

Stewardship 2026

Join the Journey

*"Trust in God from the bottom of your heart;
don't try to figure out everything on your own.
Listen for God's voice in everything you do,
everywhere you go." Proverbs 3:4-6*



WELCOME TO WORSHIP

First Sunday in Lent

February 22, 2026

8:00 AM Traditional Worship

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

Organist/Pianist: Linda Kunz

Lector: Sue Weum

Acolyte: Ella Pavolovis

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

Technical Support: Thomas Lehr, Roger Slack

Today's gospel tells of Jesus' temptation in the desert. His forty-day fast becomes the basis of our Lenten pilgrimage. In the early church Lent was a time of intense preparation for those to be baptized at the Easter Vigil. This catechetical focus on the meaning of faith is at the heart of our Lenten journey to the baptismal waters of Easter. Hungry for God's mercy, we receive the bread of life to nourish us for the days ahead.

CALL TO WORSHIP "Beautiful Savior"

Handbells: Melissa Peterson and Linda Kunz

CONFESSİON AND FORGIVENESS:

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

C: Amen.

P: Let us confess our sin before God, who removes our guilt and blots out all offenses.

Silence is kept for reflection.

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 disdaining the living

water Christ offers: Gracious God,

C: have mercy on us according to your steadfast love.

P: For disregarding voices from the margin, 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.

Stand

HYMN: "O Lord, Throughout These Forty Days" #319 ELW

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.

KYRIE: page 98 ELW (front of the hymnal)

CANTICLE OF PRAISE: page 99 ELW (front of hymnal)

SALUTATION

P: The Lord be with you.

C: And also with you.

PRAYER OF THE DAY

P: Let us pray.

C: Lord God, our strength, the struggle between good and evil rages within and around us, and the devil and all the forces that defy you tempt us with empty promises. Keep us steadfast in your word, and when we fall, raise us again and restore us through your Son, 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: Genesis 2:15-17; 3:1-7

2¹⁵ God took the Man and set him down in the Garden of Eden to work the ground and keep it in order. ¹⁶⁻¹⁷ God commanded the Man, “You can eat from any tree in the garden, except from the Tree-of-Knowledge-of-Good-and-Evil. Don’t eat from it. The moment you eat from that tree, you’re dead.” 3¹ The serpent was clever, more clever than any wild animal God had made. He spoke to the Woman: “Do I understand that God told you not to eat from any tree in the garden?” ²⁻³ The Woman said to the serpent, “Not at all. We can eat from the trees in the garden. It’s only about the tree in the middle of the garden that God said, ‘Don’t eat from it; don’t even touch it or you’ll die.’” ⁴ ⁵ The serpent told the Woman, “You won’t die. God knows that the moment you eat from that tree, you’ll see what’s really going on. You’ll be just like God, knowing everything, ranging all the way from good to evil.” ⁶ When the Woman saw that the tree looked like good eating and realized what she would get out of it—she’d know everything!—she took and ate the fruit and then gave some to her husband, and he ate. ⁷ Immediately the two of them did “see what’s really going on”—saw themselves naked! They sewed fig leaves together as makeshift clothes for themselves.

P: The word of the Lord.

C: Thanks be to God.

Stand

GOSPEL ACCLAMATION: page 103 ELW “Let your steadfast love...”

The Gospel is announced...

P: The Holy Gospel according to Matthew the 4th Chapter.

C: Glory to you, O Lord.

GOSPEL: Matthew 4:1-11

4¹⁻³ Next Jesus was taken into the wild by the Spirit for the Test. The Devil was ready to give it. Jesus prepared for the Test by fasting forty days and forty nights. That left him, of course, in a state of extreme hunger, which the Devil took advantage of in the first test: “Since you are God’s Son, speak the word that will turn these stones into loaves of bread.”⁴ Jesus answered by quoting Deuteronomy: “It takes more than bread to stay alive. It takes a steady stream of words from God’s mouth.”⁵⁻⁶ For the second test the Devil took him to the Holy City. He sat him on top of the Temple and said, “Since you are God’s Son, jump.” The Devil goaded him by quoting Psalm 91: “He has placed you in the care of angels. They will catch you so that you won’t so much as stub your toe on a stone.”⁷ Jesus countered with another citation from Deuteronomy: “Don’t you dare test the Lord your God.”⁸⁻⁹ For the third test, the Devil took him to the peak of a huge mountain. He gestured expansively, pointing out all the earth’s kingdoms, how glorious they all were. Then he said, “They’re yours—lock, stock, and barrel. Just go down on your knees and worship me, and they’re yours.”¹⁰ Jesus’ refusal was curt: “Beat it, Satan!” He backed his rebuke with a third quotation from Deuteronomy: “Worship the Lord your God, and only him. Serve him with absolute single-heartedness.”¹¹ The Test was over. The Devil left. And in his place, angels! Angels came and took care of Jesus’ needs.

P: The gospel of the Lord.

C: Praise to you, O Christ.

Sit

SERMON

Stand

HYMN: “I Want Jesus to Walk With Me ” #325 ELW

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: Reconciled by God's mercy and sustained by God's presence, let us pray for the world and its needs.

A brief silence

P: God of all grace, grant faith to your church. Give to all the baptized the will to resist temptation and to worship and serve you alone. Hear us, O God.

C: Your mercy is great.

P: God of all creation, tend this earth. When human greed and disobedience threaten this planet and the life it contains, lead us by your Spirit into ways of reverence, awe, and gentleness. Hear us, O God.

C: Your mercy is great.

P: God of all nations, preserve us from trouble. Surround all living in places of violence with your steadfast love and give resilience to all who work for peace. Grant courage to those who challenge, especially around issues of racism and systemic oppression. Hear us, O God.

C: Your mercy is great.

P: God of all healing, mend our wounds. Bring wholeness to all who are sick,

give peace to all who groan in grief, and send companions to all who are lonely or isolated. Hear us, O God.

C: Your mercy is great.

P: God of all people, provide for our community. For any among us who hunger for bread, bring nourishment. For any among us who hunger for truth, speak your life-giving word. Hear us, O God.

C: Your mercy is great.

P: God of all life, bring us to you. We thank you for your free and abounding grace, and for those who, by that same grace, now rest eternally in you. Hear us, O God.

C: Your mercy is great.

P: Receive our prayers, O God, through Jesus Christ, our strength and salvation.

C: Amen.

THE SHARING OF THE PEACE

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

C: And also with you.

Sit

OFFERTORY “Thy Holy Wings” Set by Gabrielsen

OFFERTORY PRAYER

P: O God, maker of heaven and earth,

C: 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 your Word, 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.

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: 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, \ddagger bless you now and always.

C: Amen.

DISMISSAL

P: Go in peace. Believe the good news.

C: Thanks be to God.

SENDING HYMN: “Chief of Sinners Though I Be” #609 ELW Vss. 1, 2 & 4

POSTLUDE: “Lord Jesus, You Shall Be My Song” Set by Culli