



**Christ  
Lutheran**  
CHURCH

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*Growing*  
**FAITH**

*"Listen! A sower went out to sow..."*

**Mark 4:3**

**Season of Lent**

**March 19, 2023**

## **WELCOME TO CHRIST LUTHERAN CHURCH!**

### **YOU ARE WELCOME HERE!**

At Christ Lutheran people of all backgrounds and experiences gather to worship because we all share a common hope: the life, death, and resurrection of Christ makes all things new, even us.

You will find everything that happens in worship printed in this bulletin. If you have a prayer request, the yellow cards in the seatback holders have a place for them; the other side is for any information you would like about Christ Lutheran. Please feel welcome to remain seated as necessary during the service.

### **CHILDREN ARE ALWAYS WELCOME IN CHURCH!**

God's people come in all shapes and sizes – it is a gift to the whole community when the smallest of us are present! Sitting with parents and learning to treasure times of worship is the foundation for helping build a growing faith in a child's life. There's some noise and movement that we expect from little ones - feel free to make use of the **activity bags, doodle pads, bookshelf in the overflow area and cry room at the back of the sanctuary** as needed. Whatever sacrifice of energy and effort you make to include your children in worship is multiplied as the good news of God's love takes root in their lives!

### **WHEN NURSERY CARE IS NEEDED DURING WORSHIP**

A fully equipped and staffed Nursery is available for both infants and toddlers during all services. The Nursery is located west of our gathering area in **Room 110**.

### **RESTROOMS**

Men's and women's restrooms off the Gathering Area and Church Hall have changing tables, as does the all-gender restroom near the nursery. A second all-gender restroom is through the Vestry off the East hallway, past the Welcome Center.

### **HOLY COMMUNION**

**Holy Communion** is the family meal of God's people, to which we come at Jesus' invitation. The body and blood of Christ, in the bread and wine, are his real presence with us and offer the gift of forgiveness because of his death and resurrection. Drawn together and strengthened by this meal, we are given a taste of the fullness of God's coming kingdom, and are equipped to be the hands and feet of God's love in the world. All baptized Christians are always welcome at the Lord's table.

**In-person distribution:** When indicated by the ushers, come up the right-hand ramp to approach the altar rail. When finished you may leave individually without being dismissed. **WINE** is lighter-colored, and **GRAPE JUICE** is dark; they are received via individual cups in the trays. **USED GLASSES** are placed in the basket located near the ramp. **GLUTEN-FREE BREAD IS AVAILABLE**, please indicate to the server that you require this.

### **COVID Procedure Update**

**Masks are encouraged but optional during worship.** Naturally if you prefer to stay masked throughout the service, you are of course welcome to do so. Masks are not required for singing but suggested.

Our services are on video, and occasional photographs are taken for our website and e-mail news. If you have concerns, please speak to a church staff member.

*Hearing assistance devices are available to those who need help with listening to the service and are located at the entrance to the sanctuary, or please see an Usher for assistance.*

**A Reminder: Please turn off all cell phones during worship services.**

Baptism is sometimes called enlightenment. The gospel for this Sunday is the story of the man born blind healed by Christ. "I was blind, now I see," declares the man. In baptism God opens our eyes to see the truth of who we are: God's beloved children. As David was anointed king of Israel, in baptism God anoints our head with oil, and calls us to bear witness to the light of Christ in our daily lives.

## **GATHERING**

*The Holy Spirit calls us together as the people of God*

### **PRELUDE**

*What Wondrous Love is This*

arr. Austin

### **WELCOME**

*If you are joining us for the first time, welcome! We'd love to meet you, or if there's anything you'd like to know about the ministry of Christ Lutheran Church, please consider [filling out a Connection Card online](#) (you can point your phone at the graphic to the right) or using a yellow Connection Card in the pew holders.*



***Prayer requests** can be posted to the livechat or use a yellow Prayer Request (backside of the Connection Card) and give them to an usher.*

*If you are worshipping with us via livestream, consider **preparing your space for Communion**: light a candle (if appropriate and safe), and have a plate with bread/cracker/tortilla and a cup for wine or grape juice (or an empty cup as a sign Jesus is sufficient in one or both elements).*

### **CONFESSION AND FORGIVENESS**

*All may make the sign of the cross, the sign that is marked at baptism, as the presiding minister begins.*

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

**Amen.**

Let us acknowledge before God and one another  
our need for repentance and God's mercy.

*Silence is kept for reflection.*

Holy God,  
**we confess to you our faults and failings.**  
**Too often we neglect and do not trust your holy word;**  
**we take for ourselves instead of giving to others;**  
**we spoil rather than steward your creation;**  
**we cause hurt though you call us to heal;**  
**we choose fear over compassion.**  
**Forgive us, renew us, and lead us,**  
**as we seek to follow in your way of life.**

**Amen.**

Hear the good news:

God so loved the world  
 that God gave the only Son,  
 so that all may receive life.  
 This promise is for you!  
 God embraces you with divine mercy,  
 † forgives you in Christ's name,  
 and revives you in the Spirit's power.  
**Amen.**

**GREETING**

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.**

*Children: This is the day that the Lord has made.*  
**Let us rejoice and be glad in it.**

**KYRIE**

The musical score consists of two systems, each with a vocal line and a piano accompaniment line. The key signature is one flat (Bb) and the time signature is 7/8. The lyrics are as follows:

System 1:  
 [A] In peace, in peace let us pray to the Lord. [A] For the  
 [C] Lord, have mer - cy.

System 2:  
 peace from a - bove, and for our sal - va - tion, let us pray to the  
 Lord. [A] For the peace of the whole world, the well - be - ing of the  
 [C] Lord, have mer - cy.

Church of God, and for the u - ni - ty of all, let us pray to the

Lord. **A** For this ho-ly house, and for all who of-fer here their  
**B** Lord, have mer - cy.

wor - ship and praise, let us pray to the Lord.  
**B** Lord, have mer - cy.

**A** Help, save, com- fort, and de- fend us, gra- cious Lord.  
**B** A - men

**PRAYER OF THE DAY**

*A brief silence is kept before the prayer.*  
 Creator and Healer, root of all goodness,  
 working your Sabbath will in the chaos of our life:  
 teach us the insight that gives true judgement  
 and praises you wherever you are found,  
 making miracles from spit and mud;  
 through Jesus Christ, the Son of earth.  
**Amen.**

## WORD

*God speaks to us in scripture reading, preaching and song.  
When children read, they may read a version that is appropriate to their reading level  
and voice, which may vary from the printed texts.*

**HANDBELL ANTHEM:**  
*The assembly is seated.*

*Beneath the Cross of Jesus*

arr. Mallory

## **CHILDREN'S TIME**

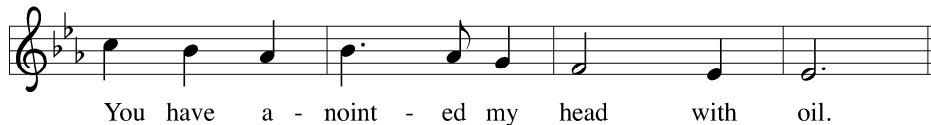
*Children are invited forward for a time together.*

## **3rd GRADE BIBLE PRESENTATION**

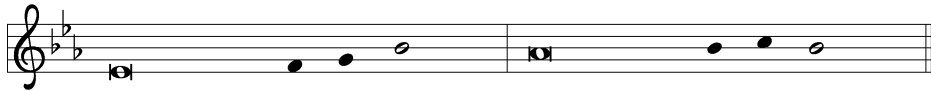
### **PSALM: Psalm 23**

*The congregation is invited to sing the psalm refrain when indicated (R). Verses will be chanted  
alternately by the leader and the people.*

#### **Refrain**



#### **Psalm Tone**



The LORD<sup>1</sup> is my shepherd;

I shall not<sup>1</sup> be in want.

<sup>2</sup>**The LORD makes me lie down<sup>1</sup> in green pastures  
and leads me be-<sup>1</sup>side still waters.**

<sup>3</sup>You restore my<sup>1</sup> soul, O LORD,  
and guide me along right pathways<sup>1</sup> for your name's sake.


<sup>4</sup>**Though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I shall<sup>1</sup> fear no evil;  
for you are with me; your rod and your staff, they<sup>1</sup> comfort me. R**

<sup>5</sup>You prepare a table before me in the presence<sup>1</sup> of my enemies;  
you anoint my head with oil, and my cup is<sup>1</sup> running over.

<sup>6</sup>**Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me all the days<sup>1</sup> of my life,  
and I will dwell in the house of the<sup>1</sup> LORD forever. R**

## GOSPEL ACCLAMATION

*The assembly stands to welcome the Gospel.*



Re - turn to the Lord, your God, who is gra-cious and mer - ci - ful,  
slow to an - ger, and a - bound - ing in stead - fast love.

## HOLY GOSPEL: John 9:1-41

*Jesus heals a man born blind, provoking a hostile reaction that he regards as spiritual blindness to the things of God.*

The Holy Gospel according to John.

**Glory to you, O Lord.**

<sup>1</sup>As [Jesus] walked along, he saw a man blind from birth. <sup>2</sup>His disciples asked him, “Rabbi, who sinned, this man or his parents, that he was born blind?” <sup>3</sup>Jesus answered, “Neither this man nor his parents sinned; he was born blind so that God’s works might be revealed in him. <sup>4</sup>We must work the works of him who sent me while it is day; night is coming when no one can work. <sup>5</sup>As long as I am in the world, I am the light of the world.” <sup>6</sup>When he had said this, he spat on the ground and made mud with the saliva and spread the mud on the man’s eyes, <sup>7</sup>saying to him, “Go, wash in the pool of Siloam” (which means Sent). Then he went and washed and came back able to see. <sup>8</sup>The neighbors and those who had seen him before as a beggar began to ask, “Is this not the man who used to sit and beg?” <sup>9</sup>Some were saying, “It is he.” Others were saying, “No, but it is someone like him.” He kept saying, “I am the man.” <sup>10</sup>But they kept asking him, “Then how were your eyes opened?” <sup>11</sup>He answered, “The man called Jesus made mud, spread it on my eyes, and said to me, ‘Go to Siloam and wash.’ Then I went and washed and received my sight.” <sup>12</sup>They said to him, “Where is he?” He said, “I do not know.”

<sup>13</sup>They brought to the Pharisees the man who had formerly been blind. <sup>14</sup>Now it was a sabbath day when Jesus made the mud and opened his eyes. <sup>15</sup>Then the Pharisees also began to ask him how he had received his sight. He said to them, “He put mud on my eyes. Then I washed, and now I see.” <sup>16</sup>Some of the Pharisees said, “This man is not from God, for he does not observe the sabbath.” But others said, “How can a man who is a sinner perform such signs?” And they were divided. <sup>17</sup>So they said again to the blind man, “What do you say about him? It was your eyes he opened.” He said, “He is a prophet.”

<sup>18</sup>The Jews did not believe that he had been blind and had received his sight until they called the parents of the man who had received his sight <sup>19</sup>and asked them, “Is this your son, who you say was born blind? How then does he now see?” <sup>20</sup>His parents answered,

“We know that this is our son, and that he was born blind; <sup>21</sup>but we do not know how it is that now he sees, nor do we know who opened his eyes. Ask him; he is of age. He will speak for himself.” <sup>22</sup>His parents said this because they were afraid of the Jews; for the Jews had already agreed that anyone who confessed Jesus to be the Messiah would be put out of the synagogue. <sup>23</sup>Therefore his parents said, “He is of age; ask him.”

<sup>24</sup>So for the second time they called the man who had been blind, and they said to him, “Give glory to God! We know that this man is a sinner.” <sup>25</sup>He answered, “I do not know whether he is a sinner. One thing I do know, that though I was blind, now I see.”

<sup>26</sup>They said to him, “What did he do to you? How did he open your eyes?” <sup>27</sup>He answered them, “I have told you already, and you would not listen. Why do you want to hear it again? Do you also want to become his disciples?” <sup>28</sup>Then they reviled him, saying, “You are his disciple, but we are disciples of Moses. <sup>29</sup>We know that God has spoken to Moses, but as for this man, we do not know where he comes from.” <sup>30</sup>The man answered, “Here is an astonishing thing! You do not know where he comes from, and yet he opened my eyes.

<sup>31</sup>We know that God does not listen to sinners, but he does listen to one who worships him and obeys his will. <sup>32</sup>Never since the world began has it been heard that anyone opened the eyes of a person born blind. <sup>33</sup>If this man were not from God, he could do nothing.” <sup>34</sup>They answered him, “You were born entirely in sins, and are you trying to teach us?” And they drove him out.

<sup>35</sup>Jesus heard that they had driven him out, and when he found him, he said, “Do you believe in the Son of Man?” <sup>36</sup>He answered, “And who is he, sir? Tell me, so that I may believe in him.” <sup>37</sup>Jesus said to him, “You have seen him, and the one speaking with you is he.” <sup>38</sup>He said, “Lord, I believe.” And he worshiped him. <sup>39</sup>Jesus said, “I came into this world for judgment so that those who do not see may see, and those who do see may become blind.” <sup>40</sup>Some of the Pharisees near him heard this and said to him, “Surely we are not blind, are we?” <sup>41</sup>Jesus said to them, “If you were blind, you would not have sin. But now that you say, ‘We see,’ your sin remains.”

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

## **SERMON**

*The assembly is seated. Time for reflection follows the sermon.*

## **GROWING FAITH : OFFERING OUR INTENTIONS**



**COMMITMENT HYMN ACS #1042**

*May This Church Be Like a Tree*

*The cantor sings the first verse in Spanish, then the assembly sings vv. 1-3 in English.*



1 *Que\_es-ta\_i - gle - sia se - a\_un ár - bol en el*  
1 May this church be like a tree, be - hind your  
2 May this church be like a tree there in the  
3 May this church be like a tree, O God, that



*fon - do de tu ca - sa, que\_ha - ya fies - ta, ya - le -*  
house, there in your gar - den, meet - ing - place for joy, and  
street or in the pla - za, for the birds a nest - ing -  
thrives where you have plant - ed; may it stand to show the



*grí - a yo - ra - ción ba - jo sus ra - mas.*  
feast, and sim - ple prayer be - neath its branch - es.  
branch, for pass - ers - by a wel - come shel - ter.  
way, your way of lov - ing and self - giv - ing,



*Con ra - í - ces bien pro - fun - das y sus bra - zos*  
With its roots in earth so fer - tile, and its arms raised  
May it stand as if it's watch - ing, near my house, just  
of - f'ring shade, and fruit for shar - ing, giv - ing up its



*ha - cia\_el cie - lo, que\_es - ta\_i - gle - sia sea fe -*  
high to heav - en, may this church bear fruits of  
round the cor - ner, wait - ing for this wea - ry  
wood for burn - ing. May this liv - ing church that

*Hymn continues on next page*

cun - da dan - do fru - tos de con - sue - lo.  
 jus - tice, acts of lov - ing and com - pas - sion.  
 pil - grim with its arms wide to em - brace me.  
 names you be a tree of life e - ter - nal.

*Refrain / Estribillo*

Ár - bol plan - ta - do jun - to a las a - guas  
 Tree ev - er grow - ing by liv - ing wa - ter,

de vi - da e - ter - na de nues - tro Dios.  
 run - ning e - ter - nal, flow - ing from God.

Ár - bol plan - ta - do jun - to a las a - guas  
 Tree ev - er grow - ing by liv - ing wa - ter,

de vi - da e - ter - na de nues - tro Dios.  
 run - ning e - ter - nal, flow - ing from God.

**PRAYERS**

Sustained by God’s abundant mercy, let us pray for the church, the world, and all of creation.

*A brief silence.*

Eternal God, you seal us by the Holy Spirit and mark us with the cross of Christ forever in baptism. Inspire us by your love as together we strive for justice and peace in all the earth. Merciful God,

**receive our prayer.**

Creating God, by your word you have made all things, and you hate nothing you have made. Teach us to perceive the beauty of the breadth of your creation, from the grandest mountain range to the smallest springtime bud. Merciful God,

**receive our prayer.**

Powerful God, you anoint kings and establish rulers. Guide the work of heads of state and elected officials. Encourage them to lead with justice and to remove barriers that impede the well-being of all. In Estonia, Latvia, and Lithuania, grant peace and security, and empower the witness of the baptized. Merciful God,

**receive our prayer.**

Shepherding God, you lead us beside still waters and restore our souls. Keep watch over those who weep; tend all who are sick and comfort those who grieve. Merciful God,

**receive our prayer.**

God our host, you fill us at your table with more than we could ever ask. Feed us with hunger for justice. Equip the feeding ministries of this congregation and community – our partnerships with local pantries, and those who are preparing to feed guests at our Men’s Overnight Shelter. Nourish us so we can nourish our neighbors. Merciful God,

**receive our prayer.**

*Here other intercessions may be offered.*

God of history, with thanksgiving we remember our ancestors in faith who cared for your people, especially Joseph, Thomas Cranmer, Jonathan Edwards, and Oscar Romero. We praise you for the ways they formed the faith of others and continue to inspire us. Merciful God,

**receive our prayer.**

We lift our prayers to you, O God, trusting in your steadfast love and your promise to renew your whole creation; through Jesus Christ our Savior.  
**Amen.**

### **SHARING OF THE PEACE**

The peace of Christ be with you always.

**And also with you.**

*We invite those worshipping by livestream to share a sign of peace in the chat, and for those in person we turn to offer them our greeting of peace before sharing a sign of peace with one another: **Peace be with you!***

### **MEAL**

*God feeds us with the presence of Jesus Christ*

### **OFFERING**

*This church serves our neighbors, our community, our world -- all because of your participation and support. This month we are sharing a portion of our offerings for the support of **Valpo New Creation Men’s Shelter/Resale Shop** [newcreationempowers.org](http://newcreationempowers.org).*

*If you prefer to give electronically use [our CLC app](#) or browse to our secure on-line portal at [clcvalpo.org/give](http://clcvalpo.org/give).*

**OFFERTORY:**

*Christ, the Life of All the Living*

Peeters

## OFFERING PRAYER

*The assembly stands as the gifts are brought forward.*

God of good gifts,

**your generosity provides for our needs  
and nurtures our growing faith.**

**We return these gifts to you in gratitude and hope:**

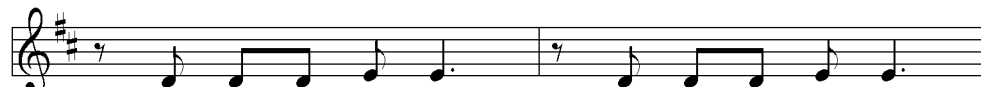
**may this church be like a tree**

**growing by the stream of your living water,**

**sharing your life with the world.**

**Amen**


## GREAT THANKSGIVING



**P** The Lord be with you. **G** And al - so with you.



**P** Lift up your hearts. **G** We lift them to the Lord.



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



**G** It is right to give our thanks and praise.

*The pastor continues and all join in singing:*

## SANCTUS

*(An ancient practice invites us to make the sign of the cross in honor of Jesus at the words "Blessed is he.")*

Ho - ly, ho - ly, ho - ly Lord,  
Lord God of pow'r and might, heav-en and earth are  
full of your glo - ry. Ho - san - na in the high - est.  
Bless - ed, bless - ed is he who comes in the name of the  
Lord. Ho - san - na in the high - est.

## TABLE PRAYER

### LORD'S PRAYER

*Children: The Spirit makes us one. We pray as Jesus taught us:*

**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

Come and receive Jesus, our strength in the wilderness.

**Thanks be to God!**

## DISTRIBUTION

*The assembly is seated.*

***Holy Communion** is the family meal of God's people, to which we come at Jesus' invitation. The body and blood of Christ, in the bread and wine, are his real presence with us and offer the gift of forgiveness because of his death and resurrection. Drawn together and strengthened by this meal, we are given a taste of the fullness of God's coming kingdom, and are equipped to be the hands and feet of God's love in the world. All baptized Christians are always welcome at the Lord's table.*

*The pastor invites those worshipping via **livestream** to commune:*

The body of Christ, given for you.

**Amen (receive the bread)**

The blood of Christ, shed for you.

**Amen (receive the cup)**

**In-person distribution:** When indicated by the ushers, come up the right-hand ramp to approach the altar rail. When finished you may leave individually without being dismissed. WINE is lighter-colored and GRAPE JUICE is dark; they are received via individual cups in the trays. USED GLASSES are placed in the basket located near the ramp. GLUTEN-FREE BREAD IS AVAILABLE, please indicate to the server that you require this.

## LAMB OF GOD

**Lamb of God, you take a - way the sin of the world;**

**have mer-cy on us, have mer-cy on us, have mer - cy.**

**Lamb of God, you take a - way the sin of the world;**

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

Lamb of God, you take a-way the sin of the world; grant us peace.

COMMUNION HYMNS ELW #814 *Take, O Take Me as I Am (sung 4x)*

Take, oh, take me as I am; sum-mon out what I shall be;

set your seal up - on my heart and live in me.

Text: John L. Bell, b. 1949  
 Music: TAKE ME AS I AM, John L. Bell  
 Text and music © 1995 Iona Community, GIA Publications, Inc., agent, 7404 S. Mason Ave., Chicago, IL 60638.  
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ACS # 1084

*God, Be the Love to Search and Keep Me*



1 God, be the love to search and keep me; God, be the prayer to  
2 Bind to my-self the name of Ho - ly, great cloud of wit - ness -  
3 Bright-ness of sun and glow of moon-light, flash - ing of light - ning,  
4 Walk - ing be-hind to hem my jour - ney, go - ing a - head to  
5 Christ in the eyes of all who see me, Christ in the ears that



move my voice; God, be the strength to now up - hold me:  
es - en - fold; proph - ets, a - pos - tles, an - gels wit - ness:  
strength of wind, depth of the sea to soil of plan - et:  
light my way, and from be - neath, a - bove, and all ways:  
hear my voice, Christ in the hearts of all who know me:



O Christ, sur - round me; O Christ, sur - round me.

*After all have returned to their places, the assembly stands as the minister continues.*  
The body and blood of our Lord Jesus Christ strengthen you and keep you in his grace.  
**Amen.**

**PRAYER AFTER COMMUNION**

Embodied God,  
at your table, we have tasted the goodness of Jesus.  
With the eyes of our hearts open to your promise,  
empower us to hear the needs of our neighbors  
and touch the world with your love.  
**Amen.**

**SENDING**

*God blesses us and sends us in mission to the world*

**INVITATIONS**

*Brief invitations are shared, especially those related to the assembly's participation in God's mission in the world.*

**BLESSING**

God, the giver of love,  
✠ Christ, the resurrection and the life,  
and the Holy Spirit of rebirth  
bless you in this Lenten journey. **Amen.**



SENDING HYMN ELW #793 *Be Thou My Vision*



1 Be thou my vi - sion, O Lord of my heart;  
2 Be thou my wis - dom, and thou my true word;  
3 Rich - es I heed not, nor vain, emp - ty praise,  
4 Light of my soul, af - ter vic - to - ry won,



naught be all else to me, save that thou art:  
I ev - er with thee and thou with me, Lord.  
thou mine in - her - i - tance, now and al - ways:  
may I reach heav - en's joys, O heav - en's Sun!



thou my best thought both by day and by night,  
Thou my soul's shel - ter, and thou my high tow'r,  
thou and thou on - ly, the first in my heart,  
Heart of my own heart, what - ev - er be - fall,



wak - ing or sleep - ing, thy pres - ence my light.  
raise thou me heav'n - ward, O Pow'r of my pow'r.  
great God of heav - en, my trea - sure thou art.  
still be my vi - sion, O Rul - er of all.

*Children join the pastors to send us in mission.*

**DISMISSAL**

Go in peace. Serve in love.

**Thanks be to God!**

**POSTLUDE**

*If Thou But Trust in God to Guide Thee*

J.S. Bach

*As worship concludes we move to the Gathering Place, where we are invited to greet one another and share in fellowship.*

### **Worship Leaders**

	<u>8:00 a.m.</u>	<u>10:30 a.m.</u>
Acolyte	Sara McDaniel	Abby Vittitoe
Lector	Linda Mapes	
Prayer Assistant	Phyllis Schroeder	Amy Knauff
Communion Assistants	Barb Clements Andrew Teeple	Jeff, Susan & Joey Rodeck
Ushers	Luke Venstrom Irene Adams	
Sound/Light	Tony Reinhold	Jeff Peiffer
Video/Livestream	-----	
Welcome Center		
Pastors	Rev. Timothy Knauff, Jr. Rev. Erica Gibson-Even	
Director of Music Ministries	Brian Bartusch	
Worship Participants	Celebration Ringers Handbell Ensemble Melissa Summerville, cantor	

### **March Altar Gifts**

Communion Baker	Lois Felten
Communion Wine	JoAnn Murfey ~ In Memory of Jim Murfey
Altar Candles	Given to the Glory of God
Eternal Lamp Candles	Sara & Jeremy Long ~ In Memory of Allen and Helene Bauer

### ***Stewardship Snippet***

**John 9:38** - *He said, "Lord, I believe." And he worshiped him.*

Stewarding your soul may mean responding as the blind man in this week's gospel lesson. Simply open your eyes to the experience of Jesus and his amazing love and mercy.

## **Ecumenical Prayer Cycle**

This week we pray for the churches and people of **Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania.**

### **We are thankful for:**

- preservation of the distinct cultural practices, literature, music and natural resources in these countries.
- the faithful witness of Christians during times of persecution and for those who survived times of occupation.
- how these countries peacefully became independent after 1918 and 1991.
- new-found freedoms that the people here have experienced, that they might be used for the good of all.

### **We pray for:**

- peaceful relations with Russia and among all the ethnic groups in these lands.
- the healing of old wounds remaining from 20th century struggles.
- just economic development that benefits all citizens in these countries, and for those who live and work abroad.
- governmental leaders and all people, that they might together strive for justice, peace and the well-being of all.

## **COMMEMORATIONS**

*Week of March 19, 2023*

### **March 19-Joseph, Guardian of Jesus**

Though the Bible tells us little about the husband of Jesus' mother Mary, we know that he was a carpenter or builder by trade. He is also shown as being devoted both to God and to Mary and Jesus. It is assumed that he died before Jesus became an adult.

### **March 21-Thomas Cranmer, Bishop of Canterbury, martyr, died 1556**

Cranmer's lasting achievement is contributing to and overseeing the creation of the Book of Common Prayer, which remains (in revised form) the worship book of the Anglican Communion. He was burned at the stake under Queen Mary for his support of the Protestant Reformation.

### **Jonathan Edwards, teacher, missionary to American Indians, died 1758**

A Puritan minister in Connecticut, Edwards is remembered as being a great preacher. Though his most famous sermon talks at length about hell, he was more concerned with God's love. He served both as missionary to the Housatonic people in Massachusetts, and as president of the future Princeton University.

### **March 24-Óscar Arnulfo Romero, Bishop of El Salvador, martyr, died 1980**

Romero was deeply concerned with injustices evident toward the poor and powerless in El Salvador, and worked forthrightly against political repression. He was assassinated while presiding at the eucharist in a chapel near the cathedral in San Salvador.

### **March 25-Annunciation of Our Lord**

Nine months before Christmas we celebrate the annunciation, in which the angel Gabriel announced to Mary that she would give birth to the Son of God. The ancient church believed that this was also the date of the world's creation and of Jesus' death on the cross.

## Growing Faith

### *Living our Baptism through the 5 Gifts of Discipleship*

When baptized Christians affirm the faith (often called confirmation) the minister asks the question: Do you intend to continue in the covenant God made with you in holy baptism:

**to live among God's faithful people,  
to hear the word of God and share in the Lord's supper,  
to proclaim the good news of God in Christ through word and deed,  
to serve all people, following the example of Jesus,  
and to strive for justice and peace in all the earth?**

RESPONSE: We do, and ask God to help and guide us.  
(*Evangelical Lutheran Worship*, p. 236)

And so begins a daily claiming and re-discovering of the God-given gifts of discipleship. These gifts overlap and are intertwined as one gift flows into another and into faithful living. On Wednesdays through Lent we will explore (unwrap) these gifts, noticing the ways God uses them to show love and faithfulness to us, and the ways God uses them to equip us to love one another.

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