

St. Paul Lutheran Church
of Stillwater, Minnesota
March 1, 2026
Second Sunday in Lent



Your presence at worship is important to God and to us! Whether you are a first-time visitor, frequent participant, neighbor, member, or friend, please take a moment as you prepare for worship to share some information on the "Welcome to Worship" card included with your bulletin. Place it in the offering plate at the time the offering is received.

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.

Many of our worship materials are taken from the red Evangelical Lutheran Worship (ELW). Page numbers are located in the front half of the book, and hymn numbers are located in the back half of the book.

The assembly **speaks** or **sings** the bold responses.

GATHERING

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



Prelude

Thanksgiving for Baptism

ELW Page 94

Gathering Song

ELW hymn 335

"Jesus, Keep Me Near the Cross"

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

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.

WORD

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

First Reading

Pew Bible: Old Testament Page 10

Genesis 12:1-4a

God's call of Abram and Sarai has a clear purpose-that through them all the families of the earth would gain a blessing. As they set out on their journey, they are accompanied by promises of land, nation, and a great reputation.

At the conclusion:

Word of God, word of life.

Thanks be to God.



Psalm 121 (paraphrase)

*I lift my eyes up to the mountains;
Where does my help come from?
My help comes from You,
Maker of heaven, Creator of the earth.*

*Oh, how I need you Lord,
You are my only hope,
You're my only prayer.
So I will wait for you
to come and rescue me.
Come and give me life.*



Second Reading

Pew Bible: New Testament Pages 154-155

Romans 4:1-5, 13-17

In the person and example of Abraham we discover that a right relationship with God does not involve earning a reward from God but entails trusting God's promises. Abraham is the forebear and model for both Jews and Gentiles, because we too trust that ours is a God who gives life to the dead.

At the conclusion:

Word of God, word of life.

Thanks be to God.

Children's and Outreach Message

Jenny Brelje

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. 3

John 3:1-17

Jesus experiences anew the temptations that Israel faced in the wilderness. As the Son of God, he endures the testing of the evil one.

The gospel is introduced:

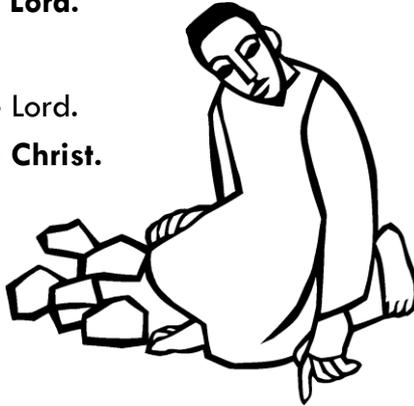
The holy gospel according to John.

oGlory to you, O Lord.

At the conclusion:

The gospel of the Lord.

Praise to you, O Christ.



Sermon

Pastor Laurel Halvorson Bernard

Silence for reflection follows the sermon.

Hymn of the Day

ELW hymn 407

"O Living Breath of God"

Creed

ELW page 105

Prayers of Intercession

ELW page 105

After each prayer:

Hear us, O God.

Your mercy is great.

At the conclusion:

Into your hands, gracious God, we commend all for whom we pray, trusting in your mercy; through Jesus Christ, our Savior.

Amen.

Peace

The peace of Christ be with you always.

And also with you.

All are invited to greet one another with a sign of Christ's peace.

MEAL

God feeds us with the presence of Jesus Christ.

Offering "Blest be the Lord" John Ostrem, soloist

Our offering is a collection of money for the church's mission, including the care of those in need, as a sign of the giving of our whole selves in grateful response for all God's gifts. Your offering and "Welcome to Worship" card may be placed in the offering plate. The QR code on the right may be used if you wish to give electronically.

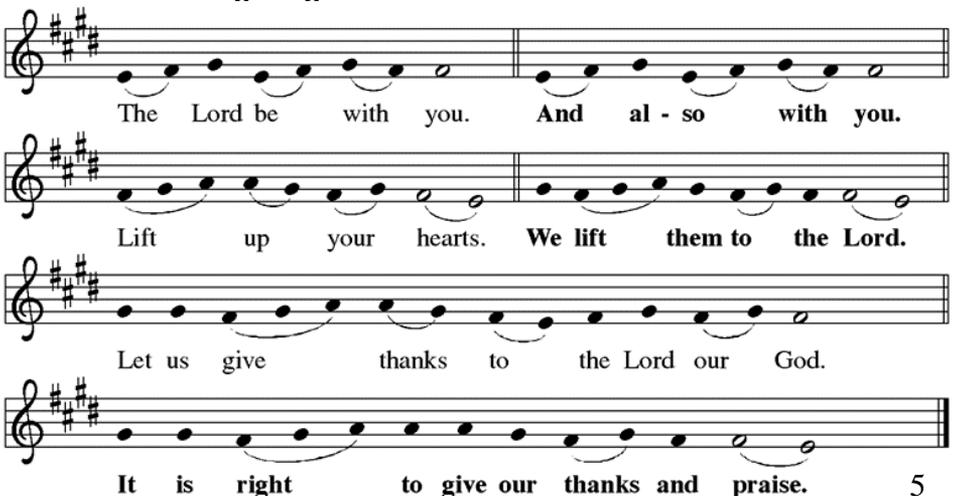


Offering Prayer

God our provider, you have not fed us with bread alone, but with words of grace and life. Bless us and these your gifts, which we receive from your bounty, through Jesus Christ our Lord.

Amen.

Great Thanksgiving



The Lord be with you. And al - so with you.

Lift up your hearts. We lift them to the Lord.

Let us give thanks to the Lord our God.

It is right to give our thanks and praise.

It is indeed right, our duty and our joy . . .

. . . we praise your name and join their unending hymn:



Ho - ly, ho - ly, ho - ly Lord, Lord God of pow'r and might,



heav'n and earth are full of your glo - ry.



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.

Blessed are you, O God of the universe . . .

Praise to you . . .

In the night in which he was betrayed . . .

Again, after supper, he took the cup, gave thanks . . .

With this bread and cup

we remember our Lord's passover from death to life

as we proclaim the mystery of faith:

Christ has died.

Christ is risen.

Christ will come again.

O God of resurrection and new life . . .

. . . Grace our table with your presence.

Come, Holy Spirit.

Reveal yourself to us in the breaking of the bread . . .

. . . Send us forth, burning with justice, peace, and love.

Come, Holy Spirit.

With your holy ones of all times and places . . .
. . . blessed and holy Trinity, now and forever.

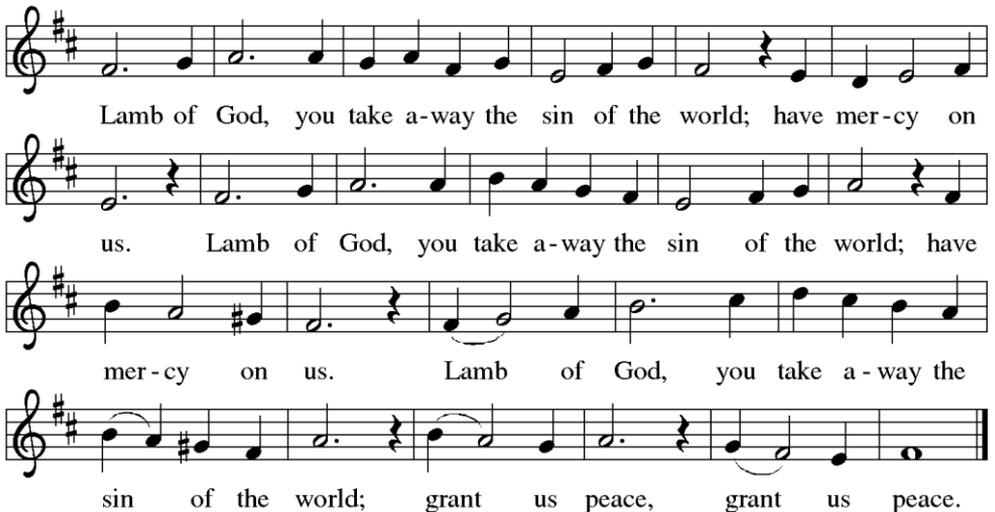
Amen.

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.**



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, grant us peace.



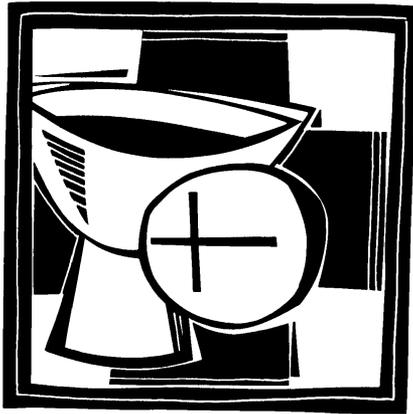
Communion

We celebrate at an open communion table. All who hear our Lord's invitation are welcome to participate. Receive the bread first with an open hand and eat immediately, followed by the juice (white) or wine (red). Gluten-free bread is available at the front end of the center aisle. Please indicate to an usher if you need to receive communion from your pew. Children who have received age-appropriate instruction are welcome to commune. If you prefer instead to receive a blessing, please indicate by crossing your arms over your shoulders.

*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.



Prayer After Communion

Compassionate God, you have fed us with the bread of heaven. Sustain us in our Lenten pilgrimage: may our fasting be hunger for justice; our alms, a making of peace; and our prayer, the song of grateful hearts, through Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord.

Amen.

SENDING

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

Announcements

Charge and Blessing

Go out into the world in peace;
have courage;
hold on to what is good;
return no one evil for evil;
strengthen the fainthearted;
support the weak, and help the suffering;
honor all people;
love and serve the Lord,
rejoicing in the power of the Holy Spirit.

Amen.

The Lord bless you and keep you.
The Lord's face shine on you with grace and mercy.
The Lord look upon you with favor and ☩ give you peace.

Amen.

Sending Song

ELW hymn 638

"Blessed Assurance"

Dismissal

Go in peace. Serve the Lord.

Thanks be to God.

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DAILY PRAYER
All Shall Be Well (Julian of Norwich)



In you, Father all-mighty, we have our preservation and our bliss. In you, Christ, we have our restoring and our saving. You are our mother, brother, and savior. In you, our Lord the Holy Spirit, is marvelous and plenteous grace. You are our clothing; for love you wrap us and embrace us. You are our maker, our lover, our keeper. Teach us to believe that by your grace all shall be well, and all shall be well, and all manner of things shall be well.

Amen.

CONNECTIONS WITH THE LITURGY
Prayer of the Day



Newly composed for Evangelical Lutheran Worship (ELW), the prayer of the day is inspired by all three readings. Our prayer joins us to Abram, who was guided by God into a new life; to Paul, who urges us to faith in God's promises; and to Nicodemus, who is called to new birth in God. Most prayers of the day in ELW are several centuries old and align with the selection of readings for Sunday that are also rooted in ancient practice.

LIFE ON EARTH Spirit and Flesh



During some past centuries of the church, the “spirit” of which John writes was so preferred to “the flesh” that the things of this earth, including the very bodies in which God’s Spirit comes to dwell, were despised. Our task is to welcome God’s Spirit into the flesh of our bodies, into the life of this earth which is so beloved by God.

UPCOMING COMMEMORATIONS

George Herbert, hymnwriter, died 1633

Sunday, March 1, 2026

As a student at Trinity College, Cambridge, England, George Herbert excelled in languages and music. He went to college with the intention of becoming a priest, but his scholarship attracted the attention of King James I. Herbert served in parliament for two years. After the death of King James and at the urging of a friend, Herbert's interest in ordained ministry was renewed. He was ordained a priest in 1630 and served the little parish of St. Andrew Bremerton until his death. He was noted for unflinching care for his parishioners, bringing the sacraments to them when they were ill, and providing food and clothing for those in need. Herbert is best remembered, however, as a writer of poems and hymns such as "Come, My Way, My Truth, My Life" (ELW 816). FUN FACT: One of Herbert's descendants was the forty-first president of the United States and is named after him: George Herbert Walker Bush.

John Wesley, died 1791; Charles Wesley, died 1788; renewers of the church

Monday, March 2, 2026

The Wesleys were leaders of a revival in the Church of England. Their spiritual discipline (or method) of frequent communion, fasting, and advocacy for the poor earned them the name "Methodists." The Wesleys were missionaries in the American colony of Georgia for a time, but returned to England discouraged. Following a conversion experience while reading Luther's Preface to the Epistle to the Romans, John was perhaps the greatest force in eighteenth-century revival. The brothers' desire was that the Methodist Societies would be a movement for renewal in the Church of England, but after their deaths the societies developed a separate status. Charles wrote more than six hundred hymns, including "Hark! The Herald Angels Sing" (ELW 270), "Christ, Whose Glory Fills the Skies" (ELW 553), and "Love Divine, All Loves Excelling" (ELW 631). FUN FACT: There

are more hymns by Charles Wesley in ELW than any other hymnwriter, perhaps making him the greatest "Lutheran" hymnwriter of all time!

Perpetua and Felicity and companions, martyrs at Carthage, died 202

Saturday, March 7, 2026

In the year 202 the emperor Septimius Severus forbade conversions to Christianity. Perpetua, a noblewoman, Felicity, an enslaved woman, and other companions were all catechumens at Carthage in North Africa. They were imprisoned and sentenced to death. Perpetua's father, who was not a Christian, visited her in prison and begged her to lay aside her Christian convictions in order to spare her life and spare the family from scorn. Perpetua responded and told her father, "We know that we are not placed in our own power but in that of God."

GOSPEL MESSAGE

Forty Days of Humility

The devil gives Jesus three opportunities to assert himself as powerful and exceptional: to turn rocks into bread, to be saved by the angels, and to rule over all the earth. Three times Jesus rebuffs the devil, turning his attention to God and refusing to take the bait.

Anthony the Great, a desert father whose life mirrored the experience of Jesus in this text, once said, “I saw the snares that the enemy spreads out over the world and I said groaning, ‘What can get through from such snares?’ Then I heard a voice saying to me, ‘Humility’” (Benedicta Ward, trans., *The Sayings of the Desert Fathers*, Cistercian, 1975). This is exactly how Jesus responds to the temptations offered by the devil: turning his attention back to God in humility, refusing the temptation to prove himself through miracles and acts of power.

During Lent, we are invited to engage in practices like fasting, almsgiving, and prayer to discipline our minds and bodies so we can return our full attention to the abiding love of God in Jesus. There will be a temptation to engage these practices as ways of puffing ourselves up, performing, or proving our worth. But Jesus calls us back to a Lent rooted in humility, engaging practices not for the sake of proving ourselves, but for deepening our trust in God.

Where might we be experiencing that temptation to puff ourselves up, perform, or prove our greatness? What practices might support a posture of humility, reminding us that God is the author of all good things, and that we are loved and sustained by a God who humbly took on flesh for the sake of the world? May these forty days teach us to embrace humility and to trust that God walks with us, making all things new.