

Willow Springs Sunday Worship 9:30 am, *Lent 4* March 27, 2022

From exceptionalism to inclusion

Simulcast on Zoom: <https://us02web.zoom.us/j/4743450556>

Meeting ID: 474 345 0556 Dial by your location +1 312 626 6799 US (Chicago)

Hosted by Steve Dubrick

Focus As we seek God's way, we move from a sense that "we" and "ours" have special standing to the knowledge that all are equally part of God's kingdom.

Welcome and Call to Worship

Leader: Together we seek the way of God,

People: rejoicing that we are new creations in Christ.

Leader: From a human point of view, we demand what is ours,

People: but through Jesus we learn that all share in God's inheritance.

Leader: Let us join God's feast,

People: where all celebrate together.

All: *Let us live out God's way of inclusion.*

Prayer

Leader: Your ways, O God, are higher than our ways.

People: Your thoughts are higher than our thoughts.

One: We seek God's ways. (*Snip the cords.*)

All: *Lord, move us from our tribal thinking to your radical inclusion.*

Songs

Lenten prayer of confession (Isaiah 55 adapted)

Leader: Holy One,
we seek you while you may be found.

People: We call upon you while you are near.

Leader: Have mercy on us, O God,
for our thoughts are not your thoughts and our ways are not your ways.

People: Forgive us for thinking we deserve special treatment. Lead us to radical inclusion.

Leader: As we walk with Christ on this Lenten journey,
let us see your way more clearly

All: *and follow your way more faithfully.*

Prayer

To the God who gathers us, we pray our lives, too, will become places of gathering, welcoming, and embracing those we thought were far off. From our wandering and alienation, we have stumbled into loving arms. From our pride and self-righteousness, we have watched and resented as others stumble into loving arms. God, bring into clear focus our distancing and embracing, our rejecting and our welcoming. Weave together the strands within us—the prodigal son, the brother, and the father—to see your work of reconciliation in our church and community. Amen.

Song

Children's time

Scripture Luke 15:1-3, 11b-32, 2 Corinthians 5:16-21

Sermon *Deep Love Transforms*

Reflection questions

Who gets to enjoy God's feast today?

How can I grow in God's love and reconciliation?

Songs

Sharing/Pastoral prayer

After prayer times *"Lord, in your mercy"* respond with *"hear our prayer."*

Offering Song

Announcements – April 3 Fifth Sunday of Lent. Ellie and Carol share about Belize Mission trip after worship, April 10 Palm Sunday. **April 14** Maundy Thursday/Tenebrae, **April 17** Easter Sunday

Sending From this time and place into whatever awaits, may you follow God's way of inclusion. May you recognize your assumptions of entitlement so that you can live into God's fully inclusive love. As you go, know that our God of the wilderness remains with you on the way.

Online giving option: <https://tinyurl.com/donateWSMC>

¹⁶ So from now on we regard no one from a worldly point of view. Though we once regarded Christ in this way, we do so no longer. ¹⁷ Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, the new creation has come: The old has gone, the new is here! ¹⁸ All this is from God, who reconciled us to himself through Christ and gave us the ministry of reconciliation: ¹⁹ that God was reconciling the world to himself in Christ, not counting people's sins against them. And he has committed to us the message of reconciliation. ²⁰ We are therefore Christ's ambassadors, as though God were making his appeal through us. We implore you on Christ's behalf: Be reconciled to God. ²¹ God made him who had no sin to be sin for us, so that in him we might become the righteousness of God.

2 Corinthians 5: 16-21