

First Lutheran Church ELCA



The Second Sunday in Lent

Sunday ☩ March 23, 2025 ☩ 10:30 am

The Season of Lent

These forty days called Lent are like no other. It is our opportune time to return to the God who rescues, to receive the gifts of God's grace, to believe with the heart and confess with the mouth the wonder of God's love in Jesus, and to resist temptation at every turn. This is no small pilgrimage on which we have just embarked. It is a struggle Jesus knew. It is a struggle Jesus shares. The nearness of the Lord, in bread and wine, water and word, will uphold and sustain us.

Gathering

PRELUDE

Contemplation

Alexandre Guilmant

OPENING HYMN

"Jesus, Keep Me Near the Cross"

ELW 335

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.

Refrain

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.

CONFESSION AND FORGIVENESS

All may make the sign of the cross, the sign that is marked at baptism.

Almighty God, to whom all hearts are open, all desires known, and from whom no secrets are hid: cleanse the thoughts of our hearts by the inspiration of your Holy Spirit, that we may perfectly love you and worthily magnify your holy name, through Jesus Christ our Lord.

Amen.

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.

God, who is rich in mercy, loved us even when we were dead in sin, and made us alive together with Christ. By grace you have been saved. In the name of ✝ Jesus Christ, your sins are forgiven. Almighty God strengthen you with power through the Holy Spirit, that Christ may live in your hearts through faith. Amen.

GREETING

The peace of our Lord Jesus Christ, the love of God,
and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit be with you all.
And also with you.

PRAYER OF THE DAY

Let us pray together:

Eternal God, your kingdom has broken into our troubled world through the life, death, and resurrection of your Son. Help us to hear your word and obey it, and bring your saving love to fruition in our lives, through Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever.
Amen.

WELCOME! ANNOUNCEMENTS & OPPORTUNITIES

God's Word for Us

FIRST READING

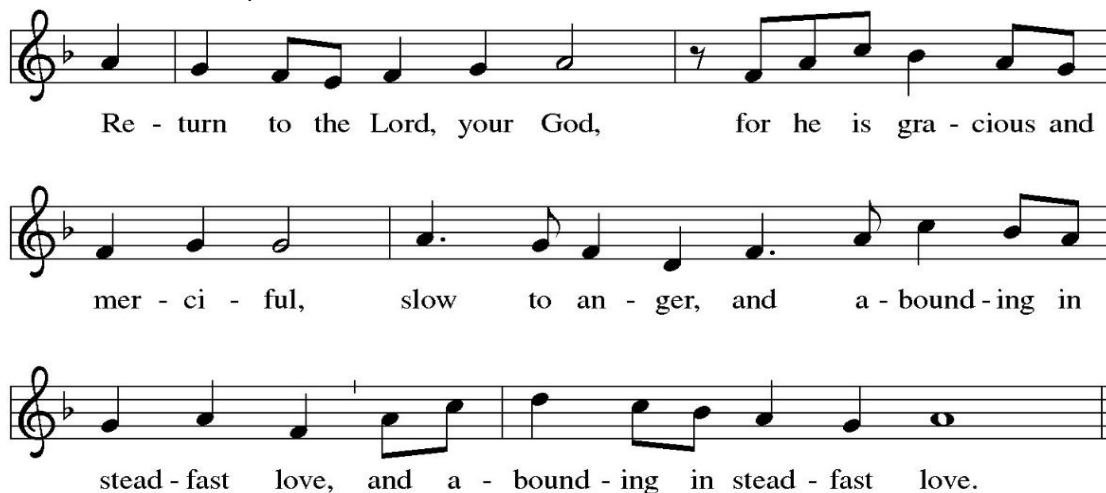
Psalm 63:1-8

- ¹O God, you are my God; eagerly I seek you;
my soul thirsts for you, my flesh faints for you,
as in a dry and weary land where there is no water.
- ²**Therefore I have gazed upon you in your holy place,
that I might behold your power and your glory.**
- ³For your steadfast love is better than life itself;
my lips shall give you praise.
- ⁴**So will I bless you as long as I live
and lift up my hands in your name.**
- ⁵My spirit is content, as with the richest of foods,
and my mouth praises you with joyful lips,
- ⁶**when I remember you upon my bed,
and meditate on you in the night watches.**
- ⁷For you have been my helper,
and under the shadow of your wings I will rejoice.
- ⁸**My whole being clings to you;
your right hand holds me fast.**

Word of God. Word of Life. **Thanks be to God.**

GOSPEL ACCLAMATION

We stand to hear the Gospel



Re - turn to the Lord, your God, for he is gra - cious and
mer - ci - ful, slow to an - ger, and a - bound - ing in
stead - fast love, and a - bound - ing in stead - fast love.

HOLY GOSPEL

Luke 13:1-9

Asked about current tragic events, Jesus turns a lesson about whether suffering is deserved into a hard call to obedience. He then tells a parable that holds out hope that the timeline for ultimate judgment will be tempered by patience.

The Gospel according to Luke. **Glory to you, O Lord.**

¹ At that very time there were some present who told him about the Galileans whose blood Pilate had mingled with their sacrifices.² [Jesus] asked them, “Do you think that because these Galileans suffered in this way they were worse sinners than all other Galileans?³ No, I tell you; but unless you repent, you will all perish as they did. ⁴Or those eighteen who were killed when the tower of Siloam fell on them — do you think that they were worse offenders than all the others living in Jerusalem? ⁵No, I tell you; but unless you repent, you will all perish just as they did.”

⁶Then he told this parable: “A man had a fig tree planted in his vineyard; and he came looking for fruit on it and found none. ⁷So he said to the gardener, ‘See here! For three years I have come looking for fruit on this fig tree, and still I find none. Cut it down! Why should it be wasting the soil?’ ⁸He replied, ‘Sir, let it alone for one more year, until I dig around it and put manure on it. ⁹If it bears fruit next year, well and good; but if not, you can cut it down.’”

The Gospel of our Lord. **Praise to you, O Christ.**

SERMON TEXT

Isaiah 55:1-9

To those who have experienced long years in exile, the return to their homeland is a celebration of abundant life. God calls them into an everlasting covenant of love. Those who return to God will enjoy new life and forgiveness, because God's ways are not our ways.

¹ Ho, everyone who thirsts, come to the waters; and you that have no money, come, buy and eat! Come, buy wine and milk without money and without price. ² Why do you spend your money for that which is not bread, and your labor for that which does not satisfy?

Listen carefully to me, and eat what is good, and delight yourselves in rich food.

³ Incline your ear, and come to me; listen, so that you may live. I will make with you an everlasting covenant, my steadfast, sure love for David.

⁴ See, I made him a witness to the peoples, a leader and commander for the peoples.

⁵ See, you shall call nations that you do not know, and nations that do not know you shall run to you, because of the LORD your God, the Holy One of Israel, for the LORD has glorified you.

⁶ Seek the LORD while he may be found, call upon him while he is near; ⁷ let the wicked forsake their way, and the unrighteous their thoughts; let them return to the LORD, that the LORD may have mercy on them, and to our God, for God will abundantly pardon.

⁸ For my thoughts are not your thoughts, nor are your ways my ways, says the LORD. ⁹ For as the heavens are higher than the earth, so are my ways higher than your ways and my thoughts than your thoughts.

Word of God. Word of Life. **Thanks be to God.**

SERMON

Silence for reflection follows the sermon.

HYMN OF THE DAY “The gifts of God are free”

**The gifts of God are free — the water, milk and wine;
the feast of God's community is set for all to dine.**

**O God, we tend to see a world of limits here;
we share your gifts reluctantly
and hoard them out of fear.**

**And yet you give your grace like food from heaven above;
your church becomes a welcome place,
a banquet of your love.**

**There's joy, and joy to spare; there's bread that satisfies;
you call us now to seek and share
your love that changes lives.**

ST. THOMAS 6.6.8.6 ("Remember and Rejoice")
Biblical Reference: Isaiah 55:1-9
Text: Copyright © 2019 by Carolyn Winfrey Gillette.

APOSTLES' CREED

Let us confess our faith in the words of the 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 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

Following each prayer, we respond...

**God, in your mercy,
receive our prayer.**

Welcome to God's table

SHARING OF THE PEACE

Greet one another with a gesture of peace.

**The peace of the Lord be with you always.
And also with you.**

OFFERING OF MUSIC

"Lamb Most Holy"

Mozart/arr. Ehret

CELEBRATION TIME!

OFFERTORY SONG

"Loaves were broken"

ACS 966 (verse 1)

Offerings are shared in the basket at the entry before or after worship.

Thanks to those who give on a regular basis through "direct deposit" giving.

Loaves were broken, words were spoken by the Galilean shore.
Jesus, Bread of life from heaven, was their food forevermore.
By your body broken for us, by your wine of life outpoured,
Jesus, feed again your people. Be our Host, our Life, our Lord.

OFFERTORY PRAYER

Let us pray.

God of grace,

bless what we offer to your service:

our gifts, our abilities, and our hearts.

May our lives overflow with gratitude and generosity,
now and always.

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.

You call your people to cleanse their hearts,
that renewed in the gift of baptism,
we may come to the fullness of your grace.

And so we praise your name,
and join their unending hymn:

Holy, Holy, Holy

setting eight, page 191



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

Communion Prayers / Words of Institution

Blessed are you, O God of the universe,
Your mercy is everlasting
and your faithfulness endures from age to age.

In the night in which he was 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 is risen.
Christ will come again.

Lord's Prayer

Gathered into one by the Holy Spirit, let us pray as Jesus taught us.
Our Father...

Invitation to the Table

These are the gifts of God, for the people of God!
All are welcome to God's table!

Communion

All are invited to receive these gifts of God. Children are welcome to receive communion or a blessing. Communion is served by intinction. Dip the bread in either the wine or the grape juice. Gluten-wafers are available, simply ask your server. If you prefer to remain in your pew, the pastor will come and serve you there. All are welcome at God's table!

Music during Communion

"Lamb of God"

ELW page 191



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, grant us peace, Lamb of God.

"Blest Be the Tie That Binds"

ELW 656



- 1 Blest be the tie that binds our hearts in Chris-tian love;
- 2 Be - fore our Fa - ther's throne we pour our ar - dent prayers;
- 3 We share our mu - tual woes, our mu - tual bur - dens bear,
- 4 From sor - row, toil, and pain, and sin we shall be free;



the u - ni - ty of heart and mind is like to that a - bove.
our fears, our hopes, our aims are one, our com - forts and our cares.
and of - ten for each oth - er flows the sym - pa - thiz - ing tear.
and per - fect love and friend - ship reign through all e - ter - ni - ty.

BLESSING AND PRAYER

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

Let us pray.

Nourishing God,
at this table you have refreshed us
with holy gifts of food and drink.
Strengthen us for service,
and send us out to embody your good news
of liberation and healing for the sake of the world.
In the name of Christ we pray,
Amen.

Sending

BLESSING

The Lord bless you and keep you,
The Lord's face shine on you with grace and mercy.
The Lord look upon you with favor and ✝ give you peace.
Amen.

SENDING HYMN

"Light Dawns on a Weary World"

ELW 726



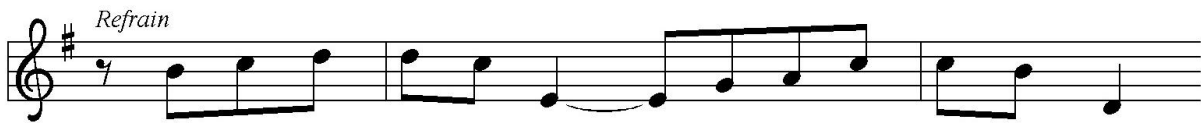
1 Light dawns on a wea - ry world when eyes be - gin to
 2 Love grows in a wea - ry world when hun - gry hearts find
 3 Hope blooms in a wea - ry world when crea-tures, once for -



see all peo - ple's dig - ni - ty. Light dawns on a
 bread and chil - dren's dreams are fed. Love grows in a
 lorn, find wil - der - ness re - born. Hope blooms in a



wea - ry world: the prom-ised day of jus - tice comes.
 wea - ry world: the prom-ised feast of plen - ty comes.
 wea - ry world: the prom-ised green of E - den comes.



The trees shall clap their hands; the dry lands, gush with springs;



the hills and moun-tains shall break forth with sing - ing!



We shall go out in joy, and be led forth in peace,



as all the world in won-der ech - oes sha - lom.

Go in peace. Serve the Lord.
Thanks be to God.

POSTLUDE

"Sinfonia in B Flat"

G.F. Handel

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SERVING TODAY

Pastor David Halaas	<i>presider</i>
Dan Moore	<i>assisting minister</i>
Yvonne Hazlett	<i>organist, choir director</i>
Cindy Lippke	<i>reader</i>
Julie Thiele	<i>sacristan</i>
David Gross	<i>communion minister</i>
Denise Powell	<i>usher</i>
Enola Peters, Nadine Holst	<i>greeters</i>
Ben and Ellie Hertenstein	<i>sound and media technicians</i>
Lori McClaren and Doug Webb	<i>coffee fellowship</i>
Craig and Sandie LaMaster	<i>radio broadcast and livestream</i>

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Welcome to worship at First Lutheran Church!

Holy Communion will be served today by intinction... dip the bread in either the wine or the grape juice. Gluten-wafers are available, simply ask your server. Children are welcome to receive Communion, or a blessing. If you prefer to remain in your pew, the pastor will come and serve you there. All are welcome at God's table!

Discover the First Lutheran radio broadcast – every Sunday at 11:00 a.m. on iHeart radio 620 am

Worship is also available at any time on our Facebook livestream page
<https://www.facebook.com/firstlutheransiouxcity/>

This week at First Lutheran

Monday, March 24

7:00 pm Handbells, choir room

Wednesday, March 26

9:00-11:30 am Holy Family Food Pantry, volunteers: Chris Taylor, Mary McCoy

12:30 pm Lenten Worship/Lutherans Together – at Senior Center, 4th & Hamilton

6:30 pm Lenten Worship/Lutherans Together – at Senior Center, 4th & Hamilton

8:00 pm Choir, choir room

Thursday, March 27

1:00 pm Bible Study – Pastor Halaas leads a ‘read-through’ of the Book of Acts

Today!

First Lutheran people gathering for fun, fellowship, and food at The Wheelhouse Bar and Grill (4501 Southern Hills Drive), at 5:30pm. We will meet at 5:00pm to carpool from church or you can meet everyone there. All are welcome!

Lenten Tree Project

The Congregational Life committee invites you to participate in collecting items in support of Sleep in Heavenly Peace during this Lenten season. Please see the directions located near the tree and return items by the end of March. (Take an egg... and return the egg to the tree!) We are also planning to have another “Bed Building Event” in the spring. Watch for details!

New Office Hours: Tuesday, Wednesday and Thursday from 9am to 2pm.

Prayer concerns and pastoral care: There are several ways for you to share your prayer concerns and needs when ill, homebound, or celebrating. Please communicate your wishes and expectations by phone, text, or email.

Coming soon: **Sunday School!** – and – a new **FIRST WORD** newsletter!
...and on Sunday, April 6th: following worship, a “Q & A” session
about the process of ‘call committee’ and ‘transition’



Evangelical Lutheran Church in America

God's work. Our hands.