

**Hope Lutheran Church**  
2001 S 500 E, Columbia City, IN 46725  
**Grace Lutheran Church**  
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**Web Page:** www.gracecolumbiacity.org  
Reverend Matthew Converse, Pastor  
Kirsten Jines, Preschool Director  
Joyce Dubach, Organist  
**Fourth Sunday in Lent**  
**March 15, 2026**



**Introduction to the day**

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.

**Food pantry need: cereal and soup**  
**Attendance for March 8.2026 - 25**

**PRELUDE**

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

*The assembly may stand.*

**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 forgives all our sin,  
whose mercy endures forever. **Amen.**

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

*Silence is kept for reflection.*

Gracious God,  
**have mercy on us according to your steadfast love.**  
For seeking worldly delights that deceive us and dishonor you:

Gracious God,  
**have mercy on us according to your steadfast love.**  
For desiring self-reliance instead of hungering for your word:

Gracious God,  
**have mercy on us according to your steadfast love.**

For failing to recognize your coming reign,  
and for hindering the work of the Spirit: Gracious God,  
**have mercy on us according to your steadfast love.**

For drawing from the well of self-serving ambition,  
and for disdainning the living water Christ offers: Gracious God,  
**have mercy on us according to your steadfast love.**  
For disregarding voices from the margin,  
and for distrusting signs of your healing and hope in the world:

Gracious God,  
**have mercy on us according to your steadfast love.**  
For dwelling in tombs of self-pity and discontent,  
and for disregarding Christ's call to come forth to life:

Gracious God,  
**have mercy on us according to your steadfast love.**

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.

**Amen.**

**GATHERING  
SONG**

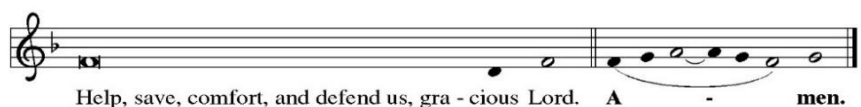
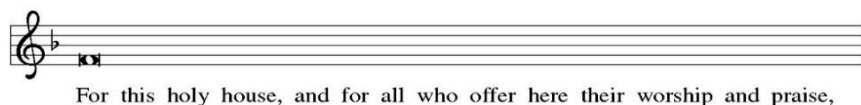
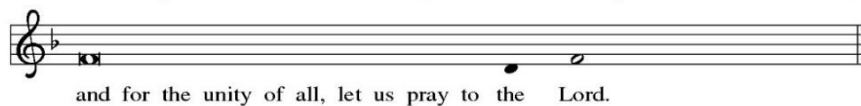
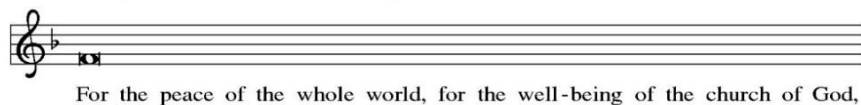
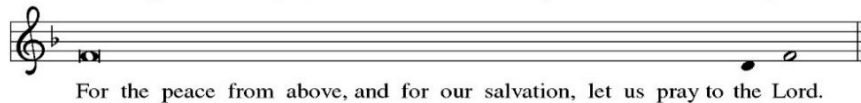
**(ELW 722)**

. **O Christ, Your Heart, Compassionate**  
Text: Herman G. Stuempfle Jr., b. 1923 Music: German melody, 18th  
cent.; adapt. X. L. Hartig, *Melodien zum Mainzer Gesangbuche*, 1833

**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.**

## KYRIE



## PRAYER OF THE DAY

*The presiding minister leads the prayer of the day.*

Let us pray.

*A brief silence is kept before the prayer.*

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.**

*The assembly is seated.*

**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.

The word of the Lord.

**Thanks be to God.**

**PSALM: Psalm 23**

<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,

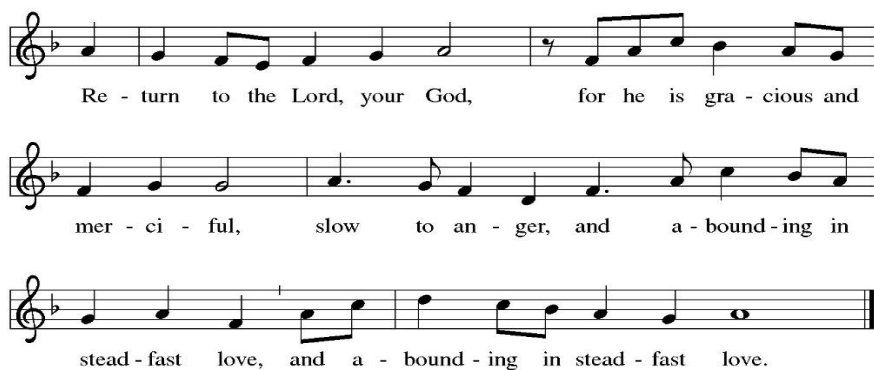
and Christ will shine on you.”

The word of the Lord.

**Thanks be to God.**

*The assembly may stand.*

## Gospel Acclamation



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

## 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.**

*The assembly is seated.*

## **SERMON**

*Silence for reflection follows the sermon.*

*The assembly may stand.*

## **HYMN OF THE DAY**

**(ELW 520)**

. **Dearest Jesus, at Your Word**

Text: Tobias Clausnitzer, 1619–1684, sts. 1–3; *Gesangbuch*, Berlin, 1707, st. 4; tr. Catherine Winkworth, 1827–1878, adapt. Music: Johann R. Ahle, 1625–1673

## **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.

*A brief silence.*

God, our shepherd, we pray that you guide the church. Lead Christians in our community (*here local congregations may be named*) and across the globe (*here international companion churches and synods may be named*) in right paths for your name's sake. Hear us, O God.

**Your mercy is great.**

God our provider, we cry out for this planet and the life it holds. Rescue endangered animals and plants, preserve threatened ecosystems, and save creatures from natural disasters. Hear us, O God.

**Your mercy is great.**

God our sovereign, we plead for your peace on earth. Bring an end to war and violence, and raise up leaders in governments, courts, businesses, schools, and community organizations who seek goodness and mercy. Hear us, O God. **Your mercy is great.**

God our healer, we call to you in our need. Uplift all who are made to feel unimportant, and transform the hearts of all infected by bigotry and prejudice. Care for all in special need this day. Hear us, O God.

**Your mercy is great.**

God our friend, we praise you for the diversity of people among us. Awaken us to share and receive the gifts we each possess, and stir up a spirit of understanding, celebration, and welcome for all. Hear us, O God. **Your mercy is great.**

*Here other intercessions may be offered.*

God our home, we thank you for all who have died and completed their baptismal journeys. Grant us faith to live until we too dwell in your house forever. Hear us, O God. **Your mercy is great.**

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

## PEACE

*The presiding minister and the assembly greet each other in the peace of the risen Christ.*

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

*The people may greet one another with a sign of Christ's peace, and may say, "Peace be with you," or similar words.*

*The assembly is seated.*

**MEAL** *God feeds us with the presence of Jesus Christ.*

## OFFERING HYMN

**VS 4 ONLY**

**(ELW 803)**

### When I Survey the Wondrous Cross

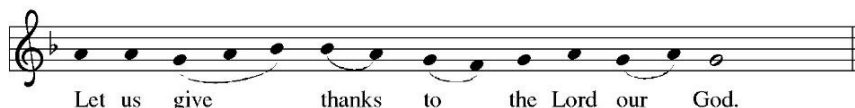
Text: Isaac Watts, 1674-1748 Music: Lowell Mason, 1792-1872

## OFFERING PRAYER

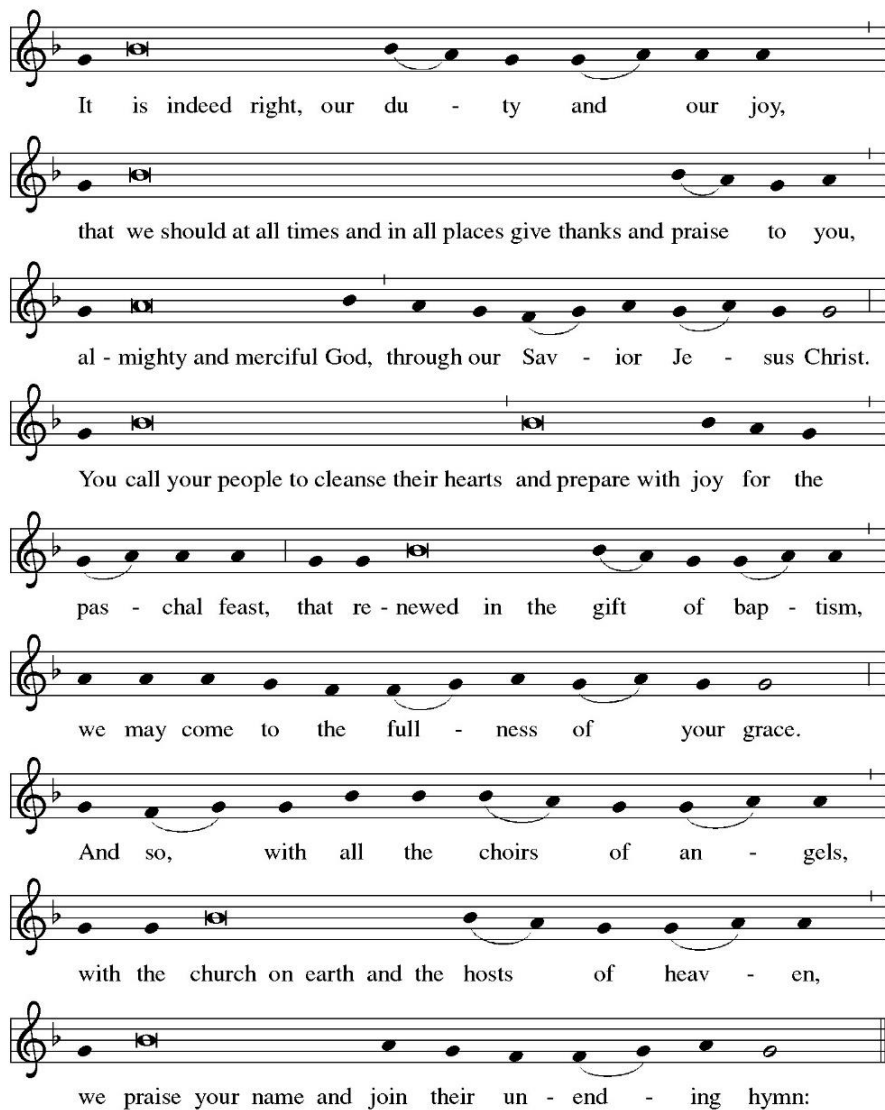
**O God, maker of heaven and earth,  
your steadfast love embraces all creation.  
You send rain and sunshine to nourish the earth  
and bring forth its bounty.**

**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.**

## Great Thanksgiving Dialogue



## PREFACE



It is indeed right, our du - ty and our joy,  
that we should at all times and in all places give thanks and praise to you,  
al - mighty and merciful God, through our Sav - ior Je - sus Christ.  
You call your people to cleanse their hearts and prepare with joy for the  
pas - chal feast, that re - newed in the gift of bap - tism,  
we may come to the full - ness of your grace.  
And so, with all the choirs of an - gels,  
with the church on earth and the hosts of heav - en,  
we praise your name and join their un - end - ing hymn:

## HOLY, HOLY, HOLY

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

## THANKSGIVING AT THE TABLE

Holy God,

our living Water and our merciful Guide,  
together with rivers and seas, wells and springs  
we bless and magnify you.

You led your people Israel through the desert,  
and provided them water from the rock.

We praise you for Christ, our Rock and our Water,  
who joined us in our desert,  
pouring out his life for the world.

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.

Remembering, therefore,  
his life, death, and resurrection,  
we await your salvation for all this thirsty world.  
Pour out your Spirit on this holy food  
and on all the baptized gathered for this feast:  
wash away our sin,  
that we may be revived for our journey by the love of Christ.  
Through him all glory and honor is yours,  
Almighty Father, with the Holy Spirit,  
in your holy Church,  
both now and forever. **Amen**

## **LORD'S PRAYER**

Gathered into one by the Holy Spirit, let us 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 to the table. Feast on God's goodness and mercy.

## **COMMUNION**


*(Everyone is welcome to come to the communion table. If you have not received instruction in the Sacraments, come to the altar for a blessing. If you would like to receive communion where you are seated in the pews, please tell the usher and at the close of communion you will be served.)*

*When giving the bread and cup, the communion ministers say*


The body of Christ, given for you.  
The blood of Christ, shed for you.  
*and each person may respond Amen.*  
**COMMUNION SONG**



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



mer-cy on us. Lamb of God, you take a-way the sin of the



world; have mer - cy on us. Lamb of God, you take a - way the



sin of the world; grant us peace.

## SONG DURING COMMUNION

### Jesus Christ, Our Blessed Savior



1 Je - sus Christ, our bless - ed Sav - ior,  
2 Christ says, "Come, that you may ev - er  
3 This be - lieve with faith un - shak - en:  
4 Christ says, "Come to me, you wea - ry;  
5 Nour - ished, go to thank - ful la - bor,



took our sin a - way for - ev - er,  
here re - mem - ber God's great - vor.  
Je - sus' meal is to be fa - ken  
all your bur - dens I will car - ry.  
bear - ing fruit in love for neigh - bor.



bear - ing bit - ter grief and pain,  
Take this bread, my bod - y; dine.  
by all those with hearts dis - tressed,  
There is noth - ing you can do  
Those you serve can taste from you



free - dom from death for us to gain.  
My blood I give for you in wine."  
by all who yearn for peace and rest.  
to earn this mer - cy; take it new."  
what won - ders God in love will do.

Text: Martin Luther, 1483–1546, after Jan Hus, c. 1369–1415; tr. Martin A. Seltz, b. 1951, and Paul Westermeyer, b. 1940  
Music: JESUS CHRISTUS, UNSER HEILAND, Hohenfurt, 1410; *Enrichidion*, Erfurt, 1524

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## 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.**

## **SENDING SONG      Be Thou My Vision      (ELW 793)**

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

## **DISMISSAL**

Go in peace. Believe the good news. **Thanks be to God.**

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## **ANNOUNCEMENT**

### **BREAD LOAF OFFERING - MARCH- Gafkjen Endowment Fund**

- \* Weekly envelope offering. We will be updating our list of envelope offerings. If you do not receive them and would like to, or you receive them and do not need them anymore because you do your offerings online or mail in a monthly check, please let the office know by March 22nd.
- \* Easter Week services for Hope and Grace: Maundy Thursday April 2 Grace 7pm with communion, Good Friday April 3 Hope 7pm No communion, Easter Sunday April 5 Hope 8:15am Grace 10am. Grace will also have a Carry in breakfast and Easter Egg hunt at 8:00am
- \*The year's Synod Assembly will be on line this year versus in person down in Indianapolis. The date is Saturday June 6th. We need one male and one female to represent our church. If

you are interested, see Pastor Matt.

- Thanks, Joe Freibrger
- Food Pantry needs, with the colder weather the need for Soup increases. While we still need Cereal and Peanut Butter, we could also use Soup as well.
- Game Night at Grace Lutheran Church, April 21<sup>st</sup>.
- Preschool Dairy Queen Fundraiser April 21<sup>st</sup>. 4-8 pm.
- Gloria Pelfrey has moved to 4725 N State Rd 9 Columbia City IN, 46725
- Hope ladies will host Adelphi Tuesday, March 17 at 11:30. This will be planning meeting so come with new ideas. Ladies from The Closet will be at our April meeting.

**Weekly Agenda at Grace Lutheran Church**

**Monday March 16, 2025**

**No school**

Helping hands 12:30 pm

Scouting America Troop 84 6:30 pm

AA 7:30 pm

**Tuesday March 17, 2025**

**St Patty's Day**

T.O.P.S 9:30 am

Care team 10:30 am

Adelphi group 11:30 am

Staff Meeting 3:40 pm

3082 6:30 pm

**Wednesday March 18, 2025**

Men's Breakfast 8 am

Food Pantry 12 pm

Pre-k Fish Fry 4-7 pm

**Thursday March 19, 2026**

AA 7:30 pm

Al-non 7:30 pm

**Friday March 20, 2026**

**Pastor's Day Off**

Food Pantry 12 pm

**Saturday February 21, 2026**

**Sunday March 22, 2026**

Worship @ Hope 8:15 am

Worship @ Grace 10:00 am

Fellowship 11:15 am

Girl Scouts 2 pm

**We have new sign-up sheets in the parish hall, for coffee hour.  
Coffee hour will be after church service, for anyone that would  
like to stay.**

# 2<sup>ND</sup> ANNUAL GRACE LUTHERAN CHURCH PRESCHOOL FISH FRY AND SILENT AUCTION

Proceeds benefit the Preschool.

March 18th  
4 pm - 7 pm

ALL YOU  
CAN EAT  
FISH FRY

\$15.00- Adult

\$6.00- Children 6-12

FREE- Children 5 and Under



Dine In OR  
Carry-Out



204 N. Main St.  
Columbia City, IN 46725

All Payment types welcome!