



# first community

March 22, 2026

10 am SOUTH

Lent 5

GREETING – Seth

PRELUDE – Robert, organ

*Chorale Prelude Herzlich tut mich verlangen,  
("My Heart is Filled with Longing"), BWV 727  
Johann Sebastian Bach (1685-1750)*

CALL TO WORSHIP – Seth

One: From the cross, Jesus spoke forgiveness.

**Many: Mercy came before understanding.**

One: God reconciles the world through love,

**Many: and entrusts that love to us.**

One: Come, let us worship the God of mercy.

**Many: Let us worship with grateful hearts.**

## OPENING HYMN

*Now the Green Blade Rises* NOEL NOUVELET  
(#238 New Century) - verses 1, 2, and 4

**Now the green blade rises from the buried  
grain;  
wheat that in dark earth for many days has  
lain;  
Love lives again, that with the dead has  
been:  
Love is come again like wheat that rises  
green.**

**In the grave they laid their love whom hate  
had slain,  
thinking that their love would never wake  
again.  
Laid in the earth like grain that sleeps  
unseen:  
Love is come again like wheat that rises  
green.**

**When our hearts are wintry, grieving, or in  
pain,  
Christ's warm touch can call us back to life  
again,  
Fields of our hearts that dead and bare  
have been:  
Love is come again like wheat that rises  
green.**

WELCOME – Seth

BAPTISM – Seth

Elizabeth “Eliza” Wheeler Hatch

**ALL: We affirm that this community of faith is filled with love for Eliza. Our homes are her homes; our resources are her resources. Together we covenant to walk beside Eliza, to teach her to accept God’s grace for herself, and to show her the many faces of God. We pray that together we will fulfill our commitment to Eliza and to God.**

CHILDREN’S MOMENT – Seth

ANTHEM- Cambridge Choir Small  
Group

*We Do Not Have to Live by Ourselves*

Jane Marshall (1924-2019)

PASTORAL PRAYER AND THE  
LORD’S PRAYER – Seth

**Alternate Version from the New Zealand  
Anglican Prayer Book**

Eternal Spirit, Earth-maker, Pain-bearer, Life-giver,  
Source of all that is and that shall be,  
Father and Mother of us all,  
Loving God, in whom is heaven:

The hallowing of your name echo through the universe!

The way of your justice be followed by the peoples of the world!

Your heavenly will be done by all created beings!

Your commonwealth of peace and freedom sustain our hope and come on earth.

With the bread we need for today, feed us.  
In the hurts we absorb from one another, forgive us.

In times of temptation and test, strengthen us.  
From trials too great to endure, spare us.  
From the grip of all that is evil, free us.

For you reign in the glory of the power that is love, now and for ever.  
Amen.

## OFFERTORY

**Invitation to Dream – Seth**

**Receiving the People's Gifts**

**Offertory – Cambridge Choir Small Group**

*Ave Maria*

Tomas Luis de Victoria (1549-1611)

**Presentation of Gifts and Prayer of  
Dedication- Seth**

ONE: As the gifts are presented, will all rise in body or spirit?

**ALL: Merciful God, you have reconciled us to yourself in Christ. Receive these gifts as signs of our gratitude and make us instruments of reconciliation in a divided world. Amen.**

Doxology Old 100th

**Praise God throughout these forty days.  
Praise Christ, our Lord, whom God did raise. And praise the Spirit who imparts God's love in Christ into our hearts. Amen.**

**SCRIPTURE READING - Deacon**

**2 Corinthians 5:18-21**

<sup>18</sup> All this is from God, who reconciled us to himself through Christ and has given us the ministry of reconciliation; <sup>19</sup> that is, in Christ God was reconciling the world to himself, not counting their trespasses against them, and entrusting the message of reconciliation to us. <sup>20</sup> So we are ambassadors for Christ, since

God is making his appeal through us; we entreat you on behalf of Christ: be reconciled to God. <sup>21</sup> For our sake God made the one who knew no sin to be sin, so that in him we might become the righteousness of God.

### **Luke 23:32-43**

<sup>32</sup> Two others also, who were criminals, were led away to be put to death with him. <sup>33</sup> When they came to the place that is called The Skull, they crucified Jesus there with the criminals, one on his right and one on his left. [[<sup>34</sup> Then Jesus said, "Father, forgive them, for they do not know what they are doing."]] And they cast lots to divide his clothing. <sup>35</sup> And the people stood by watching, but the leaders scoffed at him, saying, "He saved others; let him save himself if he is the Messiah of God, his chosen one!" <sup>36</sup> The soldiers also mocked him, coming up and offering him sour wine <sup>37</sup> and saying, "If you are the King of the Jews, save yourself!" <sup>38</sup> There was also an inscription over him, "This is the King of the Jews."

<sup>39</sup> One of the criminals who were hanged there kept deriding him and saying, "Are you not the Messiah? Save yourself and us!" <sup>40</sup> But the other rebuked him, saying, "Do you not fear God, since you are under the same sentence of condemnation? <sup>41</sup> And we indeed have been condemned justly, for we are

getting what we deserve for our deeds, but this man has done nothing wrong.”<sup>42</sup> Then he said, “Jesus, remember me when you come in your kingdom.”<sup>43</sup> He replied, “Truly I tell you, today you will be with me in paradise.”

## SERMON – Mary Kate

*The Shape of Love:*

*Seeing God Clearly at the Cross*

Part 5: **The Shape of Love Is Mercy**

## HYMN OF PREPARATION

*In the Bulb There Is a Flower PROMISE (#433  
New Century) - verse 1*

**In the bulb there is a flower;  
in the seed, an apple tree;  
in cocoons, a hidden promise:  
butterflies will soon be free!  
In the cold and snow of winter  
there's a spring that waits to be,  
unrevealed until its season,  
something God alone can see.**

## COMMUNION

Invitation to Communion – Seth

Receiving Communion

Prayer of Thanksgiving – Seth

## CLOSING HYMN

*This Is a Day of New Beginnings BEGINNINGS*  
(#417 New Century) - verses 1-4

**This is a day of new beginnings,  
time to remember and move on,  
time to believe what love is bringing,  
laying to rest the pain that's gone.**

**For by the life and death of Jesus,  
God's mighty Spirit, now as then,  
can make for us a world of difference,  
as faith and hope are born again.**

**Then let us, with the Spirit's daring,  
step from the past and leave behind  
our disappointment, guilt, and grieving,  
seeking new paths, and sure to find.**

**Christ is alive, and goes before us  
to show and share what love can do.  
This is a day of new beginnings -  
our God is making all things new.**

**BENEDICTION – Seth**

**POSTLUDE – Robert, organ**  
*Fantasia in C Minor, BWV 562*  
Johann Sebastian Bach