Thanksgiving

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,
Father Almighty, creator of heaven and earth.

You formed us in your image and breathed into us the breath of life.

When we turned away, and our love failed, your love remained steadfast.

You delivered us from captivity, made covenant to be our sovereign God,
and spoke to us through your prophets.

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.
Your Spirit anointed him to preach good news to the poor,
to proclaim release to the captives and recovering of sight to the blind,
to set at liberty those who are oppressed,
and to announce that the time had come
when you would save your people.
He healed the sick, fed the hungry, and ate with sinners.
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.
When the Lord Jesus ascended, he promised to be with you always
in the power of your Word and Holy 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 Father (God), now and forever. **Amen.**

BREAKING OF THE BREAD

Because there is one loaf, we, who are many, are one body, for we partake of the one loaf. The bread which we break is a sharing in the body of Christ.
The cup over which we give thanks is a sharing in the blood of Christ.
The cup over which we give thanks is a sharing in the blood of Christ

GIVING THE BREAD AND CUP

Eternal God, we give you thanks for this holy mystery in which you have given yourself to us. Grant that we may go into the world in the strength of your spirit, to give ourselves for others, in the name of Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

MUSICAL REFLECTION

CLOSING PRAYER (pastor)

Heavenly father, we humble ourselves before you as we walk through the wilderness with Jesus we ask for your mercy and grace. We ask that you teach us how to serve. Teach us how to love and forgive. Be with us this week as we face the world and its challenges as Christians.

***CLOSING HYMN “Crown Him with Many Crowns” (UMH # 327)**

1. Crown him with many crowns, the Lamb upon his throne,
Hark! how the heavenly anthem drowns all music but its own.
Awake, my soul, and sing of him who died for thee,
and hail him as thy matchless King through all eternity.
2. Crown him the Lord of life, who triumphed o'er the grave,
and rose victorious in the strife for those he came to save.
His glories now we sing, who died, and rose on high,
who died, eternal life to bring, and lives that death may die.
3. Crown him the Lord of peace, whose power a scepter sways
from pole to pole, that wars may cease, and all be prayer and praise.
His reign shall know no end, and round his pierced feet
fair flowers of paradise extend their fragrance ever sweet.

SPEAKER SCHEDULE

Mar. 08 Kirk Yenerall, Certified Lay Minister

Mar. 15 Keith Baker, Lay Speaker

Mar. 22 Beverly Matthews Certified Lay Minister, Supply Pastor

Mar. 29 Mark Dallner, Lay Speaker

CONFIRMATION CLASS

Confirmation class will be first and fourth Sundays at 8:30 am for one hour in the pastor's office using the book Confirm which can be purchased online through Cokesbury.

BOOK FOR GRIEF

I have books for Grief Share in the trunk of my car if anyone is interested. They are free and are spiritually based.

