

# METROPOLITAN COMMUNITY CHURCH OF NORTHERN VIRGINIA

*March 23, 2025*

*Lent III*

*There is a book at the Sanctuary entry where prayer requests may be entered.*

*There is also a Square device at the Sanctuary entry if you would like to make your Offering Donation via credit card.*

*Spirit, Community, Action – Inside & “Out” Celebrating 43 Years of Being Out in Northern Virginia*

*Like Life, The Order of Worship is Subject to Change*

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Gathering Music

Jorge Martinez

Welcome & Announcements

Rev. Emma Chattin

Centering

At the sound of the singing bowl,  
please take a few moments to prepare yourself for our worship together

Illumination

Tee

Prayers of the Community

Dale Bradshaw

Community Reading ~ *adapted from Dag Hammarskjöld*

Fabricio Fernandez

One: I am being driven forward into an unknown land.

**Many: The path grows steeper, the air colder and sharper.**

One: A wind from the horizon stirs my expectation.

**Many: Yet the question remains, “Will I ever get there?”**

One: There where life abounds,

**Many: A clear pure ripple in the silence.**

One: Listen and look carefully.

**All: Come, Holy Spirit, Come.**

Choir Response

Spirit of the Living God

First Reading ~ *Luke 13:1-9*

Denise Carson

At that very time there were some present who told Jesus about some Jews from Galilee who Pilate had killed while they were at worship, mingling their blood with the blood of their sacrifices. Jesus replied, “Do you think that because these Galileans suffered in this way they were worse sinners than all other Galileans? No, I tell you; but unless you repent, you will also perish. Or those eighteen who were killed by a falling tower in Siloam — do you think they were worse offenders than all the others living in Jerusalem? No, I tell you; but unless you repent, you will also perish.”

Jesus told this parable: “There was a fig tree growing in a vineyard; the owner came out looking for fruit on it and didn’t find any. The owner said to the gardener, ‘Look here! For three years now I have come out in search of fruit on this fig tree and have found none. Cut it down! Why should it be wasting the soil?’ In reply, the gardener said, ‘Please leave it one more year while I dig and hoe around it and put manure on it. If it bears fruit next year, well and good; but if not, you can cut it down.’”

## Second Reading

Kate Gilligan

~ adapted from Father Richard Rohr in "A Toxic Image of God"

Your image of God helps create you- the person you are. This is why it is so important that we see God as loving and benevolent and why good theology is still important. One mistaken image of God that keeps us from receiving grace is the idea that God is a cruel tyrant. People who have been raised in an atmosphere of threats of punishment and promises of reward are programmed to operate with this cheap image of God. Unfortunately, it's much easier to organize people around fear and hatred than it is to organize them around love. Most people who want to hold onto power see God as vindictive and punitive. Powerful people actually prefer this view because it validates their own use of intimidation. So much of Christian history has manifested a very different image of God than the one Jesus revealed and represented. As a result, we've developed an unworkable and toxic image of God, one that a healthy person would never trust. The mystical, transformative journey cannot take place until that image is undone. Why would you want to spend any time, even one hour in silence, solitude, or intimacy with such a God?

Response

How Like A Gentle Spirit

No. 443

Reflection

Wilderness Training  
Bad Water and Mirages

Rev. Emma Chattin

Community Dialogue

Offering Invitation

Lee Shadwick

Offertory

We Are An Offering  
by Dwight Liles

MCC NoVA Choir

❧ Welcome To The Table! ❧

Kurt Jaeger & Ken Williamson

*Sung Words of Institution:*

"Let Us Be Bread"

By Thomas J. Porter

*The Leader will sing the verses. Please join together on the refrain:*

***Let us be bread, blessed by our God, broken and shared, life for the world.***

***Let us be wine, love freely poured. Let us be one in our God.***

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Invitation to the Table

Sharing The Open Meal of Christ

Community Blessing Kurt Jaeger

Closing Song

Pressing on the Upward Way

No. 442

Benediction and Sending Forth

Rev. Emma Chattin

Postlude

❧ Go in Peace ❧