

CREATED, SAVED AND GIFTED BY GOD,
WE SEEK, SERVE AND SHARE JESUS CHRIST.



THIRD SUNDAY IN LENT
MARCH 23, 2025
10:30 AM

GOOD SHEPHERD LUTHERAN CHURCH
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INTRODUCTION

The warnings are plentiful and blunt on the third Sunday in Lent. Cut it out or get cut down! The warnings are accompanied by God's invitation to attentiveness: "Incline your ear, and come to me; listen, so that you may live." The landowner's ultimatum is forestalled by the gardener's readiness to till the ground one more year. That is good news for all of us. Thanks be to God!

FERTILIZED, FRUITFUL, AND FREE

God's word for us today is nutritious and wholesome, though hard to digest. The gospel reading seems oddly brutal alongside the abundance and comfort of the texts from Isaiah ("delight yourselves in rich food") and Psalm 63 ("My spirit is content as with the richest of foods"). Even Paul finds himself using physical sustenance as a metaphor ("they drank from the spiritual rock, . . . and the rock was Christ"). Surrounded by this food imagery, we now find Jesus using some horrific events as illustrations. After the mingled blood and fallen towers, it may be hard to hear the fig-tree parable as the grace-full story it really is. But here is Christ himself as gardener: digging, fertilizing, protecting, and nurturing us. We are fragile creatures, living in a world of tragedy and terror, but God does not punish fragility with death. On the contrary, God sent Jesus to us so that we may live.

Living in that nurtured garden of Christ, tended to and cared for as we grow in that love, how can we keep from blossoming? Live, yes, and live fruitfully, our gospel proclaims! Grow, yes, and grow gloriously! Now the good news of Christ's redeeming mercy becomes clear: we are each treated with boundless mercy, not impartial justice. While the world may want to blame the withering tree for its inability to be productive, our Savior and Lord reaches into our lives, reminds us of our roots, nourishes us with grace, and allows us to bloom, to flourish, to freely share our gifts with the world.

GATHERING

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

PRELUDE

WELCOME & ANNOUNCEMENTS

Judy Treadway

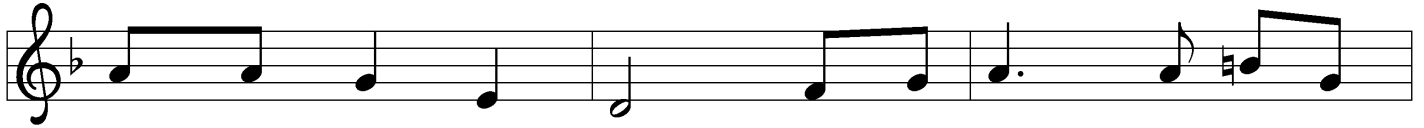
*** indicates to stand as you are able.*

CALL TO WORSHIP

Tree of Life



1 Tree of Life and awe - some mys - t'ry, in your
2 We re - mem - ber truth once spo - ken, love passed
3 Christ, you lead and we shall fol - low, stum - bling



death we are re - born; though you die in all of
on through act and word; ev - 'ry per - son lost and
though our steps may be; one with you in joy and



his - t'ry, still you rise with ev - 'ry morn, still you
bro - ken wears the bod - y of our Lord, wears the
sor - row, we the riv - er, you the sea, we the



rise with ev - 'ry morn.
bod - y of our Lord.
riv - er, you the sea.

OPENING LITANY

Seek the Lord while he may be found.

Call upon the Lord while he is near.

Let the lost find a new way.

Turn to the God of healing and compassion.

Let wicked hearts be made new.

Fall on the Lord, the wellspring of mercy and love.

For God will pardon our sins and cleanse us.

We will sing like never before for the new life we have found.

(Refrain - Music Ministers)

Bless the Lord, O my soul, O my soul.
Worship his holy name.
Sing like never before, O my soul;
I'll worship your holy name.

(Verse 1 - Music Ministers)

The sun comes up, it's a new day dawning,
It's time to sing your song again.
Whatever may pass, and whatever lies before me,
Let me be singing when the evening comes.

(Refrain - All)

**Bless the Lord, O my soul, O my soul.
Worship his holy name.
Sing like never before, O my soul;
I'll worship your holy name.**

(Verse 2 - Music Ministers)

You're rich in love, and you're slow to anger.
Your name is great and your heart is kind.
For all your goodness, I will keep on singing;
Ten thousand reasons for my heart to find.

(Refrain - All)

**Bless the Lord, O my soul, O my soul.
Worship his holy name.
Sing like never before, O my soul;
I'll worship your holy name.**

(Verse 3 - Music Ministers)

And on that day, when my strength is failing,
The end draws near, and my time has come;
Still, my soul will sing your praise unending
Ten thousand years and then forevermore!

(Refrain - All/Music Ministers)

**Bless the Lord, O my soul, O my soul.
Worship his holy name.**

**Sing like never before, O my soul;
I'll worship your holy name.
Bless the Lord, O my soul, O my soul.
Worship his holy name.
Sing like never before, O my soul;
I'll worship your holy name.
I'll worship your holy name.
Lord, I'll worship your holy name.**

"Just To Be with You"

(Verse 1 - Music Ministers)

**Lord, my life is an empty cup;
Here's my heart - would you fill me up?
I'm face to the ground, forsaking my pride,
Leaving my will, my burdens behind.**

(Refrain - Music Ministers)

**All I want, all I need
Is just to be with you,
Just to be with you.
Here I am at your feet
Just to be with you,
Just to be with you.**

(Verse 2 - All)

**I have come to the end of me,
And there's nothing I have to bring;
But you said I belong, you say I am yours;
Nothing compares to knowing you more.**

(Refrain - All)

**All I want, all I need
Is just to be with you,
Just to be with you.
Here I am at your feet
Just to be with you,
Just to be with you.**

(Music Ministers)
You made a way for me, O Savior.
I'm yours forevermore.
You made a way for me, O Savior.
I'm yours forevermore.
I'm yours forevermore.

(Final Refrain - Music Ministers / All)

All I want, all I need
Is just to be with you,
Just to be with you.
Here I am at your feet
Just to be with you,
Just to be with you.

**All I want, all I need
Is just to be with you,
Just to be with you.
Here I am at your feet
Just to be with you,
Just to be with you.**

"Living Waters"

(Verse 1 - Music Ministers)
Are you thirsty? Are you empty?
Come, and drink these living waters.
Tired and broken? Peace unspoken,
Rest beside these living waters.

(Verse 2 - Music Ministers)
Christ is calling, find refreshing
At the cross of living waters.
Lay your life down: all the old gone;
Rise up in these living waters.

(Refrain - Music Ministers)
There's a river that flows

With mercy and love,
Bringing joy to the city of our God.
There our hope is secure;
Do not fear anymore;
Praise the Lord of living waters.

(Verse 3 - All)

**Spirit moving, mercy washing,
Healing in these living waters.
Lead your children to the shoreline;
Life is in these living waters.**

(Refrain - All)

**There's a river that flows
With mercy and love,
Bringing joy to the city of our God.
There our hope is secure;
Do not fear anymore;
Praise the Lord of living waters.**

(Bridge - Music Ministers)

Ooh...

(Verse 4 - All)

**Are you thirsty? Are you empty?
Come, and drink these living waters.
Love, forgiveness: vast and boundless;
Christ - he is our living waters.**

(Final Refrain - All / Music Ministers)

**There's a river that flows
With mercy and love,
Bringing joy to the city of our God.
There our hope is secure;
Do not fear anymore;
Praise the Lord of living waters.**

There our hope is secure;
Do not fear anymore;
Praise the Lord of living waters.

**** CONFESSION**

Let us return to God, confessing our sin in the assurance of God's abiding love.

Silence is kept for reflection.

Compassionate One, **you are slow to anger and abounding in steadfast love, but our lives do not always reflect you and your love for the world. We do not show others the tender compassion you have shown to us. We do not welcome others with the radical hospitality you grant to all people. We oppress others, even though you have set us free again and again. We squander the abundant gifts of the earth. Transform our lives and guide us again in the way of the cross. Amen**

**** FORGIVENESS**

Beloved in Christ, God's arms are always stretched open wide to welcome the wandering ones home. In † Christ your sins are forgiven. You have a place in God's house forever. **Amen.**

**** PRAYER OF THE DAY**

Eternal God, **your kingdom has broken into our troubled world through the life, death, and resurrection of your Son. Help us to hear your word and obey it, and bring your saving love to fruition in our lives, through Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. Amen.**

**** PASSING OF THE PEACE**

WORD

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

FIRST READING

Isaiah 55:1-9

To those who have experienced long years in exile, the return to their homeland is a celebration of abundant life. God calls them into an everlasting covenant of love. Those who return to God will enjoy new life and forgiveness, because God's ways are not our ways.

A reading from Isaiah.

Ho, everyone who thirsts,
come to the waters;
and you that have no money,
come, buy and eat!
Come, buy wine and milk

without money and without price.
Why do you spend your money for that which is not bread,
and your labor for that which does not satisfy?
Listen carefully to me, and eat what is good,
and delight yourselves in rich food.
Incline your ear, and come to me;
listen, so that you may live.
I will make with you an everlasting covenant,
my steadfast, sure love for David.
See, I made him a witness to the peoples,
a leader and commander for the peoples.
See, you shall call nations that you do not know,
and nations that do not know you shall run to you,
because of the Lord your God, the Holy One of Israel,
for he has glorified you.

Seek the Lord while he may be found,
call upon him while he is near;
let the wicked forsake their way,
and the unrighteous their thoughts;
let them return to the Lord, that he may have mercy on them,
and to our God, for he will abundantly pardon.
For my thoughts are not your thoughts,
nor are your ways my ways, says the Lord.
For as the heavens are higher than the earth,
so are my ways higher than your ways
and my thoughts than your thoughts.

Word of God, word of life.

Thanks be to God.

PSALM

Psalm 63:1-8

O God, eagerly I seek you; my soul thirsts for you. (Ps. 63:1)

O God, you are my God; eagerly I seek you;
my soul thirsts for you, my flesh faints for you, as in a dry and weary land where there
is no water.

**Therefore I have gazed upon you in your holy place,
that I might behold your power and your glory.**

For your steadfast love is better than life itself;
my lips shall | give you praise.

**So will I bless you as long as I live
and lift up my hands in your name.**

My spirit is content, as with the richest of foods,
and my mouth praises you with joyful lips,

**when I remember you up on my bed,
and meditate on you in the night watches.**

For you have been my helper,
and under the shadow of your wings I will rejoice.

**My whole being clings to you;
your right hand holds me fast.**

SECOND READING

1 Corinthians 10:1-13

Paul uses images from Hebrew Scriptures and prophecy to speak the truth of Jesus Christ: He is our rock, our water, our food, and our drink. Christ is the living sign of God's faithfulness.

A reading from 1 Corinthians.

I do not want you to be unaware, brothers and sisters, that our ancestors were all under the cloud, and all passed through the sea, and all were baptized into Moses in the cloud and in the sea, and all ate the same spiritual food, and all drank the same spiritual drink. For they drank from the spiritual rock that followed them, and the rock was Christ. Nevertheless, God was not pleased with most of them, and they were struck down in the wilderness.

Now these things occurred as examples for us, so that we might not desire evil as they did. Do not become idolaters as some of them did; as it is written, "The people sat down to eat and drink, and they rose up to play." We must not indulge in sexual immorality as some of them did, and twenty-three thousand fell in a single day. We must not put Christ to the test, as some of them did, and were destroyed by serpents. And do not complain as some of them did, and were destroyed by the destroyer. These things happened to them to serve as an example, and they were written down to instruct us, on whom the ends of the ages have come. So if you think you are standing, watch out that you do not fall. No testing has overtaken you that is not common to everyone. God is faithful, and he will not let you be tested beyond your strength, but with the testing he will also provide the way out so that you may be able to endure it.

Word of God, word of life.

Thanks be to God.

**** GOSPEL READING**

Luke 13:1-9

Asked about current tragic events, Jesus turns a lesson about whether suffering is deserved into a hard call to obedience. He then tells a parable that holds out hope that the timeline for ultimate judgment will be tempered by patience

The holy gospel according to Luke.

Glory to you, O Lord.

At that very time there were some present who told him about the Galileans whose blood Pilate had mingled with their sacrifices. [Jesus] asked them, "Do you think that because these Galileans suffered in this way they were worse sinners than all other Galileans? No, I tell you; but unless you repent, you will all perish as they did. Or those eighteen who were killed when the tower of Siloam fell on them—do you think that they were worse offenders than all the others living in Jerusalem? No, I tell you; but unless you repent, you will all perish just as they did."

Then he told this parable: "A man had a fig tree planted in his vineyard; and he came looking for fruit on it and found none. So he said to the gardener, 'See here! For three years I have come looking for fruit on this fig tree, and still I find none. Cut it down! Why should it be wasting the soil?' He replied, 'Sir, let it alone for one more year, until I dig around it and put manure on it. If it bears fruit next year, well and good; but if not, you can cut it down.' "

The gospel of the Lord.

Praise to you, O Christ.

YOUTH MESSAGE

MESSAGE

Pastor Tom Rutherford

**** APOSTLES' 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 power of the Holy Spirit,
born of the virgin Mary,
suffered under Pontius Pilate,
was crucified, died, and was buried;
he descended into hell.**

**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 THE COMMUNITY**

Assisting Minister

Led by the Spirit, let us turn to God in prayer for the church, the world, and all those in need

A brief silence.

Each intercession concludes:

God, in your mercy,, **receive our prayer.**

Receive the prayers of your people and draw all things together in your love, in the name of Jesus, who leads us from death to life. **Amen.**

GATHERING OF THE GIFTS

OFFERTORY

OFFERING PRAYER

Assisting Minister

Gracious Provider, you set your immense treasures among us, opening your heart to the world. As we prepare to feast on your bountiful love, deepen our commitment to sharing those treasures with others, through our Savior, Jesus Christ. **Amen.**

MEAL

God feeds us with the presence of Jesus Christ.

**** DIALOGUE**

Lift up your heads; **we lift them up to God.**

Lift up your voices; **we lift them up to God.**

Lift up your hearts; **we lift them up to God.**

**** THANKSGIVING AT THE TABLE**

And so we gather at the table. We come from many different places in life. And as we come together around the table we discover that our differences are not something we just tolerate, but that our differences are indeed a blessing. So come, children of God, just as you are. Wherever you are on this journey of life and faith, you are

welcome here - here in this place, here in this community, here at this table. Come, children of God, come and remember. Remember the stories that Jesus' friends tell: Stories of bread broken and shared to feed a multitude; stories of gathering both enemy and friend together around a common table; stories of unlikely guests revealing the face of the sacred.

On a night of both celebration and betrayal Jesus took bread, blessed it and broke it; gave it to his disciples and said, "Take and eat, this is my body given for you. Do this for the remembrance of me." Then Jesus took the cup, blessed it, and gave it to his disciples 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."

And so we pray: Lord, bless this bread and bless this fruit of the vine. Bless all of us in our eating and drinking that our eyes might be open, and that we might recognize the risen Christ in our midst, indeed in one another.

**** 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**

All who are hungry, come!.

The feast of grace is spread.

For those communing at home or in the pew:

COMMUNION — *Receiving the Lord's tangible presence*

The body of Christ given for you.

The blood of Christ shed for you.

Each person may respond: Amen.

Communion Statement ~ If you believe in your heart that Jesus Christ is your Savior and Redeemer and would like to receive Holy Communion, then come forward to receive the elements. If you would just like to come forward and receive a blessing, then you may do that also.

NOTE: We invite everyone to come forward for Holy Communion. If you have a gluten allergy, gluten-free wafers are available upon request when receiving

Communion. Also, if you prefer not to receive wine at Communion, apple juice is available upon request. For those choosing to remain in the pews, there are communion all-in-one cups containing grape juice available in the Narthex.

REFLECTION DURING COMMUNION

As we prepare to receive the sacrament today, may we quietly take this time to center ourselves on Christ, and reflect the amazing gifts of grace and forgiveness that we have been given. As we receive the body and the blood of our Lord, let us reflect upon His sacrifice. Finally, may we take this time to ask the Holy Spirit to enter our hearts, and then to work in us and through us each and every day.

**** TABLE BLESSING**

The body and blood of our Lord Jesus Christ bless you and always keep you in God's grace. **Amen.**

**** PRAYER AFTER COMMUNION**

Assisting Minister

Generous Host, you have shared your feast with us and made us new. Send us now to set tables of love and grace in our communities, that your liberating love might nourish the world into freedom, in the name of the crucified one, Jesus Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

**** SENDING OF COMMUNION**

Communion ministers may be sent to take the sacrament to those who are absent. The presiding minister may lead this prayer of sending.

Gracious God, loving all your family with a mother's tender care: As you sent the angel to feed Elijah with heavenly bread, assist those who set forth to share your word and sacrament with those who are sick, homebound, and imprisoned. In your love and care, nourish and strengthen those who will receive this sacrament, and give us all the comfort of your abiding presence through the body and blood of your Son, Jesus Christ, our Lord. **Amen.**

SENDING

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

**** BLESSING**

God our tender parent, God the crucified one, God the reconciling Spirit, ☩ bless you now and forever. **Amen.**

**** SENDING HYMN**

"Lord I Lift Your Name on High"

G C D C G C

Lord, I lift your name on high, Lord, I love to sing your

D C G C D C

prais - es. I'm so glad you're in my life,

G C Dsus D G C

I'm so glad you came to save us. You came from heav - en to earth

D C G C

to show the way, from the earth to the cross,

D C G C

my debt to pay; from the cross to the grave,

D Em7 Am7 Dsus D G C/G G

from the grave to the sky; Lord, I lift your name on high.

**** DISMISSAL**

Go in peace. Live in hope.

Created, saved and gifted by God,

we seek serve and share Jesus Christ. Thanks be to God!

POSTLUDE

“W + 2” = WORSHIP PLUS TWO

MAKE A COMMITMENT NOT ONLY TO WORSHIP EACH WEEK,
BUT ALSO TRY TO FIND A WAY TO SERVE IN THE CONGREGATION
AND SEEK OUT A WAY TO SERVE OUR COMMUNITY.

YOU ARE NOW ENTERING THE MISSION FIELD

UPCOMING COMMEMORATIONS

Oscar Arnulfo Romero, Bishop of El Salvador, martyr, died 1980

Monday, March 24, 2025

Romero was deeply concerned with injustices evident toward the poor and powerless in El Salvador, and worked forthrightly against political repression.

He was assassinated while presiding at the eucharist in a chapel near the cathedral in San Salvador.

Annunciation of Our Lord

Tuesday, March 25, 2025

Nine months before Christmas we celebrate the annunciation, in which the angel Gabriel announced to Mary that she would give birth to the Son of God. The ancient church believed that this was also the date of the world's creation and of Jesus' death on the cross.

Hans Nielsen Hauge, renewer of the church, died 1824

Saturday, March 29, 2025

Hauge was a layperson who wished to revitalize the church in Norway. As a result of a mystical experience, he felt called to preach. Many professionals in the church feared his motives and influence, and he was imprisoned for leading unauthorized gatherings.