

*“Very truly, I tell you, unless a grain of wheat falls into the earth and dies, it remains just a single grain; but if it dies, it bears much fruit.”*

*John 12:24*

St. John Evangelical Lutheran Church  
Fifth Sunday in Lent – March 17, 2024  
420 Beaver St., PO Box 411  
Mars, PA 16046-0411

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Rev. Katie McNeal, Presiding Minister  
Maizy Fisher, Director of Music Ministries

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

*If you are looking for a church to call home, why not consider making this one your own? If this is your first time 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. 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 communion, 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.*

*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.*

### **\*CONFESSION AND FORGIVENESS**

Blessed be the holy Trinity, + one God, who writes the law on our hearts, who calls all people together through Jesus.

**Amen**

Held in God's mercy, let us confess our sin in the presence of God and of one another.  
*Silence is kept for reflection*

Holy God,

**We confess that we are caught in the snares of sin and cannot break free.**

**We hoard resources while our neighbors are hungry and cold.**

**We speak in ways that silence others.**

**We are silent when we should speak up.**

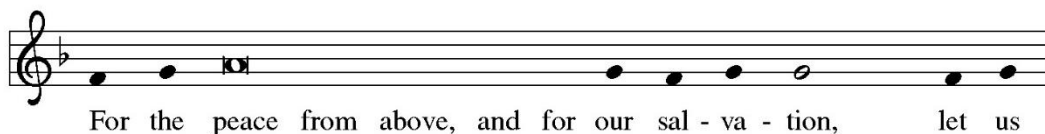
**We keep score in our hearts.**

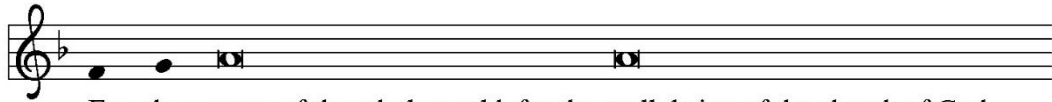
**We let hurts grow into hatred.**

**We hear your call and invitation, yet we turn the other way.**

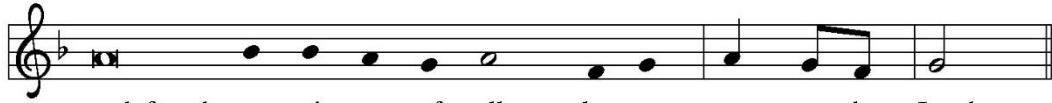
**For all these things and for the sins only you know,**

**have mercy on us and forgive us, Lord.**





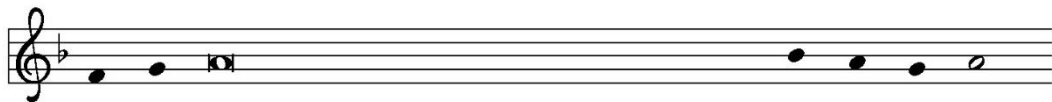
For the peace of the whole world, for the well-being of the church of God,



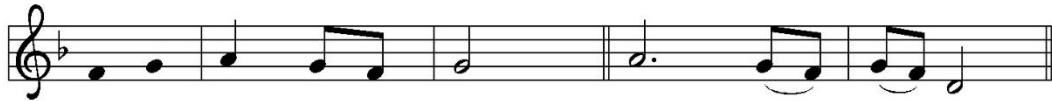
and for the u - ni - ty of all, let us pray to the Lord.



**Lord, have mer - cy.**



For this holy house, and for all who offer here their wor-ship and praise,



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



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



**A - men.**

Hear this good news:

God washes grace over us in abundance.

God promises to be with us until the end of the age, offering forgiveness and mercy.

God draws near to us, breaking every snare of sin, washing away our wrongs, and restoring life through Jesus Christ.

As a called and ordained minister of the church of Christ, and by his authority, I therefore declare to you the entire forgiveness of all your sins, in the name of the Father, and of the + Son, and of the Holy Spirit.

**Amen**

## \*CALL TO WORSHIP

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

**And also with you.**

Lent calls us to journey, this and every day, following Jesus wherever he calls us.

**Lent calls us to journey:**

**to the place where God covenants with us, to receive the new names we are given.**

Lent calls us to worship together, to tell future generations the good news.

**Lent calls us to practice justice, to bring God's hope to all people.**

Lent calls us to faithful living, to trust the one who gives us life.

**Lent calls each of us to take up our cross, to trust the one who bears it with us.**

Lent calls us to journey with God.

**Let us worship God, who walks with us, this and every day.**

## \*GATHERING SONG *Now the Green Blade Rises* (ELW 379)



1 Now the green blade ris - es from the bur - ied grain,  
2 In the grave they laid him, love by ha - tred slain,  
3 Forth he came at Eas - ter like the ris - en grain,  
4 When our hearts are win - try, griev - ing, or in pain,



wheat that in dark earth man - y days has lain;  
think - ing that he would nev - er wake a - gain,  
he that for three days in the grave had lain;  
your touch can call us back to life a - gain,



love lives a - gain, that with the dead has been;  
laid in the earth like grain that sleeps un - seen;  
raised from the dead, my liv - ing Lord is seen;  
fields of our hearts that dead and bare have been;



love is come a - gain like wheat a - ris - ing green.

## **\*PRAYER OF THE DAY**

Let us pray,

**O God, with steadfast love you draw us to yourself, and in mercy you receive our prayers. Strengthen us to bring forth the fruits of the Spirit, that through life and death we may live in your Son, Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever.**

**Amen.**

## **WORD**

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

### **FIRST READING: Jeremiah 31:31-34**

A reading from Jeremiah.

<sup>31</sup>The days are surely coming, says the LORD, when I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel and the house of Judah. <sup>32</sup>It will not be like the covenant that I made with their ancestors when I took them by the hand to bring them out of the land of Egypt—a covenant that they broke, though I was their husband, says the LORD. <sup>33</sup>But this is the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel after those days, says the LORD: I will put my law within them, and I will write it on their hearts; and I will be their God, and they shall be my people. <sup>34</sup>No longer shall they teach one another, or say to each other, “Know the LORD,” for they shall all know me, from the least of them to the greatest, says the LORD; for I will forgive their iniquity, and remember their sin no more.

The word of the Lord.

**Thanks be to God.**

### **PSALM 51:1-12**

<sup>1</sup>Have mercy on me, O God, according to your steadfast love;  
in your great compassion blot out my offenses.

<sup>2</sup>**Wash me through and through from my wickedness, and cleanse me from my sin.**

<sup>3</sup>For I know <sup>1</sup> my offenses, and my sin is ever before me.

<sup>4</sup>**Against you only have I sinned and done what is evil in your sight;  
so you are justified when you speak and right in your judgment.**

<sup>5</sup>Indeed, I was born steeped in wickedness, a sinner from my mother’s womb.

<sup>6</sup>**Indeed, you delight in truth deep within me,  
and would have me know wisdom deep within.**

<sup>7</sup>Remove my sins with hyssop, and I shall be clean; wash me, and I shall be purer than snow.

<sup>8</sup>**Let me hear joy and gladness;  
that the body you have broken may rejoice.**

<sup>9</sup>Hide your face from my sins, and blot out all my wickedness.

<sup>10</sup>**Create in me a clean heart, O God, and renew a right spirit within me.**

<sup>11</sup>Cast me not away <sup>1</sup> from your presence, and take not your Holy Spirit from me.

<sup>12</sup>**Restore to me the joy of your salvation  
and sustain me with your bountiful Spirit.**

**”SECOND READING: Hebrews 5:5-10**

A reading from Hebrews.

<sup>5</sup>Christ did not glorify himself in becoming a high priest, but was appointed by the one who said to him,

“You are my Son,  
today I have begotten you”;

<sup>6</sup>as he says also in another place,

“You are a priest forever,  
according to the order of Melchizedek.”

<sup>7</sup>In the days of his flesh, Jesus offered up prayers and supplications, with loud cries and tears, to the one who was able to save him from death, and he was heard because of his reverent submission. <sup>8</sup>Although he was a Son, he learned obedience through what he suffered; <sup>9</sup>and having been made perfect, he became the source of eternal salvation for all who obey him, <sup>10</sup>having been designated by God a high priest according to the order of Melchizedek.

The word of the Lord.

**Thanks be to God.**

## \*GOSPEL ACCLAMATION



Let your stead - fast love come to us, O Lord.



Save us as you prom - ised; we will trust your word.



Save us as you prom - ised; we will trust your word.

## \*GOSPEL READING: John 12:20-33

The holy gospel according to John.

**Glory to you, O Lord.**

<sup>20</sup>Now among those who went up to worship at the festival were some Greeks. <sup>21</sup>They came to Philip, who was from Bethsaida in Galilee, and said to him, “Sir, we wish to see Jesus.” <sup>22</sup>Philip went and told Andrew; then Andrew and Philip went and told Jesus. <sup>23</sup>Jesus answered them, “The hour has come for the Son of Man to be glorified. <sup>24</sup>Very truly, I tell you, unless a grain of wheat falls into the earth and dies, it remains just a single grain; but if it dies, it bears much fruit. <sup>25</sup>Those who love their life lose it, and those who hate their life in this world will keep it for eternal life. <sup>26</sup>Whoever serves me must follow me, and where I am, there will my servant be also. Whoever serves me, the Father will honor.

<sup>27</sup>“Now my soul is troubled. And what should I say—‘Father, save me from this hour’? No, it is for this reason that I have come to this hour. <sup>28</sup>Father, glorify your name.” Then a voice came from heaven, “I have glorified it, and I will glorify it again.” <sup>29</sup>The crowd standing there heard it and said that it was thunder. Others said, “An angel has spoken to him.” <sup>30</sup>Jesus answered, “This voice has come for your sake, not for mine. <sup>31</sup>Now is the judgment of this world; now the ruler of this world will be driven out. <sup>32</sup>And I, when I am lifted up from the earth, will draw all people to myself.” <sup>33</sup>He said this to indicate the kind of death he was to die.

The gospel of the Lord.

**Praise to you, O Christ**

## CHILDREN’S SERMON

## SERMON



**\*HYMN OF THE DAY *Restore in Us, O God* (ELW 328)**

*(Blue prayer cards are collected during the song.)*



1 Re - store in us, O God, the splen - dor of your love; re -  
2 O Spir - it, wake in us the won - der of your pow'r; from  
3 Bring us, O Christ, to share the full - ness of your joy; bap -  
4 Three - per - soned God, ful - fill the prom - ise of your grace, that



new your im - age in our hearts, and all our sins re - move.  
fruit - less fear un - furl our lives like spring - time bud and flow'r.  
tize us in the ris - en life that death can - not de - stroy.  
we, when all our search - ing ends, may see you face to face.

**\*APOSTLES' CREED**

With the whole church, let us confess our faith.

**I believe in God, the Father almighty,  
creator of heaven and earth.**

**I believe in Jesus Christ, God's only Son, our Lord,  
who was conceived by the Holy Spirit,  
born of the virgin Mary,  
suffered under Pontius Pilate,  
was crucified, died, and was buried;  
he descended to the dead.  
On the third day he rose again;  
he ascended into heaven,  
he is seated at the right hand of the Father,  
and he will come to judge the living and the dead.**

**I believe in the Holy Spirit,  
the holy catholic church,  
the communion of saints,  
the forgiveness of sins,  
the resurrection of the body,  
and the life everlasting. Amen.**

## **\*PRAYERS OF INTERCESSION**

Trusting in God's promise to reconcile all things, let us pray for the church, the well-being of creation, and a world in need. *A brief silence.*

God of the covenant, through the church you draw us into community. We give thanks for the means of grace around which we gather. Inspire writers, musicians, and artists whose creative gifts adorn our worship. Hear us, O God.

**Your mercy is great.**

God of all that exists, you lavish the earth with extravagant beauty. Preserve the rich and complex diversity of living things. Support local, national, and international efforts to protect the environment for future generations. Hear us, O God.

**Your mercy is great.**

God of the nations, you desire peace and plenty for all people. Defend those who challenge oppression and expose corruption. Support advocates for human rights, social justice, and the welfare of children. Hear us, O God.

**Your mercy is great.**

God of good will, you restore what is broken. We pray for any experiencing estrangement, conflict, or abuse in families and intimate relationships. Protect and comfort all who are vulnerable, those living in institutions and especially Bob, Geneva, Cherry, Winnie, Henry, Harry, Ellen, Ruth, Sally, Katie, Debi, those on our prayer list, and all whom we remember aloud or in our hearts. Hear us, O God.

**Your mercy is great.**

God of every time and place, you are with us. Support ministries of prayer and presence in this congregation. Move us to reach out to any who are homebound, lonely, grieving, in treatment, or ill. Hear us, O God.

**Your mercy is great.**

God of promise, we give thanks for the saints whose faith inspires us. Grant us faith to trust in your everlasting love. Hear us, O God.

**Your mercy is great.**

God of grace, accompany us on our journey and receive the prayers of our hearts and the prayers of the people brought forth today (*blue prayer cards are offered*). Trusting in your abiding presence, we offer this prayer to you, through Jesus Christ, our Savior.

**Amen.**

## **\*SHARING THE PEACE**

The peace of Christ be with you always.

**And also with you.**

Let us share God's peace with one another

## MEAL

*God feeds us with the presence of Jesus Christ.*

### OFFERING

#### OFFERTORY HYMN *We Plow the Fields and Scatter* (ELW 680)

*\*Stand for the 3<sup>rd</sup> verse*



*A - ra - mos nues-tros cam-pos, y lue - goel sem - bra - dor*  
1 We plow the fields and scat - ter the good seed on the land,  
2 You on - ly are the mak - er of all things near and far.  
3 We thank you, our cre - a - tor, for all things bright and good,



*en e - llos la si - mien - te es - par - ce con a - mor.*  
but it is fed and wa - tered by God's al - might - y hand,  
You paint the way - side flow - er, you light the eve - ning star.  
the seed - time and the har - vest, our life, our health, our food.



*Mas es de Dios la ma - no que laha - ce ger - mi - nar,*  
who sends the snow in win - ter, the warmth to swell the grain,  
The winds and waves o - bey you, by you the birds are fed;  
No gifts have we to of - fer for what your love im - parts



*ca - lor y llu - via dan - do a to - dos por i - gual.*  
the breez - es and the sun - shine, and soft re - fresh - ing rain.  
much more to us, your chil - dren, you give our dai - ly bread.  
but what you most would trea - sure— our hum - ble, thank - ful hearts.

#### **\*OFFERING PRAYER**

Let us pray.

God our provider, bless us and these your gifts, which we receive from your bounty so that all people may know your goodness. Jesus, the bread of life is the host of this meal of grace and life at which we gather. Nourish us with this holy food and fill us with hunger for justice and peace through Jesus Christ our Lord.

**Amen.**

## \*GREAT THANKSGIVING

The Lord be with you.

**And also with you.**

Lift up your hearts.

**We lift them to the Lord.**

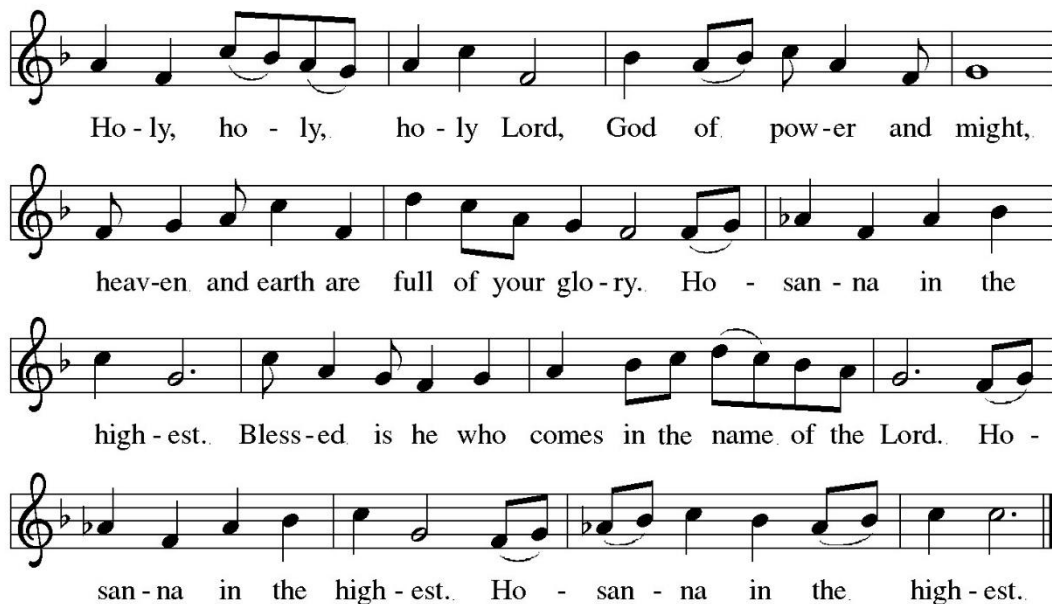
Let us give thanks to the Lord our God.

**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:



The musical score is written on four staves of music. Each staff begins with a treble clef and a key signature of one flat (B-flat). The lyrics are written below the notes. The first staff contains the lyrics: "Ho - ly, ho - ly, ho - ly Lord, God of pow - er and might,". The second staff contains: "heav - en and earth are full of your glo - ry. Ho - san - na in the". The third staff contains: "high - est. Bless - ed is he who comes in the name of the Lord. Ho -". The fourth staff contains: "san - na in the high - est. Ho - san - na in the high - est." and ends with a double bar line.

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. 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.

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

Praise to you for creating the heavens and the earth.  
Praise to you for saving the earth from the waters of the flood.  
Praise to you for bringing the Israelites safely through the sea.  
Praise to you for leading your people through the wilderness to the land of milk and honey.  
Praise to you for the words and deeds of Jesus, your anointed one.  
Praise to you for the death and resurrection of Christ.  
Praise to you for your Spirit poured out on all nations.

In the night in which our Lord Jesus was betrayed,  
he 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.**

O God of resurrection and new life:  
Pour out your Holy Spirit on us and on these gifts of bread and wine.  
Bless this feast. Grace our table with your presence.  
**Come, Holy Spirit.**

Reveal yourself to us in the breaking of the bread.  
Raise us up as the body of Christ for the world.  
Breathe new life into us. Send us forth, burning with justice, peace, and love.  
**Come, Holy Spirit.**

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.**

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;  
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**

At this table there is abundance. Come and be nourished for the journey of faith.  
Come to this feast for hungry hearts. Come!

*Through this meal, we know forgiveness, life, and salvation as the blessings of God's sacramental grace. In response to Jesus' invitation, all baptized individuals 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.

### **DISTRIBUTION OF COMMUNION**

## COMMUNION HYMN *My Faith Looks Up to Thee* (ELW 759)



1 My faith looks up to thee, thou Lamb of Cal - va - ry,  
2 May thy rich grace im - part strength to my faint - ing heart,  
3 While life's dark maze I tread and griefs a - round me spread,  
4 When ends life's tran - sient dream, when death's cold, sul - len stream



Sav - ior di - vine! Now hear me while I pray, take all my  
my zeal in - spire; as thou hast died for me, oh, may my  
be thou my guide; bid dark-ness turn to day, wipe sor-row's  
shall o'er me roll; blest Sav - ior, then, in love fear and dis -



guilt a - way, oh, let me from this day be whol - ly thine!  
love to thee pure, warm, and change-less be, a liv - ing fire!  
tears a - way, nor let me ev - er stray from thee a - side.  
trust re-move; oh, bear me safe a - bove, a ran - somed soul!

### **\*POST-COMMUNION PRAYER**

God of abundance, in this meal you have drawn us to you and nourished us with your holy food. Sustain us in our Lenten journey and strengthen us through this gift, in faith toward you and in fervent love toward one another; for the sake of Jesus Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

### **SENDING**

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

### **\*BLESSING**

Beloved, we are God's own people, holy, washed, and brought into new life.

May God bless you and keep you,

May God's voice draw you ever nearer.

And may God shower you with mercy,

fill you with courage,

and +give you peace.

**Amen.**

**\*SENDING SONG** *The Word of God Is Source and Seed* (ELW 506)



1 The Word of God is source and seed; it comes to  
 2 The Word of God is breath and life; it comes to  
 3 The Word of God is flesh and grace, who comes to

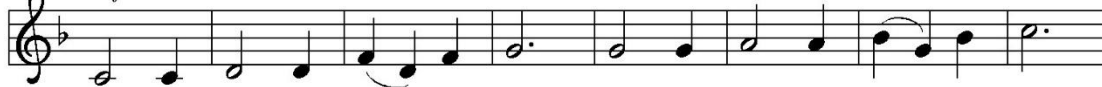


die and sprout and grow. So make your dark earth  
 heal and wake and save. So let the Spir - it  
 sing, to laugh and cry. So dare to be as



wel - come warm; root deep the grain God bent to sow.  
 touch and mend and rouse your dry bones from their grave.  
 Je - sus was, who came to live and love and die.

*Refrain*



*Gau - de - a - mus Do - mi - no, gau - de - a - mus Do - mi - no,*  
 In the Lord let us re - joice, in the Lord let us re - joice,



*gau - de - a - mus Do - mi - no!*  
 in the Lord let us re - joice!

**\*DISMISSAL**

[Jesus said,] "I am the bread of life. Whoever comes to me will never be hungry, and whoever believes in me will never be thirsty. (*John 6:35*)

Go in peace. Share your bread. Christ is with you.

**Thanks be to God.**

**POSTLUDE**



**The flowers on the altar today are from Janet Senka in memory of her beloved husband  
George Senka.**

**Assisting in worship today:**

**Assisting Minister: Jonathan C**

**Acolyte: Abigail C**

**Young Reader: Abigail C**

**Greeter:**

**Ushers: David D**

**Offering: Anna K & Nathan K**

**Attendance last week: 51 + 5 zoom**

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

God promises Jeremiah that a “new covenant” will be made in the future: a covenant that will allow all the people to know God by heart. The church sees this promise fulfilled in Christ, who draws all people to himself when he is lifted up on the cross. Our baptismal covenant draws us to God’s heart through Christ and draws God’s love and truth into our hearts. We join together in worship, sharing in word, song, and meal, and leave strengthened to share God’s love with all the world.

**Today's Music**

*Now the Green Blade Rises.* Text: John MacLeod Campbell Crum, 1872–1958, Music: French carol. Oxford University Press (New York) / Public Domain.

*Restore in Us, O God.* Text: Carl P. Daw Jr., b. 1944, Music: Hal H. Hopson, b. 1933. Hope Publishing Company (ASCAP)

*We Plow the Fields and Scatter.* Text: Matthias Claudius, 1740-1815; English tr. Jane M. Campbell, 1817-1878, alt.; Spanish tr. Ernesto Barocio, 1866-1948, Music: Luis Olivieri, b. 1937. Public Domain / Abingdon Press.

*My Faith Looks Up to Thee.* Text: Ray Palmer, 1808-1887, Music: Lowell Mason, 1792-1872. Public Domain.

*The Word of God Is Source and Seed.* Text: Delores Dufner, OSB, b. 1939, Music: David Hurd, b. 1950. GIA Publications, Inc. / Augsburg Fortress.

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**Next Week's Readings**

**Mark 11:1-11 *Jesus enters Jerusalem***

**Isaiah 50:4-9a *The servant of the Lord submits to suffering***

**Psalms 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***

**Mark 14:1—15:47 *The passion of the Lord***