



MARCH 18, 2026 | 6:00 PM | MIDWEEK LENTEN SERVICE

NO MATTER WHO YOU ARE OR WHERE YOU ARE ON
LIFE'S JOURNEY, YOU'RE WELCOME HERE!

A PRELUDE VIDEO *Quiet Place*

GATHERING

Blessed be the Holy Trinity, + Creator, Redeemer, and Sanctifier, who hears our longings and gives us new life.

Amen.

Loving God, who knows each of our stories,

We confess that we have sinned against you in our thoughts, actions, and inactions. We have been bound by jealousy, shame, and hatred. We have not listened to the cries of our siblings. We have participated in dishonest systems and benefited from violence done on our behalf. Forgive us, we pray. In your mercy free us from all that keeps us bound, and grant us healing and wholeness.

Siblings in Christ, do not be afraid.

In the name of + Jesus your sins are forgiven.

May God speak kindly to you,

restore your paths,

and look upon you with favor all the days of your life.

Amen.

* GATHERING HYMN *"Sing Praise to God, Who Reigns Above"* #6

GREETING

The grace of our Lord, Jesus Christ, the love of God, and the communion of the Holy Spirit be with you all.

And also with you

Let us pray.

**God of harmony and justice,
violence tears our dreams to pieces.**

We long for an end to mourning, betrayal, and fear.

Free us from hatred in our hearts and violence at another's hands.

Restore us to the wholeness of siblings who speak plainly and live in peace.

In Jesus' name we pray. Amen.

WORD

Genesis 42:1-25

When Jacob learned that there was grain in Egypt, he said to his sons, "Why do you keep looking at one another? ²I have heard," he said, "that there is grain in Egypt; go down and buy grain for us there, that we may live and not die." ³So ten of Joseph's brothers went down to buy grain in Egypt. ⁴But Jacob did not send Joseph's brother Benjamin with his brothers, for he feared that harm might come to him. ⁵Thus the sons of Israel were among the people who came to buy grain, for the famine had reached the land of Canaan.

⁶Now Joseph was governor over the land; it was he who sold to all the people of the land. And Joseph's brothers came and bowed themselves before him

with their faces to the ground. ⁷ When Joseph saw his brothers, he recognized them, but he treated them like strangers and spoke harshly to them. “Where do you come from?” he said. They said, “From the land of Canaan to buy food.” ⁸ Although Joseph had recognized his brothers, they did not recognize him. ⁹ Joseph also remembered the dreams that he had dreamed about them. He said to them, “You are spies; you have come to see the nakedness of the land!” ¹⁰ They said to him, “No, my lord; your servants have come to buy food. ¹¹ We are all sons of one man; we are honest men; your servants have never been spies.” ¹² But he said to them, “No, you have come to see the nakedness of the land!” ¹³ They said, “We, your servants, are twelve brothers, the sons of a certain man in the land of Canaan; the youngest, however, is now with our father, and one is no more.” ¹⁴ But Joseph said to them, “It is just as I have said to you; you are spies! ¹⁵ Here is how you shall be tested: as Pharaoh lives, you shall not leave this place unless your youngest brother comes here! ¹⁶ Let one of you go and bring your brother, while the rest of you remain in prison, in order that your words may be tested, whether there is truth in you, or else, as Pharaoh lives, surely you are spies.” ¹⁷ And he put them all together in prison for three days.

¹⁸ On the third day Joseph said to them, “Do this and you will live, for I fear God: ¹⁹ if you are honest men, let one of your brothers stay here where you are imprisoned. The rest of you shall go and carry grain for the famine of your households ²⁰ and bring your youngest brother to me. Thus your words will be verified, and you shall not die.” And they agreed to do so. ²¹ They said to one another, “Alas, we are paying the penalty for what we did to our brother; we saw his anguish when he pleaded with us, but we would not listen. That is why this anguish has come upon us.” ²² Then Reuben answered them, “Did I not tell you not to wrong the boy? But you would not listen. So now there comes a reckoning for his blood.” ²³ They did not know that Joseph understood them, since he spoke with them through an interpreter. ²⁴ He turned away from them and wept; then he returned and spoke to them. And he picked out Simeon and had him bound before their eyes. ²⁵ Joseph then gave orders to fill their bags with grain, to return every man’s money to his sack, and to give them provisions for their journey. This was done for them.

When his master heard the words that his wife spoke to him, saying, “This is the way your servant treated me,” he became enraged. And Joseph’s master took him and put him into the prison, the place where the king’s prisoners were confined; he remained there in prison.

MUSIC FOR SILENT REFLECTION “The Merton Prayer”

REFLECTION

Bound by Family

PASTOR JEN HOFFMAN

THANKSGIVING FOR THE WORD

We give you praise, holy God, for stories that illuminate our lives.

We thank you for the story of Joseph and his family.

When we are consumed by jealousy, meet us in our longing for dignity and love.

God, restore us to wholeness.

When violence shatters our world, meet us in our longing to remember we are siblings.

God, restore us to wholeness.

When dishonest systems silence and punish, meet us in our longing to be heard and believed.

God, restore us to wholeness.

When family is bound up in guilt and harsh words, meet us in our longing to be cared for and seen.

God, restore us to wholeness.

When guilt makes us fearful and shame makes us retreat, meet us in our longing for honest hearts and genuine love.

God, restore us to wholeness.

We thank you for the story of Joseph and his family.

We give you praise, holy God, for stories that illuminate our lives.

Through the wisdom of your scriptures teach us to live in wholeness.

When we are bound by forces within and without, free us to live fully in you.

* CLOSING HYMN *“Go, My Children, With My Blessing”* #431

BLESSING AND SENDING

May the God of dreams and faithful promises,
+ Father, Son, and Holy Spirit,
bless and protect you always.

Amen.

Go in peace,
forgiven, whole, and free.

Thanks be to God.

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