



St. John's Lutheran Church

Evangelical Lutheran Church in America

God's work. Our hands.



The First Sunday in Lent

February 22, 2026

10:30 Holy Communion

We move into the second half of Matthew's gospel today. The first half of the gospel was about showing who Jesus was and what he could do. Now as we turn to the second half we learn about the disciples and the larger community around Jesus that is forming. Some welcome him. Some are angered. We'll find stories of both conflict and acceptance as people try to figure out what it means to follow Jesus.

Welcome to worship today!

If you are visiting with us we invite you to sign the Guest Book in the back of the sanctuary.

Large print bulletins are available on the usher's stand.

The Zoom feed for this service is available in the nursery.

† GATHERING †

Prelude and Announcements

Confession and Forgiveness

P: Blessed be the holy Trinity, one God,
who journeys with us these forty days,
and sustains us with the gift of grace.

C: Amen.

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

Silence for reflection and self-examination.

P: Gracious God,

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

P: For disregarding voices of those unimportant to us,
and for distrusting signs of your healing and hope in the world: Gracious
God,

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

P: For dwelling in tombs of self-pity and discontent,
and for disregarding Christ's call to come forth to life: Gracious God,

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

P: God's steadfast love, grace, and forgiveness abound.

Through faith, the free gift of God,

you have been clothed in the righteousness of Christ.

In the name of Jesus Christ, your sins are forgiven.

The Spirit of the One who raised Christ from the dead

dwells in you, pours God's love into your hearts,
and gives you life and peace.

C: Amen.

Gathering Hymn As the Deer
(For music turn to Hymn 2 in the Songbook binder)

**1. As the deer panteth for the water,
so my soul longeth after thee.
You alone are my heart's desire
And I long to worship thee.**

Refrain: **You alone are my strength, my shield;
To you alone may my spirit yield.
You alone are my heart's desire
And I long to worship thee.**

**2. You're my friend and You are my brother
even though you are a King.
I love you more than any other,
So much more than anything.** *Refrain*

**3. I want you more than gold or silver,
only You can satisfy.
You alone are the real joy-giver
And the apple of my eye.** *Refrain*

Text and music: Martin Nystrom; Copyright 1984 Maranatha Praise, Inc. CCLI # 1431

Greeting (2 Corinthians 13:13)

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

C: And also with you.

Gathering Dialog (Romans 10)

A: The word is near you,

C: on your lips and in your heart.

A: If you confess with your lips that Jesus is Lord,

C: and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved.

A: Faith comes from what is heard,

C: and what is heard comes through the word of Christ.

Prayer of the Day

A: Let us pray...

O God, the strength of all who hope in you, because we are weak mortals we accomplish nothing good without you. Help us to see and understand

the things we ought to do, and give us grace and power to do them, through Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord.

C: Amen.

† WORD †

First Reading Isaiah 29:13-16

B: ¹³The Lord said: Because these people draw near with their mouths and honor me with their lips, while their hearts are far from me, and their worship of me is a human commandment learned by rote; ¹⁴so I will again do amazing things with this people, shocking and amazing.

The wisdom of their wise shall perish, and the discernment of the discerning shall be hidden.

¹⁵Ha! You who hide a plan too deep for the LORD, whose deeds are in the dark, and who say, “Who sees us? Who knows us?”

¹⁶You turn things upside down! Shall the potter be regarded as the clay? Shall the thing made say of its maker, “He did not make me”; or the thing formed say of the one who formed it, “He has no understanding”?

After the reading the reader may say: The Word of the Lord

C: Thanks be to God.

Second Reading Matthew 13:54-16:12

D: [Jesus] came to his hometown and began to teach the people in their synagogue, so that they were astounded and said, “Where did this man get this wisdom and these deeds of power? ⁵⁵Is not this the carpenter’s son? Is not his mother called Mary? And are not his brothers James and Joseph and Simon and Judas? ⁵⁶And are not all his sisters with us? Where then did this man get all this?” ⁵⁷And they took offense at him. But Jesus said to them, **“Prophets are not without honor except in their own country and in their own house.”** ⁵⁸And he did not do many deeds of power there, because of their unbelief.

E: At that time Herod the ruler heard reports about Jesus; ²and he said to his servants, “This is John the Baptist; he has been raised from the dead,

and for this reason these powers are at work in him.”³ For Herod had arrested John, bound him, and put him in prison on account of Herodias, his brother Philip’s wife,⁴ because John had been telling him, “It is not lawful for you to have her.”⁵ Though Herod wanted to put him to death, he feared the crowd, because they regarded him as a prophet.⁶ But when Herod’s birthday came, the daughter of Herodias danced before the company, and she pleased Herod⁷ so much that he promised on oath to grant her whatever she might ask.⁸ Prompted by her mother, she said, “Give me the head of John the Baptist here on a platter.”⁹ The king was grieved, yet out of regard for his oaths and for the guests, he commanded it to be given;¹⁰ he sent and had John beheaded in the prison.¹¹ The head was brought on a platter and given to the girl, who brought it to her mother.¹² His disciples came and took the body and buried it; then they went and told Jesus.

A: Now when Jesus heard this, he withdrew from there in a boat to a deserted place by himself. But when the crowds heard it, they followed him on foot from the towns.¹⁴ When he went ashore, he saw a great crowd; and he had compassion for them and cured their sick.¹⁵ When it was evening, the disciples came to him and said, “This is a deserted place, and the hour is now late; send the crowds away so that they may go into the villages and buy food for themselves.”¹⁶ Jesus said to them, “**They need not go away; you give them something to eat.**”¹⁷ They replied, “We have nothing here but five loaves and two fish.”¹⁸ And he said, “**Bring them here to me.**”¹⁹ Then he ordered the crowds to sit down on the grass. Taking the five loaves and the two fish, he looked up to heaven, and blessed and broke the loaves, and gave them to the disciples, and the disciples gave them to the crowds.²⁰ And all ate and were filled; and they took up what was left over of the broken pieces, twelve baskets full.²¹ And those who ate were about five thousand men, besides women and children.

B: Immediately he made the disciples get into the boat and go on ahead to the other side, while he dismissed the crowds.²³ And after he had dismissed the crowds, he went up the mountain by himself to pray. When evening came, he was there alone,²⁴ but by this time the boat, battered by the waves, was far from the land, for the wind was against them.²⁵ And early in the morning he came walking toward them on the sea.²⁶ But when the disciples saw him walking on the sea, they were terrified, saying, “It is a ghost!” And they cried out in fear.²⁷ But immediately Jesus spoke to them and said, “**Take heart, it is I; do not be afraid.**”²⁸ Peter answered him, “Lord, if it is you, command me to come to you on

the water.”²⁹ He said, **“Come.”** So Peter got out of the boat, started walking on the water, and came toward Jesus.³⁰ But when he noticed the strong wind, he became frightened, and beginning to sink, he cried out, “Lord, save me!”³¹ Jesus immediately reached out his hand and caught him, saying to him, **“You of little faith, why did you doubt?”**³² When they got into the boat, the wind ceased.³³ And those in the boat worshiped him, saying, “Truly you are the Son of God.”

D: Then Pharisees and scribes came to Jesus from Jerusalem and said,²⁶ “Why do your disciples break the tradition of the elders? For they do not wash their hands before they eat.”³ He answered them, **“And why do you break the commandment of God for the sake of your tradition? ⁴For God said, ‘Honor your father and your mother,’ and, ‘Whoever speaks evil of father or mother must surely die.’ ⁵But you say that whoever tells father or mother, ‘Whatever support you might have had from me is given to God,’ then that person need not honor the father. ⁶So, for the sake of your tradition, you make void the word of God. ⁷You hypocrites! Isaiah prophesied rightly about you when he said:**

**⁸“This people honors me with their lips,
but their hearts are far from me;
⁹in vain do they worship me,
teaching human precepts as doctrines.”**

E: Then he called the crowd to him and said to them, **“Listen and understand: ¹¹it is not what goes into the mouth that defiles a person, but it is what comes out of the mouth that defiles.”**¹² Then the disciples approached and said to him, “Do you know that the Pharisees took offense when they heard what you said?”¹³ He answered, **“Every plant that my heavenly Father has not planted will be uprooted. ¹⁴Let them alone; they are blind guides of the blind. And if one blind person guides another, both will fall into a pit.”**¹⁵ But Peter said to him, “Explain this parable to us.”¹⁶ Then he said, **“Are you also still without understanding? ¹⁷Do you not see that whatever goes into the mouth enters the stomach, and goes out into the sewer? ¹⁸But what comes out of the mouth proceeds from the heart, and this is what defiles. ¹⁹For out of the heart come evil intentions, murder, adultery, fornication, theft, false witness, slander. ²⁰These are what defile a person, but to eat with unwashed hands does not defile.”**

A: Jesus left that place and went away to the district of Tyre and Sidon.²² Just then a Canaanite woman from that region came out and started

shouting, "Have mercy on me, Lord, Son of David; my daughter is tormented by a demon."²³ But he did not answer her at all. And his disciples came and urged him, saying, "Send her away, for she keeps shouting after us."²⁴ He answered, "**I was sent only to the lost sheep of the house of Israel.**"²⁵ But she came and knelt before him, saying, "Lord, help me."²⁶ He answered, "**It is not fair to take the children's food and throw it to the dogs.**"²⁷ She said, "Yes, Lord, yet even the dogs eat the crumbs that fall from their masters' table."²⁸ Then Jesus answered her, "**Woman, great is your faith! Let it be done for you as you wish.**" And her daughter was healed instantly.

B: After Jesus had left that place, he passed along the Sea of Galilee, and he went up the mountain, where he sat down.³⁰ Great crowds came to him, bringing with them the lame, the maimed, the blind, the mute, and many others. They put them at his feet, and he cured them,³¹ so that the crowd was amazed when they saw the mute speaking, the maimed whole, the lame walking, and the blind seeing. And they praised the God of Israel.

³²Then Jesus called his disciples to him and said, "**I have compassion for the crowd, because they have been with me now for three days and have nothing to eat; and I do not want to send them away hungry, for they might faint on the way.**"³³ The disciples said to him, "Where are we to get enough bread in the desert to feed so great a crowd?"³⁴ Jesus asked them, "**How many loaves have you?**" They said, "Seven, and a few small fish."³⁵ Then ordering the crowd to sit down on the ground,³⁶ he took the seven loaves and the fish; and after giving thanks he broke them and gave them to the disciples, and the disciples gave them to the crowds.³⁷ And all of them ate and were filled; and they took up the broken pieces left over, seven baskets full.³⁸ Those who had eaten were four thousand men, besides women and children.³⁹ After sending away the crowds, he got into the boat and went to the region of Magadan.

D: The Pharisees and Sadducees came, and to test Jesus they asked him to show them a sign from heaven.² He answered them, "**When it is evening, you say, 'It will be fair weather, for the sky is red.'**³ **And in the morning, 'It will be stormy today, for the sky is red and threatening.'** You know how to interpret the appearance of the sky, but you cannot interpret the signs of the times.⁴ **An evil and adulterous generation asks for a sign, but no sign will be given to it except the sign of Jonah.**" Then he left them and went away.

E: When the disciples reached the other side, they had forgotten to bring any bread. ⁶Jesus said to them, **“Watch out, and beware of the yeast of the Pharisees and Sadducees.”** ⁷They said to one another, “It is because we have brought no bread.” ⁸And becoming aware of it, Jesus said, **“You of little faith, why are you talking about having no bread? ⁹Do you still not perceive? Do you not remember the five loaves for the five thousand, and how many baskets you gathered? ¹⁰Or the seven loaves for the four thousand, and how many baskets you gathered? ¹¹How could you fail to perceive that I was not speaking about bread? Beware of the yeast of the Pharisees and Sadducees!”** ¹²Then they understood that he had not told them to beware of the yeast of bread, but of the teaching of the Pharisees and Sadducees.

After the reading the reader may say: The Word of the Lord

C: Thanks be to God.

Children's Sermon

Sermon

Hymn of the Day Eternal Father Strong to Save
(For music see Hymn 756 in the Red Hymnal)

1. **Eternal Father, strong to save,
whose arm has bound the restless wave,
who bade the mighty ocean deep
its own appointed limits keep:
oh, hear us when we cry to thee
for those in peril on the sea.**
2. **O Savior, whose almighty word
the winds and waves submissive heard,
who walked upon the foaming deep,
and calm amid the storm didst sleep:
oh, hear us when we cry to thee
for those in peril on the sea.**
3. **O Holy Spirit, who didst brood
upon the chaos dark and rude,
and bid its angry tumult cease,
and give, for wild confusion, peace:
oh, hear us when we cry to thee
for those in peril on the sea.**

4. **O Trinity of love and pow’r,
all trav’lers guard in danger’s hour
from rock and tempest, fire and foe,
protect them where-so-e’er they go;
thus evermore shall rise to thee
glad hymns and praise from land and sea.**

Text: William Whiting, 1825-1878, alt. Music: John B. Dykes, 1823-1876

Response to the Word

P: In Christ you have heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation.

C: We believe in him and are marked with the seal of the promised Holy Spirit.

P: Living together in trust and hope, we confess our faith.

**C: 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.**

A: Build yourselves up on your most holy faith;

C: pray in the Holy Spirit. *(Jude 20)*

A: Keep yourselves in the love of God;

C: look forward to the mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ. *(Jude 21)*

A: If anyone is in Christ, there is a new creation:

**C: Everything old has passed away;
behold, everything has become new!** *(2 Corinthians 5:17)*

Peace

P: The peace of the Lord be with you always.

C: And also with you.

P: Let us share that peace with one another.

The congregation may greet one another with a sign of Christ's peace.

† THANKSGIVING †

Gathering of Prayers and Offerings

You are invited to write a prayer concern on the small blank slip of paper in your worship bulletin. This slip will be collected by the ushers in the offering plates. The concerns raised will be prayed for later in the service.

Special Music

Offering Prayer

P: Let us pray: Gracious God,

C: in the abundance of your steadfast love, you call us from death to life, from silence to speech, from idleness to action. With these gifts we offer ourselves to you, and with the Church through all the ages we give thanks for your saving love in Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

Prayers of Intercession

P: With the whole people of God in Christ Jesus, let us pray for the church, those in need, and all of God's creation.

Issues raised by the congregation lifted in prayer.

The prayer concludes:

P: Into your hands, gracious God, we commend all for whom we pray, trusting in your mercy; through Jesus Christ our Savior.

C: Amen.

Lord's Prayer

P: Lord remember us in your kingdom and teach us to pray:

**C: Our Father, who art in heaven,
hallowed be thy name,
thy kingdom come,
thy will be done, on earth as it is in heaven.**

**Give us this day our daily bread;
and forgive us our trespasses,**

as we forgive those who trespass against us;
and lead us not into temptation,
but deliver us from evil.
For thine is the kingdom,
and the power, and the glory,
forever and ever. Amen.

✠ SENDING ✠

Blessing

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

Sending Hymn Through the Night of Doubt and Sorrow
(For music see Hymn 327 in the Red Hymnal)

1. **Through the night of doubt and sorrow,
onward goes the pilgrim band,
singing songs of expectation,
marching to the promised land.
Clear before us through the darkness
gleams and burns the guiding light;
pilgrim clasps the hand of pilgrim
stepping fearless through the night.**
2. **One the light of God's own presence
on the ransomed people shed,
chasing far the gloom and terror,
bright'ning all the path we tread.
One the object of our journey,
one the faith which never tires,
one the earnest looking forward,
one the hope of God inspires.**
3. **One the strain that lips of thousands
lift as from the heart of one;
one the conflict, one the peril,**

**one the march in God begun.
One the gladness of rejoicing
on the far eternal shore,
where the one almighty Father
reigns in love forevermore.**

- 4. Onward, therefore, sisters, brothers;
onward, with the cross our aid.
Bear its shame, and fight its battle
till we rest beneath its shade.
Soon shall come the great awak'ning;
soon the rending of the tomb!
Then the scatt'ring of all shadows,
and the end of toil and gloom.**

Text: Berhardt S. Ingemann, 1789-1862; tr. Sabine Baring-Gould, 1834-1924, alt. Music: Thomas J. Williams, 1869-1944; arr. Richard W. Hillert, b. 1923. Arrangement copyright 1969 Concordia Publishing House

Dismissal

P: Go in peace. Serve the Lord.

C: God's Work. Our Hands.

Worship assistants TODAY:

Greeters and Ushers	Linda Flood
Acolyte	Thomas Bullwinkle
Counters	Burdie Gillern and Janice Lockwood
Coffee Hour	

Worship assistants for next Sunday, March 1, 2026

Greeters and Ushers	Janice Lockwood
Acolyte	Alyssa Young
Altar Care	Gary Boisseau
Communion Assistant	Emma Deibler
Counters	Bruce and Connie Stevenson
Coffee Hour	

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