

The United Methodist Church at Absecon

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Unlikely Offering: Mary of Bethany

February 22, 2026 – First Sunday of Lent

Today's Lay Reader: Sharon Wilson

Welcome

Prelude

When Thou Are Near

J. S. Bach

Call to Worship

Leader: Come! Come from our sanctuary or from your home. Come at 11 AM on Sunday or any time during the week. Come whenever and wherever you are. Come! Worship is called in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit!

People: We come, ready to begin the Lenten journey to the cross, and to the empty tomb.

Leader: In a world where scarcity seems to be the name of the game, abundance feels like healing.

People: Maybe that's what makes Jesus so great. He comes to us in our time of greatest need, and offers abundant love and peace.

Hymn

I Sing the Almighty Power of God

1. I sing the al-might - y power of God, that made the moun-tains
 2. I sing the good-ness of the Lord, who filled the earth with
 3. There's not a plant or flower be - low, but makes thy glo - ries

rise, that spread the flow-ing seas a-broad, and built the loft - y skies.
 food, who formed the crea-tures thru the Word, and then pro-nounced them good.
 known, and clouds a - rise, and tem-pests blow, by or - der from thy throne;

I sing the wis-dom that or-dained the sun to rule the day;
 Lord, how thy won-ders are dis-played, wher- e'er I turn my eye,
 while all that bor-rows life from thee is ev - er in thy care;

the moon shines full at God's com-mand, and all the stars o - bey.
 if I sur -vey the ground I tread, or gaze up - on the sky.
 and ev - ery-where that we can be, thou, God, art pres - ent there.

Opening Prayer

God, thank you for this opportunity to have a different journey through Lent. As we join together on the way to the cross, and to the empty tomb, teach us through Mary of Bethany. She is an example of true devotion and discipleship. Open our hearts and minds to all that we can learn through her story. Deepen our faith in Christ, and our sense of Christian community. Amen.

Pastoral Prayer

The Lord's Prayer

Hymn

Jesus Loves Me

1. Je - sus loves me! This I know, for the Bi - ble tells me so.
 2. Je - sus loves me! This I know, as he loved so long a - go,
 3. Je - sus loves me still to - day, walk-ing with me on my way,

Lit - tle ones to him be-long; they are weak, but he is strong.
 tak - ing chil - dren on his knee, say - ing, "Let them come to me."
 want - ing as a friend to give light and love to all who live.

Refrain

Yes, Je - sus loves me! Yes, Je - sus loves me!

Yes, Je - sus loves me! The Bi - ble tells me so.

Senior Choir**Yes Lord****Pepper Choplin****Young Disciples Chatting with the Rev****Scripture Lesson****John 12:1-8**

Six days before the Passover Jesus came to Bethany, the home of Lazarus, whom he had raised from the dead. There they gave a dinner for him. Martha served, and Lazarus was one of those reclining with him. Mary took a pound of costly perfume made of pure nard, anointed Jesus's feet, and wiped them with her hair. The house was filled with the fragrance of the perfume. But Judas Iscariot, one of his disciples (the one who was about to betray him), said, "Why was this perfume not sold for three hundred denarii and the money given to the poor?" (He said this not because he cared about the poor but because he was a thief; he kept the common purse and used to steal what was put into it.) Jesus said, "Leave her alone. She bought it so that she might keep it for the day of my burial. You always have the poor with you, but you do not always have me."

Leader: The Word of God for the people of God

People: Thanks be to God**Message****Unlikely Offering: Mary of Bethany****Offering Ourselves and Our Gifts to God****Offertory**

Through It All

Andraé Crouch

Offertory Hymn

Lift High the Cross

(verse 1)

Lift high the cross, the love of Christ pro-claim

till all the world a-dore his sa-cred name.

Fine

Harmony

D.C.

Hymn

Where He Leads Me

hear my Sav - ior call - ing, I can hear my Sav - ior
 with him through the gar - den, I'll go with him through the
 with him through the judg - ment, I'll go with him through the
 give me grace and glo - ry, he will give me grace and

call - ing, "Take thy cross and fol - low, fol - low me."
 gar - den, I'll go with him, with him all the way.
 judg - ment, I'll go with him, with him all the way.
 glo - ry, and go with me, with me all the way.

Refrain

Where he leads me I will fol - low, where he leads me
 I will fol - low, where he leads me I will
 fol - low; I'll go with him, with him all the way.

Benediction**Postlude****Guide Me, O Thou Great Jehovah**