



St. John's Lutheran Church

Evangelical Lutheran Church in America

God's work. Our hands.



4th Sunday in Lent—Matthew 19:1-15

March 15, 2026

10:30 Holy Communion

Last Sunday we read Matthew 18, often called the “Community Discourse.” There Jesus talked about the principles the new community of the church should live by. Today we enter Matthew 19. The discourse may be over but the themes remain. How do we handle broken relationships, ethical traps, and putting resources into those who cannot repay? These are the thoughts behind what we’ll read today.

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

Gathering Hymn Tree of Life and Awesome Mystery
(Vs. 1-3, Lent 5. For music turn to Hymn 334 in the Red Hymnal)

- 1. Tree of Life and awesome mystery,
in your death we are reborn;
though you die in all of hist'ry,
still you rise with every morn,
still you rise with every morn.**
- 2. We remember truth once spoken,
love passed on through act and word;
ev'ry person lost and broken
wears the body of our Lord,
wears the body of our Lord.**
- 3. Christ, you lead and we shall follow,
stumbling though our steps may be;
one with you in joy and sorrow,
we the river, you the sea,
we the river, you the sea.**

Lent 5 **God of all our fear and sorrow,
God who loves beyond our death,
hold us close through each tomorrow,
love as near as ev'ry breath,
love as near as ev'ry breath.**

Text and music: Marty Haugen, b. 1950; Copyright 1984 GIA Publications, Inc.

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.

Hymn of Praise O God, Why Are You Silent
(For music see Hymn 703 in the Red Hymnal)

1. **O God, why are you silent?**

**I cannot hear your voice;
the proud and strong and violent
all claim you and rejoice;
you promised you would hold me
with tenderness and care.
Draw near, O Love, enfold me,
and ease the pain I bear.**

2. **My hope lies bruised and battered,
my wounded heart is torn;
my spirit spent and shattered**

**by life's relentless storm;
will you not bend to hear me,
my cries from deep within?
Have you no word to cheer me
when night is closing in?**

**3. Through endless nights of weeping,
through weary days of grief,
my heart is in your keeping,
my comfort, my relief.
Come, share my tears and sadness,
come, suffer in my pain,
oh, bring me home to gladness,
restore my hope again.**

**4. May pain draw forth compassion,
let wisdom rise from loss;
oh, take my heart and fashion
the image of your cross;
then may I know your healing
through healing that I share,
your grace and love revealing,
your tenderness and care.**

Text: Marty Haugen, b. 1950, copyright 2003 GIA Publications, Inc. Music: Hans Leo Hassler, 1564-1612; arr. J. S. Bach, 1685-1750

Prayer of the Day

A: Let us pray...

Sovereign God, you have created us to live in loving community with one another. Form us for life that is faithful and steadfast, and teach us to trust like little children, that we may reflect the image of your Son, Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord.

C: Amen.

‡ WORD ‡

First Reading Genesis 2:18-24

B: ¹⁸Then the LORD God said, "It is not good that the man should be alone; I will make him a helper as his partner." ¹⁹So out of the ground the LORD God formed every animal of the field and every bird of the air, and brought them to the man to see what he would call them; and whatever the man called every living creature, that was its name. ²⁰The

man gave names to all cattle, and to the birds of the air, and to every animal of the field; but for the man there was not found a helper as his partner.

²¹So the LORD God caused a deep sleep to fall upon the man, and he slept; then he took one of his ribs and closed up its place with flesh. ²²And the rib that the LORD God had taken from the man he made into a woman and brought her to the man. ²³Then the man said, "This at last is bone of my bones and flesh of my flesh; this one shall be called Woman, for out of Man this one was taken." ²⁴Therefore a man leaves his father and his mother and clings to his wife, and they become one flesh.

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

C: Thanks be to God.

Scripture Poetry Psalm 8 (read responsively)

D: Lord our God,
the whole world tells
the greatness of your name.
Your glory reaches beyond the stars.

**C: Even the babble of infants
declares your strength,
your power to halt
the enemy and avenger.**

D: I see your handiwork
in the heavens:
the moon and the stars
you set in place.

**C: What is humankind
that you remember them,
the human race that you care for them?**

D: You treat them like gods,
dressing them in glory and splendor.

**C: You give them charge of the earth,
laying all at their feet:**

D: cattle and sheep,
wild beasts,
birds of the sky,
fish of the sea,
every swimming creature.

**C: Lord our God,
the whole world tells
the greatness of your name.**

Second Reading Hebrews 1:1-4, 2:5-12

E: Long ago God spoke to our ancestors in many and various ways by the prophets, ²but in these last days he has spoken to us by a Son, whom he appointed heir of all things, through whom he also created the worlds. ³He is the reflection of God's glory and the exact imprint of God's very being, and he sustains all things by his powerful word. When he had made purification for sins, he sat down at the right hand of the Majesty on high, ⁴having become as much superior to angels as the name he has inherited is more excellent than theirs.

⁵Now God did not subject the coming world, about which we are speaking, to angels. ⁶But someone has testified somewhere, "What are human beings that you are mindful of them, or mortals, that you care for them? ⁷You have made them for a little while lower than the angels; you have crowned them with glory and honor, ⁸subjecting all things under their feet." Now in subjecting all things to them, God left nothing outside their control. As it is, we do not yet see everything in subjection to them, ⁹but we do see Jesus, who for a little while was made lower than the angels, now crowned with glory and honor because of the suffering of death, so that by the grace of God he might taste death for everyone. ¹⁰It was fitting that God, for whom and through whom all things exist, in bringing many children to glory, should make the pioneer of their salvation perfect through sufferings. ¹¹For the one who sanctifies and those who are sanctified all have one Father. For this reason Jesus is not ashamed to call them brothers and sisters, ¹²saying, "I will proclaim your name to my brothers and sisters, in the midst of the congregation I will praise you."

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

C: Thanks be to God.

Gospel Acclamation (1 John 4:12)

C: If we love one another, God lives in us and God's love is perfected in us.

Gospel Reading Matthew 19:1-15

The gospel is announced:

P: The Holy Gospel according to St. Matthew the 19th chapter.

C: Glory to you O Lord.

When Jesus had finished saying these things, he left Galilee and went to the region of Judea beyond the Jordan. ²Large crowds followed him, and he cured them there.

³Some Pharisees came to him, and to test him they asked, "Is it lawful for a man to divorce his wife for any cause?" ⁴He answered, "Have you not

read that the one who made them at the beginning ‘made them male and female,’ ⁵and said, ‘For this reason a man shall leave his father and mother and be joined to his wife, and the two shall become one flesh’? ⁶So they are no longer two, but one flesh. Therefore what God has joined together, let no one separate.” ⁷They said to him, “Why then did Moses command us to give a certificate of dismissal and to divorce her?” ⁸He said to them, “It was because you were so hard-hearted that Moses allowed you to divorce your wives, but from the beginning it was not so. ⁹And I say to you, whoever divorces his wife, except for unchastity, and marries another commits adultery.” ¹⁰His disciples said to him, “If such is the case of a man with his wife, it is better not to marry.” ¹¹But he said to them, “Not everyone can accept this teaching, but only those to whom it is given. ¹²For there are eunuchs who have been so from birth, and there are eunuchs who have been made eunuchs by others, and there are eunuchs who have made themselves eunuchs for the sake of the kingdom of heaven. Let anyone accept this who can.”

Then little children were being brought to him in order that he might lay his hands on them and pray. The disciples spoke sternly to those who brought them; ¹⁴but Jesus said, “Let the little children come to me, and do not stop them; for it is to such as these that the kingdom of heaven belongs.” ¹⁵And he laid his hands on them and went on his way.

After the reading:

P: The Gospel of the Lord

C: Praise to you O Christ.

Children’s Sermon

Sermon

Hymn of the Day Christ Is Made the Sure Foundation
(For music turn to Hymn 645 in the Red Hymnal)

- 1. Christ is made the sure foundation,
Christ, our head and cornerstone,
chosen of the Lord and precious,
binding all the church in one;
holy Zion’s help forever
and our confidence alone.**
- 2. To this temple, where we call you,
come, O Lord of hosts, and stay;
come with all your loving kindness,**

**hear your people as they pray;
and your fullest benediction
shed within these walls today.**

**3. Here bestow on all your servants
what they seek from you to gain;
what they gain from you, forever
with the blessed to retain;
and hereafter in your glory
evermore with you to reign.**

**4. Praise and honor to the Father,
praise and honor to the Son,
praise and honor to the Spirit,
ever blessed three and ever one:
one in might and one in glory
while unending ages run!**

Text: Latin hymn, c. 7th century; tr. John Mason Neale, 1818-18666, alt. Music: Henry Purcell, 1659-1695; arr. Ernest Hawkins, 1802-1868

Nicene Creed

P: We confirm our faith with the Nicene Creed

C: We believe in one God, the Father, the Almighty, maker of heaven and earth, of all that is, seen and unseen.

We believe in one Lord, Jesus Christ, the only Son of God, eternally begotten of the Father, God from God, Light from Light, true God from true God, begotten, not made, of one Being with the Father; through him all things were made. For us and for our salvation he came down from heaven, was incarnate of the virgin Mary and became truly human. For our sake he was crucified under Pontius Pilate; he suffered death and was buried. On the third day he rose again, in accordance with the scriptures; he ascended into heaven and is seated at the right hand of the Father. He will come again in glory to judge the living and the dead, and his kingdom will have no end.

We believe in the Holy Spirit, the Lord, the giver of life, who proceeds from the Father and the Son, who with the Father and the Son is worshiped and glorified, who has spoken through the prophets. We believe in one holy catholic and apostolic church. We acknowledge one baptism for the forgiveness of sins. We look for the resurrection of the dead, and the life of the world to come. Amen.

Peace

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

C: And also with you.

P: We share that peace with one another.

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

Offertory and 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.

Hymn of Thanksgiving Let the Vineyards Be Fruitful Lord

For music turn to page 35 in the Blue Hymnal

**Let the vineyards be fruitful, Lord,
and fill to the brim our cup of blessing.**

**Gather a harvest from the seeds that were sown,
that we may be fed with the bread of life.**

**Gather the hopes and dreams of all;
unite them with the prayers we offer now.**

**Grace our table with your presence, Lord,
and give us a foretaste of the feast to come.**

Offering Prayer

P: Let us pray: O God, maker of heaven and earth,

C: your steadfast love embraces all creation. You send rain and sunshine to nourish this earth and bring forth its bounty. Through these gifts of bread and wine, draw us into the death and life of your Son, who calls us to bear witness to his saving work. We ask this in Jesus' name. 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 are 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.

† MEAL †

Great Thanksgiving

P: The Lord be with you.

C: And also with you.

P: Lift up your hearts.

C: We lift them to the Lord.

P: Let us give thanks to the Lord our God.

C: It is right to give our thanks and praise.

P: 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 in their unending hymn:

(Isaiah 6:3, spoken)

C: Holy, holy, holy Lord,

God of power and might,

Heaven and earth are full of your glory.

Hosanna in the highest.

Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord.

Hosanna in the highest.

P: In the night in which he was handed over our Lord Jesus took bread, 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."

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.

Invitation to Communion

P: Come to the table. Feast on God's goodness and mercy.

Communion Distribution

Welcome to the Lord's Supper! All who are baptized are invited to receive communion. We use wheat bread and wine for communion. If you would prefer a gluten free wafer instead of bread please tell the communion assistant. Also, if you prefer grape juice to wine, it is available pre-filled in the individual glasses. As we commune together everyone is invited to sing the following hymns:

Lamb of God (Page 39 of the Blue Hymnal)

338 *Beneath the Cross of Jesus (Red Hymnal)*

339 *Christ, the Life of All the Living (Red Hymnal)*

Communion Blessing *After all have communed the pastor will say:*

P: The body and the blood of our Lord Jesus Christ strengthen you and keep you in his grace.

C: Amen.

Post Communion Prayer

A: Let us pray: Generous Host,
You have shared your feast with us and made us new.
Send us now to set tables of love and grace in our communities,
that your liberating love might nourish the world into freedom,
in the name of the crucified one, Jesus Christ our Lord.

C: 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 Cry of My Heart

(For music turn to Hymn 10 in the Songbook binder)

Refrain (2x)

It is the cry of my heart to follow You.

**It is the cry of my heart to be close to You.
It is the cry of my heart to follow all of the days of my life.**

- 1. Teach me Your holy ways O Lord,
so I can walk in Your truth.
Teach me Your holy ways O Lord
and make me wholly devoted to you.**

Refrain

**It is the cry of my heart to follow You.
It is the cry of my heart to be close to You.
It is the cry of my heart to follow all of the days of my life.**

- 2. Open my eyes so I can see
the wonderful things that You do.
Open my heart up more and more,
and make it wholly devoted to You. *Refrain (2x)***

Text and music: Terry Butler; Copyright 1991 Mercy/Vineyard Publishing; CCLI# 844980

Dismissal

P: Go in peace. Serve the Lord.

C: **God's Work. Our Hands.**

Worship assistants TODAY:

Greeters and Ushers	Bruce and Connie Stevenson
Acolyte	Elijah Young
Altar Care	Gary Boisseau
Communion Assistant	Janice Lockwood
Counters	John and Linda Thompson
Coffee Hour	Almost St. Patrick's Potluck

Worship assistants for next Sunday, March 22, 2026

Greeters and Ushers	John and Linda Thompson
Acolyte	Thomas Bullwinkle
Counters	Michele Myers and Anne Stromstad
Coffee Hour	

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