

"In the temple he found people selling cattle, sheep, and doves, and the money changers seated at their tables. Making a whip of cords, he drove all of them out of the temple,"

John 2:14-15

St. John Evangelical Lutheran Church Third Sunday in Lent – March 3, 2024 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 visiting us, 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.

At the time of **Holy Communion**, all 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.

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.

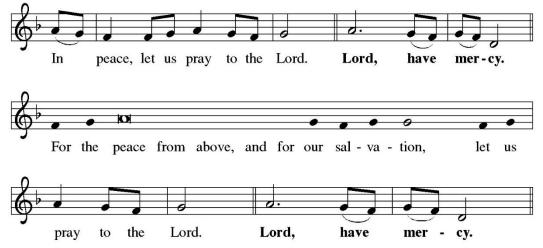
We keep score in our hearts.

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.





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 Built on a Rock (ELW 652)



***PRAYER OF THE DAY**

Let us pray,

Holy God, through your Son you have called us to live faithfully and act courageously. Keep us steadfast in your covenant of grace, and teach us the wisdom that comes only through 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: Exodus 20:1-17

A reading from Exodus

¹God spoke all these words:

²I am the LORD your God, who brought you out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of slavery; ³you shall have no other gods before me.

⁴You shall not make for yourself an idol, whether in the form of anything that is in heaven above, or that is on the earth beneath, or that is in the water under the earth. ⁵You shall not bow down to them or worship them; for I the LORD your God am a jealous God, punishing children for the iniquity of parents, to the third and the fourth generation of those who reject me, ⁶but showing steadfast love to the thousandth generation of those who love me and keep my commandments.

⁷You shall not make wrongful use of the name of the LORD your God, for the LORD will not acquit anyone who misuses his name.

⁸Remember the sabbath day, and keep it holy. ⁹Six days you shall labor and do all your work. ¹⁰But the seventh day is a sabbath to the LORD your God; you shall not do any work—you, your son or your daughter, your male or female slave, your livestock, or the alien resident in your towns. ¹¹For in six days the LORD made heaven and earth, the sea, and all that is in them, but rested the seventh day; therefore the LORD blessed the sabbath day and consecrated it.

¹²Honor your father and your mother, so that your days may be long in the land that the LORD your God is giving you.

¹³You shall not murder.

¹⁴You shall not commit adultery.

¹⁵You shall not steal.

¹⁶You shall not bear false witness against your neighbor.

¹⁷You shall not covet your neighbor's house; you shall not covet your neighbor's wife, or male or female slave, or ox, or donkey, or anything that belongs to your neighbor.

The word of the Lord. **Thanks be to God.**

PSALM 19

- ¹The heavens declare the glory of God, and the sky proclaims its maker's handiwork.
 - ²One day tells its tale to another, and one night imparts knowledge to another.
 - ³Although they have no words or language, and their voices are not heard,
 - ⁴their sound has gone out into all lands, and their message to the ends of the world, where God has pitched a tent for the sun.
 - ⁵It comes forth like a bridegroom out of his chamber; it rejoices like a champion to run its course.

⁶It goes forth from the uttermost edge of the heavens and runs about to the end of it again; nothing is hidden from its burning heat.

- ⁷The teaching of the LORD is perfect and revives the soul; the testimony of the LORD is sure and gives wisdom to the simple.
- ⁸The statutes of the LORD are just and rejoice the heart;
 - the commandment of the LORD is clear and gives light to the eyes.
- ⁹The fear of the LORD is clean and endures forever;
 - the judgments of the LORD are true and righteous altogether.
- ¹⁰More to be desired are they than gold, more than much fine gold, sweeter far than honey, than honey in the comb.
- ¹¹By them also is your servant enlightened, and in keeping them there is great reward.
- ¹²Who can detect one's own offenses? Cleanse me from my secret faults.
- ¹³Above all, keep your servant from presumptuous sins; let them not get dominion over me; then shall I be whole and sound, and innocent of a great offense.

¹⁴Let the words of my mouth and the meditation of my heart be acceptable in your sight, O LORD, my strength and my redeemer.

SECOND READING: 1 Corinthians 1:18-25

A reading from 1 Corinthians

¹⁸The message about the cross is foolishness to those who are perishing, but to us who are being saved it is the power of God. ¹⁹For it is written,

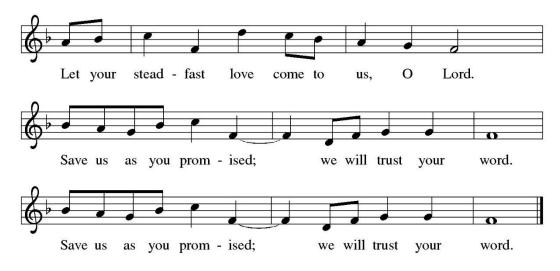
"I will destroy the wisdom of the wise,

and the discernment of the discerning I will thwart."

²⁰Where is the one who is wise? Where is the scribe? Where is the debater of this age? Has not God made foolish the wisdom of the world? ²¹For since, in the wisdom of God, the world did not know God through wisdom, God decided, through the foolishness of our proclamation, to save those who believe. ²²For Jews demand signs and Greeks desire wisdom, ²³but we proclaim Christ crucified, a stumbling block to Jews and foolishness to Gentiles, ²⁴but to those who are the called, both Jews and Greeks, Christ the power of God and the wisdom of God. ²⁵For God's foolishness is wiser than human wisdom, and God's weakness is stronger than human strength.

The word of the Lord. Thanks be to God.

***GOSPEL ACCLAMATION**



***GOSPEL READING: John 2:13-22** The holy gospel according to John. **Glory to you, O Lord.**

¹³The Passover of the Jews was near, and Jesus went up to Jerusalem. ¹⁴In the temple he found people selling cattle, sheep, and doves, and the money changers seated at their tables. ¹⁵Making a whip of cords, he drove all of them out of the temple, both the sheep and the cattle. He also poured out the coins of the money changers and overturned their tables. ¹⁶He told those who were selling the doves, "Take these things out of here! Stop making my Father's house a marketplace!" ¹⁷His disciples remembered that it was written, "Zeal for your house will consume me." ¹⁸The Jews then said to him, "What sign can you show us for doing this?" ¹⁹Jesus answered them, "Destroy this temple, and in three days I will raise it up." ²⁰The Jews then said, "This temple has been under construction for forty-six years, and will you raise it up in three days?" ²¹But he was speaking of the temple of his body. ²²After he was raised from the dead, his disciples remembered that he had said this; and they believed the scripture and the word that Jesus had spoken.

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

CHILDREN'S SERMON

SERMON

*HYMN OF THE DAY Oh, That the Lord Would Guide My Ways (ELW 772)

(Blue prayer cards are collected during the song.)



nor let my head or heart or hands of - fend a - gainst my God.

*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*.

You alone are God. We thank you for the gift of sabbath rest. Awaken the church to the mystery of your presence and give us glad hearts as we receive your good news. Hear us, O God. **Your mercy is great.**

You renew creation. Drive out those who would make the earth a marketplace. Protect rainforests, mountaintops, oceans, and wilderness areas from commercial exploitation. Unite nations, policymakers, and businesses in efforts to reduce carbon emissions. Hear us, O God. **Your mercy is great.**

You judge the nations. We pray for an end to war and strife in every land. Strengthen international efforts to negotiate peace and provide humanitarian aid to people fleeing from conflict. Hear us, O God.

Your mercy is great.

You bring healing and hope. We give thanks for physicians, nurses, researchers, therapists, and public health workers who prevent and treat illness. We pray for any who are sick 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.**

You abide with your people. Sustain any in this community undergoing life transitions: marriage, divorce, childbirth, adoption, moving, graduation, employment change, or a death in the family. We pray for those preparing for baptism. Hear us, O God. **Your mercy is great.**

You bring life from death. We remember loved ones who have died, confident that they have new life in you. May we trust that nothing can separate us from your 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**

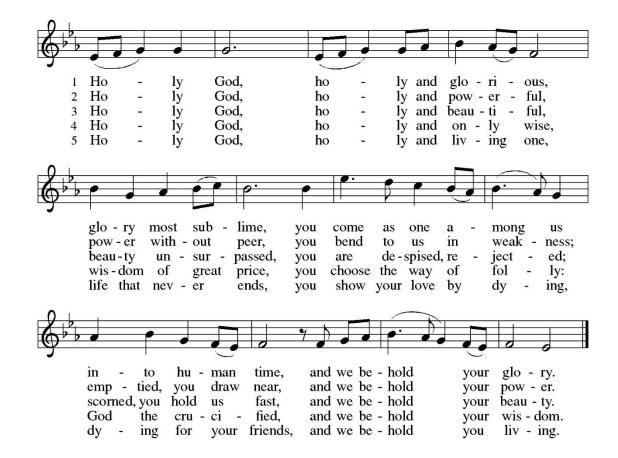
The peace of Christ be with you always. And also with you. Let us share God's peace with one another

MEAL

God feeds us with the presence of Jesus Christ.

OFFERING

OFFERTORY HYMN *Holy God, Holy and Glorious* (ELW 637)



***OFFERING PRAYER**

Let us pray.

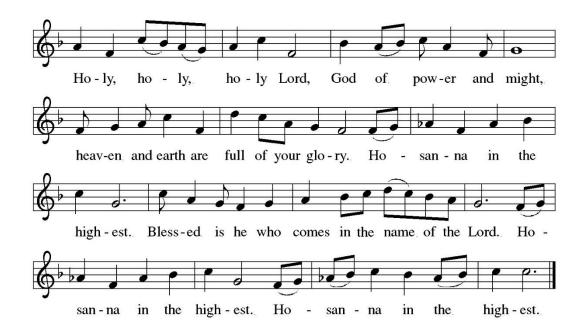
God our provider, bless us and these your gifts, which we receive from your bounty so that all people may know your goodness. Jesus, the bread of life is the host of this meal of grace and life at which we gather. Nourish us with this holy food and fill us with hunger for justice and peace through Jesus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



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.**

Chirist has thete. Chirist is risen. Chirist 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**

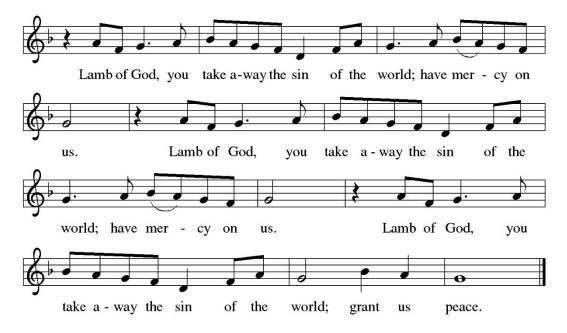
At this table there is abundance. Come and be nourished for the journey of faith. Come to this feast for hungry hearts. Come!

DISTRIBUTION OF COMMUNION

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



COMMUNION HYMN Be Thou My Vision (ELW 793)



***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 Canticle of the Turning (ELW 723)



*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

Assisting in worship today: Assisting Minister: Keith C Acolyte: Anna K Greeter: Ushers: David D Offering: Jules K & Abigail C

Attendance last week: 44 + 4 zoom

Notes for the day's texts:

The third covenant in this year's Lenten readings is the central one of Israel's history: the gift of the law to those God freed from slavery. The commandments begin with the statement that because God alone has freed us from the powers that oppressed us, we are to let nothing else claim first place in our lives. When Jesus throws the merchants out of the temple, he is defending the worship of God alone and rejecting the ways commerce and profit-making can become our gods. The Ten Commandments are essential to our baptismal call: centered first in God's liberating love, we strive to live out justice and mercy in our communities and the world.

Today's Music

Built on a Rock. Text: Nikolai F. S. Grundtvig, 1783-1872; tr. Carl Doving, 1867-1937, adapt., Music: Ludvig M. Lindeman, 1812-1887. Augsburg Fortress / Public Domain.

Oh, That the Lord Would Guide My Ways. Text: Isaac Watts, 1674-1748, alt., Music: William H. Havergal, 1793-1870. Public Domain.

Holy God, Holy and Glorious. Text: Susan R. Briehl, b. 1952, Music: Robert Buckley Farlee, b. 1950. GIA Publications, Inc./ Augsburg Fortress / Robert Buckley Farlee .

Be Thou My Vision. Text: Irish, 8th cent.; vers. Eleanor H. Hull, 1860-1935, alt.; tr. Mary E. Byrne, 1880-1931, Music: Irish traditional. Public Domain.

Canticle of the Turning. Text: Rory Cooney, b. 1952, based on the Magnificat, Music: Irish traditional. GIA Publications, Inc./ Public Domain.

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Next Week's Readings

Numbers 21:4-9 *The lifting up of the serpent* Psalm 107:1-3, 17-22 *You deliver your people from their distress* Ephesians 2:1-10 *Saved by grace through faith for good works* John 3:14-21 *The lifting up of the Son of Man*