



Thomas A. Edison
Congregational Church

March 30, 2025



Order of Worship

Fourth Sunday of Lent

** You are invited to stand
(Please remember to silence your cell phone during the service.)

When the prelude begins, let us quiet our hearts and conversation.

Church Bell Calls Us to Worship

Prelude

Layla Morell, Piano

Sonata in D Major, 1st Movement

By: Joseph Haydn

Opening of Worship (responsively)

One: God of Goodness, we come into Your presence so aware of our human frailty and yet overwhelmed by Your love for us.

All: We thank You that there is no human experience that we might walk through where Your love cannot reach us.

One: If we climb the highest mountain, You are there and yet if we find ourselves in the darkest valley of life, You are there.

All: Teach us in worship today to love You more.

One: Help us to rest in a love that asks nothing more than the simple trusting heart of a child.

All: Praying in the name of all that is good and holy, Amen.

~Slightly adapted from a prayer found @ <https://www.xavier.edu/jesuitresource/online-resources/prayer-index/gods-love>

Opening Hymn: # 42

Love Divine, All Loves Excelling
Verses 1, 3, & 4

Passing of the Peace

May the Peace of Christ be with you!
And also, with you!

Gift of Music

Debbie Marino, Soprano

God And God Alone

By: Phill McHugh

Prayer of Discipleship (Responsively)

One: Holy One, Your love for us is fathomless. We can neither comprehend it nor can we ever penetrate its depths.

All: Yet we insist on measuring ourselves by the worst in us, by the slipups and the shame-filled moments.

One: Release us from our worn-out scripts, which imprison us, lock up life, and leave us languishing in death.

All: You call us from disgrace to dignity, and await the return of our prodigal souls with outstretched arms, a royal robe, and the finest champagne:

One: instead of lessons to put us in our place,

All: You adorn our faces with kisses, reminding us who we are in your welcoming eyes. Amen.

~Slightly adapted from If Darwin Prayed by Bruce Sanguin

Prayers of the People and Concerns of the Heart

Our Lord's Prayer (*unison*)

Our Father, who art in heaven, hallowed be thy name, thy kingdom come thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread and forgive us our debts as we forgive our debtors and lead us not into temptation but deliver us from evil, for thine is the kingdom and the power and the glory forever. Amen.

Song of Response

Change My Heart, O God

Eddie Espinoza and the Praise Song Advisory Team

**Change my heart, O God, make it ever true.
Change my heart, O God, may I be like You.
You are the Potter, I am the clay.
Mold me and make me this is what I pray.
Change my heart, O God, make it ever true.
Change my heart, O God, may I be like You.**

Today's Scripture

Luke 15:1-3, 11-32

Occasions for celebration

All the tax collectors and sinners were gathering around Jesus to listen to Him. ² The Pharisees and legal experts were grumbling, saying, "This man welcomes sinners and eats with them." ³ Jesus told them this parable:

¹¹ Jesus said, "A certain man had two sons. ¹² The younger son said to his father, 'Father, give me my share of the inheritance.' Then the father divided his estate between them. ¹³ Soon afterward, the younger son gathered everything together and took a trip to a land far away. There, he wasted his wealth through extravagant living.

¹⁴ "When he had used up his resources, a severe food shortage arose in that country, and he began to be in need. ¹⁵ He hired himself out to one of the citizens of that country, who sent him into his fields to feed pigs. ¹⁶ He longed to eat his fill from what the pigs ate, but no one gave him anything. ¹⁷ When he came to his senses, he said, 'How many of my father's hired hands have more than enough

food, but I'm starving to death! ¹⁸ I will get up and go to my father, and say to him, "Father, I have sinned against heaven and against you. ¹⁹ I no longer deserve to be called your son. Take me on as one of your hired hands." ' ²⁰ So he got up and went to his father. "While he was still a long way off, his father saw him and was moved with compassion. His father ran to him, hugged him, and kissed him. ²¹ Then his son said, 'Father, I have sinned against heaven and against you. I no longer deserve to be called your son.' ²² But the father said to his servants, 'Quickly, bring out the best robe and put it on him! Put a ring on his finger and sandals on his feet! ²³ Fetch the fattened calf and slaughter it. We must celebrate with feasting ²⁴ because this son of mine was dead and has come back to life! He was lost and is found!' And they began to celebrate. ²⁵ "Now his older son was in the field. Coming in from the field, he approached the house and heard music and dancing. ²⁶ He called one of the servants and asked what was going on. ²⁷ The servant replied, 'Your brother has arrived, and your father has slaughtered the fattened calf because he received his son back safe and sound.' ²⁸ Then the older son was furious and didn't want to enter in, but his father came out and begged him. ²⁹ He answered his father, 'Look, I've served you all these years, and I never disobeyed your instruction. Yet you've never given me as much as a young goat so I could celebrate with my friends. ³⁰ But when this son of yours returned, after gobbling up your estate on prostitutes, you slaughtered the fattened calf for him.' ³¹ Then his father said, 'Son, you are always with me, and everything I have is yours. ³² But we had to celebrate and be glad because this brother of yours was dead and is alive. He was lost and is found.'"

~ Common English Bible

Response to the Sharing of God's Story

The Story of God for the People of God!
Thanks Be to God!

Pastoral Words

Hymn of Faith

**What A Friend We Have in Jesus/God's
Great Love Is So Amazing**

CONVERSE 8.7.8.7 D ("What a Friend We Have in Jesus")

**What a friend we have in Jesus
All our sins and griefs to bear
What a privilege to carry
Everything to God in prayer
O what peace we often forfeit
O what needless pain we bear
All because we do not carry
Everything to God in prayer**

**God keeps waiting, searching, yearning!
See — a father's heartfelt joy!
Thankful for his son's returning,
he runs out to greet his boy.
To the angry older brother,
hear the father's patient call.
So God says to love each other,
for in Christ, God loves us all.**

**Have we trials and temptations?
Is there trouble anywhere?
We should never be discouraged
Take it to the Lord in prayer
Can we find a friend so faithful
Who will all our sorrows share?
Jesus knows our every weakness
Take it to the Lord in prayer**

Biblical Reference: Luke 15

Tune: Charles Crozat Converse, 1868 ("What a Friend We Have in Jesus") ([MIDI](#))

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Invitation to the Offering

What we give and the spirit with which we give it, enables this church to make a difference in the lives of all whom we touch.

Offertory

Debbie Marino, Soprano

When It's All Been Said And Done

By: James A. Cowan

****Doxology**

**Praise God from whom all blessings flow;
Praise Him, all creatures here below;
Praise Him above, ye heavenly host;
Praise Father, Son and Holy Ghost. Amen.**

Life of Our Church

Quilting on Wednesday at 12:00 pm.

Faith Development

**JOIN US WEDNESDAY @ CHURCH @ 11 AM & 6:30 PM;
AS WELL AS ONLINE THURSDAY @ 11 AM**

**PARABLES -- Putting Jesus's Stories in Their
Place – Josh Scott**

Read the stories of Jesus in a new light. When Jesus taught in parables, he was doing more than telling simple morality tales. His stories were grounded in the world in which he lived and his vision of the Kingdom of God.

The Parable of the Wicked Tenants

**The Parable of the Wedding Party
The Parable of the Workers in the Vineyard**

Reading:

Matthew 21:33–46, Mark 12:1–12, Luke 20:9–19

**Today's flowers are gifted to the church
by Rick Hawk. We would like
to thank him for this beautiful gift.**

Women's Fellowship Meeting

Break out your fringe, feathers, pearls, and headbands as we "Roar Back to the 1920s" for our annual Women's Fellowship Spring Tea Party to be held Wednesday, April 9, at noon. Revisit the food, fashion, and history that made the 1920s such a memorable and celebrated time period. Bring a teacup and dress like a "flapper" or in black and gold. The cost of the tea/lunch is \$10, payable that day. RSVP no later than Saturday, April 6 to gailcourtwright26@gmail.com.

**EASTER LILY or HYACINTH
ORDER FORM**

Each year our worship spaces are adorned with beautiful Lilies and Hyacinth for Easter Sunday. If you would like to order one of these flowers in memory or in honor of a loved one, please fill out an order form online or pick up a paper from the Fellowship Hall and return it to Cindy in the church office.

Lilies are \$12.00 each and Hyacinth's are \$9.00 each. We encourage you to take your flower home after services on Easter Sunday. You can make your check out to: TAECC. You can mail

to church or drop off at the office after Sunday services. If you want to drop off the check during the week, the office is open Monday – Friday 9AM – 1PM.

Name and phone number:

Email:

Which flower would you like to order

In memory of:

In honor of:

Given by:

Sunday, April 20th Easter Luncheon
Right after Sunday's Service.
Signup sheet is on the bulletin board in
The Fellowship Hall.

\$5.00 per person. Please see either
Patti Seebock, John Seebock or Sandy Cole.
Menu: Ham, Cheesy Potatoes, Baked Beans,
Salad, Rolls & Butter.
Iced Tea and Lemonade.

Sign-up sheet is on the bulletin board to donate
flowers to enhance our Sunday Service.

For next week's God's word:
Fifth Sunday in Lent
John 12:1-8

Benediction/Blessing for Our Journey of Faith (Responsively)

Our worship has ended, but now our life of service begins!

Go from this space, for you and I are the body of Christ, and all of creation awaits us. So, live passionately, and love faithfully, and celebrate every moment of your life from now until the Finale. Our God of relentless, amazing, creative, and hopeful grace goes with us! Amen. **Amen.**

~adapted from The Rev. Michael S. Piazza

****Lenten Doxology**

**Praise God throughout these forty days.
Praise Christ, our Lord, whom God did raise.
And praise the Spirit who imparts God's love
in Christ into our hearts. Amen.**

Time with our Children

God's Amazing Love

By Dr. Carol J Miller

Luke 15:1-3, 11-32

OBJECTS: Bring a sack of party horns or shakers

One time Jesus told a story about a Father and his son. The son was a grown-up son—a man. One day the son asked his father to give him a lot of money, half of all the money the father had! Well, instead of getting mad at his selfish son, the father gave him the money! The son then left his father and went to another country.

Can you guess what he did with the money? [respect all answers] He wasted every penny. He had big parties, and he bought fancy stuff. Pretty soon the son had spent all the money. His expensive things were broken, and he had nothing. He got a job feeding pigs, but he didn't even make enough money to afford pig food to eat.

One day he sat down in the pig sty and said, "I've been a fool. My Father gave me everything; he loved me, and I just walked out and haven't lived the way he taught me to live. I'm going to go home and tell him I'm sorry. Maybe he'll give me a better job than feeding pigs." So, the son got up and started for home. All

the way he kept thinking about what he'd say. He was afraid his father might throw him out and tell him not to come back. The son was very worried.

But as the son came down the path toward his father's house, guess what happened! Does anyone know? Well, let me tell you, the son saw his father running down the path with his arms open wide to welcome him home. The son started to say the words he had been practicing—his big apology. But the father was not interested. He was so happy that his lost son was found that he threw a big party and gave his son new clothes and a special ring.

I'll tell you a secret. The father in Jesus' story is God. The son is all those people who do not pay attention to God and do not live the way God taught them. How does God feel about them when they come back to him? God throws a party — because even when we mess up, God loves us and just wants us back. Now I think that's a great thing to know, don't you?

Here, take a party horn and celebrate God's love with me. Let the kids blow the party horns for a minute. Then collect the horns!

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Journey with us through Lent

March 30th – Fourth Sunday of Lent

April 6th – Fifth Sunday of Lent (10:00 AM)

April 13th – Palm Sunday (10:00 AM)

April 17th – Maundy Thursday (6:30 PM)

April 18th – Good Friday (6:30 PM)

April 20th – Easter (10:00 AM)



The Prodigal Son.
We all know one, have been one,
or are waiting for one to come home.



The difference between mercy
and grace? Mercy gave the
prodigal son a second chance.
Grace gave him a feast.

Max Lucado

quote fancy

Interfaith Study & Discussion

at Iona Hope Episcopal Church

Monday, April 7th 6:30pm

Dessert reception to follow

Topic: "The Golden Rule" in Christianity, Islam & Judaism



Sponsored by: Cypress Lake United Methodist Church, Iona Hope Episcopal Church, Muslim Women Council of SWFL, Temple Beth El, Temple Judea & Thomas A. Edison Congregational Church

Iona Hope 9650 Gladiolus Dr. Fort Myers 33908

**God never gives
us more than
love handles.**



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Prayer List

Our Church Members:

Jean Lindenlaub; Liz Lloyd; General Dozier; Sharlene Dozier;
Barbara Buch; Bill Persons; Ian Laughlin; Jack Walmsley;
Erleene Sanders; Jeannie Gardner after the passing of her husband.

Friends & Family:

Betty Denson; Jim Martin (Teri Martin's husband); Michele Baron (friends of Rod Schaffter and Carol Skaza); Jim and Mary Pat Willis (friends of Carol & Ned Downing and Malcolm Youngquist); Linda Pekkarinen (Friend of Tee & Flo Newbrough); Hunter and Family (Friend of Jean Long); Andrew (age 11) Grandson of dear friends of (Tee & Flo Newbrough); Paula Brown (Sister of Roger Yergeau); Fred & Natalie Johnson (friend of Rod Schaffter & Carol Skaza).
Diane Shinkle & Family (loss of Grandson) (cousin of Tom Johns).

***No matter who you are, or where you are on life's journey,
you're welcome here at Edison Congregational Church.
Welcome home!***

Website:	www.edisonchurch.com
Facebook:	Facebook.com/EdisonChurch
Email Pastor:	Pastorjim@taecc.com
Email Office:	Admin@taecc.com
Office Phone:	239-334-4978
Office Hours:	Monday-Friday 9 AM – 2 PM
Mailing:	1619 Llewellyn Dr., Ft. Myers 33901

Pastor Jim can be reached at the office
or on his cell phone at 502-494-6649 (voice & text).

Our Church Staff

*Senior Minister – Rev. Jim Harper, III
Associate Minister – Rev. Anton Pierce
Administrative Assistant – Cindy Wilson
Distinguished Director of Sacred Arts – Alena Michel
Faith Community Nurse – Lori McMullen
Pianist - Stephen Brittain*

*Your gifts are deeply appreciated and enable this ministry to continue. Our church retains the
right to redirect donations to the area of greatest need.*



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