



Seward United Methodist Church
Day 7, 2023

Welcome and Announcements

Prelude

Amazing Grace

Chancel Choir/Deb Snell

Passing the Peace

Call to Worship

L: Come, listen, hear the stories that shape our faith.

P: We will be attentive and listen with our hearts and minds.

L: These are the stories Jesus told, the parables that sneak up on us with layers of meaning and mystery and challenge.

P: We will seek beyond easy answers for the deeper truths the parables teach.

Hymn

Amazing Grace (Gilligan's Island)

Stanzas 1-4

1. Amazing grace! How sweet the sound
that saved a wretch like me!
I once was lost, but now am found;
was blind, but now I see.

3. Through many dangers, toils, and snares,
I have already come;
'tis grace hath brought me safe thus far,
and grace will lead me home.

2. 'Twas grace that taught my heart to fear,
and grace my fears relieved;
how precious did that grace appear
the hour I first believed.

4. The Lord has promised good to me,
his word my hope secures;
he will my shield and portion be,
as long as life endures.

Common Prayer (in unison)

God of Word and Breath and Life, thank you for the gift of stories that teach us who you are and who you call us to be. Remind us that the best stories are worth repeating time and again and again. Open up to us the parable we hear today. Allow it to teach us anew and strengthen our faith. In the name of Jesus, who first shared the parables. AMEN.

Children's Time

Pastor Jo Ellen Axthelm

Special Music

Amazing Grace

Virginia Fraser & Megan Forbes

Scripture Lesson: Luke 15: 11-32

¹¹ Then Jesus said, "There was a man who had two sons. ¹² The younger of them said to his father, 'Father, give me the share of the wealth that will belong to me.' So he divided his assets between them. ¹³ A few days later the younger son gathered all he had and traveled to a distant region, and there he squandered his wealth in dissolute living. ¹⁴ When he had spent everything, a severe famine took place throughout that region, and he began to be in need. ¹⁵ So he went and hired himself out to one of the citizens of that region, who sent him to his fields to feed the pigs. ¹⁶ He would gladly have filled his stomach with the pods that the pigs were eating, and no one gave him anything. ¹⁷ But when he came to his senses he said, 'How many of my father's hired hands have bread enough and to spare, but here I am dying of hunger! ¹⁸ I will get up and go to my father, and I will say to him, "Father, I have sinned against heaven and before you; ¹⁹ I am no longer worthy to be called your son; treat me like one of your hired hands.'" ²⁰ So he set off and went to his father. But while he was still far off, his father saw him and was filled with compassion; he ran and put his arms around him and kissed

him. ²¹ Then the son said to him, 'Father, I have sinned against heaven and before you; I am no longer worthy to be called your son.' ²² But the father said to his slaves, 'Quickly, bring out a robe—the best one—and put it on him; put a ring on his finger and sandals on his feet. ²³ And get the fatted calf and kill it, and let us eat and celebrate, ²⁴ for this son of mine was dead and is alive again; he was lost and is found!' And they began to celebrate.

²⁵ "Now his elder son was in the field, and as he came and approached the house, he heard music and dancing. ²⁶ He called one of the slaves and asked what was going on. ²⁷ He replied, 'Your brother has come, and your father has killed the fatted calf because he has got him back safe and sound.' ²⁸ Then he became angry and refused to go in. His father came out and began to plead with him. ²⁹ But he answered his father, 'Listen! For all these years I have been working like a slave for you, and I have never disobeyed your command, yet you have never given me even a young goat so that I might celebrate with my friends. ³⁰ But when this son of yours came back, who has devoured your assets with prostitutes, you killed the fatted calf for him!' ³¹ Then the father said to him, 'Son, you are always with me, and all that is mine is yours. ³² But we had to celebrate and rejoice, because this brother of yours was dead and has come to life; he was lost and has been found.' "

Hymn

Amazing Grace (House of the Rising Sun)

All Stanzas

1. Amazing grace! How sweet the sound
that saved a wretch like me!
I once was lost, but now am found;
was blind, but now I see.

4. The Lord has promised good to me,
his word my hope secures;
he will my shield and portion be,
as long as life endures.

5. Yea, when this flesh and heart shall fail,
and mortal life shall cease,
I shall possess, within the veil,
a life of joy and peace.

Sermon

"The Lost Son"

Rev. Dr. Mary Kay Totty

Prayers of the People

Prayer Hymn

Amazing Grace (My Chains Are Gone)

Verse 1

Amazing grace how sweet the sound
That saved a wretch like me
I once was lost but now I'm found
Was blind but now I see

Verse 2

'Twas grace that taught my heart to fear
And grace my fears relieved
how precious did that grace appear
The hour I first believed

Chorus

My chains are gone I've been set free
My God my Savior has ransomed me
And like a flood His mercy rains
Unending love amazing grace

Verse 3

The Lord has promised good to me
His word my hope secures
He will my shield and portion be
As long as life endures (C)

Verse 4

The earth shall soon dissolve like snow
The sun forbear to shine
But God who called me here below
Will be forever mine
Will be forever mine
You are forever mine

Pastoral Prayer/Lord's Prayer

Offering

Special Music
Doxology

The Gift of Grace
Amazing Grace (Auld Lang Sang)

Handbell Choir
Stanzas 1-2

1. Amazing grace! How sweet the sound
that saved a wretch like me!
I once was lost, but now am found;
was blind, but now I see.

2. 'Twas grace that taught my heart to fear,
and grace my fears relieved;
how precious did that grace appear
the hour I first believed.

Prayer of Dedication (in unison)

Thank you, God, for the greatest of all gifts, the saving action of Jesus Christ in human history. Your gift inspires our generous response. We bring our offerings and renewed commitment. Help us to be faithful disciples. Amen. *(from: "Fresh Winds of the Spirit" by Lavon Bayler, p. 52)*

CELEBRATION OF HOLY COMMUNION

Celebrant Pastors: Mary Kay Totty and JoEllen Axthelm

For Holy Communion, if at home, you may use whatever simple elements you have at hand — bread, crackers, pita, juice, water, wine. If you are at in person worship please follow the instructions given by the Pastor.

Prayers of the Great Thanksgiving (spoken responsively)

Our God is with you,

And also with you.

Lift up your hearts,

We lift them up to our God.

Let us give our thanks to God.

**It is right, and a good and joyful thing,
always and everywhere to give our thanks to God.**

Heaven and earth sprang from your wisdom, O God, and you made us for your company.

**We turned away, and our love failed,
but you remained steadfast.**

You gave us room when we were in distress.

And so with all your people here, and all the company of heaven, we join in an unending hymn of praise:

**Holy, holy, holy, God of power and might,
Hosanna in the highest!
Everything that springs from your wisdom is blessed!
Hosanna in the Highest!**

You lived among us as our teacher, held us, called us friends.

**You died and live again
to show us death is not the end.**

You took bread.

We remember.

You broke it.

We remember,

You shared it.

We ate. We remember.

You took the cup.

We remember.

You said "Drink".

We remember.

You shared it.

We drank. We remember.

And so today, we feast again; our bread and wine are you.

You live among us still, whenever we remember you.

We offer ourselves now —

In praise and thanksgiving.

We offer ourselves now —

Holy and living.

Let us proclaim the mystery of faith.

Christ has died, Christ is risen, Christ will come again!

Come Holy Spirit, on us gathered here.

Be among us as we share these gifts of bread and wine.

May they become for us the bread of life and the cup of grace

that we may become Christ's love in the world.

God-incarnate, God-Spirit, and God-Source of All Beginnings,

All glory and honor are yours, now and forever. AMEN!

SHARING OF THE BREAD AND CUP

Hymn

Amazing Grace

UMH 378, v. 1, 2, 3, 6

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that saved a wretch like me!
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was blind, but now I see.

3. Through many dangers, toils, and snares,
I have already come;
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and grace will lead me home.

2. 'Twas grace that taught my heart to fear,
and grace my fears relieved;
how precious did that grace appear be,
the hour I first believed.

6. When we've been there ten thousand years,
bright shining as the sun,
we've no less days to sing God's praise
than when we'd first begun.

Benediction

Postlude

Deb Snell