



First Lutheran Church

MARCH 1, 2026

2 LENT

During Lent we journey with all those around the world who will be baptized at the Easter Vigil. In today's gospel Jesus tells Nicodemus that he must be born of water and Spirit. At the font we are given a new birth as children of God. As God made a covenant with Abraham, in baptism God promises to raise us up with Christ to new life. From worship we are sent forth to proclaim God's love for all the world.

WELCOME AND ANNOUNCEMENTS

PRELUDE

OUIMETTE

Dptych on We Are Baptized in Christ Jesus

I. Cheerfully; with childlike simplicity

II. Strings

Michael Burkhardt

Benjamin M. Cully

GATHERING

The assembly stands.

CONFESSION AND FORGIVENESS

P: Blessed be the holy Trinity, + one God, who forgives all our sin,
whose mercy endures forever.

C: Amen.

P: Let us confess our sin before God, who removes our guilt
and blots out all offenses.

Silence is kept for reflection.

P: Gracious God,

C: have mercy on us according to your steadfast love.

P: For seeking worldly delights that deceive us and dishonor you:
Gracious God,

C: have mercy on us according to your steadfast love.

P: For desiring self-reliance instead of hungering for your word:
Gracious God,

C: have mercy on us according to your steadfast love.

P: For failing to recognize your coming reign, and for hindering the work
of the Spirit: Gracious God,

C: have mercy on us according to your steadfast love.

P: For drawing from the well of self-serving ambition,
and for disdaining the living water Christ offers: Gracious God,

C: have mercy on us according to your steadfast love.

P: For distrusting signs of your healing and hope in the world: Gracious God,
C: have mercy on us according to your steadfast love.
P: For dwelling in tombs of self-pity and discontent, and for disregarding Christ's
call to come forth to life: Gracious God,
C: have mercy on us according to your steadfast love.
P: God's steadfast love, grace, and forgiveness abound.
Through faith, the free gift of God,
you have been clothed in the righteousness of Christ.
In the name of + Jesus Christ, your sins are forgiven.
The Spirit of the One who raised Christ from the dead
dwells in you, pours God's love into your hearts, and gives you life and peace.
C: Amen.

GATHERING SONG

We Are Baptized in Christ Jesus

ELW # 451



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.

GREETING

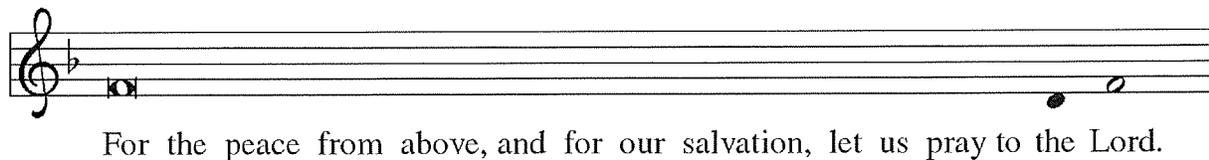
P: The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, the love of God,
and the communion of the Holy Spirit be with you all.

C: **And also with you.**

KYRIE



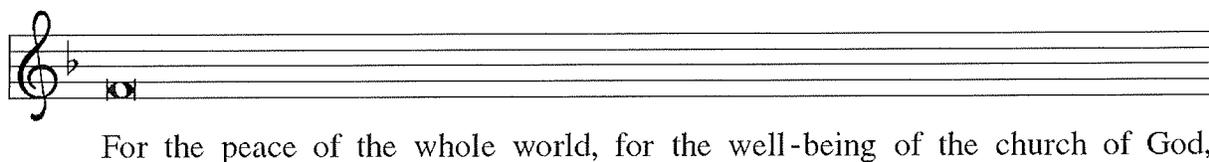
In peace, let us pray to the Lord. Lord, have mer - cy.



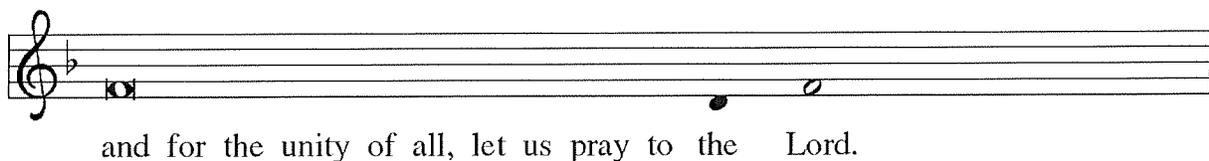
For the peace from above, and for our salvation, let us pray to the Lord.



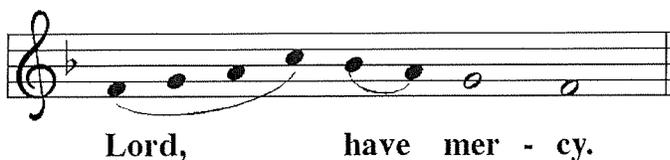
Lord, have mer - cy.



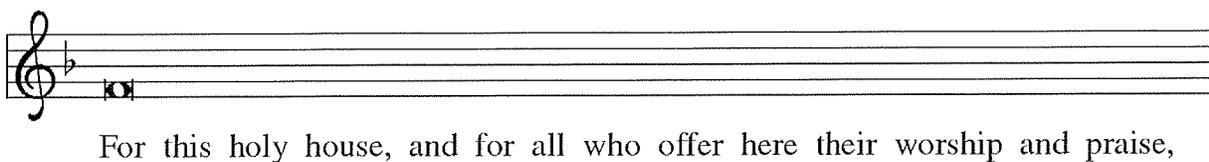
For the peace of the whole world, for the well-being of the church of God,



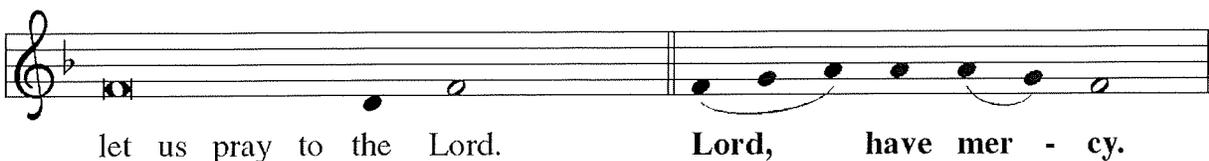
and for the unity of all, let us pray to the Lord.



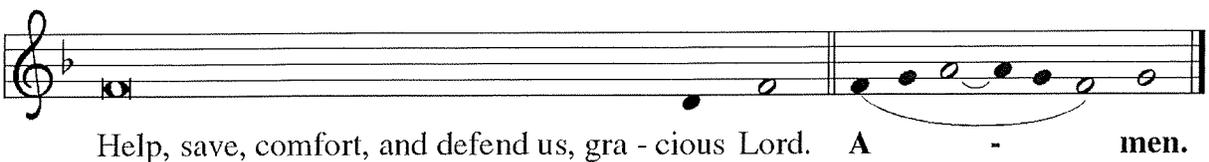
Lord, have mer - cy.



For this holy house, and for all who offer here their worship and praise,



let us pray to the Lord. Lord, have mer - cy.



Help, save, comfort, and defend us, gra - cious Lord. A - men.

PRAYER OF THE DAY

P: 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.

C: Amen.

The assembly is seated.

+ + CHILDREN MAY ATTEND SUNDAY SCHOOL

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.

R: A reading from Genesis, the twelfth chapter.

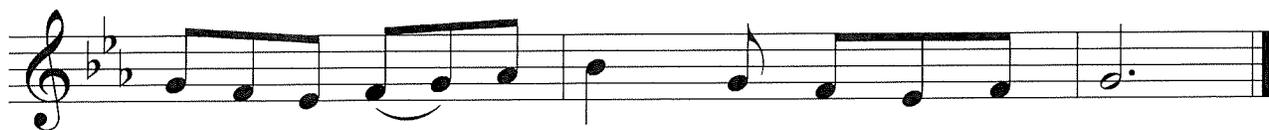
¹ The LORD said to Abram, "Go from your country and your kindred and your father's house to the land that I will show you. ² I will make of you a great nation, and I will bless you and make your name great, so that you will be a blessing. ³ I will bless those who bless you, and the one who curses you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

R: The word of the Lord.

C: Thanks be to God.

PSALM

PSALM 32



Mer-cy em-brac - es those who trust in the LORD.

The cantor will sing the verses.

- ¹ Happy are they whose transgressions ¹ are forgiven,
and whose sin is ¹ put away!
- ² Happy are they to whom the LORD im- ¹ putes no guilt,
and in whose spirit there ¹ is no guile!
- ³ While I held my tongue, my bones with- ¹ ered away,

because of my groaning | all day long.

⁴ For your hand was heavy upon me | day and night;
my moisture was dried up as in the | heat of summer. **Refrain**

⁵ Then I acknowledged my sin to you, and did not con- | ceal my guilt.

I said, "I will confess my transgressions to the LORD."

Then you forgave me the guilt | of my sin.

⁶ Therefore all the faithful will make their prayers to you in | time of trouble;
when the great waters overflow, they | shall not reach them.

⁷ You are my hiding-place; you preserve | me from trouble;
you surround me with shouts | of deliverance.

⁸ "I will instruct you and teach you in the way that | you should go;
I will guide you | with my eye. **Refrain**

⁹ Do not be like horse or mule, which have no | understanding;
who must be fitted with bit and bridle, or else they will | not stay near you."

¹⁰ Great are the tribulations | of the wicked;
but mercy embraces those who trust | in the LORD.

¹¹ Be glad, you righteous, and rejoice | in the LORD;
shout for joy, all who are | true of heart. **Refrain**

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.

R: A reading from Romans, the fourth chapter.

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.

R: *The word of the Lord.*

C: **Thanks be to God.**

The assembly stands.

GOSPEL ACCLAMATION

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.

GOSPEL

JOHN 3:1-17

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.

P: *The Holy Gospel according to John.*

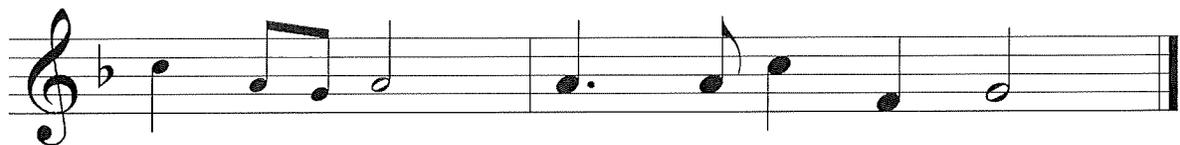
Glo - ry to you, O Lord.

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.”

P: The Gospel of the Lord.



Praise to you, O Christ.

The assembly is seated.

SERMON

REVEREND JANET WITTENMYER

The assembly stands.

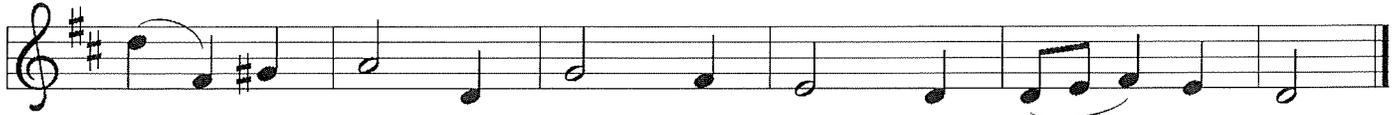
HYMN OF THE DAY



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!

Text: *Gesangbuch*, Bollhagen, 1791; tr: August Crull, 1846–1923, alt.
Music: ROCKINGHAM OLD, Edward Miller, 1731–1807, adapt.

APOSTLES' CREED

P: Living together in trust and hope, we profess our faith
as expressed 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.**

The assembly kneels.

PRAYER OF INTERCESSION

P: Reconciled by God's mercy and sustained by God's presence,
let us pray for the world and its needs.

A brief silence.

L: Faithful One, you renew us by grace.
As you have inspired faith through the work of church artists
and hymnwriters throughout the ages,
give your church the means to praise your beauty today.

Each petition concludes.

P: Hear us, O God.

C: Your mercy is great.

P: Receive our prayers, O God, through Jesus Christ, our strength and salvation.

C: Amen.

The assembly is seated.

MEAL

OFFERING AND ORGAN MEDITATION

OLD 124TH

Hal H. Hopson

Eternal Lord of Love, Behold Your Church

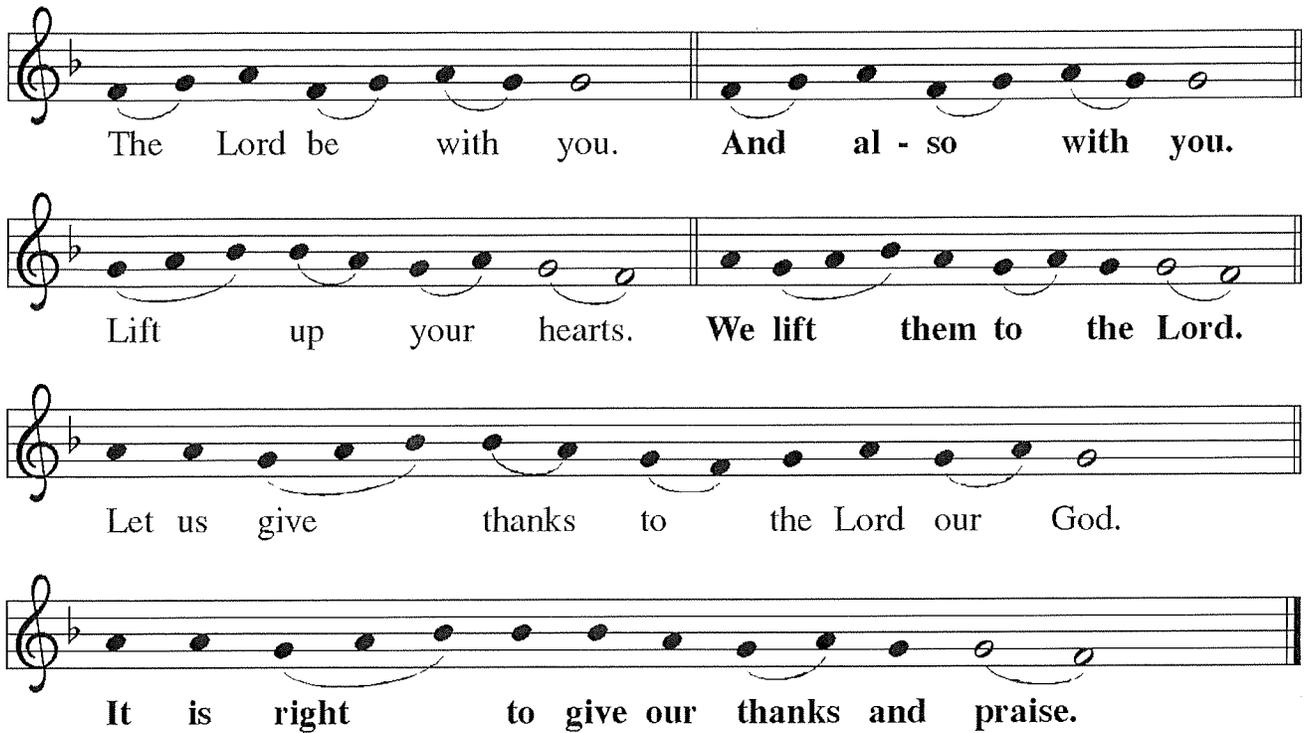
The assembly stands.

OFFERING PRAYER

L: O God, maker of heaven and earth,
your steadfast love embraces all creation.
You send rain and sunshine to nourish the earth and bring forth its bounty.
Through these gifts of bread and wine, draw us into the death
and life of your Son, who calls us to bear witness to his saving work.
We ask this in Jesus' name.

C: Amen.

GREAT THANKSGIVING



The Lord be with you. And al - so 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.

PREFACE

P: 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:

HOLY, HOLY, HOLY



Ho - ly, ho - ly, ho - ly Lord, God of pow'r and might,



heav-en and earth are 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 in the high - est.

THANKSGIVING AT THE TABLE

P: 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.

P: 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.

LORD'S PRAYER

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

C: **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.

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.

INVITATION TO COMMUNION

P: Taste and see that the Lord is good.

The assembly is seated.

COMMUNION IS DISTRIBUTED IN TWO MANNERS AT FIRST LUTHERAN

† *You may commune in your pews.*

Individual communion kits are available at the Narthex doors.

† *You may come to the Table, to receive the Body and Blood of Christ.*

COMMUNION MUSIC

SCHMÜCKE DICH, O LIEBE SEELE

Johann Sebastian Bach

Deck thyself, my soul, with gladness, BWV 654

The assembly stands.

TABLE BLESSING

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

C: Amen.

COMMUNION PRAYER

L: God of our salvation,
we give you thanks for this meal that restores our souls, reconciles us to you,
and strengthens us for the journey.

Through the body and blood of your Son,
may we become Christ's body in the world,
bearing witness to your love for all creation,
through Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord.

C: Amen.

CONGREGATIONAL PRAYER

C: Oh God,
your everlasting love for us is always trustworthy and sure.
We are grateful for the goodness you have shown us
through the years,
and we ask now for confidence to go forward into the future.
Bless our community of faith, bless our healing,
bless the changes that are before us, bless our pastoral leaders
who will shepherd us through this time of transition.
We thank you now for the wisdom you will show us
as we align with your will, and servant or servants
you are already preparing to send us in your blessed time.
Help us to keep looking to you to define our ministry and our future.
In his name and for the sake of Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord, Amen.

BLESSING

P: Receive the blessing of the holy Trinity:
God, who calls all things into existence,
Jesus Christ, who redeems us,
and the Holy Spirit, whose breath sustains creation,
bless you now and always.

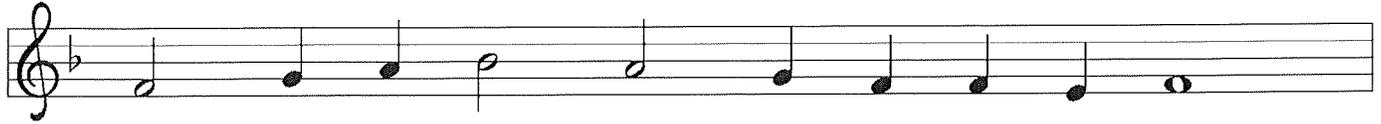


A - men, a - men, a - men.

SENDING SONG

Eternal Lord of Love, Behold Your Church

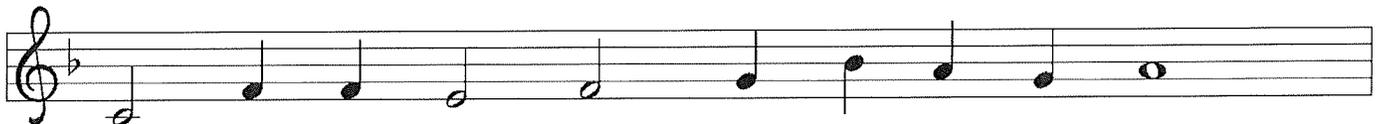
ELW # 321



1 E - ter - nal Lord of love, be - hold your church
2 So dai - ly dy - ing to the way of self,
3 If dead in you, so in you we a - rise,



walk - ing once more the pil - grim way of Lent,
so dai - ly liv - ing in your way of love,
you the first - born of all the faith - ful dead;



led by your cloud by day, by night your fire,
we walk the road, Lord Je - sus, that you trod,
and as through ston - y ground the green shoots break,



moved by your love and toward your pres - ence bent:
know - ing our - selves bap - tized in - to your death:
glo - rious in spring - time dress of leaf and flow'r,



far off yet here— the goal of all de - sire.
so we are dead and live with you in God.
so in - to life and glo - ry shall we wake.

DISMISSAL

POSTLUDE

L: Go in peace.
P: Believe the good news.
C: Thanks be to God.

OLD 124TH *Healey William*
Ten Hymn Preludes, Set II

Events in Review

<u>Sunday</u>		Mar 1
10:00AM	Church Service	
<u>Monday</u>		Mar 2
10:00AM	NO Bible Study at Willows	
5:15PM	NO Bell Choir Practice	
<u>Tuesday</u>		Mar 3
6:00PM	Worship & Music Meeting	
<u>Wednesday</u>		Mar 4
8:00 AM	Life Screening	
5:45 PM	Lent Supper	
7:00 PM	Lent Service	
<u>Thursday</u>		Mar 5
<u>Friday</u>		Mar 6
<u>Saturday</u>		Mar 7

Next Week

<u>Sunday</u>		Mar 8
10:00AM	Church Service	
<u>Monday</u>		Mar 9
10:00AM	NO Bible Study at Willows	
5:15PM	Bell Choir Practice	
<u>Tuesday</u>		Mar 10
<u>Wednesday</u>		Mar 11
9:00 AM	Piece Corp	
5:45 PM	Lent Supper	
6:00 PM	Property Meeting	
7:00 PM	Lent Service	
<u>Thursday</u>		Mar 12
<u>Friday</u>		Mar 13
<u>Saturday</u>		Mar 14



If you have a prayer request for today, please raise your hand during announcements and a host will give you a green card to fill out.

Sign up sheet for Lent Wednesday's Soup, Bread or Rolls & Desserts is on the table in the hallway.

*The
Season
of
Lent*



And Daffodiles

Order Forms are available on the hallway table.

They are \$15.00 a piece

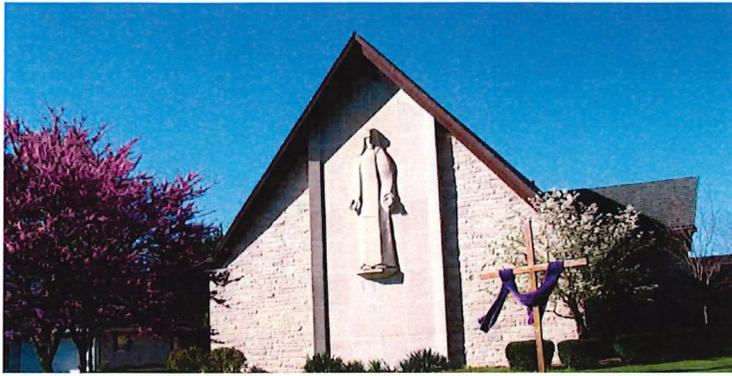
Orders are due by March 29th

(Palm Sunday)

Cookie Sign up sheets are located on the Information Board in the hallway. The time is before and after Church Service. Approximately 4 dozen cookies are needed each week.



Contact Us



First Lutheran Church

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419-447-1323

www.firstlutherantiffin.com
firstlutherantiffin@gmail.com

Interim Pastor

Pastor Mark Schuring

(740) 360-2306

theskipster55@gmail.com

Our Worship Leaders

Altar Guild:	Sandy & Ron Mellott
Cantor:	Elijah Shiley
Facebook Camera	The Rosses
Host	Janet Zirger
Reader:	Melissa Chester
Worship Assistant	Melissa Chester
Director of Music:	Curtis L. King
Minister:	Rev. Janet Wittenmyer

Emergency Pastors

Pastor Mark Schuring

(740) 360-2306

Mike Porter

(585) 813-5009

Pastor Philip Scherr

(814) 756-9435

Our Mission Statement

“God is among us!”

“We are called to go out, care for all, share the gospel, forgive, reconcile and trust God for all that we need.”

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March 1, 2026