

## 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

Second Sunday in Lent

March 1, 2026

8:00 AM Traditional Worship

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

**Organist/Pianist:** Linda Kunz

**Lector:** Hannah Peterson

**Acolyte:** Hannah Peterson

**Ushers:** Todd Skavlen, Mark Wilberg, Eric Smedal & Roger Butzscge

**Technical Support:** Thomas Lehr, Roger Slack

During Lent we journey with all those around the world who will be baptized at the Easter Vigil. In today’s gospel Jesus tells Nicodemus that he must be born of water and Spirit. At the font we are given a new birth as children of God. As God made a covenant with Abraham, in baptism God promises to raise us up with Christ to new life. From worship we are sent forth to proclaim God’s love for all the world.

**CALL TO WORSHIP: “All Who Believe and Are Baptized”**  
set by Raabe

#### CONFESSION 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 disdain 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 God of Mercy, God of Light" #714 ELW Vss. 1-3**

## **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 147 ELW** (*front of the hymnal*)

**CANTICLE OF PRAISE: page 149 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:** **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. Amen.**

*Sit*

**FIRST READING: Genesis 12:1-4a**

<sup>12</sup> God told Abram: “Leave your country, your family, and your father’s home for a land that I will show you. <sup>2-3</sup> I’ll make you a great nation and bless you. I’ll make you famous; you’ll be a blessing. I’ll bless those who bless you; those who curse you I’ll curse. All the families of the Earth will be blessed through you.” <sup>4-6</sup> So Abram left just as God said, and Lot left with him. Abram was seventy-five years old when he left Haran. Abram took his wife Sarai and his nephew Lot with him, along with all the possessions and people they had gotten in Haran, and set out for the land of Canaan and arrived safe and sound. Abram passed through the country as far as Shechem and the Oak of Moreh. At that time the Canaanites occupied the land.

**P:** The word of the Lord.

**C:** **Thanks be to God.**

*Stand*

**GOSPEL ACCLAMATION: “Return to the Lord” page 151 ELW**

*The Gospel is announced...*

**P:** The Holy Gospel according to John the 3rd Chapter.

**C:** **Glory to you, O Lord.**

## **GOSPEL: John 3:1-17**

**Narrator:** There was a man of the Pharisee sect, Nicodemus, a prominent leader among the Jews. Late one night he visited Jesus and said,

**Nicodemus (All):** Rabbi, we all know you're a teacher straight from God. No one could do all the God-pointing, God-revealing acts you do if God weren't in on it.

**Narrator:** Jesus said, "You're absolutely right. Take it from me: Unless a person is born from above, it's not possible to see what I'm pointing to—to God's kingdom." <sup>4</sup> said

**Nicodemus (All):** How can anyone be born who has already been born and grown up? You can't re-enter your mother's womb and be born again. What are you saying with this 'born-from-above' talk?

**Narrator:** Jesus said, "You're not listening. Let me say it again. Unless a person submits to this original creation—the 'wind-hovering-over-the-water' creation, the invisible moving the visible, a baptism into a new life—it's not possible to enter God's kingdom. When you look at a baby, it's just that: a body you can look at and touch. But the person who takes shape within is formed by something you can't see and touch—the Spirit—and becomes a living spirit. So don't be so surprised when I tell you that you have to be 'born from above'—out of this world, so to speak. You know well enough how the wind blows this way and that. You hear it rustling through the trees, but you have no idea where it comes from or where it's headed next. That's the way it is with everyone 'born from above' by the wind of God, the Spirit of God.

**Nicodemus (All):** What do you mean by this? How does this happen?

**Narrator:** Jesus said, "You're a respected teacher of Israel and you don't know these basics? Listen carefully. I'm speaking sober truth to you. I speak only of what I know by experience; I give witness only to what I have seen with my own eyes. There is nothing secondhand here, no hearsay. Yet instead of facing the evidence and accepting it, you procrastinate with questions. If I tell you things that are plain as the hand before your face and you don't believe me, what use is there in telling you of things you can't see, the things of God? No one has ever gone up into the presence of God except the One who came down from that Presence, the Son of Man. In the same way that Moses lifted the serpent in the desert so people could have something to see and then believe, it is necessary for the Son of Man to be lifted up—and everyone who looks up to him, trusting and expectant, will gain a real life, eternal life. This is how much God loved the world: He gave

his Son, his one and only Son. And this is why: so that no one need be destroyed; by believing in him, anyone can have a whole and lasting life. God didn't go to all the trouble of sending his Son merely to point an accusing finger, telling the world how bad it was. He came to help, to put the world right again. Anyone who trusts in him is acquitted; anyone who refuses to trust him has long since been under the death sentence without knowing it. And why? Because of that person's failure to believe in the one-of-a-kind Son of God when introduced to him.

**P:** The gospel of the Lord.

**C: Praise to you, O Christ.**

*Sit*

### **SERMON**

*Stand*

**HYMN: "God Loved the World" #323 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:** Faithful One, you renew us by grace. As you have inspired faith through the work of church artists and hymnwriters throughout the ages, give your church the means to praise your beauty today. Hear us, O God.

**C: Your mercy is great.**

**P:** Living One, you delight in this world. The sun and moon, the wind and the water declare your goodness. Preserve this earth, and protect conservationists, scientists, and all who labor in service to creation. Hear us, O God.

**C: Your mercy is great.**

**P:** Ruling One, you bless us to be a blessing. Open the hearts of all leaders to seek the flourishing of every person and lend your help to all who wait for justice, deliverance, and peace. Hear us, O God.

**C: Your mercy is great.**

**P:** Compassionate One, you send your Son to save. Declare your word of acceptance to any who feel condemned and lift up any brought low by hatred and exclusion. Tend to all who are struggling with illness or loss. Hear us, O God.

**C: Your mercy is great.**

**P:** Guiding One, you watch over our going out and coming in. Bless newcomers and new members in this assembly and accompany those who have recently left this community to journey elsewhere (*especially*). Hear us, O God.

**C: Your mercy is great.**

**P:** Eternal One, you neither slumber nor sleep. Be our keeper in life and in death. Thank you for our beloved who have died, and for your promise which saves this whole world by your love. 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: “On My Heart Imprint Your Image”**  
König/Christiansen

## **OFFERTORY PRAYER**

**P:** O God, maker of heaven and earth,

**C:** **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. Amen.**

## **WORDS OF INSTITUTION**

### **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.**

## **INVITATION TO COMMUNION**

**P:** Come to the table. Feast on God’s goodness and mercy. The body of Christ given for you. The blood of Christ shed for you.

## **LAMB OF GOD page 154 ELW**

### **COMMUNION DISTRIBUTION**

*Music is played as those who wish to come forward for communion come forward and kneel at the communion rail. Others are invited to commune in your pew.*

### **COMMUNION BLESSING**

**P:** The body and blood of our Lord Jesus Christ strengthen you and keep you in his grace till life everlasting.

**C: Amen.**

### **PRAYER AFTER COMMUNION**

**P:** God of our salvation,

**C: we give you thanks for this meal that restores our souls, reconciles us to you, and strengthens us for the journey. Through the body and blood of your Son, may we become Christ's body in the world, bearing witness to your love for all creation, through Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord. 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, ✠ bless you now and always.

**C: Amen.**

### **DISMISSAL**

**P:** Go in peace. Believe the good news.

**C: Thanks be to God.**

### **SENDING HYMN: "Blessed Assurance" #638 ELW**

### **POSTLUDE: "When I Survey the Wondrous Cross" Mason/Franks**