

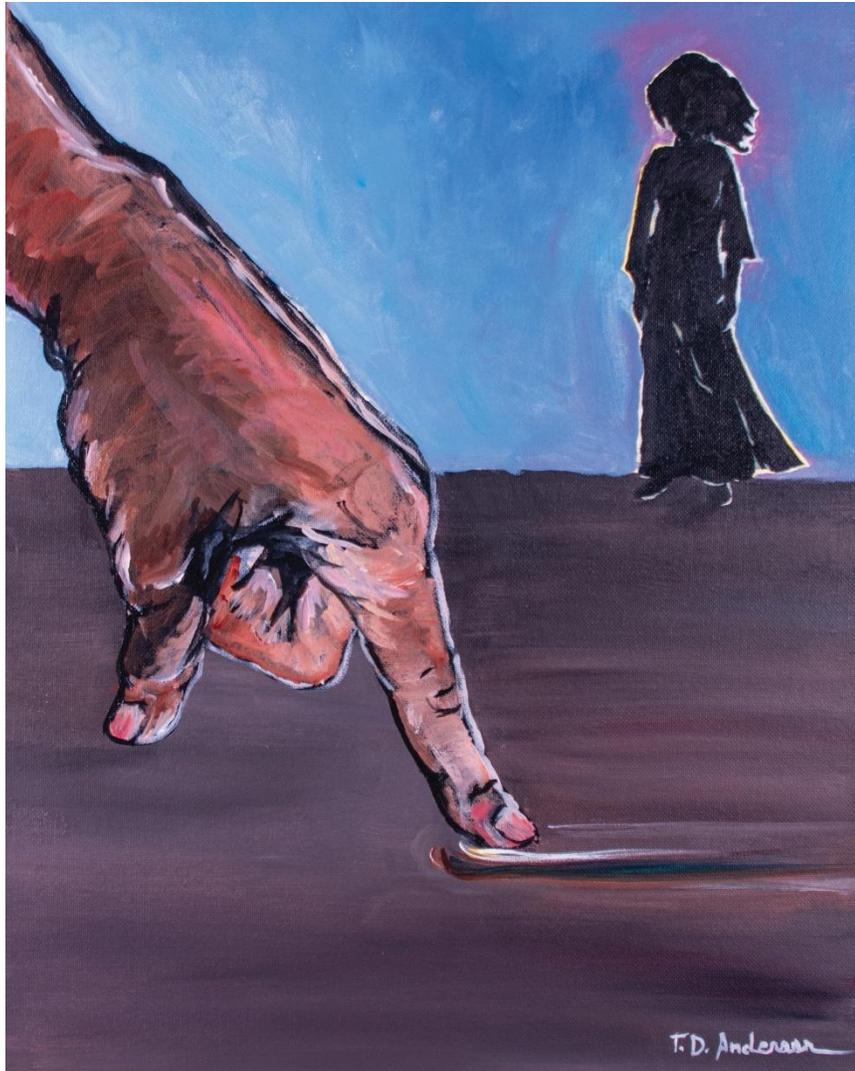
Worship for the Fifth Sunday of Lent

March 22, 2026

First Presbyterian Church, McAllen

Tell Me Something GOOD:

The Good News is ... rooted in justice, mercy, and faithfulness.



T. Denise Anderson
Epilogue

Opening Sentences

- This Lent, we are grounding ourselves in the good news that God's love invites us, Christ's grace holds us, and the Spirit's power leads us.
- Let us prepare our hearts and minds for worship.

Prelude

Call to Worship

Please rise in body or in spirit.

Welcome to the weary and the worn.

Welcome to the wiggly and the eager.

Welcome to the skeptical and the seeking.

Welcome to the early risers and those still trying to wake up.

Welcome to the rule followers and the rule breakers.

Welcome to those hungry for justice and those desperate for mercy.

Welcome to the sinners and the saints.

This is God's house.

You can make yourself at home here.

Let us worship our just, merciful, and faithful God.

Hymn

There's A Wideness in God's Mercy

GG #435

There's a wideness in God's mercy,
like the wideness of the sea.
There's a kindness in God's justice,
which is more than liberty.
There is no place where earth's sorrows
are more felt than up in heaven.
There is no place where earth's failings
have such kindly judgment given.

For the love of God is broader
than the measures of the mind.

And the heart of the Eternal is most wonderfully kind.

If our love were but more faithful, we would gladly trust God's Word,
and our lives reflect thanksgiving for the goodness of our Lord.



Prayer of the Day

Lord God, Great I AM,
you are resurrection and life.
As we worship you this day
show us who we are:
bearers of good news,
messengers of resurrection;
through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

Call to Confession

Jesus once said to a crowd, "Let anyone among you who is without sin be the first to throw a stone."

Friends, none of us is without sin.

None of us get it right all the time.

None of us can get by without God's grace.

In the Prayer of Confession, we acknowledge this truth.

We put down our stones

and we turn to God for forgiveness.

Join me in this act of transformation.

Let us pray.

Prayer of Confession

Holy God, we love to organize our lives with rules.

We love clear answers. We love to think we know right and wrong.

**We love swift justice. We love to pick up stones,
but you show us another way.**

You welcome questions and nuanced conversation.

You prioritize mercy over legality.

You prioritize people over tradition.

You prioritize love over everything.

Forgive us for losing sight of what truly matters.

Forgive us for clinging tighter to laws than to each other or to you.

Forgive us. Soften our hearts.

Root us in mercy, justice, and love. Amen.

Words of Forgiveness

Church family, Jesus saw a crowd ready to throw stones and invited them to choose another way. Jesus offered them grace, mercy, and compassion, and the same can be said for us.

So hear and believe the good news of the Gospel:

Our God is a God of mercy.

Our God is a God of compassion.

Our God is a God of grace.

We are forgiven, loved, and invited to choose another way.

Thanks be to God.

Change my heart, O God; make it ever true.
Change my heart, O God; may I be like you.
You are the Potter; I am the clay.
Mold me and make me; this is what I pray.
Cámbiame, Señor, con tu gran poder.
Hazme como tú, tu yo quiero ser.
Tú el alfarero, yo el barro soy.
Sólo a tu imagen, quiero siempre ser.
Cámbiame, Señor, con tu gran poder.
Hazme como tú, tu yo quiero ser.

Passing the Peace

The peace of our Lord be with you all. / **And also with you.**

Life of the Church

Time with the Younger Church

Prayer for Illumination

Holy One,
when you speak, we don't want to miss it.
When you bend down and write in the dirt,
when you move through the trees,
when you wake with the dawn,
when you tug on our heart,
or whisper in our dreams,
we don't want to miss it.
So today we pray:
clear out the cobwebs in our ears.
Quiet the steady stream of thoughts
marching through our minds.
Open up space in our hearts
so that we can receive your word for us today.
Amen.

Anthem

Scripture Readings

John 8:2-11

²Early in the morning he came again to the temple. All the people came to him, and he sat down and began to teach them. ³The scribes and the Pharisees brought a woman who had been caught in adultery, and, making her stand before all of them, ⁴they said to him, “Teacher, this woman was caught in the very act of committing adultery. ⁵Now in the law Moses commanded us to stone such women. Now what do you say?” ⁶They said this to test him, so that they might have some charge to bring against him. Jesus bent down and wrote with his finger on the ground. ⁷When they kept on questioning him, he straightened up and said to them, “Let anyone among you who is without sin be the first to throw a stone at her.” ⁸And once again he bent down and wrote on the ground. ⁹When they heard it, they went away, one by one, beginning with the elders, and Jesus was left alone with the woman standing before him. ¹⁰Jesus straightened up and said to her, “Woman, where are they? Has no one condemned you?” ¹¹She said, “No one, sir.” And Jesus said, “Neither do I condemn you. Go your way, and from now on do not sin again.”

Matthew 23:23

²³“Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! For you tithe mint, dill, and cumin and have neglected the weightier matters of the law: justice and mercy and faith. It is these you ought to have practiced without neglecting the others.

The Word of the Lord / **Thanks be to God.**

Sermon

Hymn

What Does the Lord Require of You?

GG #70

What does the Lord require of you?

To seek justice and love kindness

What does the Lord require of you?

and walk humbly with your God.

Prayers of the People and Lord's Prayer

Loving God,
you know all of us.
You know our fears and our dreams,
our hopes and our longings,
our grief and joy.
You know the words that are on our tongues
before we can even say them,
so today we come to you unfiltered.
Today, we bring you our full honesty,
trusting that you meet us here with grace and love.



Hannah Garrity
There is Good

Holy God, we admit that mercy, justice, and faithfulness
often get tangled up in our minds.
We want to do the right thing, which feels like justice.
However, sometimes we go about justice with a blunt sword,
failing to practice mercy.
We want to be merciful, but our anger and hurt can get in the way.
Too often, we find ourselves casting stones.
We want to be righteous, but we often forget that righteousness must
impact our relationship, not only our words or our actions.

God, we admit that mercy, justice, and faithfulness often get tangled up in
our minds. So like Jesus did with the crowds that day, help us to root
ourselves in the best of these practices. Untangle these threads of our faith
and show us how to hold them all.

Spark a fire in our hearts for justice –
justice for the oppressed,
justice for the overlooked,
justice for our neighbors,
justice for those not given a voice.

Spark a fire in our hearts for mercy –
mercy for the sinful, which is all of us,
mercy for the hurt,
mercy for the ones who are doing their best with what they have.

And spark a fire in our hearts for righteousness.
Call us up to a higher moral ground.
Remind us that our faith invites us to love as you love,
and to forgive as you forgive.

Show us how to put down our stones.
Show us how to forgive ourselves for our own wrong.
Show us how to empathize with others, putting ourselves in their shoes.

If we can do that, then maybe there will be a day when there is less stone-
throwing, less mob-building, less violence toward our neighbor.
Maybe there will be a day when all can gather at the table. Maybe there will
be a day when we can all break bread together. Maybe there will be a day
when justice, mercy, and righteousness feel like a mighty flowing stream.

Until that day, we will continue to look for your words in the dirt.
We will continue to listen for your deep truth.
Until that promised day, we will continue
to bring you our unfiltered honesty.
Until that promised day, we will continue to pray for our neighbor.

Loving God, set a fire in our hearts for justice, mercy, and righteousness.
And as you do, we will join our voices together to pray the words your Son
has taught us, saying: **Our Father, who art in heaven ...**

Invitation to the Offering

Jesus says: Where your treasure is,
there your heart will be also.

Let us offer to God the gift of our treasure and our lives.

Offertory

Act of Dedication Bread of Life from Heaven, v. 3 (no refrain) GG #497

Love as the One who, in love for you,
gave himself for the life of the world.
Come to the One who is food for you,
that your hunger and thirst be no more.

Offertory Prayer

Holy God, giver of life, we thank you for raising us up
and joining us together as one people, your people,
living and serving as the body of Christ.

Use the gifts we bring to further the work of your kingdom.

Use our lives to proclaim the good news
of new life in Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

Hymn

Be Thou My Vision, v. 1-3

GG #450

Be thou my vision, O Lord of my heart;
naught be all else to me, save that thou art;
thou my best thought, by day or by night,
waking or sleeping, thy presence my light.

Be thou my wisdom, and thou my true Word;
I ever with thee and thou with me, Lord;
thou my soul's shelter, and thou my high tower;
raise thou me heavenward, O Power of my power.

Riches I heed not, nor vain, empty praise;
thou mine inheritance, now and always;
thou and thou only, first in my heart,
High King of Heaven, my treasure thou art.

Benediction

Congregational Response Be Thou My Vision, v. 4

High King of Heaven, my victory won,
may I reach heaven's joys, O bright heaven's Sun!
Heart of my own heart, whatever befall,
still be my vision, O Ruler of all.

Postlude

Much of the liturgy in this service has been adapted from liturgy by Sarah A. Speed | A
Sanctified Art LLC | sanctifiedart.org

Worship Leaders: Rev. Kathryn J. Escandell Mike Hudler
Beverly Avila Robert Garza Ale Pacheco FPC Chancel Choir

FPC McAllen Contact Information: 104 S. 12th Street; McAllen, TX 78501

Mailing Address: P.O. Box 1029; McAllen, TX 78505

Church phone: 956-682-2836

website: <https://www.mcallenfpc.org/>

Pastor: fpcpastorkathy@gmail.com

Church Administrator: fpchurch@sbcglobal.net