



“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.”

~John 3:17

St. John Evangelical Lutheran Church

2nd Sunday in Lent – March 5, 2023

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Rev. Katie McNeal, Presiding Minister

Maizy Fisher, Director of Music Ministries

*We are delighted to have you worship with us this morning!
Know that you are welcome here just as you are*

If you are looking for a church to call home, why not consider making this one your own? If this is your first time visiting us, please fill out the visitor information card stapled to your bulletin.

*Everything you need to follow worship can be found in this bulletin. As you are comfortable, please rise when there is an * and join in the congregational responses, noted in **bold**.*

All songs are marked with numbers. The red book in the pew has all the songs. Look for the large number in the upper corner of the page to find the correct song.

During the time of Peace, you are invited to turn to those around you and offer a word of peace. We suggest a handshake and saying, "Peace be with you." You are also welcomed to offer another gesture of peace (wave, fist-bump, smile, etc.). Hand sanitizer is available in each pew.

At the time of Offering, you are invited to share a gift as you are comfortable. You may also place any updates to our ongoing prayer list using the yellow cards in the pews and placing them in the offering plates.

If you need a restroom, restrooms are located on the bottom floor at the far side of the building from the elevator. Restrooms may be accessed either via the stairs in the rear of the sanctuary, the stairs by the Greeting Area, or the elevator.

As you prepare for worship, you are invited to fill out the blue prayer request forms located in each pew. The cards will be collected during our hymn of the day, and prayers will be offered during the prayers of the people.

PRELUDE

ANNOUNCEMENTS

GATHERING

The Holy Spirit calls us together as the people of God.

*WORDS OF WELCOME

Blessed be the holy Trinity, † one God,
who journeys with us these forty days,
and sustains us with the gift of grace.

Amen.

*GATHERING SONG *God Loved the World* (ELW 323)



1 God loved the world so that he gave his on - ly
2 Christ Je - sus is the ground of faith, who was made
3 If you are ill, if death draws near, this truth your
4 Be of good cheer, for God's own Son for - gives all
5 All glo - ry to the Fa - ther, Son, and Ho - ly



Son the lost to save, that all who would in
flesh and suf - fered death; all who con - fide in
trou - bled heart can cheer: Christ Je - sus res - cues
sins that you have done, and jus - ti - fied by
Spir - it, Three in One! To you, O bless - ed



him be - lieve should ev - er - last - ing life re - ceive.
Christ a - lone are built on this chief cor - ner - stone.
us from death; that is the firm - est ground of faith.
Je - sus' blood, your bap - tism grants the high - est good.
Trin - i - ty, be praise now and e - ter - nal - ly!

***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.

***CONFESSION AND FORGIVENESS**

In God's love we know that we fall short. We trust in God's forgiveness, but before we can accept forgiveness, we must confess our failings and shortcomings. We must acknowledge our need for repentance and God's mercy.

Let us come before God and one another and confess our sins.

Silence is kept for reflection.

Most merciful God,

**we confess that we are captive to sin
and cannot free ourselves.**

**We have sinned against you in thought, word, and deed,
by what we have done and by what we have left undone.**

**We have not loved you with our whole heart;
we have not loved our neighbors as ourselves.**

**For the sake of your Son, Jesus Christ,
have mercy on us.**

**Forgive us, renew us, and lead us,
so that we may delight in your will and walk in your ways,
to the glory of your holy name.**

Amen.

Hear the good news:

God so loved the world that God gave the only Son,
so that all may receive life.

This promise is for you!

God embraces you with divine mercy,

✠ forgives you in Christ's name,

and revives you in the Spirit's power.

Amen.

Sure of God's forgiveness, let us approach God in prayer and supplication:

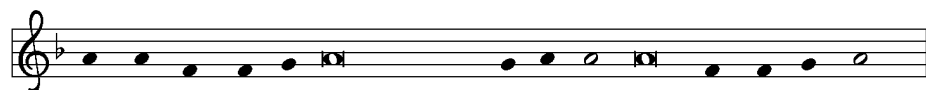
*KYRIE



In peace, let us pray to the Lord.



Lord, have mer - cy.



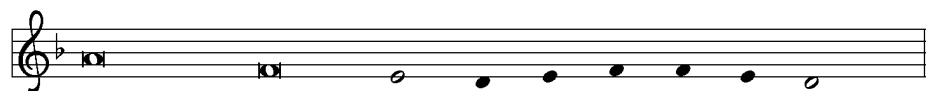
For the peace from a - bove, and for our sal - va - tion, let us pray to the Lord.



Lord, have mer - cy.



For the peace of the whole world, for the well - being of the church of God,



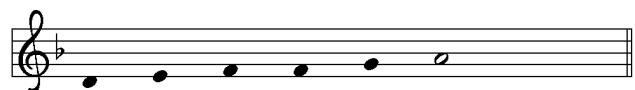
and for the unity of all, let us pray to the Lord.



Lord, have mer - cy.



For this ho - ly house, and for all who of - fer here their wor - ship and praise,



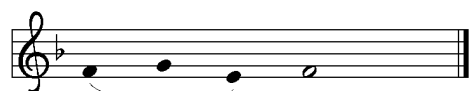
let us pray to the Lord.



Lord, have mer - cy.



Help, save, comfort, and de - fend us, gra - cious Lord.



A - men.

*GLORY TO GOD

Assisting minister



Glo - ry to God in the high - est, and peace to God's peo-ple on earth.


All



Lord God, heav'n-ly King, al-might-y God and Fa - ther, we wor -



ship you, we give you thanks, we praise you for your glo - ry.



Lord Je - sus Christ, on - ly Son of the Fa - ther, O Lord God,



Lamb of God, you take a - way the sin of the world: have



mer-cy on us; you are seat - ed at the right hand of the



Fa - ther: re - ceive our prayer. For you a - lone are the



Ho - ly One, you a - lone are the Lord, you a - lone



are the Most High, Je - sus Christ, with the Ho - ly Spir - it,



in the glo - ry of God the Fa - ther. A - men.

*PRAYER OF THE DAY

Let us pray,

O God, our leader and guide, in the waters of baptism you bring us to new birth to live as your children. Strengthen our faith in your promises, that by your Spirit we may lift up your life to all the world through your Son, Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. Amen.

WORD

God speaks to us in scripture reading, preaching, and song.

FIRST READING: Genesis 12:1-4a

A reading from the book of Genesis.

¹The LORD said to Abram, “Go from your country and your kindred and your father’s house to the land that I will show you. ²I will make of you a great nation, and I will bless you, and make your name great, so that you will be a blessing. ³I 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.

The word of the Lord.

Thanks be to God.

PSALM 121

¹I 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.**

³The 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;**

⁵the 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.**

⁷The 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

A reading from the book of Romans.

¹What then are we to say was gained by Abraham, our ancestor according to the flesh? ²For if Abraham was justified by works, he has something to boast about, but not before God. ³For what does the scripture say? “Abraham believed God, and it was reckoned to him as righteousness.” ⁴Now to one who works, wages are not reckoned as a gift but as something due. ⁵But to one who without works trusts him who justifies the ungodly, such faith is reckoned as righteousness.

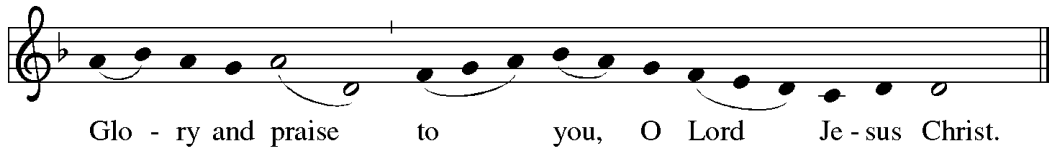
¹³For the promise that he would inherit the world did not come to Abraham or to his descendants through the law but through the righteousness of faith. ¹⁴If it is the adherents of the law who are to be the heirs, faith is null and the promise is void. ¹⁵For the law brings wrath; but where there is no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

¹⁶For this reason it depends on faith, in order that the promise may rest on grace and be guaranteed to all his descendants, not only to the adherents of the law but also to those who share the faith of Abraham (for he is the father of all of us, ¹⁷as 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.

The word of the Lord.

Thanks be to God.

*GOSPEL ACCLAMATION



*GOSPEL READING: John 3:1-17

The holy gospel according to John.

Glory to you, O Lord.

¹Now there was a Pharisee named Nicodemus, a leader of the Jews. ²He 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 apart from the presence of God.” ³Jesus answered him, “Very truly, I tell you, no one can see the kingdom of God without being born from above.” ⁴Nicodemus 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?” ⁵Jesus answered, “Very truly, I tell you, no one can enter the kingdom of God without being born of water and Spirit. ⁶What is born of the flesh is flesh, and what is born of the Spirit is spirit. ⁷Do not be astonished that I said to you, ‘You must be born from above.’ ⁸The 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.” ⁹Nicodemus said to him, “How can these things be?” ¹⁰Jesus answered him, “Are you a 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. ¹²If I have told you about earthly things and you do not believe, how can you believe if I tell you about heavenly things? ¹³No one has ascended into heaven except the one who descended from heaven, the Son of Man. ¹⁴And just as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, so must the Son of Man be lifted up, ¹⁵that 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.”

The gospel of the Lord.

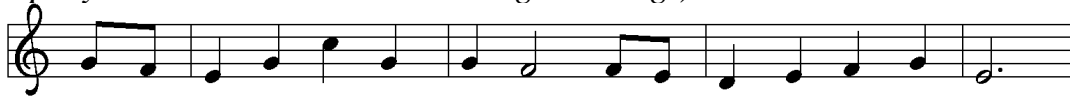
Praise to you, O Christ

CHILDREN’S SERMON

SERMON

***HYMN OF THE DAY *We Are Baptized in Christ Jesus* (ELW 451)**

(Blue prayer cards are collected during the song.)



1 We are bap-tized in Christ Je - sus, we are bap - tized in his death;
2 In the wa - ter and the wit-ness, in the break-ing of the bread,
3 Glo-ry be to God the Fa - ther, glo-ry be to Christ the Son,



that as Christ is raised vic - to - rious, we might live a brand new life.
in the wait - ing arms of Je - sus who is ris - en from the dead,
glo - ry to the Ho - ly Spir - it, ev - er three and ev - er one;



And if we have been u - nit - ed in a dread-ful death like his,
God has made a new be - gin-ning from the ash - es of our past;
as it was in the be - gin-ning, glo - ry now re-sounds a - gain



we will all be re - u - nit - ed, for he lives.
in the los - ing and the win - ning we hold fast.
in a song that has no end - ing. . . . A - men.

***APOSTLES' CREED**

With the whole church, let us confess our faith.

**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 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.**

***PRAYERS OF INTERCESSION**

Sustained by God's abundant mercy, let us pray for the church, the world, and all of creation.
A brief silence.

O God, you so love the children and the child-like. Bless all who are called to the ministry of teaching, that they form and inspire us for the work of the gospel. Bless the young in our midst, and delight us with their joy, wonder, and curiosity. Revive our ministries with children and youth and equip us all for faithful discipleship. Merciful God,
receive our prayer.

O God, you so love your creation. Guide the work of researchers, scientists, and activists who love your earth and who inspire us to care for the natural world. Merciful God,
receive our prayer.

O God, you so love the world. Uphold leaders who resist tyranny and oppression. Strengthen organizations that promote peace and harmony. Direct their work to alleviate human suffering and to address its root causes. Merciful God,
receive our prayer.

O God, you so love your people. Draw near to all who live with mental illness, depression, or addiction, and accompany them in healing and recovery. Hear the cries of those who look to you in their distress especially Jeff, Bob, Katie, Marcia, Geneva, Cherry, Winnie, Chuck, Henry, Harry, Roy, Ellen, Ruth, Sally, Beverly, Karen, Katie, Larry, Debi, Todd, those on our prayer list, and all whom we remember aloud or in our hearts. Merciful God,
receive our prayer.

God, you so love the church. You use questions throughout your Word to invite us deeper into relationship with you. Give us courage to bring our unanswered questions to you, and help us to know of your abiding presence even in our uncertainties, trusting that your love and faithfulness are sure this day and always. Merciful God.
receive our prayer.

O God, you so love your saints. As our ancestors in the faith have been a blessing to us, so inspire us by their example to be a blessing to those who come after us. Merciful God,
receive our prayer.

We lift our prayers to you, O God, especially those on the hearts of this congregation today (*prayer cards are read*). We commend all the prayers, spoken and unspoken to you, trusting in your steadfast love and your promise to renew your whole creation; through Jesus Christ our Savior. **Amen.**

***SHARING THE PEACE**

The peace of Christ be with you always.
And also with you.

MEAL

God feeds us with the presence of Jesus Christ.

CHOIR ANTHEM *We've Come This Far by Faith*

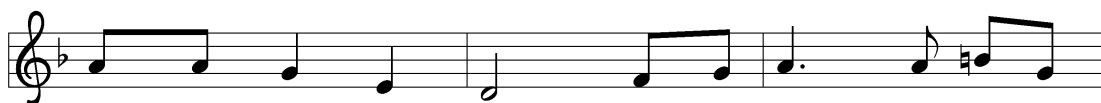
COLLECTION OF THE OFFERING

OFFERTORY HYMN *Tree of Life and Awesome Mystery* (ELW 334)

**Rise on 4th verse*



1 Tree of Life and awe - some mys - t'ry, in your
2 We re - mem - ber truth once spo - ken, love passed
3 Christ, you lead and we shall fol - low, stum - bling



death we are re - born; though you die in all of
on through act and word; ev - 'ry per - son lost and
though our steps may be; one with you in joy and



his - t'ry, still you rise with ev - 'ry morn, still you
bro - ken wears the bod - y of our Lord, wears the
sor - row, we the riv - er, you the sea, we the



rise with ev - 'ry morn.
bod - y of our Lord.
riv - er, you the sea.

Lent 2

- 4 In our call to be a blessing,
may we be a blessing true;
may we live and die confessing
Christ as Lord of all we do.

***OFFERING PRAYER**

God, we may never know what you will do with these gifts of our time, talents, and treasures. But we carry a faith passed to us through generations. We set the table with food and drink harvested by many hands. We offer ourselves to your service. And we trust that you will use the gifts we give today in the future of your church and your work in the world.

Amen.

*GREAT THANKSGIVING

The Lord be with you.

And also with you.

Lift up your hearts.

We lift them to the Lord.

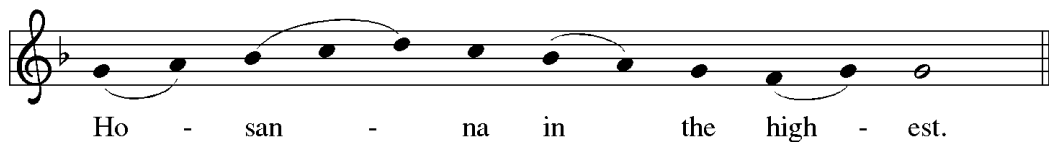
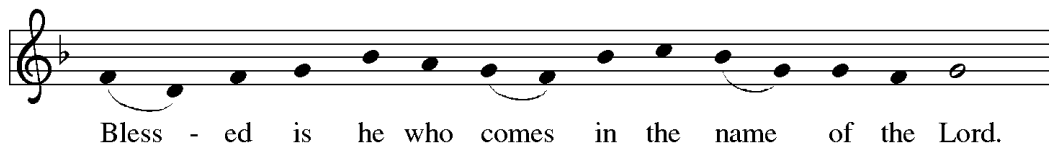
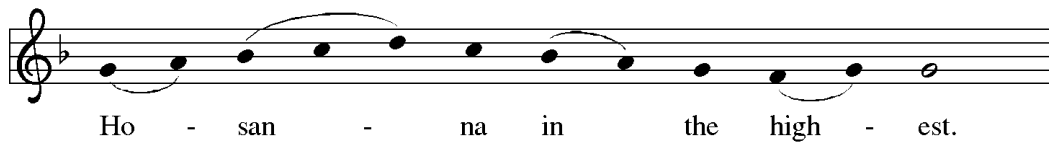
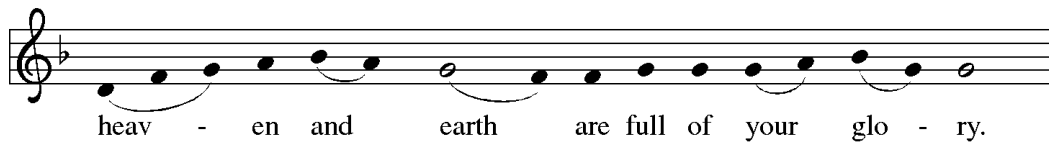
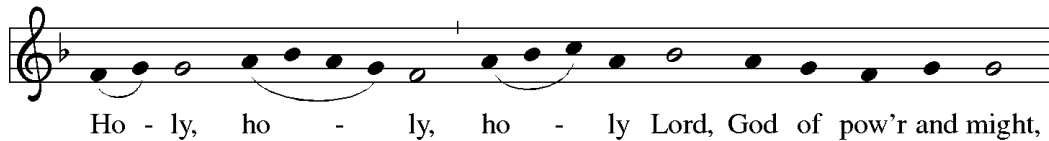
Let us give thanks to the Lord our God.

It is right to give our thanks and praise.

It is indeed right, our duty, and our joy,
that we should at all times and in all places
give thanks and praise to you, almighty and merciful God,
through our Savior Jesus Christ.

You call your people to cleanse their hearts
and prepare with joy for the paschal feast,
that, renewed in the gift of baptism,
we may come to the fullness of your grace.

And so, with all the choirs of angels,
with the church on earth and the hosts of heaven,
we praise your name and join their unending hymn:



Blessed are you, O God of the universe. Your mercy is everlasting and your steadfast faithfulness is with us through all times.

You sent to us Jesus, a Savior with questionable beginnings from a dubious place.
When everyday people met your Son,
They asked “He cannot be the Messiah, can he?”
When religious leaders heard Jesus’ teachings,
They wondered “Can these words come from the God we know?”
People had their doubts, but Jesus’ faith compelled them to ask,
“Is this really the one who will save us from our sins?”

Christ’s abundant forgiveness to sinners, even in his humiliating death at the hands of the state,
And Jesus’ glorious resurrection from the depths of the tomb all answered *yes!*

Yet for all this, Even the people who know Jesus best carried doubts in their hearts.
They lived under the burden of unanswered questions.
And when Jesus gathered them for one last meal, uncertainty swirled in their hearts.

So to explain God’s love, to show it and share it,
On the very night on which he would be betrayed, our Lord Jesus took bread, and 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.

With this bread and cup we remember our Lord's passover from death to life
as we proclaim the mystery of faith:

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

God of all times, reveal yourself to us in the breaking of the bread.
Bless this feast and grace our table with your presence.
Raise us up as the body of Christ for the world.
Breathe new life into us. Send us forth, burning with justice, peace, and love.
Come Holy Spirit.
Come, Holy Spirit.

With your holy ones of all times and places, with the earth and all its creatures,
with sun and moon and stars, we praise you, O God, blessed and holy Trinity,
now and forever.

Amen.

Jesus, you have asked us to ask you for anything we need.
Remember us in your kingdom and teach us to ask and pray:

**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 trespasses,
as we forgive those who trespass against us;
and lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil.
For thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory,
forever and ever. Amen**

***INVITATION TO COMMUNION**

If you wonder whether God really wants you at this table, Jesus answers *yes*.
Know that your unanswered questions are welcome here,
because the Spirit unquestionably beckons you to come and taste the truth of God's love.

Through this meal, we know forgiveness, life, and salvation as the blessings of God's sacramental grace. In response to Jesus' invitation, all are welcome to come forward and experience the real presence of Christ in the elements. Those who do not receive the elements are invited to come forward for a blessing. Grape juice and gluten free wafers are available upon request. Communion may also be brought to those who are unable to come forward.

COMMUNION SONG *Lamb of God*

Lamb of God, you take a - way the sin of the
world; have mer - cy on us. Lamb of God, you
take a - way the sin of the world; have mer - cy
on us. Lamb of God, you take a - way the
sin of the world; grant us peace. A - men.

DISTRIBUTION OF COMMUNION

COMMUNION HYMN *O Living Breath of God* (ELW 407)



- 1 O liv-ing Breath of God, wind at the be-gin - ning up-on the wa - ters;
- 2 O liv-ing Breath of God, by whose pow'r the Son came to birth a - mong us;
- 3 O liv-ing Breath of God, bear-ing us to life through bap-tis-mal wa - ters;



- O liv-ing Breath of God, bear-ing the cre - a - tion to won-drous birth:
O liv-ing Breath of God, who to the cre - a - tion gives life a - new:
O liv-ing Breath of God, sigh-ing with cre - a - tion for free-dom's birth:



Refrain
Come now, and fill our spir - its; pour out your gifts a - bun - dant.



O liv-ing Breath of God, Ho-ly Spir-it, breathe in us as we pray.

COMMUNION HYMN *Mothering God, You Gave Me Birth* (ELW 735)



- 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.

***POST-COMMUNION BLESSING**

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

***BLESSING OF COMMUNION OUTREACH**

Gracious God, loving all your family with a mother's tender care: As you sent the angel to feed Elijah with heavenly bread, assist us in this ministry on which we are sent forth. Bless those who carry your heavenly food to those unable to be with us this day. In your love and care, nourish and strengthen those to whom we bring this sacrament, that through the body and blood of your Son we all may know the comfort of your abiding presence. **Amen.**

***POST-COMMUNION PRAYER**

Fed and nourished at your table, open our hearts to your promises, and give us courage to ask what our neighbors need and how we might serve you and touch the world with your love. **Amen.**

SENDING

God blesses us and sends us in mission to the world.

***BLESSING**

God, the giver of love, † Christ, the resurrection and the life, and the Holy Spirit of rebirth bless you in this Lenten journey. **Amen.**

***SENDING SONG *I Love to Tell the Story* (ELW 661)**



1 I love to tell the sto - ry of un - seen things a - bove,
 2 I love to tell the sto - ry: how pleas - ant to re - peat
 3 I love to tell the sto - ry, for those who know it best



of Je - sus and his glo - ry, of Je - sus and his love.
 what seems, each time I tell it, more won - der - ful - ly sweet!
 seem hun - ger - ing and thirst - ing to hear it like the rest.



I love to tell the sto - ry, be - cause I know it's true;
 I love to tell the sto - ry, for some have nev - er heard
 And when, in scenes of glo - ry, I sing the new, new song,



it sat - is - fies my long - ings as noth - ing else would do.
 the mes - sage of sal - va - tion from God's own ho - ly word.
 I'll sing the old, old sto - ry that I have loved so long.

Refrain



I love to tell the sto - ry; 'twill be my theme in glo - ry



to tell the old, old sto - ry of Je - sus and his love.

***DISMISSAL**

“Jesus said to them again, ‘Peace be with you. As the Father has sent me, so I send you.’”
 (John 20:21)

Go in peace. Serve in love.

Thanks be to God.

POSTLUDE

Assisting in worship today:

Assisting Minister: Dave Knauff

Acolyte: Abigail Cardinal

Ushers: John Tully

Greeter: Denise Hager

Offering: Anna Kramer and Nathan Kramer

Young Reader:

Attendance last week: 58 + 3 zoom

Notes for the day's texts:

What is it about the night that invites questions? As our head rests on the pillow and shadows stretch out on the bedroom wall, questions, like field mice, begin to emerge from the nooks and crannies of our mind. At first, the questions are utilitarian: Did someone let the dog out this evening? Are the kids' lunches packed for school? When am I going to get to the grocery store this week? And then, without warning, the questions morph: Is Grandma going to recover from this illness? Why are my prayers so short these days? Does Jesus really care about us—about me? At this point we know that night has truly descended. Truth uttered in darkness. Naked honesty feels much safer, much less exposed when light's reach seems a day way.

Maybe that is why we can relate to Nicodemus. For when did Nicodemus come to Jesus? By night! Though we can easily skip over the setting's description in this gospel encounter, it is so very important. With shadows dancing in the torchlight, Nicodemus makes his way to Jesus, beset by questions he can ask only under cover of darkness. Though the darkness is Nicodemus' security blanket, he cannot help himself. Like a moth fluttering in the night sky, Nicodemus is irresistibly drawn to the light. Not just any light: Jesus, the light of the world, the light no darkness can overcome. As people filled with our own questions, we follow in the furtive footsteps of Nicodemus, falsely believing our naked honesty will remain hidden in the gloom of night. But the Spirit, through the light of Christ, calls us out from the shadows, and in fact, exposes us to the brilliance of God's love—a love that meets our questioning hearts with nothing less than life eternal.

Today's Music

God Loved the World. Text: Gesangbuch, Bollhagen, 1791; tr. August Crull, 1846–1923, alt., Music: Edward Miller, 1731–1807, adapt. Public Domain.

We Are Baptized in Christ Jesus. Text: John C. Ylvisaker, b. 1937, Music: John C. Ylvisaker. John Ylvisaker.

Tree of Life and Awesome Mystery. Text: Marty Haugen, b. 1950, Music: Marty Haugen. GIA Publications, Inc.

O Living Breath of God. Text: Osvaldo Catena, 1920–1986; tr. Gerhard M. Cartford, b. 1923

Music: Swedish folk tune. Editorial Bonum / Augsburg Fortress.

Mothering God, You Gave Me birth. Text: Jean Janzen, b. 1933; based on Julian of Norwich, c. 1342-c. 1413,

Music: Carolyn Jennings, b. 1936. Augsburg Fortress.

I Love to Tell the Story. Text: Katherine Hankey, 1834-1911, Music: William E. Fischer, 1849-1936.

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