

TAPIOLA APOSTOLIC LUTHERAN CHURCH

FEBRUARY - 2026

SCHEDULE

Sunday Bible Study and Sunday School: 9:45 a.m.

Sunday Service: 11: a.m.

Wed. Bible Study: 7:00 p.m.

SPEAKERS

February 1: Charles Korhonen, *Holy Communion*

February 8: Mark Sunnarborg

February 15: Charles Korhonen

December 24: Herb Jarvi

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The Burning Bush

“And Moses said, I will now turn aside, and see this great sight, why the bush is not burnt” - Exodus 3:3

Moses had spent the past forty years in the wilderness of Midian. Now eighty years old, he may have wondered whether those years had been wasted—especially when compared to his earlier life as a member of Egypt’s royal family. However, those decades were not punishment for the killing of the Egyptian (Exodus 2:12); they were preparation for the next forty years of his life. After fleeing from Pharaoh, who sought to kill him (Exodus 2:15), Moses settled into a quieter lifestyle, tending the flock of his father-in-law, Jethro. On what seemed like an ordinary day, far removed from the splendor of his previous royal life, God called to Moses through a burning bush. This story is not just about Moses; it is also about you. So, please take off your shoes, for the ground you are now standing on is holy. God is calling—will you turn aside in response?

During the first 40 years of his life, before he killed the Egyptian, Moses had little contact with his people, who did not consider him to be their leader. By the time God called him—as alluded to in our text—Moses had been humbled. Stripped of self-reliance and royal identity, he was now ready to fulfill the work God had prepared for him. At the same time, God had been preparing the people to receive Moses. Through Pharaoh’s harsh oppression, their suffering deepened until they *“cried... unto God by reason of the bondage”* (Exodus 2:23). God heard their prayers, and He sent Moses to lead them out of Egypt.

Exodus 3:1 introduces us to a pivotal moment in Moses’ life during his time in Midian. This verse tells us that he *“led the flock to the backside of the desert to the mountain of God, even to Horeb,”* though it does not say whether Moses recognized its sacred significance at the time. This location would later become central to Israel’s story, as it was here that Moses would receive the Ten Commandments from God. In much the same way, we often find ourselves in places, relationships, or passages of scripture that seem ordinary at first. Yet in hindsight, these moments become holy ground—because God met us there.

On this particular day, Moses noticed a bush that was on fire but was not being consumed. It was only when he changed his direction to investigate that the Lord spoke to him: *“And when the Lord saw that he turned aside to see, God called ... and said, ‘Moses, Moses’”* (Exodus 3:4). Moses responded quickly, *“Here am I.”* Then God said, *“Put off thy shoes from off thy feet, for the place whereon thou standest is holy ground”* (Exodus 3:5). By removing his shoes, Moses was being asked to lay aside his personal beliefs and any preconceived ideas about salvation. God was inviting him to approach—not with certainty, but with surrender.

Moreover, when God revealed Himself as the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, Moses felt a sense of fear—unlike in the previous verse, where he showed no fear at all. This shift is reminiscent of the widow of Zarephath, who cared for Elijah until her son died. In her grief, she confronted him, saying, *“Art thou come unto me to call my sin to remembrance, and to slay my son?”* (1 Kings 17:18). In that moment,

she experienced a spiritual reckoning—something in her past rising to the surface. It is possible that Moses, too, realized God still held him accountable for the murder he committed (Exodus 2:12). Time and distance had not erased that sin, even though he tried to bury it. It is a call to confession, not in isolation, but in the open, as Jesus affirmed in John 20:23. The bush still burns, reminding us that sin must be addressed—not hidden, not ignored, and never alone.

The burning bush symbolizes God's persistent call regarding sin—a call that will not fade or disappear on its own. When we turn aside to heed His voice, as Moses did, and worship Him through His Word, God invites us to approach Him without the burden of our preconceived notions. He desires that we listen—not to affirm what we already believe, but to receive truth that reshapes us. King David experienced something similar after his sins with Bathsheba and Uriah. He tried to make amends, hoping that time would ease his conscience. It did not. In Psalm 32:3-5, he wrote about the relief he could not find: *"When I kept silence, my bones waxed old through my roaring all the day long. For day and night thy hand was heavy upon me: my moisture is turned into the drought of summer. Selah. I acknowledged my sin unto thee, and mine iniquity have I not hid. I said, I will confess my transgressions unto the LORD; and thou forgavest the iniquity of my sin. Selah."* Like David, we find that silence does not heal us. However, confession opens the door to forgiveness—and the flame that once convicted now warms us with His grace.

So, if you find yourself in a quiet place, far from where you once stood, take heart. The bush still burns, and God still calls. Take a moment to turn aside, pray, listen carefully, and remove your shoes, for God desires to forgive your sins. In the Old Testament, a penitent person would voluntarily confess his sin to a priest, who then sprinkled sacrificial blood to make atonement. That has not changed. Whenever God convicts us of sin, there is a mercy seat to which we can turn—where absolution, spoken by a fellow believer, is not earned but received in Him.

God's Peace,
Charles Korhonen