

# Asbury United Methodist Church

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Worship Leader: Alice Pace

Chancel: Shirley Keene

\* Please rise in body or in spirit

## THE HIGH WAY

WEEK FIVE

MARCH 22, 2026

### WE GATHER

MEETING ONE ANOTHER ON THE WAY

**PRELUDE** “Jesus, Savior, Pilot Me” Hanna Noh

**WELCOME AND ANNOUNCEMENTS**

**PREPARING TOGETHER**

Threshold Moment

“A Wilderness Wandering People”

**Leader:** Our worship series leads us along the path of our faith journey in a way that leads to new life in Jesus Christ, the message of Easter that we move towards. New paths are possible through freedom in Christ. And these ways can be made plain before us if we have eyes to see. Yes, we will strain against adversity – such is life. We don’t reach Easter until we’ve been through the agony of Holy Week that will soon be upon us. But new paths are always possible. New horizons are ours through relationship with God and with each other. There will be both stumbling blocks and stepping stones along the way. But God is our rock and our redeemer – God is with us in our every step.

(SUNG)

**We are a wilderness wandering people**

**On a journey of the soul.**

**May we find our destination**

**In our longing to be whole.**

**Our Holy God is calling to us.**  
**With Jesus by our side**  
**May compassion be our compass;**  
**May the Spirit be our guide,**  
**On THE WAY**  
**On THE WAY**  
**On THE WAY**

**PRAYER FOR THE PATH (in unison)**

God our Rock,  
Be with us on THE WAY.

At times we are not sure how we will carry the burdens of grief and disappointment that accumulate in life.

We come asking for help in lightening the load,  
So that we can be free to move in new directions.  
Help us to help each other as Jesus asks us to do.

AMEN.

**OPENING HYMN**

Be Still, My Soul (UMH page 534 vs1&2)

**GREETING EACH OTHER**

Leader: The best part of having companions on THE WAY is the sharing that we get to do that makes us feel just a little less alone. During this series, we have shared answers to a common question with each other. I invite you to turn to someone you did not come to church with and answer this question: "What feels heavy to you this day?"

As God has gathered us in as the Body of Christ, let us now extend the peace of Christ to one another.

**WE PROCLAIM**

Discovering Ourselves on THE WAY

Isaiah 43: 16-19

He is the one who made a road through the sea and a path through rough waters. He is the one who defeated the chariots and horses and the mighty armies. They fell together and will never rise again. They were destroyed as a flame is put out. The Lord says, “Forget what happened before, and do not think about the past. Look at the new thing I am going to do. It is already happening. Don’t you see it? I will make a road in the desert and rivers in the dry land.”

Philippians 3: 12-14

From Paul to the Philippians

I do not mean that I am already as God wants me to be. I have not yet reached that goal. But I continue trying to reach it and to make it mine. Christ wants me to do that, which is the reason he made me his. Brothers and sisters, I know that I have not yet reached that goal, but there is one thing I always do. Forgetting the past and straining toward what is ahead, I keep trying to reach the goal and get the prize for which God called me through Christ to the life above.

**CHOIR ANTHEM “We Will Keep Our Faith Alive”**

**SERMON (Jan Jones)**

**WE RESPOND**

Opening to the Holy On **THE WAY**

**SHARING JOYS AND CONCERNS**

Leader: Let us pause along the way to turn towards the Holy One, the One whose way is freedom from fear. We come with our honesty about just how difficult it is to trust the path, trust our instincts, trust our inner compass. And we remember that God meets us even here.

**PRAYING FOR OTHERS ALONG THE WAY (silent prayers)**

Leader: Holy God, we come before you in prayer, lifting to you the joys and concerns, the hopes and dreams of our lives...Bless, we pray, this gathering of your people, that we may grow and flourish in your love and grace. We pray for our church that we would be a beacon of light in a world of darkness. In the midst of all that occupies our time and energy, we need sacred time with you, O God. Forgive us for being prone to wander. If there are ways we can show your love to others, open our eyes to the opportunities. We come weary and distracted, sometimes even broken. But you are the God who makes all things new. Wash us clean today. Remove the bitterness, anger, or doubt that we carried in.

We pray for those who are in pain, those who are ill, those who grieve. May we touch their lives not only through our prayers, but through our lives and actions.

We continue our prayers for those whose journeys are difficult in this moment.....  
(Pray silently)

And as we think about the difficulties of life, we also are reminded that there is so much good along the journey of life. We give thanks for those moments of joy, laughter, and accomplishments, both big and small.....(Pray silently)

We pray all these things spoken aloud, and the ones that have been lifted in the quiet of our hearts, and conclude our prayers with the one that Jesus taught us saying...

### **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, the power and the glory, forever. AMEN.

### **STILLNESS** (sung)

**Meet me in the stillness, Lord**

**Be the air I breathe**

**Meet me in the stillness, Lord**

**Free me to receive**

In the Gospel of Matthew, Jesus says, "Come to me, all you who are weary and are carrying heavy burdens, and I will give your rest. Take my yoke upon you, and learn from me, for I am gentle and humble in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. For my yoke is easy and my burden is light"

You received a rock on Ash Wednesday to carry with you through the days and weeks of Lent. You have carried your rock as a symbol of the weights you have created or the burdens you have refused to let go of. Today, inspired by the ritual action of pilgrims on the Camino de Santiago, we will bring our rocks forward to place them in the baptismal font. As you place your rock, offer gratitude for the presence of Christ from the day of your baptism to wherever your journey has led you today. Whatever you are carrying that has made your heart heavy...tiredness, fear, anxiety, confusion, sadness...I invite you to come and lay that burden down...intentionally releasing your rock, your burdens, knowing God has made a way in your life to come to Him for forgiveness, for acceptance, and abundant grace.

In your baptism, you were washed by His grace, filled with His spirit, and renewed in your soul. You are given the gift of relieving your burdens.

God goes wherever you go. Wherever you go today, imagine God going with you. Imagine him walking or sitting with you. Remind yourself that whenever you succeed, he is there. Whenever you share Christ, he is there. Whenever you sin – he is there. He will make the darkness become light.

I invite you to come forward when you are ready. Place your stone in the font and continue to build the cross with pieces of tile, symbolizing our brokenness and His love which makes us whole.

### **TIME FOR CONTEMPLATION**

Hear this: you are already free because Jesus makes it so.

Whether or not you know it, believe it, or feel it quite yet,

Your burden is shared by Jesus who is gentle and humble of heart.

You are forgiven and freed,

May it be so.

**STILLNESS** (sung)

**Meet me in the stillness, Lord**

**Be the air I breathe**

**Meet me in the stillness, Lord**

**Free me to receive.**

**WE GO FORTH**

Continuing with Jesus on THE WAY

**OFFERING “Jesus Is All the World to Me”**

**Doxology**

**Praise God, Creator of us all.**

**Praise Christ, by who we hear our call,**

**Praise Spirit, that which sets us free,**

**Our awe is yours, the One-in-Three.**

**Offering Prayer**

Heavenly Father, we ask for Your blessing upon these tithes and offerings. Multiply them for the expansion of your kingdom, for the support of Your church, and for the needs of the less

fortunate. May they be used wisely and effectively to bring hope, healing and salvation. We come before You today with grateful hearts, recognizing that all we have comes from your generous hand. Thank you for the blessings of life and salvation through your Son, Jesus Christ.

AMEN.

### **CLOSING HYMN**

Spirit Song UMH page 347 vs 1&2)

#### **Benediction**

Leader: The Creator God filled you with breath, inviting you to this journey called Life.

**People: We will follow on THE WAY**

Leader: Jesus, our Guide, showed us what it means to make a new way with Love.

**People: We will follow on THE WAY**

Leader: The Spirit gives us strength to move forward and Courage and Compassion for all we meet.

**People: We will follow on THE WAY**

Leader: May this week be filled with opportunities to choose to let go of those things that no longer serve you,

And be on the lookout for ways to encourage the same in those you meet.

**May it be so.**

AMEN

#### **Buen Camino**

**POSTLUDE** “Lord, You Have Come to the Lakeshore” Hanna Noh

#### **Announcements**

- The worship leader for next Sunday, March 29<sup>th</sup> is Carl Bishop.
- **Holy Week Worship Schedule**
  - **Maundy Thursday Worship:** Thursday, April 2, at Zion Church — Fellowship Dinner at 5:00 p.m. / Worship at 6:00 p.m.
  - **Good Friday English Worship:** Friday, April 3, at Asbury UMC — 6:00 p.m.
  - **Easter Worship: Sunday,** April 5, at 9:30 a.m.

- **Pastor's schedule: Wesley heritage Journey (15-24)**

### **Birthdays**

22<sup>nd</sup> LaDonna Pratt

24<sup>th</sup> Beth Bradbury, Sarah Gibbs & Carolyn Whitney

26<sup>th</sup> Jan Jones

### **World Down Syndrome Day is 3/21**

Down Syndrome occurs when there are 3 instead of 2 copies of the 21<sup>st</sup> chromosome in each cell body. 3/21 aims to promote awareness and understanding of Down syndrome and to recognize the dignity, rights, potential and wellbeing of people with Down syndrome.

**Flowers**      The flowers on the altar this week are given to the glory of God and in loving memory of Marion A. Fitzgerald by her daughters Carolyn and Marion.

