



**Fourth Sunday in Lent  
Thursday, March 12, 2026**

**First English Lutheran Church  
402 N. 3<sup>rd</sup> Ave., Wausau, Wisconsin 54401-4448  
715-842-5727**

**<https://www.firstenglishlutheranwausau.org>**

**A Congregation of The Evangelical Lutheran Church in America**

**Pastor: Reverend Mary E. Zupansic  
Minister of Music: Daniel Larson  
Pianist: Hal Osborn  
Parish Administrator: Debra Kluetz**

## WELCOME TO FIRST ENGLISH LUTHERAN CHURCH

Whether you are joining us in person or online, we are blessed to have you worshipping with us today. We pray that our time of worship together further encourages and strengthens our call to discipleship.

If you are a visitor, please fill out the neon green Visitor Card and drop and give it to an usher or greeter. Please come to worship with us again!

Worship Leader: Pastor Mary E. Zupansic  
Pianist: Hal Osborn Lector: Maralee Moellendorf

### PRELUDE

### WELCOME AND ANNOUNCEMENTS

### CONFESSION AND FORGIVENESS

In the name of the Father,  
and of the † Son,  
and of the Holy Spirit.

**Amen.**

Almighty God, to whom all hearts are open, all desires known, and from whom no secrets are hid: cleanse the thoughts of our hearts by the inspiration of your Holy Spirit, that we may perfectly love you and worthily magnify your holy name, through Jesus Christ our Lord.

**Amen.**

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

*(pause)*

Most merciful God,

**we confess that we are captive to sin and cannot free ourselves. We have sinned against you in thought, word, and deed, by what we have done and by what we have left undone. We have not loved you with our whole heart; we have not loved our neighbors as ourselves. For the sake of your Son, Jesus Christ,**

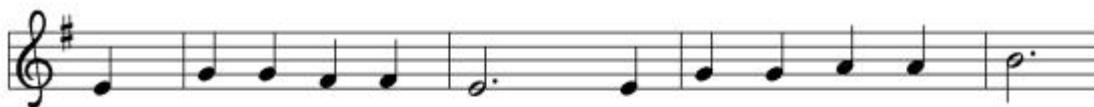
**have mercy on us. Forgive us, renew us, and lead us, so that we may delight in your will and walk in your ways, to the glory of your holy name. Amen.**

In the mercy of almighty God, Jesus Christ was given to die for us, and for his sake God forgives us all our sins. As a called and ordained minister of the church of Christ, and by his authority, I therefore declare to you the entire forgiveness of all your sins, in the name of the Father, and of the  $\dagger$  Son, and of the Holy Spirit.  
**Amen.**

**GATHERING SONG**

*Kyrie*

**ELW P. 203**



- 1 Have mer - cy on us, Lord, and hear our sol - emn prayer.
- 2 Have mer - cy on us, Christ, and wash a - way our sin.
- 3 Have mer - cy on us, Lord; make sin and shame de - part.



We come to hear your liv - ing word; it saves us from de - spair.  
Pour out your grace and make us whole that new life may be - gin.  
Re - new us with your sav - ing pow'r; cre - ate in us new hearts!

**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.**

**PRAYER OF THE DAY**

Let us pray.  
Bend your ear to our prayers, Lord Christ, and come among us. By your gracious life and death for us, bring light into the darkness of our hearts, and anoint us with your Spirit, for you live and reign with the Father and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. **Amen.**

## WORD

God speaks to us in scripture reading, preaching, and song.

### **FIRST READING: 1 Samuel 16:1-13**

A reading from 1 Samuel.

<sup>1</sup> The LORD said to Samuel, “How long will you grieve over Saul? I have rejected him from being king over Israel. Fill your horn with oil and set out; I will send you to Jesse the Bethlehemite, for I have provided for myself a king among his sons.” <sup>2</sup> Samuel said, “How can I go? If Saul hears of it, he will kill me.” And the LORD said, “Take a heifer with you and say, ‘I have come to sacrifice to the LORD.’” <sup>3</sup> Invite Jesse to the sacrifice, and I will show you what you shall do, and you shall anoint for me the one whom I name to you.” <sup>4</sup> Samuel did what the LORD commanded and came to Bethlehem. The elders of the city came to meet him trembling and said, “Do you come peaceably?” <sup>5</sup> He said, “Peaceably. I have come to sacrifice to the LORD; sanctify yourselves and come with me to the sacrifice.” And he sanctified Jesse and his sons and invited them to the sacrifice.

<sup>6</sup> When they came, he looked on Eliab and thought, “Surely his anointed is now before the LORD.” <sup>7</sup> But the LORD said to Samuel, “Do not look on his appearance or on the height of his stature, because I have rejected him, for the LORD does not see as mortals see; they look on the outward appearance, but the LORD looks on the heart.” <sup>8</sup> Then Jesse called Abinadab and made him pass before Samuel. He said, “Neither has the LORD chosen this one.” <sup>9</sup> Then Jesse made Shammah pass by. And he said, “Neither has the LORD chosen this one.” <sup>10</sup> Jesse made seven of his sons pass before Samuel, and Samuel said to Jesse, “The LORD has not chosen any of these.” <sup>11</sup> Samuel said to Jesse, “Are all your sons here?” And he said, “There remains yet the youngest, but he is keeping the sheep.” And Samuel said to Jesse, “Send and bring him, for we will not sit down until he comes here.” <sup>12</sup> He sent and brought him in. Now he was ruddy and had beautiful eyes and was handsome. The LORD said, “Rise and anoint him, for this is the one.” <sup>13</sup> Then Samuel took the horn of oil and anointed him in the presence of his brothers, and the spirit of the LORD came mightily upon David from that day forward. Samuel then set out and went to Ramah.

Word of God, word of life.

**Thanks be to God.**

**PSALM: Psalm 23 (responsively)**

<sup>1</sup> The LORD is my shepherd;  
I shall not be in want.

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

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

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

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

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

**SECOND READING: Ephesians 5:8-14**

A reading from Ephesians.

<sup>8</sup> Once you were darkness, but now in the Lord you are light. Walk as children of light, <sup>9</sup> for the fruit of the light is found in all that is good and right and true. <sup>10</sup> Try to find out what is pleasing to the Lord. <sup>11</sup> Take no part in the unfruitful works of darkness; rather, expose them. <sup>12</sup> For it is shameful even to mention what such people do secretly, <sup>13</sup> but everything exposed by the light becomes visible, <sup>14</sup> for everything that becomes visible is light. Therefore it says,

“Sleeper, awake!

Rise from the dead,  
and Christ will shine on you.”

Word of God, word of life.

**Thanks be to God.**

## **GOSPEL: John 9:1-41**

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 he.” <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.” 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, 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 who were with 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**

**Pastor Mary E. Zupansic**





1 A - maz - ing grace!— how sweet the sound— that  
 2 'Twas grace that taught my heart to fear, and  
 3 Through man - y dan - gers, toils, and snares I  
 4 The Lord has prom - ised good to me; his  
 5 When we've been there ten thou - sand years, bright



saved a wretch like me! I once was lost, but  
 grace my fears re - lieved; how pre - cious did that  
 have al - read - y come; 'tis grace has brought me  
 word my hope se - cures; he will my shield and  
 shin - ing as the sun, we've no less days to



now am found; was blind, but now I see.  
 grace ap - pear the hour I first be - lieved!  
 safe thus far, and grace will lead me home.  
 por - tion be as long as life en - dures.  
 sing God's praise than when we'd first be - gun.

Text: John Newton, 1725–1807, alt., sts. 1–4; anonymous, st. 5  
 Music: NEW BRITAIN, W. Walker, *Southern Harmony*, 1835

**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**

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

*Each petition ends with the following response.*

Hear us, O God. **Your mercy is great.**

Receive our prayers, O God, through Jesus Christ, our strength and salvation.  
**Amen.**

## **THE SHARING OF PEACE**

The peace of Christ be with you always.  
**And also with you.**

## **MEAL**

God feeds us with the presence of Jesus Christ.

## **OFFERING PRAYER**

Let us pray.

**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 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.**

In the night in which he was betrayed,  
our Lord Jesus took bread, and gave thanks;  
broke it, and gave it to his disciples, saying:  
Take and eat; this is my body, given for you.  
Do this for the remembrance of me.

Again, after supper, he took the cup, gave thanks,  
and gave it for all to drink, saying:  
This cup is the new covenant in my blood,  
shed for you and for all people for the forgiveness of sin.  
Do this for the remembrance of me.

## **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**

Come to the table.  
Feast on God's goodness and mercy.  
**Thanks be to God.**

### **COMMUNION: Instrumental Interlude**

### **TABLE BLESSING**

The body and blood of our Lord Jesus Christ, strengthen you  
and keep you in his grace. **Amen.**

### **PRAYER AFTER COMMUNION**

Let us pray. God of our salvation,  
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.**

### **SENDING**

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

### **BLESSING**

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. **Amen.**



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.

Text: Irish, 8th cent.; vers. Eleanor H. Hull, 1860–1935, alt.; tr. Mary E. Byrne, 1880–1931  
 Music: SLANE, Irish traditional

## **DISMISSAL**

Go in peace. Believe the good news. Share the light of Christ.

**Thanks be to God.**

## **POSTLUDE**

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## **PASTORAL CARE**

If you would like a visit from Pastor Mary, or if you have a pastoral emergency, please call Pastor on her cell phone 920-671-4338.

## **LENTEN MID-WEEK PRAYER**

### **“Baptismal Promises”**

**February 25 & March 4, 11, 18, 25**

**12:15 p.m.**

You have made public profession of your faith.

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?*

Each week we will consider one of the baptismal promises and how we live them out in our everyday lives.

## **Lenten Lunch**

**Following the 12:15** worship service, enjoy a simple lunch! All are welcome!

## **HOLY WEEK WORSHIP SCHEDULE**

Palm Sunday, March 29: Worship at 9:00 a.m.

Maundy Thursday, April 2: Worship at 6:00 p.m.

Good Friday, April 3: Worship at 1:15 and 6:00 p.m.

Easter Sunday, April 5: Worship at 8:00 and 10:00 a.m.



## **EASTER FLOWERS**

Order forms are in the narthex and in the church office. Please indicate the number of plants you are ordering and return the form along with your payment by this week Wednesday, March 18.

## **KITS FOR LUTHERAN WORLD RELIEF**

Hello all- I will once again be needing your help with my continued work with LWR Kits. I have decided to try and assemble some School Kits as well as the Personal Care Kits.

Donations of:

DARK colored bath size towels (20-27"x 40-52")

OR School kit items:

\*70-80 sheet SPIRAL Notebooks Wide or Collage Ruled (280-320 sheets total)

\*30 centimeter ruler

\*blunt scissors

\*pencil sharpener

\*#2 pencils w/erasers (unsharpened)

\*black or blue ballpoint pens (no gel ink)

\*box of 16 or 24 crayons

\*2 1/2" eraser

I will be accepting items until mid August. If you have any questions please feel free to contact me. There will be a basket in the narthex under the table. Thank you for any donations you can provide! -- Lori Heyne

## **HELP FOR THE HOMELESS HYGIENE DRIVE**

**February 22 – March 15.**

Donations remain in the community where they are collected. Thank you to everyone who donated items to this project. This drive is sponsored by *the family*, 88.5 FM Marathon County.

## **VOLUNTEERS NEEDED**

to sort hygiene items on Friday, March 20<sup>th</sup> from 8:00 a.m. to 1:00 p.m. at the Community Partners Campus Neighbors' Place. The sign-up sheet is on the table in the narthex. Thank you for helping your community.

## **LANTERN DEADLINE**

The deadline for submitting April Lantern articles is Friday, March 20. Please honor the deadline.

## **LET US REMEMBER IN PRAYER...**

John & Karen Otto, Chad Seivert, Lyle Jaegler, Linda Kittel, Sarah (*friend of the Cortright family*), Judy Beemer (*sister of Roger DeWitt*), Ron Wiese (*friend of the DeWitt family*), John (family of Klapperich and Wynn), Melinda (*sister of Matt Heyne*), Diane (*Aunt to Angela Greenfield & Jarek Nelson*), Janet Alters (*Family member of Mike & Joan, Jack & Kim, Erin, Spencer and Ella*), Tracey (*friend of Sheri Fochs*)

**Homebound / Assisted Lived:** Kathie Peterson (*Primrose*), Dolores Hintz (*Sylvan Crossings*), Sue McKee (*Rennes in Weston*), Diane Zuelke (*Mountain Terrace*), Michelle Detert (*Cady Home*), Ila Barttelt (*Rennes*), Gary Klingbeil (*Wood Aven*), Dennis & Laurayne Nicoliasen (*Rennes*)  
Audrey Fellbaum  
Delphine Saeger  
Eleanor Thorpe

**Daily Prayers Offered for:** Bishops Anne Edison-Albright (*East Central Synod*) and Yehiel Curry (*Presiding Bishop of the ELCA*), and all those who work in the East Central Synod Office; ShyAnn and Peter Egwalata (*in Uganda*)

## **PEEK AT THE WEEK OF MARCH 15-22, 2026**

**Sunday, Mar. 15:** 9:00 a.m. Worship  
10:15 a.m. Sunday School

**Monday, Mar. 16:** 6:00 p.m. Church Council

**Tuesday, Mar. 17:** 9:00 a.m. Quilting Workday

**Wednesday, Mar. 18:** 12:15 p.m. Lenten Worship  
followed by lunch in Fellowship Hall

**Thursday, Mar. 19:** 6:00 p.m. Worship

**Friday, Mar. 20:** 6:30 p.m. NA Meeting

**Sunday, Mar. 22:** 9:00 a.m. Worship

10:15 a.m. Sunday School (Mission Sunday)

## **BOW THE KNEE**

You are invited to a powerful musical Easter drama, *BOW THE KNEE*, at Trinity Lutheran Church, 107 N. State Street in Merrill on Saturday, March 21 at 7:00pm and Sunday, March 22 at 2:30pm. On Palm Sunday weekend the drama will be held at Zion Lutheran Church, 238145 Star Road in Aniwa (12 miles east of Wausau) on Saturday, March 28 at 7:00pm and Sunday, March 29 at 2:30 p.m. Free admission.

