

March 15, 2026 + 10:30 A.M.
Fourth Sunday of Lent/Lenten Cantata

We Join in Worship

Liturgist: Hunter Balczo

If you need extra space for a wheelchair or walker, or if you have young children with you, please feel free to make use of our Prayground, the extra space across the aisle from the sound booth.

PRELUDE

Liebesleid (Love's Sorrow)
Tristan Casiano, Violin

Fritz Kreisler

WELCOME

ANNOUNCEMENTS

*THE PEACE OF CHRIST

*CALL TO WORSHIP (Adapted from *Psalm 121*)

Leader: We lift up our eyes to the mountains—from where will our help come?
ALL: Our help comes from the LORD, who made heaven and earth.
Leader: The LORD will not let our feet be moved; the LORD who keeps us will not slumber.
ALL: The LORD who keeps us will neither slumber nor sleep.
Leader: The LORD is our keeper; the LORD is our shade at our right hands.
ALL: The sun shall not strike us by day, nor the moon by night.
Leader: The LORD will keep us from all evil; the LORD will keep our lives.
ALL: The LORD will keep our going out and our coming in from this time on and forevermore.

*OPENING HYMN: “When I Survey the Wondrous Cross” (101)

INVITATION TO CONFESSION:

Leader: The author of Ephesians writes, “Everything exposed by the light becomes visible, for everything that becomes visible is light.” Let us confess and bring our sins into the light.

PRAYER OF CONFESSION (unison)

God of light and love, we bring our sins into your light. We confess that we have lost sight of the meaning of your living, your suffering, and your dying. We have used your name to judge and exclude. We have used your Church to oppress and control. We have used your cross as a weapon. Forgive us for our idolatry. Forgive us for closing our eyes to your light and for hiding your true light from others. In the name of Jesus Christ, your beloved Son, we pray. Amen.

KYRIE: Glory to God, No. 579 (unison)

**Lord, have mercy. Lord, have mercy. Lord, have mercy.
Christ, have mercy. Christ, have mercy. Christ, have mercy.
Lord, have mercy. Lord, have mercy. Lord, have mercy.**

ASSURANCE OF PARDON

Leader: Sleeper, awake! Rise from the dead, and Christ will shine on you!
ALL: In Jesus Christ we are forgiven! Hallelujah! Thanks be to God!

GLORIA PATRI (577)

Glory be to the Father, and the Son, and Holy Ghost;

As it was in the beginning, is now, ever shall be, world without end. Amen.

As it was in the beginning, is now, ever shall be, world without end. Amen.

STATEMENT OF FAITH: (from *A Brief Statement of Faith*)

We trust in Jesus Christ, Fully human, fully God. Jesus proclaimed the reign of God: preaching good news to the poor and release to the captives, teaching by word and deed and blessing the children, healing the sick and binding up the brokenhearted, eating with outcasts, forgiving sinners, and calling all to repent and believe the gospel. Unjustly condemned for blasphemy and sedition, Jesus was crucified, suffering the depths of human pain and giving his life for the sins of the world. God raised this Jesus from the dead, vindicating his sinless life, breaking the power of sin and evil, delivering us from death to life eternal.

God's Word in Action

EMBODIED WORD FOR DISCIPLES OF ALL AGES

PRAYERS OF THE PEOPLE AND 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 debts, as we forgive our debtors; and lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil. For thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, forever. Amen.

OFFERING INVITATION

Leader: Jesus said, "As long as I am in the world, I am the light of the world." Let us give our pledges, tithes, and offerings so that we may share Jesus' healing light with the world. Please place your offering in the plate as it is passed. If you are worshiping from home, please mail in your checks or use our online giving option on the website. Now let us practice stewardship as we listen to today's offertory.

OFFERTORY *Savior, Like a Shepherd Lead Us with He Leadeth Me*
William Bradbury, arr. Cindy Berry

*** DOXOLOGY:**

Praise God, from whom all blessings flow;

Praise God, all creatures high and low;

Alleluia! Alleluia!

Praise God, in Jesus fully known;

Creator, Word, and Spirit one;

Alleluia! Alleluia!

Alleluia! Alleluia! Alleluia!

***PRAYER OF DEDICATION: (Unison)**

O God, we dedicate these gifts to you and to the Kingdom of your son, the Kingdom that grows beneath the weeping tree. Give us wisdom as we use them in your service. We pray in the name of Jesus Christ, the light of the world. Amen.

We Hear God's Word: Lenten Cantata

The Weeping Tree By Joseph M. Martin

Foreword

1. Procession of the Cross
2. The Weeping Tree (Theme)
3. Of Tears and Sorrows
 Duet: Karen Lounsbury & Gale Churitch
4. Lamentation of the Cross
5. Wondrous Love, Wondrous Cross
6. Alas, and Did My Savior Bleed?
7. Without His Cross
8. The Weeping Tree (Epilogue)

*A Big Thank You to Tristan Casiano, Jamie Ham, Jean Smith, and Hunter Balczó

We Go into the World

BENEDICTION

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* So that we can properly greet people who come to the building during Sunday morning worship, Door A will be the only unlocked external door during the worship service.

PEEK AT THE WEEK:

SUNDAY 3/15:	FOURTH SUNDAY OF LENT LENTEN CANTATA – 10:30 AM
MONDAY 3/16:	GA – 6:30 PM Al-Anon – 7:00 PM
TUESDAY 3/17:	Private Flute Lessons 2-8 PM (FH) Session - 6:30 PM AA – 7:30 PM
WEDNESDAY 3/18:	Private Flute Lessons 2-8 PM (FH) Lenten Study 7-8 PM (Zoom) GA – 7:00 PM
THURSDAY 3/19:	Choir – 7:00 PM
SATURDAY 3/21:	Rev. Dr. Leroy Fassett's Memorial Service – 12:00 PM

ANNOUNCEMENTS

- **SAVE THE DATES!** On May 1st and 2nd we will be having a Rummage Sale. Watch the announcements in the coming weeks for more information on how you can contribute and help make it a success.
- **RUMMAGE SALE PLANNING MEETING** Come join us on Wednesday, March 25th, as we plan for the rummage sale. We will meet in the meeting room in the old sanctuary. All are welcome to attend!
- **TIME TO ORDER EASTER FLOWERS** Hyacinths, lilies, and tulips are \$10.00 each, and the deadline for ordering is *today, Sunday, March 15, 2026*. You may also make a donation in lieu of flowers. Please fill the order form in the narthex and include money or check and either drop off or mail to the church office at: 8727 Delaware Street, Highland, IN 46322.
- **LENT PRAYER ACTIVITY STATIONS** Lenten Prayer Stations are set up in the church library room (across from the church office) and in the narthex. The prayer stations are appropriate for all ages, so you are encouraged to share this space with the children, youth and adults in your life. The prayer stations are available on Sundays before and after worship, and during regular church office hours (Mon. –Thurs., 8 am to noon). If you cannot come to the church and would like an at-home version of the stations, please contact Heather Casiano at hcasiano@fpchighland.org, or call the church office.
- **LENT DEVOTIONAL BOOKLET** The Ministry of Faith Development is once again providing a Lenten devotional booklet. This year's devotional is titled "Discipleship in a Divided Age," from the Presbyterian Outlook, and guides readers to journey through Matthew's Gospel to discover how Jesus leads us toward humility, courage, compassion and faithful discipleship amid the fractures of our age. We have a few extra printed copies in the narthex for those who prefer a printed version and do not have access to a printer.
- **LENTEN STUDY AND PRACTICE WITH PASTOR TYLER** Once again, Pastor Tyler will be leading us in a special Lenten Study and Practice during the season of Lent. Join in each Wednesday of Lent, Feb. 25 - April 1, from 7-8 pm online on Zoom (During our usual BYOB time). This year's theme is "I Lift My Eyes Up to the Mountains." *Psalm 121* is a powerful salve in times of great challenge and need. We will explore it and other mountain passages as we seek hope and healing. All are welcome! The sessions will be recorded for those who would like to participate but cannot make the live sessions on Wednesdays. The Zoom link is sent out via email weekly; if you are not currently receiving this email and would like to, please contact Kristen in the church office.
- **ONE GREAT HOUR OF SHARING PC(USA) SPECIAL OFFERING** We will be participating in this offering throughout Lent, with our fish banks to come back Easter Sunday. In doing so, we create possibility for people forced to flee their homes in search of safety. We support recovery efforts when disasters devastate communities. We empower partners to build sustainable futures. We walk alongside our siblings to work for more just immigration laws and processes. Our gifts show people they are not alone and that people they don't know see them and care enough to respond.
- **"THE BIBLE IN TODAY'S WORLD"** class meets on Sunday mornings from 9-10 am in the middle classroom (across from Pastor Tyler's office). This group is reading through the book, "A is for Alabaster" by Anna Carter Florence. Each week is independent of the other weeks, so come as you are able. If you need a book, or for any other questions, contact Heather Casiano.
- **FOLLOW US ON SOCIAL MEDIA!** If you don't already follow us on Facebook and Instagram, please start doing so [@firstpchighland](https://www.facebook.com/firstpchighland) on both Facebook and Instagram.
- **INTERESTED IN BECOMING A MEMBER OF FPCH?** You are always welcome here, whether a member or not! If you are interested in joining as a member, though, we would love to have you! Please talk to Pastor Tyler if you would like to learn more.

Opportunities to serve as the HEART, HANDS, and FEET of Jesus Christ:

- **BLESSING BOX** Please continue to place items in the Blessing Box and take items if you are a person in need! Items most commonly donated: Canned goods with pull tabs, socks, toilet paper, non-perishable foods, small snacks, toiletries, baby wipes and diapers. Please check expiration dates!
- **HELP STOCK OUR PANTRY!** Please pick up a beautifully decorated grocery bag in the narthex and fill it to help the church's food pantry.

Prayer List

Anthony	Rita Stronczek
Brady Vanes	Keren, Zuriel, and Gedeon
George Griner	Edna Cruz
Guy Hendricks	Charlie
Bill and Anettia Holmes	Jerry & Rena Martinez
David Markley	Nicole
David Kingen	Greg
Diana and Ray Mendoza	Pastor Jane
Janet Orem	Mary Ellen Edeus
Cindy Waltz and Sister	Jane and David
Yvonne Suroviak	Flora R.
Georgette Sknerski	Tyler Gall
Jakob Holden	Phil
Denise Matthys	Luana Sulkowski
Jan Oprea	Sonny Buono
Florance Cody	Shannon Sutton
Kathy & Chuck Pumnea	Robin
Laura Buono Domsic	Eunice
The Windstrups	Betsy
Rick Parker	David
Gary Everhart	Trina & Scott
Darlene O'Brien	Joe & Kathy
Doug & Sue Matthews	Breanne Polan
Janet Terpstra	Tammy
Glen Nahler	Alex
Tom	Ben
David Hamblin	Mike Kelly
Jana Tolley	Sue Heth
Larry & Bonnie Perryman	Ron Toren
Delta Rose	Tony
Winnie Owen	Mildred
Breeanne	Neal
Mom Bechtler	Rita
Victor	Carolyn
Marian Clayton	Loved ones of Leroy Fassett
Ella P	
Melissa J.	

Isaiah 53:1-8

53 Who has believed what we have heard?

And to whom has the arm of the Lord been revealed?

² For he grew up before him like a young plant
and like a root out of dry ground;

he had no form or majesty that we should look at him,
nothing in his appearance that we should desire him.

³ He was despised and rejected by others;
a man of suffering and acquainted with infirmity,
and as one from whom others hide their faces
he was despised, and we held him of no account.

⁴ Surely he has borne our infirmities
and carried our diseases,
yet we accounted him stricken,
struck down by God, and afflicted.

⁵ But he was wounded for our transgressions,
crushed for our iniquities;
upon him was the punishment that made us whole,
and by his bruises we are healed.

⁶ All we like sheep have gone astray;
we have all turned to our own way,
and the Lord has laid on him
the iniquity of us all.

⁷ He was oppressed, and he was afflicted,
yet he did not open his mouth;
like a lamb that is led to the slaughter
and like a sheep that before its shearers is silent,
so he did not open his mouth.

⁸ By a perversion of justice he was taken away.
Who could have imagined his future?
For he was cut off from the land of the living,
stricken for the transgression of my people.

Ephesians 5:8-14

⁸ for once you were darkness, but now in the Lord you are light. Walk as children of light, ⁹ for the fruit of the light is found in all that is good and right and true. ¹⁰ Try to find out what is pleasing to the Lord. ¹¹ Take no part in the unfruitful works of darkness; rather, expose them. ¹² For it is shameful even to mention what such people do secretly, ¹³ but everything exposed by the light becomes visible, ¹⁴ for everything that becomes visible is light. Therefore it says,

“Sleeper, awake!

Rise from the dead,
and Christ will shine on you.”

John 9:1-17

9 As he walked along, he saw a man blind from birth. ² His disciples asked him, “Rabbi, who sinned, this man or his parents, that he was born blind?” ³ Jesus answered, “Neither this man nor his parents sinned; he was born blind so that God’s works might be revealed in him. ⁴ We must work the works of him who sent me while it is day; night is coming, when no one can work. ⁵ As long as I am in the world, I am the light of the world.” ⁶ When he had said this, he spat on the ground and made mud with the saliva and spread the mud on the man’s eyes, ⁷ saying to him, “Go, wash in the pool of Siloam” (which means Sent). Then he went and washed and came back able to see. ⁸ The neighbors and those who had seen him before as a beggar began to ask, “Is this not the man who used to sit and beg?” ⁹ Some were saying, “It is he.” Others were saying, “No, but it is someone like him.” He kept saying, “I am he.” ¹⁰ But they kept asking him, “Then how were your eyes opened?” ¹¹ He answered, “The man called Jesus made mud, spread it on my eyes, and said to me, ‘Go to Siloam and wash.’ Then I went and washed and received my sight.” ¹² They said to him, “Where is he?” He said, “I do not know.” ¹³ They brought to the Pharisees the man who had formerly been blind. ¹⁴ Now it was a Sabbath day when Jesus made the mud and opened his eyes. ¹⁵ Then the Pharisees also began to ask him how he had received his sight. He said to them, “He put mud on my eyes. Then I washed, and now I see.” ¹⁶ Some of the Pharisees said, “This man is not from God, for he does not observe the Sabbath.” Others said, “How can a man who is a sinner perform such signs?” And they were divided. ¹⁷ So they said again to the blind man, “What do you say about him? It was your eyes he opened.” He said, “He is a prophet.”

Journeying through the Streets

Isaiah 53:1-8; Ephesians 5:8-14; John 9:1-17

As Jesus journeyed through the Galilean countryside and the Judean desert, as he journeyed through dirt and wilderness and water, he gained quite a following and quite a reputation. Out in the wilderness and countryside he was known for miracles of healing and feeding thousands and walking on water. He was known for world-changing teachings that made people recognize the power and worthiness that they had within themselves as children of God—a power and worthiness much deeper and broader and higher than any that could be bestowed in the societies of the world. He was known for inspiring thousands with his love and with his welcome into this radical community that he called the Kingdom.

Every now and then he would make a journey to Jerusalem, particularly around major feast days. And his reputation in Jerusalem was decidedly quite different than it was out in the wilderness and countryside! You see, Jerusalem was the political and religious power center of Judea. The theocratic local government was there. The temple was there. The Pharisees and Sadducees and Scribes and Teachers of the Law were there. And for all of them, Jesus’s reputation was that of a blasphemer, a troublemaker, and a threat to their power. You see, in the narrative of Jesus’s life as told in the gospel of *John*, Jesus rioted in the temple very early on in his ministry. According to *John*, right after performing his first miracle of turning water into wine at the wedding in Cana, Jesus went to the temple in Jerusalem and drove out the money changers, dumped the money, and flipped the tables. Clearly that would have angered them. But that was just the beginning! After that he kept healing people on the Sabbath, not only upstaging them but also challenging the law that they used for control. And then, horror of horrors, it became known that he had made a friend at a certain well who was not just a woman but was also a Samaritan! If you do a close reading of *John*, you will even find that some assumed Jesus was a Samaritan himself, so impactful was that journey to the water!

And such was the heart of the issue for those with power in Jerusalem. Not only did Jesus befriend and commune with the wrong sort of people, but he did so with such alacrity that he became completely identified with them. And, even worse, he made blasphemous claims like saying that God was his father and that he was the bread of life and that he was the light of the world. And then, worst of all, he was leaving the temple complex and journeying through the streets with that blasphemous message. He was meeting people where they were and introducing them to God without them having to come to the temple, without them having to make

those payments that he had dumped on the ground way back at the beginning, without them having to submit to the control of temple leaders. Yes, it was most certainly his journeying through the streets that got him into the most trouble. Before the events of today's reading even happened, they had already tried to arrest him on multiple occasions and had already tried to stone him at least once.

You see, he had been at the temple earlier that day when the Scribes and Pharisees brought in a woman who was accused of committing adultery. They wanted to make an example of her by stoning her according to the law of Moses, and they wanted to make an example of Jesus by testing him on that very law when confronted with a living, breathing person. In response, he wrote something in the dirt and said, "Let anyone among you who is without sin be the first to throw a stone at her." Then he wrote in the dirt again, and they high tailed it out of there quickly. My guess is that he was writing down the particular sins of the Scribes and Pharisees, and they of course did not want those particular sins to be known. The result was a woman's life being saved and the religious leaders' hypocrisy being exposed. And so, not only was their bloodlust unsatisfied, but their fury was kindled.

They stalked him the rest of the day, trying to catch him out in his teachings so that they could justify aiming those same stones at him. Finally they heard the thing that they assumed would do it. They said:

'Now we know that you have a demon. Abraham died, and so did the prophets, yet you say, 'Whoever keeps my word will never taste death.'⁵³ Are you greater than our father Abraham, who died? The prophets also died. Who do you claim to be?'⁵⁴ Jesus answered, "If I glorify myself, my glory is nothing. It is my Father who glorifies me, he of whom you say, 'He is our God,'⁵⁵ though you do not know him. But I know him; if I would say that I do not know him, I would be a liar like you. But I do know him, and I keep his word.⁵⁶ Your ancestor Abraham rejoiced that he would see my day; he saw it and was glad."⁵⁷ Then the Jews said to him, "You are not yet fifty years old, and have you seen Abraham?"⁵⁸ Jesus said to them, "Very truly, I tell you, before Abraham was, I am."⁵⁹ So they picked up stones to throw at him, but Jesus hid himself and went out of the temple.—John 8:52-59

He made his way back into the streets.

"The streets" have always been loaded with meaning. I have encountered it pretty much everywhere I have been in this world, and I have encountered it throughout time in books written from different centuries. "The streets" mean poverty. "The streets" mean violence. "The streets" mean danger. "The streets" mean unsavory. "The streets" mean unworthy. "The streets" mean unwanted. "The streets" mean homelessness. "The streets" mean sex work. "The streets" mean drug use. And so "the streets" are the realm of the most otherized, the most ostracized, the most oppressed, the most detested, the most despised. Street urchins. Street children. Street walkers. Street dwellers. I hear it every day as euphemistic condemnation: "He's been out running the streets. She's been out working the streets. They've been out in the streets again." And I hear it every day as a badge of good behavior and morality to avoid the streets: "I've managed to stay out of the streets. I've kept my kids out of the streets." And so "the streets" have become dog whistles for class and race and sexuality—the discursive playground for manufactured panic about crime and immorality.

I can assure you that these same sentiments, these same meanings were there in first century Jerusalem. Because somehow they have always been there, transcending time, place, and context. In first century Jerusalem the panic against the streets would have carried a bit more religious moralism. The streets would have been the realm of the demon possessed, of the ritually unclean, of the adulterous women, of the lepers, of the beggars. In other words, the streets would have been the realm of the sinners. And so, of course, Jesus found himself right at home in the streets. Jesus found himself among his people in the streets. For, he, too, was named a sinner. He, too, was persecuted by the powerful. He, too, was oppressed and afflicted. He, too, was hunted down for arrest and execution. And so he hid and sought refuge in the streets.

And almost immediately he came upon someone who had been declared a sinner by the whole society because he was blind and poor. For, the logic was that if he was blind and poor than it must have been a punishment from God for the sinfulness of his family or for his own sinfulness. Even Jesus's own disciples had this logic and asked about it. Jesus answered, "Neither this man nor his parents sinned; he was born blind so that God's works might be revealed in him. We must work the works of him who sent me while it is day; night is

coming when no one can work. As long as I am in the world, I am the light of the world.” This man was not sinful. His parents were not sinful. He was made in the fullness of who he was, in the image and likeness of God, and that fullness included his blindness. For, God had a plan for him that could only be accomplished by someone with his experience.

You see, he would have experienced the worst of what his broken world had to offer. Because of his blindness, he was forced to beg for his livelihood. Because he was a beggar, he was pushed to the margins of society. Because he was pushed to the margins of society, he was lonely. Because of all of this, people saw him as the worst of sinners. Even Jesus’ disciples who were not from Jerusalem viewed him in this way only from looking upon him once, without knowing him at all. And yet, he did not let all of the brokenness around him, all of the violence directed at him get him down. He did not give in to despair or allow his spirit to be broken. Instead, he followed the well-trodden path that he had to know by heart in order to survive every single day. Day after day he sat down in his spot and reached out to his fellow humans. He asked people to respond to him with compassion. He spoke to anyone and everyone who walked by, always seeking connection and wholeness. He always maintained his hope.

And then one day this man walked up with his disciples. They were spitting the same old broken vitriol about him when he heard a voice speak up. His sense of hearing was acute, as he depended on it for survival without vision. He heard love. He heard compassion. He heard understanding. He heard wholeness. He heard the speaker spit onto the ground. He heard grains of sand and particles of dirt being bound together as they were rolled with saliva. And then he felt a cool, healing touch as the mixture was spread on his eyes. That voice said, “Go, wash in the pool of Siloam.” Then he went and washed and came back able to see. And so in the wilderness of the streets there was a journey through the dirt and a journey to the water. And so, journeying through the streets there was healing.

I have always been confounded by society’s narratives of the streets as the space for all things awful and evil. For, just as those narratives seem to transcend place and context, so does the reality that the streets are actually the beautiful, beating heart of community. Everywhere I have been on this blessed planet, the streets have been home to the musicians and the artists and the activists. The streets have been home to children in need and to those who take care of the children even though they have nothing themselves. The streets have been the home of radical welcome for the outcast, the immigrant, and the otherized. The streets have been home to games and music and dancing. The streets have been home to the salt of the earth. The streets have been where I have found the most joy, the most creativity, the most kindness, and the most interdependence. In short, the streets have been where I have found the Kingdom of God.

And clearly the same was true for Jesus. As he journeyed through the streets, he did not just find people in need of him. He also found people he needed, like the blind man who now could see. The suffering servant savior of the world learned from this man that no matter how broken the world might be, hope can still persist. And so he came to know that he himself could contain all that brokenness and still be a source of light and hope for others. He came to know that even if he was reviled, mocked, hated, beaten, spat upon, apprehended, questioned, shoved to the margins, and executed, he could still hold his head up like this man who once was blind and look his haters in the eyes and still connect with them and still save them.

As we continue our journey with Jesus to the cross, may we be willing to journey through streets with him! May we be willing to challenge the dominant narratives of society. May we be willing to resist the panicked dog whistles that plague our news stations. May we be willing to encounter difference. May we be willing to risk being among the “sinners.” May we be willing to accept that we *are* the sinners. May we dance and protest and welcome and commune. May we seek the Kingdom!

The Man in sandals came to help the poor and lame. No one could stay the same after they spoke His name.

Sandals, sandals on His feet, dusty streets where people meet. Sandals, sandals came to me, steps that lead past Calvary. Amen!

When I Survey the Wondrous Cross 101

HAMBURG LM

Isaac Watts, 1707

Lowell Mason, 1824

1. When I sur - vey the won - drous cross On which the
2. For - bid it, Lord, that I should boast, Save in the
3. See, from His head, His hands, His feet, Sor - row and
4. Were the whole realm of na - ture mine, That were a

Prince of glo - ry died, My rich - est gain I
death of Christ my God; All the vain things that
love flow min - gled down; Did e'er such love and
pres - ent far too small; Love so a - maz - ing,

count but loss, And pour con - tempt on all my pride.
charm me most, I sac - ri - fice them to His blood.
sor - row meet, Or thorns com - pose so rich a crown?
so di - vine, De - mands my soul, my life, my all.