



*“But love your enemies, do good, and lend, expecting nothing in return. Your reward will be great, and you will be children of the Most High; for he is kind to the ungrateful and the wicked. <sup>36</sup> Be merciful, just as your Father is merciful.”*

*~Luke 6:35-36*

**St. John Evangelical Lutheran Church**  
**7<sup>th</sup> Sunday after Epiphany – February 23, 2025**  
420 Beaver St., PO Box 411  
Mars, PA 16046-0411  
[www.stjohnchurchmars.org](http://www.stjohnchurchmars.org)  
Phone: 724-625-1830      email: [office@stjohnchurchmars.org](mailto: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 worshipping 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**

## **ANNOUNCEMENTS**

## **GATHERING**

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

## **STEWARDSHIP REFLECTION**

## **PRAYER FOR STEWARDSHIP**

**Almighty God, you call us into congregations where we can grow in faith, and into mission in the world where we live out our faith each day. So guide and direct us that we may be wise and faithful stewards of all that you have entrusted to us, that your love may be made known to all; through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen**

## **\*GATHERING SONG *Word of God, Come Down on Earth* (ELW 510)**



1 Word of God, come down on earth, liv - ing rain from  
2 Word e - ter - nal, throned on high, Word that brought to  
3 Word that speaks God's ten - der love, one with God be -



heav'n de - scend - ing; touch our hearts and bring to birth  
life cre - a - tion, Word that came from heav'n to die,  
yond all tell - ing, Word that sends us from a - bove



faith and hope and love un - end - ing. Word al - might - y,  
cru - ci - fied for our sal - va - tion, sav - ing Word, the  
God the Spir - it, with us dwell - ing, Word of truth, to



we re - vere you; Word made flesh, we long to hear you.  
world re - stor - ing, speak to us, your love out - pour - ing.  
all truth lead us; Word of life, with one bread feed us.

**\*THANKSGIVING FOR BAPTISM**

Blessed be the holy Trinity, † one God,  
by whose hand we are given new birth,  
by whose speaking we are given new life.

**Amen.**

Look, here is water!

**Here is our water of life! Alleluia!**

Baptized into Christ's death and resurrection, and called to live the baptized life,  
let us give thanks for the gifts of baptism.

We give you thanks, O God, for in the beginning your voice thundered over the deep  
and water became the essence of life.

Adam and Eve beheld Eden's verdant rivers.

The ark carried your creation through the flood into a new day.

Miriam led the dancing as your people passed through the sea into freedom's land.

In a desert pool the Ethiopian official entered your boundless baptismal life.

**Wash away our sin and all that separates us from you.**

**Empower our witness to your resurrection.**

**Strengthen our resolve in seeking justice for all.**

At the river your beloved Son was baptized by John and anointed with the Holy Spirit.

By the baptism of Jesus' death and resurrection  
you opened the floodgates of your reconciling love,  
freeing us to live as your people.

Joined to Christ in the waters of baptism,

**we are welcomed, restored, and supported  
as citizens of the new creation.**

Look, here is water!

**Here is our water of life! Alleluia!**

**\*CANTICLE OF PRAISE *This Is the Feast***

*Refrain*

This is the feast of vic - to - ry for our God.

Al - le - lu - ia, al - le - lu - ia.

1 Wor - thy is Christ, the Lamb who was slain, whose blood set us free to be

peo - ple of God. Pow - er, rich - es, wis - dom, and strength, and

hon - or, bless - ing, and glo - ry are his.

*Refrain*

This is the feast of vic - to - ry for our God.

Al - le - lu - ia, al - le - lu - ia.

2 Sing with all the peo - ple of God, and join in the hymn of

all cre - a - tion: Bless - ing, hon - or, glo - ry, and might be to

God and the Lamb for - ev - er. A - men.

*Final refrain*

This is the feast of vic - to - ry for our God,

for the Lamb who was slain has be - gun his reign.

Al - le - lu - ia, al - le - lu - ia, al - le - lu - ia.

## **PRAYER OF THE DAY**

Let us pray.

**O Lord Jesus, make us instruments of your peace, that where there is hatred, we may sow love, where there is injury, pardon, and where there is despair, hope. Grant, O divine master, that we may seek to console, to understand, and to love in your name, for you live and reign with the Father and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever.**

**Amen.**

## **FIRST READING: Genesis 45:3-11, 15**

A reading from Genesis.

<sup>3</sup> Joseph said to his brothers, “I am Joseph. Is my father still alive?” But his brothers could not answer him, so dismayed were they at his presence.

<sup>4</sup> Then Joseph said to his brothers, “Come closer to me.” And they came closer. He said, “I am your brother, Joseph, whom you sold into Egypt. <sup>5</sup> And now do not be distressed, or angry with yourselves, because you sold me here; for God sent me before you to preserve life. <sup>6</sup> For the famine has been in the land these two years; and there are five more years in which there will be neither plowing nor harvest. <sup>7</sup> God sent me before you to preserve for you a remnant on earth, and to keep alive for you many survivors. <sup>8</sup> So it was not you who sent me here, but God; he has made me a father to Pharaoh, and lord of all his house and ruler over all the land of Egypt. <sup>9</sup> Hurry and go up to my father and say to him, ‘Thus says your son Joseph, God has made me lord of all Egypt; come down to me, do not delay. <sup>10</sup> You shall settle in the land of Goshen, and you shall be near me, you and your children and your children’s children, as well as your flocks, your herds, and all that you have. <sup>11</sup> I will provide for you there—since there are five more years of famine to come—so that you and your household, and all that you have, will not come to poverty.’” <sup>15</sup> And he kissed all his brothers and wept upon them; and after that his brothers talked with him.

The word of the Lord.

**Thanks be to God.**

## PSALM: PSALM 37:1-11, 39-40

- <sup>1</sup> Do not be provoked by evildoers; do not be jealous of those who do wrong.
- <sup>2</sup> **For they shall soon wither like the grass, and like the green grass fade away.**
- <sup>3</sup> Put your trust in the LORD and do good; dwell in the land and find safe pasture.
- <sup>4</sup> **Take delight in the LORD, who shall give you your heart's desire.**
- <sup>5</sup> Commit your way to the LORD; put your trust in the LORD, and see what God will do.
- <sup>6</sup> **The LORD will make your vindication as clear as the light and the justice of your case like the noonday sun.**
- <sup>7</sup> Be still before the LORD and wait patiently.  
Do not be provoked by the one who prospers, the one who succeeds in evil schemes.
- <sup>8</sup> **Refrain from anger, leave rage alone; do not be provoked; it leads only to evil.**
- <sup>9</sup> For evildoers shall be cut off, but those who hope in the LORD shall possess the land.
- <sup>10</sup> **In a little while the wicked shall be no more; even if you search out their place, they will not be there.**
- <sup>11</sup> But the lowly shall possess the land; they will delight in abundance of peace.
- <sup>39</sup> **But the deliverance of the righteous comes from you, O LORD; you are their stronghold in time of trouble.**
- <sup>40</sup> You, O LORD, will help them and rescue them;  
you will rescue them from the wicked and deliver them, because in you they seek refuge.

## SECOND READING: 1 Corinthians 15:35-38, 42-50

A reading from 1 Corinthians.

- <sup>35</sup> But someone will ask, "How are the dead raised? With what kind of body do they come?"
- <sup>36</sup> Fool! What you sow does not come to life unless it dies. <sup>37</sup> And as for what you sow, you do not sow the body that is to be, but a bare seed, perhaps of wheat or of some other grain. <sup>38</sup> But God gives it a body as he has chosen, and to each kind of seed its own body.
- <sup>42</sup> So it is with the resurrection of the dead. What is sown is perishable, what is raised is imperishable. <sup>43</sup> It is sown in dishonor, it is raised in glory. It is sown in weakness, it is raised in power. <sup>44</sup> It is sown a physical body, it is raised a spiritual body. If there is a physical body, there is also a spiritual body. <sup>45</sup> Thus it is written, "The first man, Adam, became a living being"; the last Adam became a life-giving spirit. <sup>46</sup> But it is not the spiritual that is first, but the physical, and then the spiritual. <sup>47</sup> The first man was from the earth, a man of dust; the second man is from heaven. <sup>48</sup> As was the man of dust, so are those who are of the dust; and as is the man of heaven, so are those who are of heaven. <sup>49</sup> Just as we have borne the image of the man of dust, we will also bear the image of the man of heaven.
- <sup>50</sup> What I am saying, brothers and sisters, is this: flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God, nor does the perishable inherit the imperishable.

The word of the Lord.

**Thanks be to God.**

## \*GOSPEL ACCLAMATION

Al - le - lu - ia, al - le - lu - ia.

Al - le - lu - ia, al - le - lu - ia.

*Repeat alleluia*

## \*GOSPEL READING: Luke 6:27-38

The holy gospel according to Luke.

**Glory to you, O Lord.**

[Jesus said:] <sup>27</sup> “But I say to you that listen, Love your enemies, do good to those who hate you, <sup>28</sup> bless those who curse you, pray for those who abuse you. <sup>29</sup> If anyone strikes you on the cheek, offer the other also; and from anyone who takes away your coat do not withhold even your shirt. <sup>30</sup> Give to everyone who begs from you; and if anyone takes away your goods, do not ask for them again. <sup>31</sup> Do to others as you would have them do to you.

<sup>32</sup> “If you love those who love you, what credit is that to you? For even sinners love those who love them. <sup>33</sup> If you do good to those who do good to you, what credit is that to you? For even sinners do the same. <sup>34</sup> If you lend to those from whom you hope to receive, what credit is that to you? Even sinners lend to sinners, to receive as much again. <sup>35</sup> But love your enemies, do good, and lend, expecting nothing in return. Your reward will be great, and you will be children of the Most High; for he is kind to the ungrateful and the wicked. <sup>36</sup> Be merciful, just as your Father is merciful.

<sup>37</sup> “Do not judge, and you will not be judged; do not condemn, and you will not be condemned. Forgive, and you will be forgiven; <sup>38</sup> give, and it will be given to you. A good measure, pressed down, shaken together, running over, will be put into your lap; for the measure you give will be the measure you get back.”

The gospel of the Lord.

**Praise to you, O Christ**

## CHILDREN’S SERMON

### SERMON



**\*HYMN OF THE DAY *Bring Peace to Earth Again* (ELW 700)**

*(Blue prayer cards are collected)*



1 Where ar - mies scourge the coun - try - side, and peo - ple flee in fear,  
2 Where an - ger fes - ters in the heart, and strikes with cru - el hand;  
3 Where homes are torn by bit - ter strife, and love dis - solves in blame;  
4 O God, whose heart com - pas - sion - ate bears ev - 'ry hu - man pain,



where si - rens scream through flam - ing nights, and death is ev - er near:  
where vio - lence stalks the trou - bled streets, and ter - ror haunts the land:  
where walls you meant for shel - t'ring care hide deeds of hurt and shame:  
re - deem this vio - lent, wound - ing world till gen - tle - ness shall reign.



O God of mer - cy, hear our prayer: bring peace to earth a - gain!

**\*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**

With the Spirit of Christ shining upon us, let us boldly pray for the church, the world, and all of creation. *A brief silence*

Surprising God, you call us to love our enemies and to show kindness in the face of cruelty. Let our actions be a shining witness of your overwhelming grace for all. God of grace, **hear our prayer.**

As animals hibernate and fields lay dormant, let them be a reminder that life and faith are not static but always changing and growing. May we, with all creation, trust that the ending of one thing promises life in a new way. God of grace, **hear our prayer.**

We pray for leaders and policymakers who work to reduce violence in our nations, cities, and towns. Give your wisdom and discernment amid heated arguments and differing viewpoints. God of grace, **hear our prayer.**

We pray for the victims of abuse and violence. Provide safe shelter and new beginnings to those experiencing domestic violence and dangerous situations. Enfold with love all who seek your healing care especially Bob, Geneva, Cherry, Winnie, Henry, Harry, Ellen, Sally, Katie, Debi, Anne, Karen, Nan, Beverly, those on our prayer list, all whom we remember in our hearts and all who suffer in any. God of grace, **hear our prayer.**

Empower our faith communities to be signs of your gracious love. Bless the local ministries of parish nursing and caregiving, that they will be a voice for those in need in our communities. God of grace, **hear our prayer.**

We give thanks for the enduring witness of those who have died before us. May their lives in you provide a witness of your everlasting grace. God of grace, **hear our prayer.**

We entrust our prayer to you, O God, and we lift up the prayers gathered before you now (*blue prayer cards are read*). We offer these prayers with the prayers that we offer only in sighs too deep for words with the sure and certain hope that your promise is revealed among the people. **Amen.**

## **\*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 COLLECTION**

## OFFERTORY HYMN *We Give Thee but Thine Own* (ELW 686)



1 We give thee but thine own, what - e'er the gift may be;  
2 May we thy boun - ties thus as stew - ards true re - ceive,  
3 The cap - tive to re - lease, to God the lost to bring,  
4 And we be - lieve thy word, though dim our faith may be:



all that we have is thine a - lone, a trust, O Lord, from thee.  
and glad - ly, as thou bless - est us, to thee our first - fruits give.  
to teach the way of life and peace—it is a Christ - like thing.  
what - e'er we do for thine, O Lord, we do it un - to thee.

## STEWARDSHIP RESPONSE

### **\*OFFERING PRAYER**

Lord God, we praise you and we thank you for your tender, faithful love, for your abundant grace, and for your everlasting mercy. Into your hands, almighty God,  
**we place ourselves: our minds to know you, our hearts to love you, our wills to serve you, for we our yours.**

Into your hands, incarnate Savior,  
**we place ourselves: receive us and draw us after you, that we may follow your steps; abide in us and enliven us by the power of your indwelling.**

Into your hands, O hovering Spirit,  
**we place ourselves: take us and fashion us after your image; let your comfort strengthen, and your grace renew soul and body, in life and in death, now and forever.**

We offer with joy and thanksgiving what you have first given us –  
**our selves, our time, and our possessions. We offer these gifts today, and in joy and thanksgiving for all that you are and all that you provide, we pray you will guide us to be good stewards of the gifts entrusted to us: to share our time, our talent, and our material gifts as an outward sign of the treasure we hold in Jesus. Receive our gifts today and the gifts we will give for the sake of him who offered himself for us, Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.**

Blessed are you, Holy One, for all good things come from you. In bread and cup you open heaven to us. Meet us at this table, that we may be nourished for the journey and follow your Son, Jesus, in whose name we pray. **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.  
By the leading of a star he was shown forth to all nations;  
in the waters of the Jordan you proclaimed him your beloved Son;  
and in the miracle of water turned to wine he revealed your glory.  
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:

Ho - ly, ho - ly, ho - ly Lord, God of pow - er and  
might, heav-en and earth are full of your glo - ry. Ho -  
san - na in the high-est, 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, ho - san - na in the high - est.

Holy One, the beginning and the end, the giver of life:  
Blessed are you for the birth of creation.  
Blessed are you in the darkness and in the light.  
Blessed are you for your promise to your people.  
Blessed are you in the prophets' hopes and dreams.  
Blessed are you for Mary's openness to your will.  
Blessed are you for your Son Jesus,  
the Word made flesh.

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.

For as often as we eat of this bread and drink from this cup,  
we proclaim the Lord's death until he comes.

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

With this bread and cup  
we remember your Word dwelling among us, full of grace and truth.  
We remember our new birth in his death and resurrection.  
We look with hope for his coming.  
**Come, Lord Jesus.**

Holy God, we long for your Spirit.  
Come among us.  
Bless this meal.  
May your Word take flesh in us.  
Awaken your people.  
Fill us with your light.  
Bring the gift of peace on earth.  
**Come, Holy Spirit.**

All praise and glory are yours,  
Holy One of Israel,  
Word of God incarnate,  
Power of the Most High,  
one God, now and forever. **Amen.**

## \*THE LORD'S PRAYER

Gathered into one by the Holy Spirit, let us 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

Glory to God in the highest! Come to the table of peace.

*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*

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.

**COMMUNION HYMN *Lord of All Nations, Grant Me Grace* (ELW 716)**



1 Lord of all na - tions, grant me grace to love all  
 2 Break down the wall that would di - vide thy chil - dren,  
 3 For - give me, Lord, where I have erred by love - less  
 4 Give me thy cour - age, Lord, to speak when - ev - er  
 5 With thine own love may I be filled and by thy



peo - ple, ev - 'ry race; and in each per - son may I  
 Lord, on ev - 'ry side. My neigh - bor's good let me pur -  
 act and thought - less word. Make me to see the wrong I  
 strong op - press the weak. Should I my - self the vic - tim  
 Ho - ly Spir - it willed, that all I touch, wher - e'er I



see my kin - dred, loved, re - deemed by thee.  
 sue; let Chris - tian love bind warm and true.  
 do will cru - ci - fy my Lord a - new.  
 be, help me for - give, re - mem - b'ring thee.  
 be, may be di - vine - ly touched by thee.

**COMMUNION HYMN *Blessed Be, God Who Forgives* (ELW 221)**



Bless - ed be God, who for - gives all our sins, who



heals all our ills, who crowns us with mer - cy and love.

**\*POST-COMMUNION BLESSING**

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

**\*POST-COMMUNION PRAYER**

Gracious God, in this meal you have drawn us to your heart, and nourished us at your table with food and drink, the body and blood of Christ. Now send us forth to be your people in the world, and to proclaim your truth this day and evermore, through Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord.  
**Amen.**

## \*BLESSING

May Almighty God, the Holy One who created the world, the Son who lived to teach us how to live together, and died that we might live together with him forever, and the Spirit who inspires and nurtures us in faith, + bless you with joy, anoint you with compassion, and send you in love. **Amen.**

## \*SENDING SONG *All Creatures, Worship God Most High!* (ELW 835) verses 1,2,4,6



- 1 All crea-tures, wor-ship God most high! Sound ev-'ry voice in earth and  
2 Sing, broth-er wind; with clouds and rain you grow the gifts of fruit and  
4 All who for love of God for-give, all who in pain or sor-row



sky: Al-le-lu-ia! Al-le-lu-ia! Sing, broth-er sun, in splen-dor  
grain: Al-le-lu-ia! Al-le-lu-ia! Dear sis-ter wa-ter, use-ful,  
grieve: Al-le-lu-ia! Al-le-lu-ia! Christ bears your bur-dens and your



bright; sing, sis-ter moon and stars of night:  
clear, make mu-sic for your Lord to hear: Al-le-lu-ia, al-le-  
fears; still make your song a-mid the tears:



lu-ia, al-le-lu-ia, al-le-lu-ia, al-le-lu-ia!

- 6 O sisters, brothers, take your part,  
and worship God with humble heart:  
Alleluia! Alleluia!  
All creatures, bless the Father, Son,  
and Holy Spirit, Three in One:  
Alleluia.

## \*DISMISSAL

Go in peace. Christ is with you.  
**Thanks be to God.**

## POSTLUDE



**The flowers on the altar were supplied by Ruth Ann Tully in Memory of Frieda Carbo and Catherine Franz.**

**Assisting in worship today:**

**Assisting Minister: Missy K**

**Acolyte: Ella N and Ava N**

**Ushers: Volunteer**

**Offering: Jules K and Cate S**

**Attendance last week: 51 + 6 zoom**

**Notes for the day's texts:**

Probably no admonition of Jesus has been more difficult to follow than the command to “love your enemies.” Some men have sincerely felt that its actual practice is not possible. Others, like the philosopher Nietzsche, contend that Jesus’ exhortation to love one’s enemies is testimony to the fact that the Christian ethic is designed for the weak and the cowardly, and not for the strong and courageous. Jesus, they say, was an impractical idealist. But upheaval after upheaval has reminded us that modern man is traveling along a road called hate, in a journey that will bring us to destruction and damnation. Far from being the pious injunction of a utopian dreamer, the command to love one’s enemy is an absolute necessity for our survival.

Our responsibility as Christians is to discover the meaning of this command and seek passionately to live it out in our daily lives. —*Martin Luther King Jr.*

[Martin Luther King Jr., *Strength to Love*, (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1963), 47-48.]

**Today's Music**

*Word of God, Come Sown on Earth.* Text: James Quinn, SJ, b. 1919, Music: Johann R. Ahle, 1625–1673. Selah Publishing Co., Inc. / Public Domain

*Bring Peace to Earth Again.* Text: Herman G. Stuempfle Jr., b. 1923, Music: Perry Nelson, b. 1955. World Library Publications, a division of GIA Publications, Inc.

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**Next Week's Readings:**

*Exodus 34:29-35 Coming down from Mount Sinai, Moses' face shone*

*Psalm 99 Proclaim the greatness of the Lord; worship upon God's holy hill*

*2 Corinthians 3:12-4:2 With unveiled faces we see the Lord's glory as we are transformed*

*Luke 9:28-36 [37-43a] Jesus is transfigured on the mountain*