



**Wednesday Lenten Worship**  
**March 4, 2026 at 6:15pm**

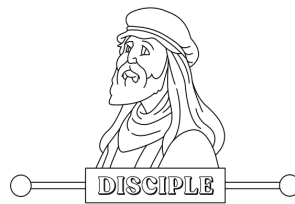
- Quiet Centering**                      *Please take this time to quietly prepare for worship.*
- Prelude**                                      *Prayer to Jesus by R. Rolle and George Oldroyd*
- Welcome**
- Song**    *Seek Ye First the Kin(g)dom of God (UMH 405)*
- Scripture Reading**                              **Luke 6:17-36 (NRSVUE)**
- Message**    *The Work of Imagination: Disciples*  
Sue Buckland, Congregational Care Coordinator
- Prayer**
- Song**    *Change My Heart, O God (TFWS 2152)*
- Blessing and Sending Out**
- Postlude**                                      *I Will Estol Thee by Steven Scott*

***Offering***

*If you have brought with you a financial gift, it may be placed in a basket near the door on your way out of the sanctuary. Gifts on Wednesdays in Lent will go into our UMCA "Camperships" fund to support all kids, youth, and adults who would like to participate in camp and retreats throughout the year.*

<sup>17</sup> He came down with them and stood on a level place with a great crowd of his disciples and a great multitude of people from all Judea, Jerusalem, and the coast of Tyre and Sidon. <sup>18</sup> They had come to hear him and to be healed of their diseases, and those who were troubled with unclean spirits were cured. <sup>19</sup> And everyone in the crowd was trying to touch him, for power came out from him and healed all of them. **Blessings and Woes** <sup>20</sup> Then he looked up at his disciples and said: *“Blessed are you who are poor, for yours is the kingdom of God. <sup>21</sup> “Blessed are you who are hungry now, for you will be filled. “Blessed are you who weep now, for you will laugh. <sup>22</sup> “Blessed are you when people hate you and when they exclude you, revile you, and defame you on account of the Son of Man. <sup>23</sup> Rejoice on that day and leap for joy, for surely your reward is great in heaven, for that is how their ancestors treated the prophets. <sup>24</sup> “But woe to you who are rich, for you have received your consolation. <sup>25</sup> “Woe to you who are full now, for you will be hungry. “Woe to you who are laughing now, for you will mourn and weep. <sup>26</sup> “Woe to you when all speak well of you, for that is how their ancestors treated the false prophets. **Love for Enemies** “But I say to you who are listening: Love your enemies; do good to those who hate you; <sup>28</sup> bless those who curse you; pray for those who mistreat you. <sup>29</sup> If anyone strikes you on the cheek, offer the other also, and from anyone who takes away your coat do not withhold even your shirt. <sup>30</sup> Give to everyone who asks of you, and if anyone takes away what is yours, do not ask for it back again. <sup>31</sup> Do to others as you would have them do to you. <sup>32</sup> “If you love those who love you, what credit is that to you? For even sinners love those who love them. <sup>33</sup> If you do good to those who do good to you, what credit is that to you? For even sinners do the same. <sup>34</sup> If you lend to those from whom you expect to receive payment, what credit is that to you? Even sinners lend to sinners, to receive as much again. <sup>35</sup> Instead, love your enemies, do good, and lend, expecting nothing in return. Your reward will be great, and you will be children of the Most High, for he himself is kind to the ungrateful and wicked. <sup>36</sup> Be merciful, just as God is merciful.”*

CHARACTER SPOTLIGHT



The disciples gather on the plain, still learning what it means to follow Jesus. Those gathered are ordinary people—fisherfolk, laborers, seekers—suddenly confronted with teachings that overturn everything they have been taught about blessing, love, and justice. They hear Jesus say that the poor, the hungry, the grieving, and hated are the ones God blesses. For some, this is relief: their suffering is not a curse but a place where God’s presence dwells. For others, it’s a shock: the comfort they counted as a blessing is called into question. Jesus continues; the crowd is stretched further. To love enemies? Bless those who curse? Give without expecting a return? These aren’t strategies for survival but practices of resistance—ways of life that refuse the violence and calculations of empire. Those listening must decide whether to cling to the logic of “love those who love you” or to embrace the radical vision Jesus proclaims. In them, we imagine our own wrestling with Jesus’ words. Discipleship is not admiration of Jesus but participation in his upside-down way of love. The disciples stand as mirrors of our hesitation and hope, showing that following Jesus means choosing practices of mercy and generosity that may not make sense to the world but reveal the kin(g)dom breaking in.