

God's Surprising Strategies for Getting Sinners Back Home

*Theme of the Day: Always Present, Always Patient*

**PEACE**  
LUTHERAN CHURCH

Houghton, Michigan  
Sunday, March 23, 2025

## **Welcome to Worship**

God's grace welcomes you, and so do we — the pastor and members of Peace! Jesus Christ is the only Savior of all people. By his perfect life, innocent death and triumphant resurrection, Jesus saves all sinners. We learn these truths from the Bible — God's complete plan for our salvation and his guidebook for our lives. Peace greets you with a warm welcome. We look forward to seeing you again soon!

## **About Our Service**

The gospel (or good news) is not just information about what Jesus did to save sinners. It is also the power God uses to work faith in our hearts, transform our lives, and give us lasting peace. Therefore, Lutheran Worship places the gospel in central focus in an order of service called the liturgy. In the message and meal (Holy Communion), in specially selected Scripture readings, and in carefully crafted songs, prayers, and creeds, the liturgy proclaims the good news about Jesus from start to finish. Lutheran worship is also designed to include the participation of the entire assembly (including children). For your ease and convenience, the order of service is printed out on the following pages. If a song is not found in this service folder, it can be found in the red or blue hymnals located on the chair in front of you.

## **Series Explanation: Open Door Policies**

When a wayward child wanders far from home, how does a loving parent pursue them without driving them further away? One thing that parent does is let the child know that there is an ongoing open-door policy. The child knows they will always be welcomed back home. Likewise, when we wander from God, he always keeps his door open for us. But God doesn't passively wait for us to return. He lovingly pursues sinners in ways that make them long for home.

In the Church Year, we have come to the season of Lent. The word Lent comes from an old English word for spring: "lengthen," when the days grow longer. For over 1400 years, the church has set aside the 40 days between Ash Wednesday and Easter as a time of repentance and renewal. In this 40-day journey to the cross and tomb, we will see the surprising strategies our heavenly Father uses for getting sinners back home, close to him and the loving care he offers.

## **Worship Series Schedule: Open Door Policies**

Ash Wednesday: *Lowering Our Defenses*

March 9: *One Stands; Everyone Else Sits*

March 16: *No Detours Allowed*

**March 23: *Always Present, Always Patient***

March 30: *Grace Instead of Condemnation*

April 6<sup>th</sup>: *Hiding Treasure in the Trash*

### **Today's Focus: *Always Present, Always Patient***

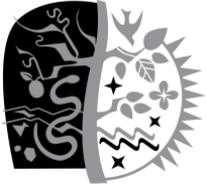
The heavenly Father is always present in the lives of his children. He sees every sorrow we endure. He also sees every sin that we commit, even if it's only in our thoughts. He is always present. Yet, he is also always patient. God does not snap at us the second we turn from him. He gives us time to see the error of our ways. He assures us that the door back to him remains always open. By giving us room to share our struggles and shortcomings, he works in us the very repentance he desires and saves us from the judgement that would otherwise be ours.

### **Service Participants:**

Computer Organ: Zack Sickmann and Nate Crowder

Accompaniment: Zack Sickmann, Emma Bohme, Ella Erdman, Benji Doerr

Pastor of Peace: Pastor Welch



# ORDER OF SERVICE FOR LENT

*Lent is the most contemplative season of the church year. For centuries, Christians have adapted the order of service as we acknowledge our many sins and reflect on the sacrifice our Lord Jesus made on our behalf. At the start of today's worship, we hear the comforting voice of our Savior and see his equally gracious works of peace.*

The name of the triune God and the sign of the cross remind worshipers of their baptisms.

## Gathering Rite: Lord, Have Mercy

In the name of the Father and of the T Son and of the Holy Spirit.

**Amen.**

*Soloist sings:*

- 1 For what we have done and left undone  
we fall on your countless mercies.  
For sins that are known and those unknown  
we call on your name so holy.  
For envy and pride, for closing our eyes;  
for scorning our very neighbor.  
In thought, word, and deed we've failed you, our King;  
how deeply we need a Savior.  
Lord, have mercy, Christ, have mercy, Lord, have mercy on us.  
Lord, have mercy, Christ, have mercy, Lord, have mercy on us.

*All sing:*

2 For what you have done, your life of love you per - fect-ly  
lived, we praise you. Though tempt - ed and tried, you fixed your eyes;



you fin-ished the work God gave you. And there on the tree,



a King a-mong thieves, you bled for a world's be - tray-al.



You loved to the end, our mer - ci - ful friend; how



pure and for-ev - er faith-ful. Lord, have mer - cy,



Christ, have mer - cy, Lord, have mer - cy on\_\_\_ us.



Lord, have mer - cy, Christ, have mer - cy, Lord, have mer - cy



on\_\_\_ us. Lord, have mer - cy, Christ, have mer - cy,



Lord, have mer - cy on\_\_\_ us. Lord, have mer - cy,



Christ, have mer - cy, Lord, have mer - cy on us.

Let us confess our sins in the presence of God and of one another.

**Holy God, gracious Father,**

**I am sinful by nature**

**and have sinned against you in my thoughts, words, and actions.**

**I have not loved you with my whole heart;**

**I have not loved others as I should.**

**I deserve your punishment both now and forever.**

**But Jesus, my Savior, paid for my sins with his innocent suffering and death.**

**Trusting in him, I pray: God, have mercy on me, a sinner.**

Almighty God, the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, does not desire the death of sinners but rather that they turn from their wickedness and live. He sent his Son to be the atoning sacrifice for our sins and for the sins of the whole world. Therefore, as a called servant of Christ and by his authority, I forgive you all your sins in the name of the Father and of the T Son and of the Holy Spirit.

**Amen.**

The use of the keys of absolution is that special right which Christ gave to his church on earth: to proclaim the forgiveness of sins through Jesus. See John 20:21-23.

During these days of Lent, let us implore God to give us renewal and his Holy Spirit. May we continue to abide in the true faith and at the last be received by him through the merits of Jesus Christ our Lord.

**Amen.**

*All sing:*

3 For hearts that are cold, for seiz-ing con - trol; for scorn-ing our  
ver - y Mak - er. In thought, word, and deed we've



failed you, our King; how deep - ly we need a Sav - ior.



Lord, have mer - cy, Christ, have mer - cy, Lord, have mer - cy on — us.



Lord, have mer - cy, Christ, have mer - cy, Lord, have mer - cy on — us.



Lord, have mer - cy, Christ, have mer - cy, Lord, have mer - cy on — us.



Lord, have mer - cy, Christ, have mer - cy, Lord, have mer - cy on us.

Tune: © 2019 Getty Music Hymns and Songs; Love Your Enemies Publishing; Getty Music Publishing; Messenger Hymns, admin. Music Services. Used by permission: Peace Ev. Lutheran Church no. A-734944

## Prayer

O God, whose glory it is always to have mercy, be gracious to all who have gone astray from your ways, and bring them again with penitent hearts and steadfast faith to embrace and hold fast the unchangeable truth of your Word; through your Son, Jesus Christ our Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever.

**Amen.**

*Please be seated.*



# The Word

## First Reading

*Exodus 3:1–15*

The Lord reveals his presence to Moses as flames within a bush—fire that warms and gives light yet does not consume.

<sup>1</sup>Now Moses was tending the flock of Jethro his father-in-law, the priest of Midian, and he led the flock to the far side of the wilderness and came to Horeb, the mountain of God. <sup>2</sup>There the angel of the LORD appeared to him in flames of fire from within a bush. Moses saw that though the bush was on fire it did not burn up. <sup>3</sup>So Moses thought, “I will go over and see this strange sight—why the bush does not burn up.”

<sup>4</sup>When the LORD saw that he had gone over to look, God called to him from within the bush, “Moses! Moses!”

And Moses said, “Here I am.”

<sup>5</sup>“Do not come any closer,” God said. “Take off your sandals, for the place where you are standing is holy ground.” <sup>6</sup>Then he said, “I am the God of your father, the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac and the God of Jacob.” At this, Moses hid his face, because he was afraid to look at God.

<sup>7</sup>The LORD said, “I have indeed seen the misery of my people in Egypt. I have heard them crying out because of their slave drivers, and I am concerned about their suffering. <sup>8</sup>So I have come down to rescue them from the hand of the Egyptians and to bring them up out of that land into a good and spacious land, a land flowing with milk and honey—the home of the Canaanites, Hittites, Amorites, Perizzites, Hivites and Jebusites. <sup>9</sup>And now the cry of the Israelites has reached me, and I have seen the way the Egyptians are oppressing them. <sup>10</sup>So now, go. I am sending you to Pharaoh to bring my people the Israelites out of Egypt.”

<sup>11</sup>But Moses said to God, “Who am I that I should go to Pharaoh and bring the Israelites out of Egypt?”

<sup>12</sup>And God said, “I will be with you. And this will be the sign to you that it is I who have sent you: When you have brought the people out of Egypt, you will worship God on this mountain.”

<sup>13</sup>Moses said to God, “Suppose I go to the Israelites and say to them, ‘The God of your fathers has sent me to you,’ and they ask me, ‘What is his name?’ Then what shall I tell them?”

<sup>14</sup>God said to Moses, “I AM WHO I AM. This is what you are to say to the Israelites: ‘I AM has sent me to you.’”

<sup>15</sup>God also said to Moses, “Say to the Israelites, ‘The LORD, the God of your fathers—the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac and the God of Jacob—has sent me to you.’”

“This is my name forever,  
the name you shall call me  
from generation to generation.

The Word of the Lord.  
Thanks be to God.

## Children's Lesson

### Gospel Acclamation

2 Peter 3:9

Normally, we prepare to hear the words and works of Jesus by standing and singing “Alleluia” – praise the Lord.



*Refrain*



Glo - ry to you, Lord Je - sus Christ, Son of the liv - ing God.

He is patient with you, not wanting anyone to perish, but everyone to come to repentance.

During Lent, “alleluias” are omitted.

*Refrain*

## Gospel

Luke 13:1-9

God is always patient, but our time of grace does come to an end at the moment of death. Since that can come at unexpected times, Jesus teaches that the time to repent is right now.

<sup>1</sup>Now there were some present at that time who told Jesus about the Galileans whose blood Pilate had mixed with their sacrifices. <sup>2</sup>Jesus answered, “Do you think that these Galileans were worse sinners than all the other Galileans because they suffered this way? <sup>3</sup>I tell you, no! But unless you repent, you too will all perish. <sup>4</sup>Or those eighteen who died when the tower in Siloam fell on them—do you think they were more guilty than all the others living in Jerusalem? <sup>5</sup>I tell you, no! But unless you repent, you too will all perish.”

<sup>6</sup>Then he told this parable: “A man had a fig tree growing in his vineyard, and he went to look for fruit on it but did not find any. <sup>7</sup>So he said to the man who took care of the vineyard, ‘For three years now I’ve been coming to look for fruit on this fig tree and haven’t found any. Cut it down! Why should it use up the soil?’

<sup>8</sup>“‘Sir,’ the man replied, ‘leave it alone for one more year, and I’ll dig around it and fertilize it. <sup>9</sup>If it bears fruit next year, fine! If not, then cut it down.’”

The Gospel of the Lord.

**Praise be to you, O Christ!**

## Hymn of the Day

*I Run to Christ*



1 I run to Christ when chased by fear and find a ref - uge  
2 I run to Christ when worn by life and find my soul re -  
3 I run to Christ when stalked by sin and find a sure es -



sure. “Be - lieve in me,” his voice I hear; his words and  
fished. “Come un - to me,” he calls thro’ strife; fa - tigue gives  
cape. “De - liv - er me,” I cry to him; temp - ta - tion

wounds se - cure. I run to Christ when torn by grief and  
way to rest. I run to Christ when vexed by hell and  
yields to grace. I run to Christ when plagued by shame and  
find a - bun - dant peace. "I too had tears," he  
find a might - y arm. "The dev - il flees," the  
find my one de - fense. "I bore God's wrath," he  
gent - ly speaks; thus joy and sor - row meet.  
Scrip - tures tell; he roars but can - not harm.  
pleads my case— my ad - vo - cate and friend.

Text: Chris Anderson, b. 1971

Tune: Greg Habegger, b. 1973

Text and tune: © 2010 Church Works Media (adm. at IntegratedRights.com). Used by permission: OneLicense no. 734944

## Sermon Reading

1 Corinthians 10:1–13

<sup>1</sup>For I do not want you to be ignorant of the fact, brothers and sisters, that our ancestors were all under the cloud and that they all passed through the sea. <sup>2</sup>They were all baptized into Moses in the cloud and in the sea. <sup>3</sup>They all ate the same spiritual food <sup>4</sup>and drank the same spiritual drink; for they drank from the spiritual rock that accompanied them, and that rock was Christ. <sup>5</sup>Nevertheless, God was not pleased with most of them; their bodies were scattered in the wilderness.

<sup>6</sup>Now these things occurred as examples to keep us from setting our hearts on evil things as they did. <sup>7</sup>Do not be idolaters, as some of them were; as it is written: "The people sat down to eat and drink and got up to indulge in revelry." <sup>8</sup>We should not commit sexual immorality, as some of them did—and in one day twenty-three thousand of them died. <sup>9</sup>We should not test Christ, as some of them did—and were killed by snakes.

God revealed his presence among the nation of Israel. Instead of his presence leading to repentant faith, with a sense of false security the Israelites set their hearts on evil.

<sup>10</sup>And do not grumble, as some of them did—and were killed by the destroying angel.

<sup>11</sup>These things happened to them as examples and were written down as warnings for us, on whom the culmination of the ages has come. <sup>12</sup>So, if you think you are standing firm, be careful that you don't fall! <sup>13</sup>No temptation has overtaken you except what is common to mankind. And God is faithful; he will not let you be tempted beyond what you can bear. But when you are tempted, he will also provide a way out so that you can endure it.

The Word of the Lord.

Thanks be to God.

Public  
confession is  
faith's  
response to  
God's saving  
Word.  
Christians  
composed the  
Apostle's  
Creed in the  
fourth century  
to defend the  
Bible's  
teachings that  
both Jesus  
Christ and the  
Holy Spirit are  
true God,  
equal to the  
Father in one  
eternal,  
undivided  
Trinity.

## **Apostles' Creed**

**I believe in God, the Father Almighty,  
maker of heaven and earth.**

**I believe in Jesus Christ, his 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 into hell.**

**The third day he rose again from the dead.**

**He ascended into heaven**

**and is seated at the right hand of God the Father Almighty.**

**From there he will come to judge the living and the dead.**

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

## Offering

The members of Peace have joined together in the grace of giving (2 Corinthians 8:7) to do the Lord's work of sharing the message of Jesus. Visitors need not feel obligated. You are our guests!

Members and visitors, kindly fill out one of our Connection Cards. You may place it in the offering plate or hand it to an usher.

## Prayer of the Church

Please stand. The pastor will speak the prayer of the church and the congregation will join to say the Lord's prayer.



## Lord's Prayer

**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.**

*Please be seated.*

## Blessing

The Lord bless you and keep you.

The Lord make his face shine on you and be gracious to you.

The Lord look on you with favor and T give you peace. **Amen.**

*Numbers 6:22-27*

# Hymn

## How Deep the Father's Love for Us



1 How deep the Fa-ther's love for us, how vast be-yond all  
2 Be-hold the Man up-on a cross, my sin up-on his  
3 I will not boast in an-y-thing: no gifts, no pow'r, no



mea-sure, that he should give his on-ly Son to  
shoul-ders. A-shamed, I hear my mock-ing voice call  
wis-dom. But I will boast in Je-sus Christ: his



make a wretch his trea-sure. How great the pain of sear-ing loss.  
out a-mong the scof-fers. It was my sin that held him there  
death and res-ur-rec-tion. Why should I gain from his re-ward?



The Fa-ther turns his face a-way as wounds which mar the  
un-til it was ac-com-plished; his dy-ing breath has  
I can-not give an an-swer. But this I know with



Cho-sen One bring man-y sons to glo-ry.  
brought me life. I know that it is fin-ished.  
all my heart: his wounds have paid my ran-som.

Text: Stuart Townend, b. 1963

Tune: Stuart Townend, b. 1963

Text and tune: © 1995 Thankyou Music, admin. CapitolCMGPublishing.com. Used by permission: Peace Ev. Lutheran Church no. A-734944

# Announcements

## Foundations of Faith

Foundations is for everyone: people interested in becoming members, those looking to build their faith, or the curious observer who wants to study the Bible without feeling obligated to join a church. This study is Bible-based and discussion-centered. Classes can be arranged to fit personal schedules.

To get plugged in or to request more information, contact Pastor Welch (pastor@peacehoughton.org). Childcare is available upon request.

## Online Offering Option

If you would like to give an online offering today, please scan the QR code. All online donations are safe and go directly to Peace.



## Upcoming Events

There is a full schedule of events for both members and students alike. You can find the full schedule on the tables in the fellowship hall, on the app or website, or by scanning the QR code.



## Easter Lilies

On Easter morning, our sanctuary will be decorated with Easter lilies. If you would like to donate some lilies, please sign up in the fellowship hall or talk to Amy Hughes.



# PEACE

LUTHERAN CHURCH

47745 Mill Rd.  
Houghton, MI 49931

Office: 906-482-1602

Pastor Welch's Cell: 906-231-6835

Pastor Welch's Email: [pastor@peacehoughton.org](mailto:pastor@peacehoughton.org)

**[Peacehoughton.org](http://Peacehoughton.org)**

Our mission is to spread the gospel of Christ, to gather college students and the local community into a family of believers, and to share the message of hope and the promise of salvation through grace.