

**Stewardship 2025
United in Christ**



**Yesterday,
Today and
Tomorrow**

Psalm 46:7 “The Lord of hosts is with us; the God of Jacob is our stronghold.”

**WELCOME TO WORSHIP
Third Sunday in Lent
March 23, 2025
8:00 AM Traditional Worship**

Pastor: Paula Geister-Jones **Lay Ministry Administrator:** Jenny Hoffman

Organist/Pianist: Linda Kunz

Lector: Sharie Buskager

Acolytes: Ella Pavolonis & Lucas Peterson

Ushers: Sue Walls, Sandra Maerz, Sue Weum, Sharon Manson

Technical Support: Thomas Lehr, Roger Slack

The warnings are plentiful and blunt on the third Sunday in Lent. Cut it out or get cut down! The warnings are accompanied by God’s invitation to attentiveness: “Incline your ear, and come to me; listen, so that you may live.” The landowner’s ultimatum is forestalled by the gardener’s readiness to till the ground one more year. That is good news for all of us. Thanks be to God!

CALL TO WORSHIP “Rock of Ages” Hastings/Porter

CONFESSION AND FORGIVENESS

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

P: Blessed be the holy Trinity, ✚ one God, who forgives all our sin,
whose mercy endures forever.

C: Amen

P: Let us return to God, confessing our sin in the assurance of God’s abiding love.
Silence is kept for reflection.

P: Compassionate One,

C: you are slow to anger and abounding in steadfast love,
but our lives do not always reflect you and your love for the world.
We do not show others the tender compassion you have shown to us.
We do not welcome others with the radical hospitality you grant to all
people. We oppress others, even though you have set us free again and
again. We squander the abundant gifts of the earth. Transform our lives and
guide us again in the way of the cross.

C: Amen.

P: Beloved in Christ,

God's arms are always stretched open wide to welcome the wandering ones
home. In ✠ Christ your sins are forgiven. You have a place in God's house
forever.

C: Amen.

Stand

HYMN: "Wash, O God, Our Sons and Daughters" ELW #445

Vs. 1 Wash, O God, our sons and daughters,
where your cleansing waters flow.
Number them among your people;
bless as Christ blessed long ago.
Weave them garments bright and sparkling;
compass them with love and light.
Fill, anoint them; send your Spirit,
holy dove and heart's delight.

Vs. 2 We who bring them long for nurture;
by your milk may we be fed.
Let us join your feast, partaking
cup of blessing, living bread.
God, renew us, guide our footsteps;
free from sin and all its snares,
one with Christ in living, dying,
by your Spirit, children, heirs.

Vs. 3 Oh, how deep your holy wisdom!"
Unimagined, all your ways!
To your name be glory, honor!

**With our lives we worship praise!
We your people stand before you,
water-washed and Spirit-born.
By your grace, our lives we offer.
Recreate us; God, transform!**

GREETING

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.**

LITANY

P: The word is near you,

C: **on your lips and in your heart.**

P: 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.**

P: Faith comes from what is heard,

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

HYMN OF PRAISE: "How Great Thou Art" ELW #856

**Vs. 1 O Lord my God, when I in awesome wonder
consider all the works thy hand hath made,
I see the stars, I hear the mighty thunder,
thy pow'r throughout the universe displayed;**

Refrain

**Then sings my soul, my Savior God, to thee,
how great thou art! How great thou art!**

**Then sings my soul, my Savior God, to thee,
how great thou art! How great thou art!**

SALUTATION

P: The Lord be with you.

C: **And also with you.**

PRAYER OF THE DAY

P: Let us pray.

C: Eternal God, your kingdom has broken into our troubled world through the life, death, and resurrection of your Son. Help us to hear your word and obey it, and bring your saving love to fruition in our lives, through Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. Amen.

Sit

FIRST READING: Isaiah 55:1-9

¹⁻⁵ “Hey there! All who are thirsty, come to the water. Are you penniless? Come anyway—buy and eat! Come, buy your drinks, buy wine and milk. Buy without money—everything’s free. Why do you spend your money on junk food, your hard-earned cash on cotton candy? Listen to me, listen well: Eat only the best, fill yourself with only the finest. Pay attention, come close now, listen carefully to my life-giving, life-nourishing words. I’m making a lasting covenant commitment with you, the same that I made with David: sure, solid, enduring love. I set him up as a witness to the nations, made him a prince and leader of the nations, And now I’m doing it to you: You’ll summon nations you’ve never heard of, and nations who’ve never heard of you will come running to you Because of me, your God, because The Holy of Israel has honored you.” ⁶⁻⁷ Seek God while he’s here to be found, pray to him while he’s close at hand. Let the wicked abandon their way of life and the evil their way of thinking. Let them come back to God, who is merciful, come back to our God, who is lavish with forgiveness. ⁸⁻¹¹ “I don’t think the way you think. The way you work isn’t the way I work.” God’s Decree. “For as the sky soars high above earth, so the way I work surpasses the way you work, and the way I think is beyond the way you think. Just as rain and snow descend from the skies and don’t go back until they’ve watered the earth, Doing their work of making things grow and blossom, producing seed for farmers and food for the hungry, So will the words that come out of my mouth not come back empty-handed. They’ll do the work I sent them to do, they’ll complete the assignment I gave them.

P: The Word of the Lord.

C: Thanks be to God.

Stand

GOSPEL CANTICLE: “O Lord, Throughout These Forty Days” ELW #319

**Vs. 1 O Lord, throughout these forty days
you prayed and kept the fast;
inspire repentance for our sin,**

and free us from our past.

**Vs. 2 You strove with Satan, and you won;
your faithfulness endured;
lend us your nerve, your skill, and trust
in God's eternal word.**

The Gospel is announced...

P: The Holy Gospel according to Luke the 13th Chapter.

C: Glory to you, O Lord.

GOSPEL: Luke13:1-9

¹⁻⁵ About that time some people came up and told him about the Galileans Pilate had killed while they were at worship, mixing their blood with the blood of the sacrifices on the altar. Jesus responded, "Do you think those murdered Galileans were worse sinners than all other Galileans? Not at all. Unless you turn to God, you, too, will die. And those eighteen in Jerusalem the other day, the ones crushed and killed when the Tower of Siloam collapsed and fell on them, do you think they were worse citizens than all other Jerusalemites? Not at all. Unless you turn to God, you, too, will die." ⁶⁻⁷ Then he told them a story: "A man had an apple tree planted in his front yard. He came to it expecting to find apples, but there weren't any. He said to his gardener, 'What's going on here? For three years now I've come to this tree expecting apples and not one apple have I found. Chop it down! Why waste good ground with it any longer?' ⁸⁻⁹ "The gardener said, 'Let's give it another year. I'll dig around it and fertilize, and maybe it will produce next year; if it doesn't, then chop it down.'"

P: The gospel of the Lord.

C: Praise to you, O Christ.

Sit

SERMON

Stand

HYMN: "Rock of Ages, Cleft for Me" ELW #623

**Vs. 1 Rock of Ages, cleft for me,
let me hide myself in thee;
let the water and the blood,
from thy riven side which flowed,
be of sin the double cure;**

cleanse me from its guilt and pow'r.

**Vs. 2 Not the labors of my hands
can fulfill thy law's demands;
could my zeal no respite know,
could my tears forever flow,
all for sin could not atone;
thou must save, and thou alone.**

**Vs. 3 Nothing in my hand I bring;
simply to thy cross I cling.
Naked, come to thee for dress;
helpless, look to thee for grace;
foul, I to the fountain fly;
wash me, Savior, or I die.**

**Vs. 4 While I draw this fleeting breath,
when mine eyelids close in death,
when I soar to worlds unknown,
see thee on thy judgment throne,
Rock of Ages, cleft for me,
let me hide myself in thee.**

APOSTLE'S CREED

**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.**

PRAYERS OF INTERCESSION

P: Led by the Spirit, let us turn to God in prayer for the church, the world, and all those in need.

A Brief Silence

P: We pray for the church, called to be a witness to all peoples. Grant humility and wisdom to bishops, pastors, deacons, elders, councils, and congregations, that they may call upon you in making decisions. God, in your mercy,

C: receive our prayer.

P: We pray for the earth, called to provide abundantly. Teach your people the goodness of your generosity, that in sharing what we have been given, all life may flourish on the planet that is our shared home. God, in your mercy,

C: receive our prayer.

P: We pray for the nations, called to protect their inhabitants and collaborate in the work of justice and peace. Forge bonds of compassion and mutual care across human borders and boundaries, that all the world may have enough to live. God, in your mercy,

C: receive our prayer.

P: We pray for those in need, called to receive your compassion. Comfort those whose lives have been disrupted through natural disasters and human conflict. Aid communities in coming together to mourn, heal, and rebuild. God, in your mercy,

C: receive our prayer.

P: We pray for this assembly, called to welcome its neighbors to the table of your grace. Bless food pantries, community gardens and kitchens, clean water projects, and all ministries that address human hunger and thirst. God, in your mercy,

C: receive our prayer.

P: We give thanks for the faithful lives of those who proclaimed your gospel in times of challenge and strife, and for all those whose lives of love and service have ended. May their witness inspire our own. God, in your mercy,

C: receive our prayer.

P: Receive the prayers of your people and draw all things together in your love, in the name of Jesus, who leads us from death to life.

C: Amen.

THE SHARING OF THE PEACE

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

C: And also with you.

Sit

OFFERTORY “Wash, O God, Our Sons and Daughters” Callahan

OFFERTORY PRAYER

P: Gracious Provider, you set your immense treasures among us, opening your heart to the world. As we prepare to feast on your bountiful love, deepen our commitment to sharing those treasures with others, through our Savior, Jesus Christ.

C: Amen.

THE 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.**

ANNOUNCEMENTS

Stand

BLESSING

P: God our tender parent, God the crucified one, God the reconciling Spirit,
✠ bless you now and forever.

C: Amen.

DISMISSAL

P: Go in peace. Care for others as God cares for you.

C: Thanks be to God.

SENDING HYMN: "Beneath the Cross of Jesus" ELW #338

**Vs. 1 Beneath the cross of Jesus
I long to take my stand;
the shadow of a mighty rock
within a weary land,
a home within a wilderness,
a rest upon the way,
from the burning of the noontide heat
and burdens of the day.**

**Vs. 2 Upon the cross of Jesus,
my eye at times can see
the very dying form of one
who suffered there for me.
And from my contrite heart, with tears,
two wonders I confess:
the wonder of his glorious love
and my unworthiness.**

**Vs. 3 I take, O cross, your shadow
for my abiding place;
I ask no other sunshine than
the sunshine of his face;
content to let the world go by,
to know no gain nor loss,
my sinful self my only shame,
my glory all, the cross.**

POSTLUDE: "Near the Cross" Doane/Carlson