



Sunday, March 1, 2026

10:00 a.m.



Pastor Erik Allen

“God’s Math”



## WE GATHER TO WORSHIP

### Prelude

“Lord, You I Love With All My Heart”

Gerhard Krapf

### Announcements

### Gathering Song

Thy Word

### Call to Worship

P: Children of God, in Lent we remember that our salvation is an unearned gift, that new life is a matter of faith, not of works.

**C: We gather to lay down the burden of trying to earn our salvation.**

P: Like Nicodemus, who met Jesus in the dark of night, we struggle to accept that new life is not just possible but given as a free gift of grace.

**C: We gather to bring our struggles into the light and embrace God’s grace with open arms.**

P: Like Paul writing to the Romans, we remember God’s promise of new life has always rested on grace.

**C: We gather to receive the promise of salvation by grace through faith.**

P: Like the many who have followed, questioned, and grown in the faith, we submit ourselves to be formed by grace as we work out our salvation day by day.

**C: We gather as people guided by the promise of new life, a promise fulfilled by Christ, whose path we follow.**

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

**C: And also with you.**

*pass the peace as you feel comfortable*

### Song

Sometimes by Step

### Confession and Forgiveness

P: Blessed be the holy Trinity, ✠ one God, who looks upon us in compassion, forgives our sin, and heals our lives.

**C: Amen.**

P: Let us confess our sin in the presence of God and of one another.

*The assembly kneels or stands. Silence is kept for reflection.*

P: Have mercy, O God,

**C: against you, you alone, we have sinned. In your compassion, cleanse us from our sin and take away our guilt. Create in us a new heart and give us a steadfast spirit. Do not cast us away, but fill us with your Holy Spirit and restore your joy within us. Amen.**

P: God, who is rich in mercy, loved us even when we were dead in sin, and made us alive together with Christ. By grace you have been saved. In the name of ✠ Jesus Christ, your sins are forgiven. Almighty God strengthen you with power through the Holy Spirit, that Christ may live in your hearts through faith.

**C: Amen.**

### **Prayer of the Day**

P: O God, our leader and guide, in the waters of baptism you bring us to new birth to live as your children. Strengthen our faith in your promises, that by your Spirit we may lift up your life to all the world through your Son, Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever.

**C: Amen.**

*please be seated*

**Lesson** Romans 4:1-5, 13-17

**Gospel** John 3:1-17

### **Gospel Response**

P: Word of God, Word of life.

**C: Thanks be to God.**

**Children's Message** Pastor Erik

**Sermon** "God's Math" Pastor Erik

**Hymn** God Loved the World ELW 323

### **The Apostles' Creed**

**C: I believe in God, the Father almighty, Creator of heaven and earth.**

**I believe in Jesus Christ, His only Son, our Lord.**

**He was conceived by the power of the Holy Spirit and born of the virgin Mary.**

He 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,  
and is seated at the right hand of the Father.  
He will come again 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.

*please be seated*

## The Offering

*There are baskets in the back of the Sanctuary for our special 1<sup>st</sup> Sunday Offering which is given to World Hunger through ELCA.*

If you would like, you may give online by scanning the QR code  
or Offering Plates are located at the back of the Sanctuary.



## Offering Response

Blessed Assurance  
vs 3

ELW 323

## Offertory Prayer

- P: O God, maker of heaven and earth, your steadfast love embraces all creation. You send rain and sunshine to nourish the 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.
- C: **Amen.**

**Prayers of the Church** (*the congregation joins in speaking the first names of those for whom we pray.*)

Members: Liz, Bob, Lee, Marion, Kelly, Marj, Vickie

Family & Friends: Jerry, Melanie, Charles, Mark, Faizah, Chuck,  
Sylvia, Bill, Marie, Mary, Carol, Bob

## **Communion**

## **Words of Institution**

### **The Lord's Prayer**

**C: Our Father in heaven, hallowed be Your name, Your kingdom come, Your will be done, on earth as in heaven. Give us today our daily bread. Forgive us our sins as we forgive those who sin against us. Save us from the time of trial and deliver us from evil. For the Kingdom, the power, and the glory are Yours, now and forever. Amen!**

### **Invitation to Communion**

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

*please be seated.*

### **Distribution**

*All baptized Christians who seek the blessings of Christ's true body and blood in the bread and wine of Holy Communion are welcome. Those who do not wish to receive may come forward for a blessing. Please let your server know if you desire a gluten-free wafer.*

### **Benediction**

P: Receive the blessing of the holy Trinity: God, 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.**

**Song** Sanctuary

### **Sending**

P: Go in peace. Serve the Lord!

**C: Thanks be to God!**

**Postlude** "Toccata" Johann Speth

*Please join us in Fellowship Hall for 1st Sunday Fellowship*

## Announcements

### 1<sup>st</sup> Sunday Fellowship

Join us in Fellowship Hall following worship as Worship & Music provides treats and fellowship time. There will also be an opportunity to learn about our tech, altar guild, and musical groups if you might be interested spreading your wings and joining a group.

### New WOW Bible Study

Beginning March 18th WOW will be starting a 4 week study on “Proverbs – Everlasting Wisdom for Everyday Life” by Vance Pitman. This study is open to all women – those who have never studied the Bible before and those seasoned studiers. Friends, neighbors, family are all welcome. If you have not been part of WOW before please let Donna Frazier or Becky Ellis know that you would like a book so we order enough. WOW meets Wednesday mornings from 9:15-11:00 in the Parlor.

### Share the Story! - Assistant Teacher for Gloryland

If you want to share the stories in the Bible to our youngest disciples, we could sure use your help! We are looking for an assistant teacher to help with the K-5 Gloryland class. If you are interested in helping out or have any questions, please contact Liz Lichtenberger at ehv1215@yahoo.com. There's really nothing better than being the vessel that ignites the love of Jesus in someone's heart.

### Confirmation & Youth

Don't miss out on the fun, food and discussions each Sunday evening. Our Confirmation and Youth Groups meet beginning at 5:00 pm. If you're interested in joining and have questions, talk to Pastor Erik or Jenn Stumpp for details.

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## Weekly Activities

- SUNDAY, March 1

9:00 am Christian Ed  
10:00 am Worship  
11:00 am 1st Sunday Fellowship  
2:15 pm Chinese Orchestra  
4:00 pm Girl Scouts  
5:00 pm Bell Rehearsal  
5:00 pm Confirmation/Youth

- MONDAY, March 2

10:00 am Craft Group  
7:00 pm Aphasia Support

- TUESDAY, March 3

4:15 pm Girls on the Run  
7:00 pm Boy Scouts

- WEDNESDAY, March 4

8:30 am Men's Bible Study  
9:30 am WOW  
3:00 pm Women's Prayer Group  
7:00 pm Worship  
7:30 pm Choir Practice

- THURSDAY, March 5

4:15 pm Girls on the Run  
6:00 pm Lion Dance  
6:15 pm Girl Scouts  
7:00 pm Worship & Music

- SATURDAY, March 7

1:00 pm Chinese Dance  
5:00 pm Chinese Gathering

## WEEKLY DEVOTIONS

### Theme of the Week: Christ Meets Us in the Weakness of His Disciples

The powers of evil afflict even those whose faith is deep and sincere. Tormented by temptation, burdened by conscience, and watching their children suffer, the faithful cry out, “Have mercy on me, Lord, Son of David.” Our prayers rise to God, yet help can seem slow in coming. In our waiting, we may be tempted to despair or to believe that our prayers do not matter. Yet the psalmist reminds us, “Weeping may linger for the night, but joy comes with the morning” (Psalm 30:5). Our prayers are precious to God. God answers not because we have earned it, but because of steadfast love revealed in Jesus Christ, whose life, death, and resurrection proclaim mercy stronger than suffering.

#### SUNDAY SCRIPTURE: Matthew 15:21–28 Persistence of Prayer

Prayer is bold, persistent, and clings to God’s promises even when silence meets us. We see this in the Canaanite woman who approaches Jesus, pleading for her daughter’s healing. At first, she is ignored. The disciples want her sent away. Jesus speaks of his mission in ways that reflect the boundaries of his time. Yet she persists. Even when his words seem harsh, she refuses to let go of hope. She trusts that God’s mercy cannot be contained or rationed. In her courageous faith, she reveals the wideness of God’s grace. Jesus honors her persistence and heals her daughter. *Lord, make us persistent and courageous in prayer, trusting that Your mercy reaches beyond every boundary. Amen.*

#### MONDAY SCRIPTURE: Psalm 130 A Psalm of Hope

Psalm 130 begins in the depths, with a cry for mercy rising from honest anguish. The psalmist dares to name despair and yet refuses to surrender hope. “If you, O Lord, should mark iniquities, who could stand?” But with God there is forgiveness and steadfast love. This promise transforms fear into watchful expectation. We wait for God as those who long for morning light. Luther reminds us that the Law names the truth of our brokenness, and the Gospel proclaims God’s liberating grace. In the depths we discover not condemnation, but the God who redeems. *Lord, teach us to trust Your steadfast love as the extraordinary gift it is. Amen.*

#### TUESDAY SCRIPTURE: 1 Thessalonians 4:1–7 The Will of God

God calls us to lives shaped by dignity, justice, and love—not by exploitation, shame, or harm. In a culture that often treats bodies as commodities and desire as entitlement, Scripture invites us into relationships marked by mutuality, consent, faithfulness, and care. Sexual immorality is not simply about rule-breaking; it is about ways of living that diminish ourselves or others. God’s vision for human intimacy is rooted in covenantal love and respect, whether in marriage or in singleness. As a community, we are called to model relationships that reflect Christ’s self-giving love. *Holy God, may your Spirit, form us to be people whose lives embody integrity, compassion, and joy. Amen.*

#### WEDNESDAY SCRIPTURE: Isaiah 45:20–25 One God, One Savior

When God confronts us, it is never to shame us but to draw us back into life. We are constantly tempted to place our trust in lesser powers—status, security, ideology, or self-sufficiency. Through the Scriptures, God calls us back to the One who creates and redeems. There is no other source of ultimate hope. Yet this God comes not in domination, but in mercy. In Jesus Christ we see the heart of God—righteous, compassionate, and saving. On

the cross, Christ meets the full force of sin and suffering and transforms it into reconciliation and new life. *God of mercy, keep our hearts centered in You, our true and faithful Savior. Amen.*

**THURSDAY SCRIPTURE: Mark 9:17–29 “I Believe; Help My Unbelief”**

A child is suffering, and the disciples are unable to bring healing. Jesus laments their small faith and invites the child forward. To the anguished parent he says, “All things are possible for one who believes.” The father responds with breathtaking honesty: “I believe; help my unbelief.” This is the prayer of every disciple. Faith is not certainty; it is trust born in vulnerability. In Word and Sacrament, God meets us precisely in that fragile place. In baptism, God claims us, rescues us from all that diminishes life, and raises us into Christ’s new creation. *Lord Jesus, meet us in our doubt and lift us into deeper trust and hope. Amen.*

**FRIDAY SCRIPTURE: James 5:13–20 Praying with the Sick**

So much of any type of caring ministry is found in these verses: listening to suffering, praying with those in pain, giving thanks in moments of joy, and anointing with oil as a sign of the Spirit’s presence. God does not promise freedom from every illness, but God does promise accompaniment. Even when bodies fail, the Spirit sustains life and hope. At the heart of Christian care is the proclamation of forgiveness—God’s unconditional grace in Christ. In suffering, people often seek explanations. What we most need is assurance that nothing—not illness, not fear, not even death—can separate us from God’s love. *Healing God, restore our souls with Your forgiving grace and sustain us in resurrection hope. Amen.*

**SATURDAY SCRIPTURE: Psalm 25 Guard My Soul and Deliver Me**

Our hope rests in the God whose mercy is from everlasting to everlasting. In vulnerability, the psalmist prays, “To you, O Lord, I lift up my soul... Turn to me and be gracious to me.” This is not a prayer of perfection, but of dependence. We ask for guidance, forgiveness, and deliverance—not because we are worthy, but because God is gracious. In Christ, our Redeemer, we see that God has entered fully into human weakness, bearing shame and suffering to reconcile us and renew us. Thanks be to God! *Gracious God, hold us in Your mercy, forgive us, and strengthen us to live in Your love. Amen.*