

**Family of Christ Lutheran Church
Fourth Sunday in Lent
March 15, 2026**

Welcome, Announcements and Prayer Requests

Confession and Forgiveness

*All may make the sign of the cross, the sign that is marked
at baptism, as the presiding minister begins.*

We gather in the name of God, who created us, who was born to be with us, ✠ who guides us still. **Amen.**

God knows our hearts, the guilt we carry, the heartache that keeps us awake, the burdens we bear. God knows that “happy are they who are forgiven,” and so we confess in confidence of God’s forgiveness.

A brief silence

Good and gracious God, we have sinned and fallen short of the good you desire for us and for all creation. We have seen the earth as resources to extract and forgotten to marvel at its beauty. We have doubted your ability to provide and hoarded more than we need. We have ignored the needs of the vulnerable, and when you called us to follow you to greater wonders, we remained where we were and clung to control. Forgive our sin and our selfishness. Draw us out of ourselves, more deeply into your love, and more fully into a world in need.

God knows our sin before we do and meets every confession with abundant grace. In Christ, † we are alive and completely forgiven. God's goodness has the final word. May this gift renew our faith and lighten our load so that we are prepared to care for the world God so loves. **Amen.**

Gathering Hymn: ELW 614 There Is a Balm in Gilead

There Is a Balm in Gilead



There is a balm in Gil-e-ad to make the wound-ed whole;



there is a balm in Gil-e-ad to heal the sin-sick soul.



- 1 Some - times I feel dis - cour-aged and think my work's in vain,
- 2 If you can - not preach like Pe - ter, if you can-not pray like Paul,
- 3 Don't ev - er be dis - cour-aged, for Je - sus is your friend;



but then the Ho - ly Spir - it re - vives my soul a - gain.
you can tell the love of Je - sus and say, "He died for all."
and if you lack for knowl-edge, he'll ne'er re - fuse to lend.

Text: African American spiritual
Music: BALM IN GILEAD, African American spiritual

Please be seated

Greeting

The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, the love of God, and the communion of the Holy Spirit be with you all.

And also with you.

Prayer of the Day

Welcoming God, there is no one whom you have rejected forever. **There is nothing we can do to make you close the door to our relationship with you. You are always ready and waiting to befriend us again. In moments when we need it most, help us to notice your presence. Send us out with a keen sense of who the world has rejected, that we might be agents of friendship who welcome them in. Amen.**

First Reading: 1 Samuel 16:1-13

Samuel anointed David even though he was the eighth-oldest son of Jesse and did not match his brothers in height or other physical characteristics. With the anointing came endowment with the Spirit of the LORD, designating David as the LORD's chosen successor to Saul.

¹ The LORD said to Samuel, "How long will you grieve over Saul? I have rejected him from being king over Israel. Fill your horn with oil and set out; I will send you to Jesse the Bethlehemite, for I

have provided for myself a king among his sons.”² Samuel said, “How can I go? If Saul hears of it, he will kill me.” And the LORD said, “Take a heifer with you and say, ‘I have come to sacrifice to the LORD.’”³ Invite Jesse to the sacrifice, and I will show you what you shall do, and you shall anoint for me the one whom I name to you.”⁴ Samuel did what the LORD commanded and came to Bethlehem. The elders of the city came to meet him trembling and said, “Do you come peaceably?”⁵ He said, “Peaceably. I have come to sacrifice to the LORD; sanctify yourselves and come with me to the sacrifice.” And he sanctified Jesse and his sons and invited them to the sacrifice.

⁶ When they came, he looked on Eliab and thought, “Surely his anointed is now before the LORD.”⁷ But the LORD said to Samuel, “Do not look on his appearance or on the height of his stature, because I have rejected him, for the LORD does not see as mortals see; they look on the outward appearance, but the LORD looks on the heart.”⁸ Then Jesse called Abinadab and made him pass before Samuel. He said, “Neither has the LORD chosen this one.”⁹ Then Jesse made Shammah pass by. And he said, “Neither has the LORD chosen this one.”¹⁰ Jesse made seven of his sons pass before Samuel, and Samuel said to Jesse, “The LORD has not chosen any of these.”¹¹ Samuel said to Jesse, “Are all your sons here?” And he said, “There remains yet the youngest, but he is keeping the sheep.” And Samuel said to Jesse, “Send and bring him, for we will not sit down until he comes here.”¹² He sent and brought him in. Now he was ruddy and had beautiful eyes and was handsome. The LORD said, “Rise and anoint him, for this is the one.”¹³ Then Samuel took the horn of oil and anointed him in the presence of his brothers, and the

spirit of the LORD came mightily upon David from that day forward. Samuel then set out and went to Ramah.

Word of God, word of life.

Thanks be to God.

Psalm 23

¹ The LORD is my shepherd;

I shall not be in want.

² **The LORD makes me lie down in green pastures
and leads me beside still waters.**

³ You restore my soul, O LORD,
and guide me along right pathways for your name's sake.

⁴ **Though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I
shall fear no evil;**

**for you are with me; your rod and your staff, they comfort
me.**

⁵ You prepare a table before me in the presence of my
enemies;

you anoint my head with oil, and my cup is running over.

⁶ **Surely goodness and mercy shall pursue me all the days
of my life,**

and I will dwell in the house of the LORD forever.

Second Reading: Ephesians 5:8-14

*Because we now live in the divine light which is Jesus
Christ, we conduct our lives in ways that reflect the light of
Christ, so that our activity is truly pleasing to God.*

⁸ Once you were darkness, but now in the Lord you are light. Walk as children of light, ⁹ for the fruit of the light is found in all that is good and right and true. ¹⁰ Try to find out what is pleasing to the Lord. ¹¹ Take no part in the unfruitful works of darkness; rather, expose them. ¹² For it is shameful even to mention what such people do secretly, ¹³ but everything exposed by the light becomes visible, ¹⁴ for everything that becomes visible is light. Therefore it says,

“Sleeper, awake!
Rise from the dead,
and Christ will shine on you.”

Word of God, word of life.

Thanks be to God.

Please rise as you are able.

Lenten Acclamation: ELW p. 125



Let your stead - fast love come to us, O Lord.



Save us as you prom - ised; we will trust your word.



Save us as you prom - ised; we will trust your word.

Gospel: John 9:1-41

The Gospel according to John, the 9th chapter.

Glory to you, O Lord.

Jesus heals a man born blind, provoking a hostile reaction that he regards as spiritual blindness to the things of God.

¹ As [Jesus] walked along, he saw a man blind from birth. ² His disciples asked him, “Rabbi, who sinned, this man or his parents, that he was born blind?” ³ Jesus answered, “Neither this man nor his parents sinned; he was born blind so that God’s works might be revealed in him. ⁴ We must work the works of him who sent me while it is day; night is coming, when no one can work. ⁵ As long as I am in the world, I am the light of the world.” ⁶ When he had said this, he spat on the ground and made mud with the saliva and spread the mud on the man’s eyes, ⁷ saying to him, “Go, wash in the pool of Siloam” (which means Sent). Then he went and washed and came back able to see. ⁸ The neighbors and those who had seen him before as a beggar began to ask, “Is this not the man who used to sit and beg?” ⁹ Some were saying, “It is he.” Others were saying, “No, but it is someone like him.” He kept saying, “I am he.” ¹⁰ But they kept asking him, “Then how were your eyes opened?” ¹¹ He answered, “The man called Jesus made mud, spread it on my eyes, and said to me, ‘Go to Siloam and wash.’ Then I went and washed and received my sight.” ¹² They said to him, “Where is he?” He said, “I do not know.”

¹³ They brought to the Pharisees the man who had formerly been blind. ¹⁴ Now it was a Sabbath day when Jesus made the mud and opened his eyes. ¹⁵ Then the Pharisees also began to ask him how he had received his sight. He said to them, “He put

mud on my eyes. Then I washed, and now I see.”¹⁶ Some of the Pharisees said, “This man is not from God, for he does not observe the Sabbath.” Others said, “How can a man who is a sinner perform such signs?” And they were divided.¹⁷ So they said again to the blind man, “What do you say about him? It was your eyes he opened.” He said, “He is a prophet.”

¹⁸ The Jews did not believe that he had been blind and had received his sight until they called the parents of the man who had received his sight¹⁹ and asked them, “Is this your son, who you say was born blind? How then does he now see?”²⁰ His parents answered, “We know that this is our son and that he was born blind,²¹ but we do not know how it is that now he sees, nor do we know who opened his eyes. Ask him; he is of age. He will speak for himself.”²² His parents said this because they were afraid of the Jews, for the Jews had already agreed that anyone who confessed Jesus to be the Messiah would be put out of the synagogue.²³ Therefore his parents said, “He is of age; ask him.”

²⁴ So for the second time they called the man who had been blind, and they said to him, “Give glory to God! We know that this man is a sinner.”²⁵ He answered, “I do not know whether he is a sinner. One thing I do know, that though I was blind, now I see.”

²⁶ They said to him, “What did he do to you? How did he open your eyes?”²⁷ He answered them, “I have told you already, and you would not listen. Why do you want to hear it again? Do you also want to become his disciples?”²⁸ Then they reviled him, saying, “You are his disciple, but we are disciples of Moses.

²⁹ We know that God has spoken to Moses, but as for this man, we do not know where he comes from.”³⁰ The man answered, “Here is an astonishing thing! You do not know where he comes

from, yet he opened my eyes.³¹ We know that God does not listen to sinners, but he does listen to one who worships him and obeys his will.³² Never since the world began has it been heard that anyone opened the eyes of a person born blind.³³ If this man were not from God, he could do nothing.”³⁴ They answered him, “You were born entirely in sins, and are you trying to teach us?” And they drove him out.

³⁵ Jesus heard that they had driven him out, and when he found him he said, “Do you believe in the Son of Man?”³⁶ He answered, “And who is he, sir? Tell me, so that I may believe in him.”³⁷ Jesus said to him, “You have seen him, and the one speaking with you is he.”³⁸ He said, “Lord, I believe.” And he worshiped him.³⁹ Jesus said, “I came into this world for judgment, so that those who do not see may see and those who do see may become blind.”⁴⁰ Some of the Pharisees who were with him heard this and said to him, “Surely we are not blind, are we?”⁴¹ Jesus said to them, “If you were blind, you would not have sin. But now that you say, ‘We see,’ your sin remains.”

This is the Gospel of our Lord.

Praise to you, O Christ.

Sermon

Hymn of the Day: ELW 779 Amazing Grace

Amazing Grace, How Sweet the Sound



1 A - maz - ing grace!— how sweet the sound— that
 2 'Twas grace that taught my heart to fear, and
 3 Through man - y dan - gers, toils, and snares I
 4 The Lord has prom - ised good to me; his
 5 When we've been there ten thou - sand years, bright



saved a wretch like me! I once was lost, but
 grace my fears re - lieved; how pre - cious did that
 have al - read - y come; 'tis grace has brought me
 word my hope se - cures; he will my shield and
 shin - ing as the sun, we've no less days to



now am found; was blind, but now I see.
 grace ap - pear the hour I first be - lieved!
 safe thus far, and grace will lead me home.
 por - tion be as long as life en - dures.
 sing God's praise than when we'd first be - gun.

Text: John Newton, 1725–1807, alt., sts. 1–4; anonymous, st. 5
 Music: NEW BRITAIN, W. Walker, *Southern Harmony*, 1835

Apostles' Creed

**I believe in God, the Father almighty,
creator of heaven and earth.**

**I believe in Jesus Christ, God's only Son, our Lord,
who was conceived by the power of the Holy Spirit,
born of the virgin Mary,
suffered under Pontius Pilate,
was crucified, died, and was buried;
he descended to the dead.**

**On the third day he rose again;
he ascended into heaven,
he is seated at the right hand of the Father,
and he will come to judge the living and the dead.**

**I believe in the Holy Spirit,
the holy catholic church,
the communion of saints,
the forgiveness of sins,
the resurrection of the body,
and the life everlasting. Amen.**

Please be seated

Prayers of the People

God, our maker, healer, and friend, You are all in for us and all creation. You have given us a beautiful universe to explore. You have called each one of us by name. You never cease to offer life and forgiveness. There is no detail of life in this world that has escaped you. We pray now, trusting in your goodness and mercy.

A brief silence.

God, our shepherd, we pray that you guide the church. Lead Christians in our community and across the globe in right paths for your name's sake. Hear us, O God.

Your mercy is great.

God our provider, we cry out for this planet and the life it holds. Rescue endangered animals and plants, preserve threatened ecosystems, and save creatures from natural disasters. Hear us, O God.

Your mercy is great.

God our sovereign, we plead for your peace on earth. Bring an end to war and violence, and raise up leaders in governments, courts, businesses, schools, and community organizations who seek goodness and mercy. Hear us, O God.

Your mercy is great.

God our healer, we call to you in our need. Uplift all who are made to feel unimportant and transform the hearts of all infected by bigotry and prejudice. Care for all in special need this day. We pray for those on our prayer list and those whose names and needs we lift before you now, either silently or aloud (*a brief pause*). Hear us, O God.

Your mercy is great.

God our friend, we praise you for the diversity of people among us. Awaken us to share and receive the gifts we each possess, and stir up a spirit of understanding, celebration, and welcome for all. Hear us, O God.

Your mercy is great.

God our home, we thank you for all who have died and completed their baptismal journeys. Grant us faith to live until we too dwell in your house forever. Hear us, O God.

Your mercy is great.

Receive our prayers, O God, through Jesus Christ, our strength and salvation. **Amen.**

Sharing of the Peace

The peace of Christ be with you all.

And also with you.

Please share a sign of Christ's peace with those around you.

Offering Is Collected

Offering and Elements Are Brought to the Table

Offering Song:

Let the Vineyards Be Fruitful *Offering Song*

Let the vine - yards be fruit - ful, Lord, and fill to the brim our cup of
bless - ing. Gath - er a har - vest from the seeds that were sown, that we may be
fed with the bread of life. Gath - er the hopes and the dreams of all; u -
nite them with the prayers we of - fer now. Grace our ta - ble with your
pres - ence, and give us a fore - taste of the feast to come.

Text: John W. Arthur, 1922-1980
Music: Richard W. Hillert, b. 1923
Text and music © 1978 *Lutheran Book of Worship*, admin. Augsburg Fortress.
Duplication in any form prohibited without permission or valid license from copyright administrator.

Offering Prayer

God who provides, **we return to you a portion of all that you have given us. Bless and use these gifts, our hands, our hearts, our ministry, to care for the world you so love. Now prepare us to receive you at this table and again in the world beyond our doors. In Jesus' name we pray. Amen.**

Communion

The Lord be with you.

And also with you.

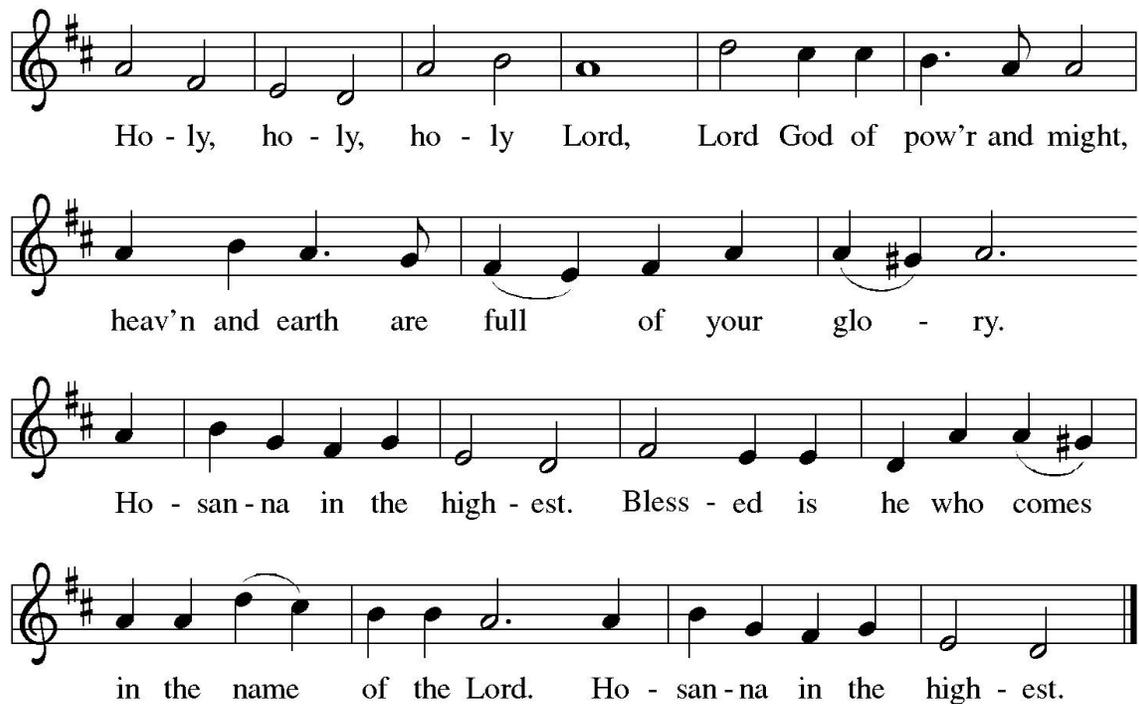
Lift up your hearts.

We lift them to the Lord!

Let us give thanks to the Lord our God.

It is right to give our thanks and praise.

We have to praise you, we have to thank you, God, because the whole universe is filled with your wonders. On this very day you overcome the powers of death and destruction forever, and so, in thankfulness, we join the song of the angels:



Ho - ly, ho - ly, ho - ly Lord, Lord God of pow'r and might,
 heav'n and earth are full of your glo - ry.
 Ho - san - na in the high - est. Bless - ed is he who comes
 in the name of the Lord. Ho - san - na in the high - est.

Creator, you made a wondrous world and called it good. You planted a garden, and in it, you crafted your creatures, even our ancestors. When sin, pain, and death entered the world, you did not leave us but remained a lover and friend of humanity. You made outrageous and hope-filled promises to Abram and Sarai, you brought water from a rock when your people wandered in the wilderness, you saw the possibilities in least and lowly, and you knew that life could come even from dry old bones.

When at last the time was right, you were born to be with us in Jesus and joined us in the highs and lows of human existence. You met Nicodemus in his nighttime wondering, you welcomed the questions of the woman at the well, you witnessed the rejection of the man born blind, you wept at the grave of Lazarus, and you even went through death for us.

On the night of his betrayal and arrest, knowing it was time to give all of himself, Jesus took bread, gave thanks, broke it, and gave it to his disciples, saying: Take and eat; this is my body, given for you. Do this for the remembrance of me.

Again, after supper, he took the cup, gave thanks, and gave it for all to drink, saying: This cup is the new covenant in my blood, shed for you and for all people for the forgiveness of sin. Do this for the remembrance of me.

And so, we remind each other and the world:

Christ has died, Christ is risen, Christ will come again.

Pour out your Spirit on us, your gathered people, and on this meal, your gifts of bread and cup. Through a holy mystery, let this become for us the body and blood of Christ. Let it remind us of the unending feast for which we are bound. Let it strengthen us, that we will become the body of Christ for the world you so love.
Amen.

Gathered into one by the Holy Spirit, let us pray as Jesus taught us:

Lord's Prayer

Our Father in heaven, hallowed be your name, your kingdom come, your will be done, on earth as in heaven.

Give us today our daily bread.

Forgive us our sins as we forgive those who sin against us.

Save us from the time of trial and deliver us from evil.

For the kingdom, the power, and the glory are yours, now and forever. Amen.

Invitation to Communion

Come to the table. Feast on God's goodness and mercy. **Amen.**

Communion Hymn: ELW 603 God, When Human Bonds Are Broken

God, When Human Bonds Are Broken



1 God, when hu - man bonds are bro - ken and we lack the
2 Through that still - ness, with your Spir - it come in - to our
3 You in us are bruised and bro - ken: hear us as we
4 Send us, God of new be - gin - nings, hum - bly hope - ful
5 Give us faith to be more faith - ful, give us hope to



love or skill to re - store the hope of heal - ing,
world of stress, for the sake of Christ for - giv - ing
seek re - lease from the pain of ear - lier liv - ing;
in - to life. Use us as a means of bless - ing:
be more true, give us love to go on learn - ing:



give us grace and make us still.
all the fail - ures we con - fess.
set us free and grant us peace.
make us stron - ger, give us faith.
God, en - cour - age and re - new!

Text: Fred Kaan, b. 1929

Music: MERTON, William H. Monk, 1823-1889

Text © 1989 Hope Publishing Company, Carol Stream, IL 60188. All rights reserved. Used by permission.

Duplication in any form prohibited without permission or valid license from copyright administrator.

Post-Communion Blessing

The body and blood of our Lord Jesus Christ strengthen you and keep you in his grace. **Amen.**

Prayer after Communion

God, you have revealed yourself to us again in the holy mystery of bread and cup. Strengthen us by your presence, draw us closer to one another as the Body of Christ, and send us to reveal you in our all our words and ways. Amen.

Blessing

As you have met God in this place, go now to meet God beyond this place. As you have received the love of Jesus, go now to give the love of Jesus. As the Creator has been all in for you, go now and be all in for the sake of the world.

Gracious God, Father, Son, and † Spirit,
bless you as you go. **Amen.**

Sending Hymn: ELW 793 Be Thou My Vision

Be Thou My Vision



1 Be thou my vi - sion, O Lord of my heart;
 2 Be thou my wis - dom, and thou my true word;
 3 Rich - es I heed not, nor vain, emp - ty praise,
 4 Light of my soul, af - ter vic - to - ry won,



naught be all else to me, save that thou art:
 I ev - er with thee and thou with me, Lord.
 thou mine in - her - i - tance, now and al - ways:
 may I reach heav - en's joys, O heav - en's Sun!



thou my best thought both by day and by night,
 Thou my soul's shel - ter, and thou my high tow'r,
 thou and thou on - ly, the first in my heart,
 Heart of my own heart, what - ev - er be - fall,



wak - ing or sleep - ing, thy pres - ence my light.
 raise thou me heav'n - ward, O Pow'r of my pow'r.
 great God of heav - en, my trea - sure thou art.
 still be my vi - sion, O Rul - er of all.

Text: Irish, 8th cent.; vers. Eleanor H. Hull, 1860–1935, alt.; tr. Mary E. Byrne, 1880–1931
 Music: SLANE, Irish traditional

Dismissal

Go in peace. Believe the good news.
Thanks be to God.

Announcements:

- **Midweek Lent Online Prayer Services:** March 18th and 25th.
- **Lent Bible Study:** Signs of the Kingdom: Studies in Matthew, March 15, 22, 29, April 12, at 9 a.m.
- **Getting Crafty Group:** March 18th, 6:30 p.m.
- **Book Club:** March 26th, 7 p.m. We will discuss *The Borrowed Life of Frederick Fife* by Anna Johnston.
- **Community Easter Egg Hunt:** March 29th, noon. Please donate small, wrapped candy and/or small toys that will fit into a plastic egg. We'll fill eggs on March 22nd.
- **Maundy Thursday and Good Friday Services:** April 2 and April 3, at 7 p.m.
- **Easter Sunrise Service:** April 5th, 7 a.m.
- **Easter Festival Service:** April 5th, 10 a.m.
- **FeedtheNeedStl service project:** April 12th, 1 to 3 p.m. at Queeny Recreation Center.
- **Rummage and Bake Sale:** April 18th. Bring donations in on Sundays or on Tuesdays and Thursdays from 9 to noon.

focelca.com
foclutheran@gmail.com
Pastor Jane Brda, SAM
Ellen Mueller — Music

All In: Lent 2026 © 2025 Barn Geese Worship. Used by permission. Elements from sundaysandseasons.com. Used by permission of SAS103282. Copyright ©2023 Augsburg Fortress. All rights reserved. Reprinted and streamed under Onelicense.net. New Revised Standard Version Bible, Copyright © 1989, Division of Christian Education of the National Council of the Churches of Christ in the United States of America. Used by permission. All rights reserved. Revised Common Lectionary, Copyright © 1992 Consultation on Common Texts, admin Augsburg Fortress. Used by permission.