

February 22, 2026

“Love and Grief, Glory and Belief!”

In-Person (Greyrock Commons) and ZOOM Meeting

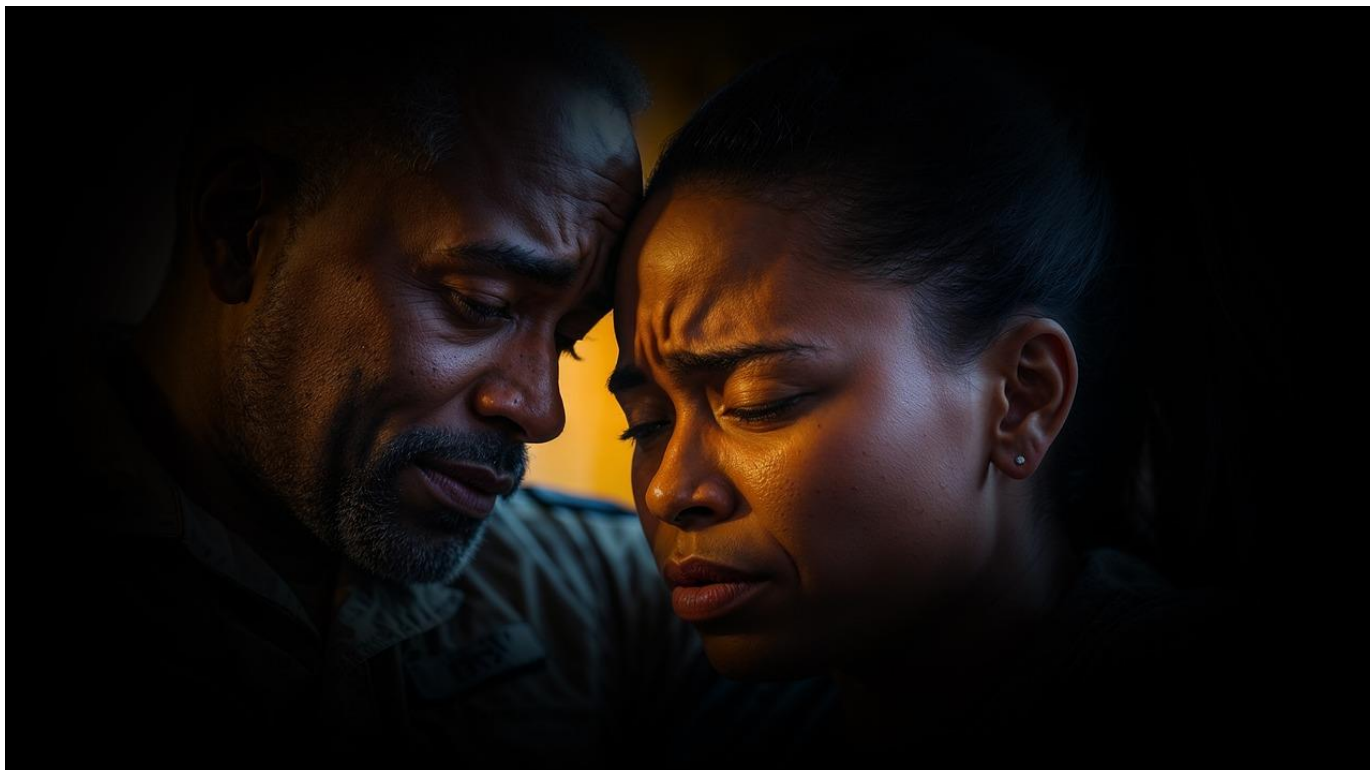
FORT COLLINS MENNONITE FELLOWSHIP

300 E. Oak Street, Ft. Collins, CO 80524

Worship: 10:00 AM

Pastor: Steve Ramer

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SEASON OF LENT

Ours is a world of urgency, a digital age of immediate gratification. We rush to resolution. We retreat into silos of sameness and scapegoat those who disagree with us. Our temptation to seek relief from the dissonant uncertainty of life’s liminalities might be heightened this year. This is a historical moment when many of us feel caught up in forces beyond our control —military conflicts, deportations, funding cuts, climate crisis, and more.

1. GATHERING

Prelude (John)

Call to Worship

One: Welcome Lent.

All: Welcome mystery.

One: Welcome dissonance.

All: Welcome grief.

One: Welcome glory and uncertainty.

All: Welcome doubt. Welcome belief.

One: Welcome questions without answers.

All: Welcome fullness from above.

One: Welcome death and resurrection.

All: Welcome Jesus’ fiercest love.

Opening Prayer (Steve) — #863

As we step into Lent, we say “welcome” to the dissonance.

We reserve a space for lament and grief, to stay a while and do their work.

We release our nice little pictures of perfect selves, perfect faith, perfect world, and look for God in the heartache.

We listen for God in discordant melodies. And follow Jesus to the cross, though we don’t understand, and it doesn’t compute.

As we step into Lent, we say, “welcome” to the dissonance.

Trusting that God is here. Now. In the mystery. Before it is resolved. — Amen

Congregational Singing (Cathy & Leanna)

Welcome and Passing of the Peace

Leader: May the peace of Christ be with you.

People: And also, with you.

Leader: Let us offer one another signs of peace, reconciliation, and love.

"Against eternal injustice, man must assert justice, and to protest against the universe of grief, he must create happiness."

— Albert Camus

2. HEARING GOD'S WORD

Scriptures: John 11:1–44

John 11:1 A certain man, Lazarus, was ill. He was from Bethany, the village of Mary and her sister Martha . . .

3 So the sisters sent word to Jesus, saying, "Lord, the one whom you love is ill."

4 When he heard this, Jesus said, " This illness isn't fatal. It's for the glory of God so that God's Son can be glorified through it." 5 Jesus loved Martha, her sister, and Lazarus. 6 When he heard that Lazarus was ill, he stayed where he was. After two days, 7 he said to his disciples, " Let's return to Judea again." . . .

17 When Jesus arrived, he found that Lazarus had already been in the tomb for four days . . .

20 When Martha heard that Jesus was coming, she went to meet him, while Mary remained in the house. 21 Martha said to Jesus, "Lord, if you had been here, my brother wouldn't have died . . .

23 Jesus told her, " Your brother will rise again." 24 Martha replied, "I know that he will rise in the resurrection on the last day." 25 Jesus said to her, " I am the resurrection and the life. Whoever believes in me will live, even though they die . . .she went and spoke privately to her sister Mary, "The teacher is here and he's calling for you." 29 When Mary heard this, she got up quickly and went to Jesus.

32 When Mary arrived where Jesus was and saw him, she fell at his feet and said, "Lord, if you had been here, my brother wouldn't have died." 33 When Jesus saw her crying and the Jews who had come with her crying also, he was deeply disturbed and troubled. 34 He asked, " Where have you laid him?" They replied, "Lord, come and see." 35 Jesus began to cry. 36 The Jews said, "See how much he loved him!" 37 But some of them said, "He healed the eyes of the man born blind. Couldn't he have kept Lazarus from dying?" . . . Jesus shouted with a loud voice, " Lazarus, come out!" 44 The dead man came out . . .

Confession

Jesus, you don't always show up when we expect or in the way we expect.

We feel for Martha and Mary. In our grief we too may say, "Lord, if you had been here . . ."

In our bitter confusion we may say, "God healed others. Couldn't God have . . ."

We hoped you would prevent this pain. We hoped you would fix this hurt.

Instead, you weep with us. Instead, you go to the tomb and sit with us in the horrid emptiness of loss.

Though you will surprise us again— and this time with life— for now, your love is shown in tears.

Sermon: "Love and Grief, Glory and Belief!"



We often think of love and grief as very different emotions. We are challenged with the dissonance of their relationship as we pay attention to Jesus' words and actions. Lazarus' sisters Mary and Martha, lament like we might: "Lord, if you had been here, this wouldn't have happened." Others whisper a question we might also ask: "Couldn't Jesus have prevented this?" These questions hold a familiar, deeply human grief — the experience of an absence of Christ/God in a world of pain and suffering, where things are not as we want them to be.

3. RESPONDING TO GOD'S WORD

Congregational Singing (Cathy & Leanna)

Reflections and Responses

Joys and Concerns

Offering & Music (Leanna)

Sending Blessing (Steve)

As you go, may you listen for God in the discordant melodies of your life,

remembering that Jesus is with us in our grieving and the mystery of the Spirit is weaving all around us.

May you go with Christ's peace surrounding you, inviting you to look for resurrection.

"The friend who can be silent with us in a moment of despair or confusion, who can stay with us in an hour of grief and bereavement, who can tolerate not knowing... not healing, not curing... that is a friend who cares." — Henri Nouwen