

**Family of Christ Lutheran Church
Second Sunday in Lent
March 1, 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 335 Jesus, Keep Me Near the Cross

Jesus, Keep Me Near the Cross



1 Je - sus, keep me near the cross, there's a pre - cious foun - tain;
 2 Near the cross, a trem - bling soul, love and mer - cy found me;
 3 Near the cross! O Lamb of God, bring its scenes be - fore me;
 4 Near the cross I'll watch and wait, hop - ing, trust - ing ev - er,



free to all, a heal - ing stream flows from Cal - v'ry's moun - tain.
 there the bright and morn - ing star sheds its beams a - round me.
 help me walk from day to day with its shad - ow o'er me.
 till I reach the gold - en strand just be - yond the riv - er.



In the cross, in the cross be my glo - ry ev - er;



till my ran - somed soul shall find rest be - yond the riv - er.

Text: Fanny J. Crosby, 1820–1915
 Music: NEAR THE CROSS, William H. Doane, 1832–1915

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

Faithful One, we fear what we do not know and hesitate to accept uncertainty. **Yet you are faithful. You call us to where we are meant to be, even when we can't perceive it. Give us trust in your faithfulness, that we might answer your call with ready hearts. Amen.**

First Reading: Genesis 12:1-4a

God's call of Abram and Sarai has a clear purpose—that through them all the families of the earth would gain a blessing. As they set out on their journey, they are accompanied by promises of land, nation, and a great reputation.

¹ The LORD said to Abram, “Go from your country and your kindred and your father’s house to the land that I will show you. ² I will make of you a great nation, and I will bless you and make your name great, so that you will be a blessing. ³ I will bless those who bless you, and the one who curses you I will curse, and in you all the families of the earth shall be blessed.”

^{4a} So Abram went, as the LORD had told him, and Lot went with him.

Word of God, word of life.
Thanks be to God.

Psalm 121

- ¹ I lift up my eyes to the hills;
from where is my help to come?
- ² **My help comes from the LORD,
the maker of heaven and earth.**
- ³ The LORD will not let your foot be moved
nor will the one who watches over you fall asleep.
- ⁴ **Behold, the keeper of Israel
will neither slumber nor sleep;**
- ⁵ the LORD watches over you;
the LORD is your shade at your right hand;
- ⁶ **the sun will not strike you by day,
nor the moon by night.**
- ⁷ The LORD will preserve you from all evil
and will keep your life.
- ⁸ **The LORD will watch over your going out and your coming
in,
from this time forth forevermore.**

Second Reading: Romans 4:1-5, 13-17

In the person and example of Abraham we discover that a right relationship with God does not involve earning a reward from God but entails trusting God's promises. Abraham is the forebear and model for both Jews and

Gentiles, because we too trust that ours is a God who gives life to the dead.

¹ What then are we to say was gained by Abraham, our ancestor according to the flesh? ² For if Abraham was justified by works, he has something to boast about, but not before God. ³ For what does the scripture say? “Abraham believed God, and it was reckoned to him as righteousness.” ⁴ Now to one who works, wages are not reckoned as a gift but as something due. ⁵ But to one who does not work but trusts him who justifies the ungodly, such faith is reckoned as righteousness.

¹³ For the promise that he would inherit the world did not come to Abraham or to his descendants through the law but through the righteousness of faith. ¹⁴ For if it is the adherents of the law who are to be the heirs, faith is null and the promise is void. ¹⁵ For the law brings wrath, but where there is no law, neither is there transgression.

¹⁶ For this reason the promise depends on faith, in order that it may rest on grace, so that it may be guaranteed to all his descendants, not only to the adherents of the law but also to those who share the faith of Abraham (who is the father of all of us, ¹⁷ as it is written, “I have made you the father of many nations”), in the presence of the God in whom he believed, who gives life to the dead and calls into existence the things that do not exist.

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 3:1-17

The Gospel according to John, the 3rd chapter.

Glory to you, O Lord.

A curious Pharisee visits Jesus by night to learn from the teacher his friends reject. Jesus speaks to him about life in the Spirit and the kingdom of God.

¹ Now there was a Pharisee named Nicodemus, a leader of the Jews. ² He came to Jesus by night and said to him, “Rabbi, we know that you are a teacher who has come from God, for no one can do these signs that you do unless God is with that person.”

³ Jesus answered him, “Very truly, I tell you, no one can see the kingdom of God without being born from above.” ⁴ Nicodemus said to him, “How can anyone be born after having grown old? Can one enter a second time into the mother’s womb and be born?” ⁵ Jesus answered, “Very truly, I tell you, no one can enter the kingdom of God without being born of water and Spirit.

⁶ What is born of the flesh is flesh, and what is born of the Spirit is spirit. ⁷ Do not be astonished that I said to you, ‘You must be born from above.’ ⁸ The wind blows where it chooses, and you hear the sound of it, but you do not know where it comes from or where it goes. So it is with everyone who is born of the Spirit.”

⁹ Nicodemus said to him, “How can these things be?” ¹⁰ Jesus answered him, “Are you the teacher of Israel, and yet you do not understand these things?

¹¹ “Very truly, I tell you, we speak of what we know and testify to what we have seen, yet you do not receive our testimony. ¹² If I have told you about earthly things and you do not believe, how can you believe if I tell you about heavenly things? ¹³ No one has ascended into heaven except the one who descended from heaven, the Son of Man. ¹⁴ And just as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, so must the Son of Man be lifted up, ¹⁵ that whoever believes in him may have eternal life.

¹⁶ “For God so loved the world that he gave his only Son, so that everyone who believes in him may not perish but may have eternal life.

¹⁷ “Indeed, God did not send the Son into the world to condemn the world but in order that the world might be saved through him.”

This is the Gospel of our Lord.

Praise to you, O Christ.

Sermon

Hymn of the Day: ELW 735

Mothering God, You Gave Me Birth



1 Moth - er - ing God, you gave me birth in the bright
2 Moth - er - ing Christ, you took my form, of - fer - ing
3 Moth - er - ing Spir - it, nur - t'ring one, in arms of



morn - ing of this world. Cre - a - tor, source of ev - 'ry
me your food of light, grain . . . of life, and grape of
pa - tience hold me close, so that in faith I root and



breath, you are my rain, my wind, my sun.
love, your ver - y bod - y for my peace.
grow un - til I flow'r, un - til I know.

Text: Jean Janzen, b. 1933; based on Julian of Norwich, c. 1342–c. 1413
Music: NORWICH, Carolyn Jennings, b. 1936
Text © 1991 Jean Janzen, admin. Augsburg Fortress.
Music © 1995 Augsburg Fortress.

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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.

Faithful One, you renew us by grace. As you have inspired faith through the work of church artists and hymnwriters throughout the ages, like George Herbert whom the church remembers

today, give your church the means to praise your beauty today.
Hear us, O God.

Your mercy is great.

Living One, you delight in this world. The sun and moon, the wind and the water declare your goodness. Preserve this earth, and protect conservationists, scientists, and all who labor in service to creation. Hear us, O God.

Your mercy is great.

Ruling One, you bless us to be a blessing. Open the hearts of all leaders to seek the flourishing of every person and lend your help to all who wait for justice, deliverance, and peace. Hear us, O God.

Your mercy is great.

Compassionate One, you send your Son to save. Declare your word of acceptance to any who feel condemned and lift up any brought low by hatred and exclusion. Tend to all who are struggling with illness or loss, especially 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.

Guiding One, you watch over our going out and coming in. Bless newcomers and new members in this assembly and accompany those who have recently left this community to journey elsewhere. Hear us, O God.

Your mercy is great.

Eternal One, you neither slumber nor sleep. Be our keeper in life and in death. Thank you for our beloved who have died, and for your promise which saves this whole world by your love. 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
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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.

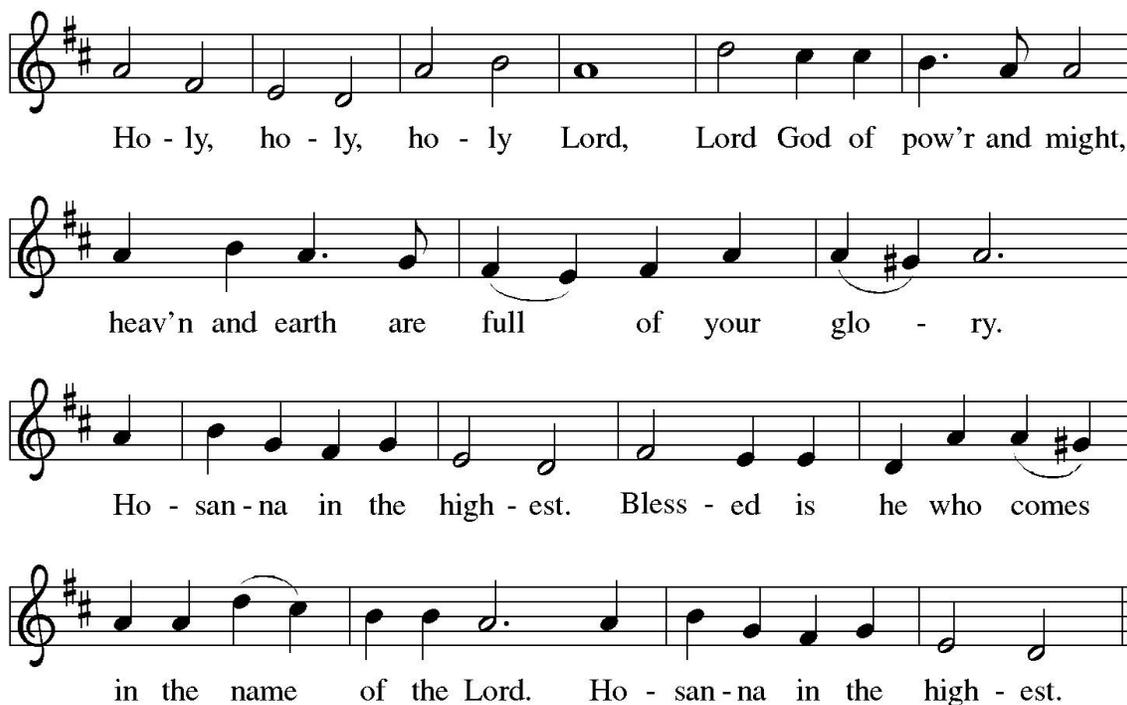
Lift up your hearts.

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 757 All My Hope on God is Founded

1 All my hope on God is founded
who will all my trust renew,
who through change and chance will guide me,
only good and only true.
God unknown, God alone,
call my heart to be thine own.

2 Mortal pride and earthly glory,
sword and crown betray our trust;
what with care and toil we fashion,
tow'r and temple, fall to dust.
But thy pow'r, hour by hour,
is my temple and my tow'r.

3 Great thy goodness, e'er enduring;
deep thy wisdom, passing thought;
splendor, light, and life attend thee,
beauty springing out of naught.
Evermore from thy store
newborn worlds rise and adore.

4 Still from earth to God eternal
sacrifice of praise be done,
high above all praises praising
for the gift of God's own Son.
Christ doth call one and all:
ye who follow shall not fall.

Text: Joachim Neander, 1650-1680; para. Robert Bridges, 1844-1930, alt.

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 638 Blessed Assurance

Blessed Assurance



- 1 Bless-ed as-sur - ance, Je - sus is mine! Oh, what a fore-taste of glo-ry di - vine!
- 2 Per - fect sub-mis-sion, per-fect de-light, vi-sions of rap-ture now burst on my sight;
- 3 Per - fect sub-mis-sion, all is at rest; I in my Sav-ior am hap-py and blest,



Heir of sal - va - tion, pur-chase of God, born of his Spir - it, washed in his blood.
an - gels de-scend-ing bring from a - bove ech - oes of mer - cy, whis-pers of love.
watch-ing and wait-ing, look - ing a - bove, filled with his good-ness, lost in his love.

Refrain



This is my sto - ry, this is my song, prais-ing my Sav - ior all the day long:



this is my sto - ry, this is my song, prais-ing my Sav - ior all the day long.

Text: Fanny J. Crosby, 1820–1915

Music: ASSURANCE, Phoebe P. Knapp, 1830–1908

Dismissal

Go in peace. Believe the good news.

Thanks be to God.

Announcements:

- **Midweek Lent Online Prayer Services:** March 4, 11, 18, and 25th.
- **Lent Bible Study:** Signs of the Kingdom: Studies in Matthew, March 1, 8, 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.
- **Rummage and Bake Sale:** April 18th. Bring donations in on Sundays or on Tuesdays and Thursdays from 9 to noon.

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

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