

Sunday Worship on March 1, 2026

(CCLI: License Number #3156883) (Welcoming Elder: Kevin Johnston)

We Gather

- Welcome and Announcements
- Responsive Call to worship
- Praise song BOP 674 In the bulb there is a flower (Vs. 1-3)
- Prayer for Worship and the Lord's Prayer
- Words of Assurance
- Praise song BOP 300 Father, we love you (Vs. 1-3)
- Prayer for children

We listen

- Sung prayer for illumination (B OP 445 Open our eyes, Lord)
- First reading: Genesis 12:1-4a
- Second reading: Psalm 121 (Refrain 2)
- Third reading: John 3:1-17
- Sermon: **You must be born again (The gift of new life at his table)**
- Praise song BOP 534 All who hunger, gather gladly (Vs. 1-3)
- Communion
- Prayer for people

We Respond

- Offering, Doxology (BOP 830 Praise God from whom all blessings flow) & Dedication
- Song for the Journey BOP 651 Guide me, O thou great Redeemer (Vs. 1-3)

We Serve

- Benediction
- A Sung Blessing

Responsive Call to Worship

Into life's challenges and questions comes the Mystery of God,

and God's truth opens our eyes.

Into our routines and rituals walks the presence of Christ,

and God's love brings healing and hope.

Into our traditions and conclusions blows the wind of the Holy Spirit,

and God's people are born from above.

We gather in Jesus' name to encounter God's grace and glory.

Let us worship God with open hearts and minds.

Praise song – BOP 674 In the bulb there is a flower (Vs. 1-3)

Prayer of Adoration

God of majesty and mercy, Christ, both Lord and Servant, Spirit of new life, your mystery embraces the vast reaches of the universe and yet you are present with us in the course of our daily lives.

Even the tiniest spark of your wisdom illuminates the greatest complexities. With the smallest gesture of your love, you renew our hope. Deepen our sense of your holy presence this day. Assure us that your love will never let us go. We offer our praise and our prayers this day to you, Holy God, Holy One and Holy Three, with humble hearts and faith that seeks understanding.

Prayer of confession (Unison)

God of mystery and mercy, we confess that we prefer simple certainty to seeking deeper understanding. We settle for what we know, ignoring our doubts and questions. Forgive us when our faith falters because what we think no longer satisfies. Open our eyes to the truth you hold out to us in Christ, and give us courage to rethink what we have assumed about you and your love for the world.

Heavenly Father, hear us, as we offer the Prayer that Jesus taught us: (The 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.

Words of Assurance

The Apostle Paul declared that from now on, we regard no one from a human point of view. If anyone is in Christ, there is a new creation. Everything old has passed away; see, everything has become new! Thanks be to God for love that gives us all a new start this very day!

May the Peace of Christ be with you. *(Let us bless each other with the peace of the Lord.)*

Praise song When Israel Was in Egypt's Land

Prayer for the children

Sung prayer for illumination (BOP 445 Open our eyes, Lord)

- First reading: Genesis 12:1-4a
- Second reading: Psalm 121 (Refrain 2)
- Third reading: John 3:1-17

"This is the word of the Lord / Thanks be to God."

Sermon: You must be born again (The gift of new life at His table)

We are going to share the Word of the Lord with the title YOU MUST BE BORN AGAIN. And we have a subtitle today. It's The Gift of New Life at His Table)

In John's gospel, Nicodemus came to Jesus at night. He was a respected leader. A teacher of Israel. A moral man. A religious man. And yet he came with questions.

V2, "Rabbi, we know that you are a teacher who has come from God.."

Nicodemus began politely, carefully, and respectfully.

Jesus answered him in an unexpected way.

V3, 'Very truly, I tell you, no one can see the kingdom of God without being born from above.'

Born again. Born from above.

Nicodemus was confused. **V4, "How can anyone be born after having grown old? Can one enter a second time into the mother's womb and be born?"**

He was thinking about effort. "What must I do!?"

But, Jesus was speaking about origin, the being.

To be born is not something we achieve. It is something we receive.

Birth is not a decision we make. It a gift given to us.

And this is unsettling. **For most of us, it is easier to improve ourselves than depend entirely on grace.**

We prefer adjustment over surrender.

We prefer reform over resurrection.

But, Jesus says, **v7, "You must be born again from above."**

In **Genesis 12:1, "Go from your country and your kindred and your father's house to the land that I will show you."**

Abraham was not given a blueprint. He was given a promise.

And he went.

New birth is like that. It begins not with our performance but with God's promise.

During this season of Lent, we have asked last week, what are we fighting this Lent? What are the temptations, challenges, and struggles?

We fight habits. We fight temptations. We fight old patterns.

But before we can fight well, we must be alive.

Only alive people have temptations.

Dead people cannot struggle against sin. Only the living can.

Jesus says we must be born of water and the Spirit.
Water washes. The Spirit creates.

Jesus recalls the story from the wilderness. **V14, As Moses lifted up the serpent, so must the Son of Man be lifted up.**

Here, the conversation turns to the cross.

V16, “For God so loved the world...”

Not condemned, but loved.
Not discarded, but loved.

God did not send the Son to condemn the world, but that the world might be saved through him.

New birth flows from love.
Not from fear, not from pressure, but from love.

Today, we come to the Table. This Table teaches us what new birth looks like.
We do not produce this bread. We do not earn this cup.
We receive.
Like children.

Today, we are going to sing a hymn and it starts like this. “All who hunger, gather gladly.”
This is not the table of the impressive. It is the table of the hungry.
Nicodemus was hungry. That is why he came in the night.

Psalm 121 says, “I lift up my eyes to the hills.”

Our help does not come from ourselves. It comes from the Lord.
New life comes from above.

The Holy Spirit blows where it chooses. We do not control it.
We receive it. That may feel humbling. But it is also freeing.

Because if new birth depends on God’s grace, then it does not collapse when we stumble. If salvation begins with God’s love, it does not disappear when our strength runs out.

Perhaps, some of you are tired.

You have been trying to manage your spiritual life. Trying to improve yourself, trying to fix what feels broken.

Did it work well?

Jesus does NOT say, “Try harder!”

He says, “Be born from above.”

This means surrender. Trust. Open your hands.

This is exactly what we do at the Table.

Lift your hands. When we put our palms down, we pray to God to help us release what we are holding. Do this prayer when we come to God asking something we want. God’s plans and God’s gifts are higher than our thoughts and understanding. Because of the things we are stubbornly holding, we cannot see what God is pouring down upon us.

So with hands down prayer, let go of what we are holding.

Turn our palms around. This is palms up prayer. With empty hands, we ask God to fill us with what he wants to fill us. With humble hearts, we come to God confessing that we thankfully receive what God is ready to give to us. From time to time, do this prayer.

Hands down, we let go. We remove what covers our eyes.

Hands up, we receive. God is our loving Father. He is ready to give us what’s best for us.

We receive the bread. We receive the cup. We receive Christ.

As we receive Jesus Christ, he gives us life.

Real life. Eternal life. Life that begins now and stretches into eternity.

At his Table, God gives us His one and only Son, Jesus Christ. Jesus is the best gift God can offer us.

Sisters and brothers in Christ, this is good news.

God loves the world. **God loves each and every one of you.**

Jesus does not condemn you, but saves you.

Jesus does not to shame you, but gives you life.

That is why he has come.

So, come. Come to Jesus.

Come not because you are strong, but because you are hungry.

Come not because you have conquered every sin, but because you need grace.

Be born from above.

Receive the gift of new life at the Table of Jesus Christ our Lord and Saviour.

And live up to the life we have received.

This is the message of the Lord for us today.

Let us pray.

Lord Jesus, we cannot give birth to ourselves. We need life from above. Give us faith to trust your love. Open our hands to receive your grace. As we come to your Table, make us new. In Jesus holy name, we pray. Amen.

Praise song BOP 534 All who hunger, gather gladly (Vs. 1-3)

Communion

Sisters and brother in Christ, this is the table of our Lord Jesus Christ. Today we have heard the words of Jesus, “You must be born from above.” At this table, we do not manufacture new life. We receive it. This is not a table for the self-sufficient, but for those who are hungry. Not for the perfect, but for those who long to be made new.

Here, Christ meets us as we are. Here, he feeds us with the life that comes from above. Here, the love of God, who did not send the Son to condemn the world, but to save it, becomes bread for our journey.

All who hungry, gather gladly. Come, for all is ready.

(Great Prayer of Thanksgiving:) (Please say BOLD print together)

L: The Lord be with you. **P: And also, with you.**

L: Lift up your hearts. **P: We lift them to the Lord.**

L: Let us give thanks to the Lord our God.

P: It is right to give God thanks and praise.

L: Holy and gracious God, you are the giver of life. From the beginning, you created us in love and breathed your Spirit into dust. When we wandered in the wilderness of our own making, you did not abandon us. You called Abraham by promise, not by merit. You kept watch over your people, our help coming from you, the Maker of heaven and earth.

In the fullness of time, you sent your Son, Jesus Christ. He came not to condemn the world, but that the world might be saved through him. Lifted up on the cross, he revealed the depth of your love. Raised from the grave, he opened the way of new birth and eternal life.

In him, you have shown us what it means to be born from above to live by trust, to receive grace, to walk in the Spirit.

Therefore, with angels and archangels, and with all the saints in every time and place, we praise your name and join their unending hymn:

(Sanctus) 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.

L: Gracious God, we remember Jesus Christ. On the night before he died, he took bread, blessed it, broke it, and gave it to his disciples. In simple gifts, he gave the mystery of his very self. Through his broken body and poured-out blood, you revealed mercy stronger than sin and love stronger than death.

As we come to this table, we come like Nicodemus, seeking, hungry, needing life from above. Shape us by your grace. Let this meal be more than remembrance. Let it be renewal. Make us a people who live by faith in your promise. Therefore, we proclaim the mystery of faith:

P: Christ has died, Christ is risen, Christ will come again.

L: Pour out your Holy Spirit upon us and upon these gifts of bread and wine. May this bread be for us the body of Christ, and this cup the blood of Christ. By your Holy Spirit, give us new birth again and again, washing us, renewing us, strengthening us for the journey.

Make us one with Christ, one with each other, and one in ministry to all the world, until the day when we feast with joy in your kingdom.

Through Christ, with Christ, in Christ, in the unity of the Holy Spirit, all glory and honour are yours, Almighty God, now and forever. Amen.

Breaking of the BREAD and Pouring the WINE

(The minister breaks bread in the presence of the people, saying:)

The Lord Jesus, on the night before he died, took bread, and after giving thanks to God, he broke it and said,

“This is my body, given for you. Do this in remembrance of me.”

(The minister may pour wine into the cup, lifting it while saying:)

In the same way, he took the cup after supper, saying,

“This cup is the new covenant sealed in my blood. Whenever you drink it, do this in remembrance of me.”(Distribution of the elements)

Every time you eat this bread and drink the cup, you proclaim the Lord’s death until he comes. (Take some time for personal prayer)

Prayer for people:

God of life, we pray for your church as we walk this Lenten journey. Renew us where we are weary. Strengthen us where we are weak.

We pray for those who are sick, those who are anxious and those who feel alone in the night like Nicodemus.

Lift their eyes to the hills. Be their keeper and their help.

We pray for our community and for the world. Where there is injustice, bring righteousness.

Where there is fear, bring peace.

Make us a people born from above, living by faith and serving in love.
In Jesus' precious name, we pray. Amen.

Invitation to the offering:

Freely we have received. Freely we give.

In gratitude for the new life given to us in Christ, let us offer our gifts to God. As we give our offerings, let us glorify God.

(BOP #830, Praise God from whom all blessings flow)

Offering prayer:

Generous God, all that we have comes from you. Receive these gifts and use them and use us for the work of your kingdom and the sharing of your life with the world. In the name of Jesus Christ our Lord, we pray. Amen.

Song for the Journey – BOP 651 Guide me, O thou great Redeemer (Vs. 1-3)

Now, it is our time to be sent to the world where God called us to be.

You have been fed bread from heaven. You have received life from above. Now go into the wilderness of this world guided by the Lord who keeps you. Walk by faith. Live as those who have been born again.

Benediction: May the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, And the Love of God, our Father, And the intimate fellowship of the Holy Spirit, be with us all, now and always. Amen.