

"Mary took a pound of costly perfume made of pure nard, anointed Jesus' feet, and wiped them with her hair."

~John 12:3

St. John Evangelical Lutheran Church Fifth Sunday in Lent – April 6, 2025 420 Beaver St., PO Box 411 Mars, PA 16046-0411 www.stjohnchurchmars.org

Phone: 724-625-1830 email: office@stjohnchurchmars.org

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 worshiping at St. John, 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. Envelopes are available in the pews if you prefer. Online gifts may be made using the QR code below:



You may also offer updates to our ongoing prayer list using the yellow cards in the pews and placing them in the offering plates. **Visitor information cards** and member attendance cards (attached to the front of the bulletin) may also be placed in the offering plates.

As Lutherans, we believe Christ is truly present in the elements of the Lord's Supper. At the time of **Holy Communion**, all baptized individuals are welcome to come forward via the center aisle, receive the elements, and return via the side aisles. We begin at the front of the right side, commune all on the right side, then we will invite the left side forward. When you come forward, you may receive the bread from the pastor (gluten free wafers are available), then pre-filled cups with wine or grape juice from the assisting minister. You may consume the elements after receiving them then place the empty cup in the tray held by the acolyte. Those who do not receive Holy Communion are welcome to come forward for a blessing.

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.

A playroom is available downstairs for children who need a break from the worship service.

This room is by the elevator on the lower level. An adult must remain with the child.

Children are also welcome to utilize the books and puzzles available in the Greeting Area on the top level by 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 intercession.

PRELUDE and ANNOUNCEMENTS

GATHERING

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

*CALL TO WORSHIP

Jesus went to the mountaintop to pray.

Jesus went into the city to heal.

Jesus walked to Samaria to extend love.

Jesus went to the water's edge to teach.

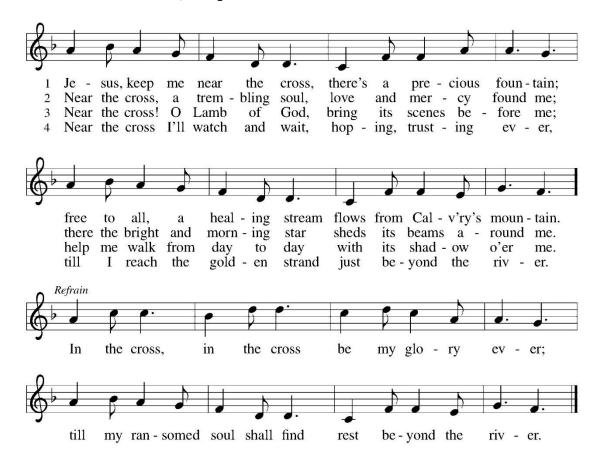
Jesus went to places of peace and connection,

but Jesus also went to the wilderness.

There is nowhere we can go that God does not walk with us.

We are in God's house. Let us worship God.

*GATHERING SONG Jesus, Keep Me Near the Cross (ELW 335)



* CONFESSION AND FORGIVENESS

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

We come to confession not to wallow in our own guilt. God wants a life for us so expansive that faith, joy, and hope flow over the edges. So, we come to confession not because we have to suffer our way through Lent, but because we know that change starts with being honest. There is healing here. There is life to be gained here. Let us speak truth into our lives, asking for God's help where we need it, trusting in God's abundant, overflowing grace.

Holy God,

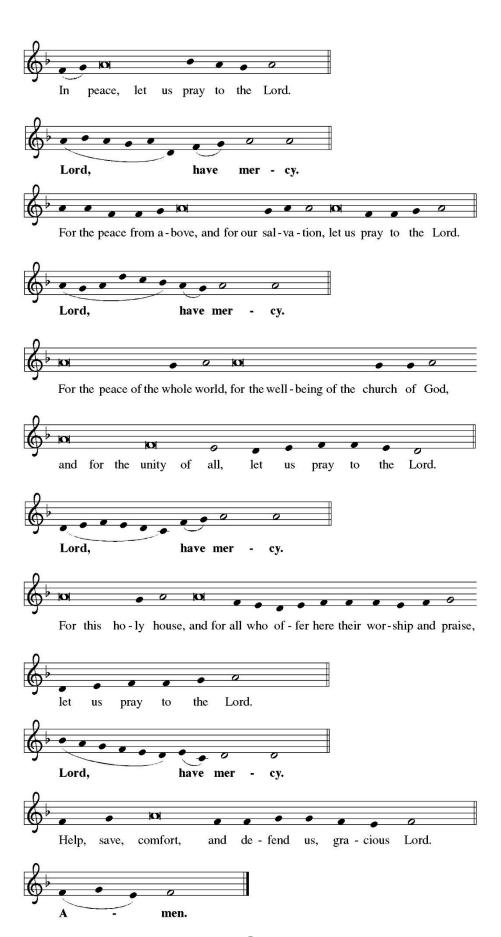
We confess: we do not turn to you fully. Instead of trusting that we are made good, instead of trusting that we are loved simply because we are yours, we stockpile our value in earthly things – in trophies and awards, in likes and follows, in wealth and power. We share with you only the pieces of our lives that are convenient. We forget that we are called, invited, and loved with all that we are – including our mess, our beauty, our faith, and our doubt. Forgive us. Teach us a new way. Teach us your way. Teach us to love as you love. Give us hearts that long to turn fully to you. Amen.

Family of faith, God sees you. God hears you. God loves you. No matter how many times we mess up, no matter how far we wander, no matter how lost we feel, God's grace is full to the brim. It overflows in desert places. It finds us where we are and it covers us in mercy. For even when we stumble, even when we take the easy way out, even in our fear or shame, even when we sin, we belong to God. Siblings in Christ, know this: in the name of Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord, you are freed, forgiven, and claimed with all that you are.

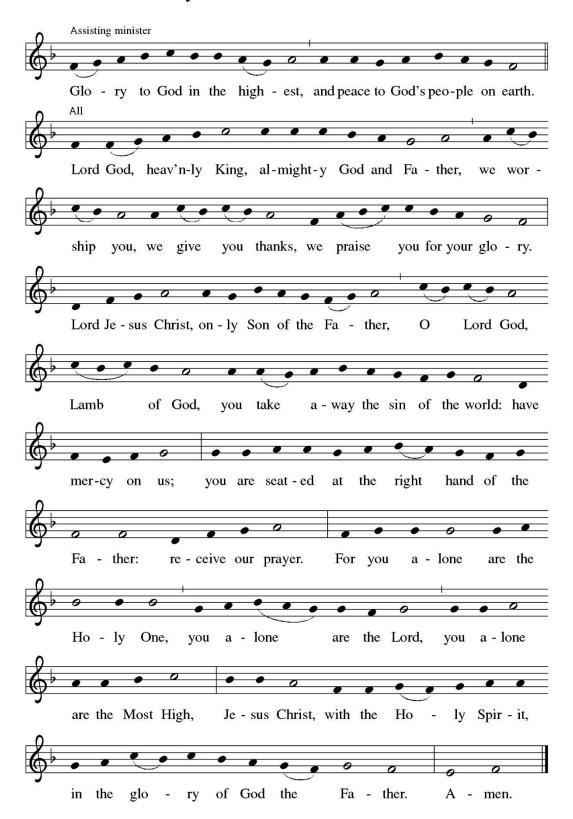
Now say it with me:

God loves us, chooses us, and wraps us in grace. We are claimed. We are drenched in mercy. We are forgiven. Thanks be to God. Amen.

*KYRIE



*CANTICLE OF PRAISE Glory To God



*PRAYER OF THE DAY

Let us pray,

Creator God, you prepare a new way in the wilderness, and your grace waters our desert. Open our hearts to be transformed by the new thing you are doing, that our lives may proclaim the extravagance of your love given to all 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.

FIRST READING: Isaiah 43:16-21

A reading from Isaiah.

Thus says the LORD,
who makes a way in the sea,
a path in the mighty waters,
who brings out chariot and horse,
army and warrior;
they lie down, they cannot rise,
they are extinguished, quenched like a wick:
Do not remember the former things,
or consider the things of old.
I am about to do a new thing;
now it springs forth, do you not perceive it?

I will make a way in the wilderness and rivers in the desert.

²⁰ The wild animals will honor me, the jackals and the ostriches;

for I give water in the wilderness,

rivers in the desert,

to give drink to my chosen people,

²¹ the people whom I formed for myself so that they might declare my praise.

The word of the Lord.

Thanks be to God.

PSALM: Psalm 126

- When the LORD restored the fortunes of Zion, then were we like those who dream.
- ² Then was our mouth filled with laughter, and our tongue with shouts of joy. Then they said among the nations, "The LORD has done great things for them."
- ³ The LORD has done great things for us, and we are glad indeed.
- ⁴ Restore our fortunes, O LORD, like the watercourses of the Negeb.
- ⁵ Those who sowed with tears will reap with songs of joy.
- ⁶ Those who go out weeping, carrying the seed, will come again with joy, shouldering their sheaves.

SECOND READING: Philippians 3:4b-14

A reading from Philippians.

[Paul writes:] ^{4b} If anyone else has reason to be confident in the flesh, I have more: ⁵ circumcised on the eighth day, a member of the people of Israel, of the tribe of Benjamin, a Hebrew born of Hebrews; as to the law, a Pharisee; ⁶ as to zeal, a persecutor of the church; as to righteousness under the law, blameless.

⁷ Yet whatever gains I had, these I have come to regard as loss because of Christ. ⁸ More than that, I regard everything as loss because of the surpassing value of knowing Christ Jesus my Lord. For his sake I have suffered the loss of all things, and I regard them as rubbish, in order that I may gain Christ ⁹ and be found in him, not having a righteousness of my own that comes from the law, but one that comes through faith in Christ, the righteousness from God based on faith. ¹⁰ I want to know Christ and the power of his resurrection and the sharing of his sufferings by becoming like him in his death, ¹¹ if somehow I may attain the resurrection from the dead.

¹² Not that I have already obtained this or have already reached the goal; but I press on to make it my own, because Christ Jesus has made me his own. ¹³ Beloved, I do not consider that I have made it my own; but this one thing I do: forgetting what lies behind and straining forward to what lies ahead, ¹⁴ I press on toward the goal for the prize of the heavenly call of God in Christ Jesus.

The word of the Lord.

Thanks be to God.

*GOSPEL ACCLAMATION



*GOSPEL READING: John 12:1-8 The holy gospel according to John.

Glory to you, O Lord.

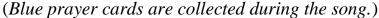
¹ Six days before the Passover Jesus came to Bethany, the home of Lazarus, whom he had raised from the dead. ² There they gave a dinner for him. Martha served, and Lazarus was one of those at the table with him. ³ Mary took a pound of costly perfume made of pure nard, anointed Jesus' feet, and wiped them with her hair. The house was filled with the fragrance of the perfume. ⁴ But Judas Iscariot, one of his disciples (the one who was about to betray him), said, ⁵ "Why was this perfume not sold for three hundred denarii and the money given to the poor?" ⁶ (He said this not because he cared about the poor, but because he was a thief; he kept the common purse and used to steal what was put into it.) ⁷ Jesus said, "Leave her alone. She bought it so that she might keep it for the day of my burial. ⁸ You always have the poor with you, but you do not always have me."

The gospel of the Lord. **Praise to you, O Christ**

CHILDREN'S SERMON

SERMON

*HYMN OF THE DAY Holy Woman, Grateful Giver (ACS 1002)





*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

Led by the Spirit, let us turn to God in prayer for the church, the world, and all those in need. *A brief silence*

The church declares your praise, O God. Guide us in the example of Isaiah's imagination, Paul's transformed identity, and Mary's faith and devotion; that our lives, too, may be poured out in love as we trust in your promises. God, in your mercy,

receive our prayer.

The earth declares your praise, O God. Make a way for the planet's future in the sea and the wilderness, the mountains and plains, the tundra and wetlands. Repair habitats and sustainable ecosystems on, above, and beneath the ground. God, in your mercy,

receive our prayer.

The nations declare your praise, O God. Where religious differences divide, bring together those who worship you in the name of Jesus Christ and those who call to you with different names. Guide interreligious dialogue, that faith may unite rather than divide communities. God, in your mercy,

receive our prayer.

The people declare your praise, O God. Restore those whose hope has been dampened through a health diagnosis, job or home loss, divorce, or death. Bring healing to those in need, especially Bob, Geneva, Cherry, Winnie, Henry, Harry, Ellen, Sally, Katie, Debi, Anne, Karen, Nan, Beverly, those on our prayer list, all whom we remember aloud or in our hearts and all who suffer in any way. May all who weep now sing songs of joy again. God, in your mercy,

receive our prayer.

The gifts of the Spirit declare your praise, O God. We thank you for artists who proclaim the gospel. Inspire music, poetry, and images that proclaim the new thing you are doing. God, in your mercy,

receive our prayer.

The communion of saints declares your praise, O God. Giving thanks for those who have died, we trust in the one who has made them his own: Christ Jesus, our crucified and risen Savior. God, in your mercy,

receive our prayer.

God of the wilderness, we give you thanks for your overflowing, abundant mercy and your steadfast presence. Receive the prayers of your people. (*blue prayer cards are read*) Draw all things together in your love, in the name of Jesus, who leads us from death to life.

Amen.

*SHARING THE PEACE

The peace of Christ be with you always.

And also with you.

Let us share Christ's peace with one another.

MEAL

God feeds us with the presence of Jesus Christ

OFFERING and OFFERTORY HYMN Take My Life, That I May Be (ELW 583)



*OFFERING PRAYER

Let us pray.

Gracious Provider, you set your immense treasures among us, opening your heart to the world. As we prepare to feast on your bountiful love, deepen our commitment to sharing those treasures with others, through our Savior, Jesus Christ. **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.

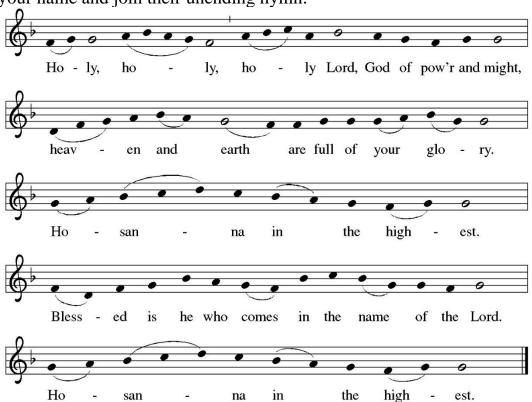
It is indeed right, our duty and our joy, that we should at all times and in all places give thanks and praise to you, almighty and merciful God, through our Savior Jesus Christ.

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 love never runs out, your hope never runs dry, your joy never gives up.

Even as your Son gathered with his friends for one more meal, as he prepared to give the full measure of his devotion and love to this broken world, just before his own friend betrayed him, 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.

God of Life, in a world that loves scarcity, your abundance is shocking. In a world that knows fear, your joy is compelling. In a world that knows anxiety, your peace is captivating. **We long for these things.**

So today we ask you:

When compassion fatigue rears her head, be with us.

When stress makes it hard to breathe, be with us.

When self-doubt pushes in close, be with us.

When exhaustion becomes our constant or when loneliness becomes our norm, **be with us.** Be with us, and show us the way to the life you long for us.

Show us a life of expansive faith.

Show us a life of overflowing joy.

Show us a life of absorbing beauty.

Show us a life of engrossing purpose.

Show us a life that is honest, abundant, and meaningful in the life, death, and resurrection of Jesus.

Pour out your Holy Spirit on us and on these gifts of bread and wine. Bless this feast. Grace our table with your presence. Breathe new life into us. **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**.

*THE LORD'S PRAYER

Lord, remember us in your kingdom and teach us to 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;

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

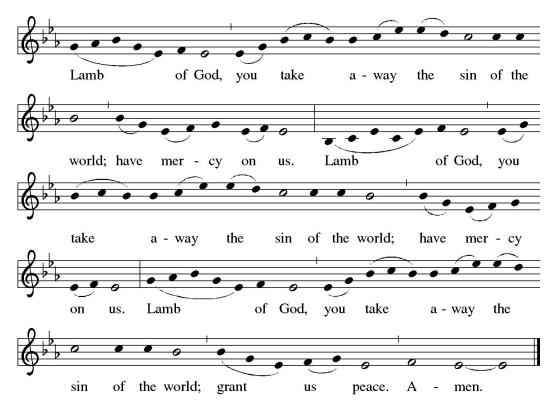
*INVITATION TO COMMUNION

You are invited to this meal of grace. Every one of us – with our doubts, our fears, our scars, our joy, our dreams, our hopes, our questions – we are invited to God's table. For here we will be fed and given a taste of an expansive life that is full to the brim with love, overflowing with joy. Now come. Not because you must, but because you can. Come. You are invited. This meal is for you.

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 bread and wine. Those who do not receive the bread and wine are invited to come forward for a blessing.

Grape juice and gluten free wafers are available upon request. Communion may also be brought back to the pews for those who are unable to come forward.

COMMUNION SONG Lamb of God

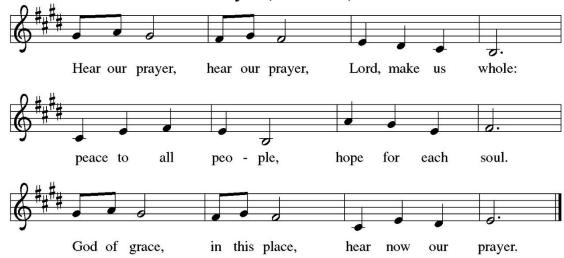


DISTRIBUTION OF COMMUNION

COMMUNION HYMN Through the Night of Doubt and Sorrow (ELW 327)



COMMUNION HYMN Hear Our Prayer (ELW 178)



*POST-COMMUNION BLESSING

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

*POST-COMMUNION PRAYER

Compassionate God, you have fed us with the bread of heaven. Sustain us in our Lenten pilgrimage: may our fasting be hunger for justice; our alms, a making of peace; and our prayer, the song of grateful hearts, through Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord. **Amen.**

*BLESSING

May God our tender parent, God the crucified one,

God the reconciling Spirit, +

fill you to the brim with grace and blessing now and forever Amen.

*SENDING SONG Surely God Is My Salvation (ACS 926)



*DISMISSAL

Go forth into the world to serve God with gladness; be of good courage; hold fast to that which is good; render no one evil for evil; strengthen the fainthearted; support the weak; help the afflicted; honor all people; and love and serve God, rejoicing in the power of the Holy Spirit. Go in peace. Serve in love.

Thanks be to God.

POSTLUDE

The Flowers on the altar today were supplied by Cora and Barry Steigerwalt in honor of their son Matthew's birthday.

Assisting in worship today:

Assisting Minister: Gene H

Acolyte: Abby C Ushers: Volunteer

Offering: Ava N & Ella N

Attendance: 59

Notes for the day's texts:

Our God makes all things new. In the first reading God promises it. In the gospel Mary anticipates it, anointing Jesus' feet with costly perfume in preparation for the day of his burial. In the second reading Paul recalls his transformation from the persecutor Saul into an apostle. In baptism, God's new person (you!) rises daily from the deadly mire of trespasses and sins.

Each day, we the baptized boldly face death, trusting that God has made a new way, a wet way, to travel from death to life. God in Christ has honored human vulnerability by becoming flesh and by laying down his own life. He is the new way through a dry, barren, and death-filled place. Because Christ Jesus has made them his own, the baptized walk wet through the desert places of this life, pouring out the whole of their lives, down to the very last hair, in extravagant love for God and for the people God has formed.

Today's Music

Jesus, Keep Me Near the Cross. Text: Fanny J. Crosby, 1820–1915, Music: William H. Doane, 1832–1915. Public Domain. Holy Woman, Grateful Giver. Text: Susan Palo Cherwien, 1953-2021, Music: Anne Krentz Organ, b. 1960. Augsburg Fortress. Take My Life, That I May Be. Text: Frances R. Havergal, 1836–1879, adapt.; Spanish text: Vicente Mendoza, 1875–1955, Music: William Dexheimer Pharris, b. 1956; arr. Mark Sedio, b. 1954. Public Domain / Augsburg Fortress. Through the Night of Doubt and Sorrow. Text: Bernhardt S. Ingemann, 1789–1862; tr. Sabine Baring-Gould, 1834–1924, alt. Music: Thomas J. Williams, 1869–1944; arr. Richard W. Hillert, 1923-2010. Public Domain /CPH Publishing (SESAC). Hear Our Prayer. Text and music: Paul Andress, b. 1956. Augsburg Fortress

Surely God Is My Salvation. Text: Zebulon M. Highben, b. 1979, based on Isaiah 12:2-6, Music: Hasidic melody. Augsburg Fortress.

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Next Week's Readings:

Luke 19:28-40 Entrance into the final days
Isaiah 50:4-9a The servant of the Lord submits to suffering
Psalm 31:9-16 Into your hands, O LORD, I commend my spirit
Philippians 2:5-11 Humbled to the point of death on a cross
Luke 22:14-23:56 The passion of the Lord