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February 22, 2026 at 9:30am

First Sunday in Lent Today's gospel tells of Jesus' temptation in the desert. His forty-day fast becomes the basis of our Lenten pilgrimage. In the early church Lent was a time of intense preparation for those to be baptized at the Easter Vigil. This catechetical focus on the meaning of faith is at the heart of our Lenten journey to the baptismal waters of Easter. Hungry for God's mercy, we receive the bread of life to nourish us for the days ahead.



GATHERING

Prelude

Lament Your Great Sin

J. S. Bach

Welcome

Choir

Jesus, Lead Thou On

Arr. David Hermann

*Jesus, still lead on, till our rest be won;
and, although the way be cheerless,
we will follow, calm and fearless;
guide us by your hand to the promised land.*

*Jesus, still lead on, till our rest be won;
heavenly leader, still direct us,
still support, console, protect us,
till we safely stand in the promised land.*

Stand

Confession and Forgiveness

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 disdaining 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 Hymn 326

Bless Now, O God, the Journey



1 Bless now, O God, the jour - ney that all your peo - ple make,
2 Bless so - journ-ers and pil - grims who share this wind - ing way;
3 Di - vine e - ter - nal lov - er, you meet us on the road.



the path through noise and si - lence, the way of give and take.
your hope burns through the ter - rors, your love sus-tains the day.
We wait for lands of prom - ise where milk and hon - ey flow,



The trail is found in des - ert and winds the moun-tain round,
We yearn for ho - ly free - dom while of - ten we are bound;
but wait-ing not for plac - es, you meet us all a - round.



then leads be - side still wa - ters, the road where faith is found.
to - geth - er we are seek - ing the road where faith is found.
Our cov - e - nant is writ - ten on roads, as faith is found.

Text: Sylvia G. Dunstan, 1955–1993
Music: LLANGLOFFAN, Welsh tune, 19th cent.

Apostolic 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: Your Heart, O God, Is Grieved

Hymn 602

Leader

1 O God, Father in heav - en, have mer - cy up - on us.
 2 O Son of God, redeemer of the world, have mer - cy up - on us.
 3 O God, Holy Spir - it, have mer - cy up - on - us.

All

Your heart, O God, is grieved, we know, by ev' - ry
 Your arms ex - tend, O Christ, to save from sting of
 O lav - ish Giv - er, come to aid the chil - dren
 e - vil, ev - ry of woe; up on scars your be - cross - for -
 death and grasp word has grave; your Now make us fore grow and the
 that your sak - en Son our death is laid, and peace is won.
 Fa - ther move his heart to mer - cy at such love.
 help us pray; bring joy and com - fort, come to stay.

Prayer of the Day

Let us pray. Lord God, our strength, the struggle between good and evil rages within and around us, and the devil and all the forces that defy you tempt us with empty promises. Keep us steadfast in your word, and when we fall, raise us again and restore us 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

WORD

First Reading: Genesis 2:15-17; 3:1-7

Human beings were formed with great care, to be in relationship with the creator, creation, and one another. The serpent's promise to the first couple that their eyes would be opened led, ironically, to the discovery only that they were naked.

A reading from Genesis. ¹⁵ The LORD God took the man and put him in the garden of Eden to till it and keep it. ¹⁶ And the LORD God commanded the man, “You may freely eat of every tree of the garden, ¹⁷ but of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil you shall not eat, for in the day that you eat of it you shall die.” ^{3:1} Now the serpent was more crafty than any other wild animal that the LORD God had made. He said to the woman, “Did God say, ‘You shall not eat from any tree in the garden?’” ² The woman said to the serpent, “We may eat of the fruit of the trees in the garden, ³ but God said, ‘You shall not eat of the fruit of the tree that is in the middle of the garden, nor shall you touch it, or you shall die.’” ⁴ But the serpent said to the woman, “You will not die, ⁵ for God knows that when you eat of it your eyes will be opened, and you will be like God, knowing good and evil.” ⁶ So when the woman saw that the tree was good for food and that it was a delight to the eyes and that the tree was to be desired to make one wise, she took of its fruit and ate, and she also gave some to her husband, who was with her, and he ate. ⁷ Then the eyes of both were opened, and they knew that they were naked, and they sewed fig leaves together and made loincloths for themselves.

The word of the Lord. **Thanks be to God.**

Psalm 32 choir/congregation



¹ Happy are they whose transgressions ¹ are forgiven,
and whose sin is ¹ put away!

² Happy are they to whom the LORD im- ¹ puts no guilt,
and in whose spirit there ¹ is no guile!

³ While I held my tongue, my bones with- ¹ ered away,
because of my groaning ¹ all day long.

⁴ For your hand was heavy upon me ¹ day and night;
my moisture was dried up as in the ¹ heat of summer.

⁵ Then I acknowledged my sin to you, and did not con- ¹ ceal my guilt.
I said, “I will confess my transgressions to the LORD.”
Then you forgave me the guilt ¹ of my sin.

**⁶Therefore all the faithful will make their prayers to you in ¹time of trouble;
when the great waters overflow, they ¹shall not reach them.**

**⁷You are my hiding-place; you preserve ¹me from trouble;
you surround me with shouts ¹of deliverance.**

**⁸“I will instruct you and teach you in the way that ¹you should go;
I will guide you ¹with my eye.**

**⁹Do not be like horse or mule, which have no ¹understanding;
who must be fitted with bit and bridle, or else they will ¹not stay near you.”**

**¹⁰Great are the tribulations ¹of the wicked;
but mercy embraces those who trust ¹in the LORD.**

**¹¹Be glad, you righteous, and rejoice ¹in the LORD;
shout for joy, all who are ¹true of heart.**

Second Reading: Romans 5:12-19

Through Adam’s disobedience, humanity came under bondage to sin and death, from which we cannot free ourselves. In Christ’s obedient death, God graciously showers on us the free gift of liberation and life.

A reading from Romans. ¹²Just as sin came into the world through one man, and death came through sin, and so death spread to all because all have sinned ¹³for sin was indeed in the world before the law, but sin is not reckoned when there is no law.

¹⁴Yet death reigned from Adam to Moses, even over those who did not sin in the likeness of Adam, who is a pattern of the one who was to come. ¹⁵But the free gift is not like the trespass. For if the many died through the one man’s trespass, much more surely have the grace of God and the gift in the grace of the one man, Jesus Christ, abounded for the many. ¹⁶And the gift is not like the effect of the one man’s sin. For the judgment following one trespass brought condemnation, but the gift following many trespasses brings justification. ¹⁷If, because of the one man’s trespass, death reigned through that one, much more surely will those who receive the abundance of grace and the gift of righteousness reign in life through the one man, Jesus Christ. ¹⁸Therefore just as one man’s trespass led to condemnation for all, so one man’s act of righteousness leads to justification and life for all. ¹⁹For just as through the one man’s disobedience the many were made sinners, so through the one man’s obedience the many will be made righteous.

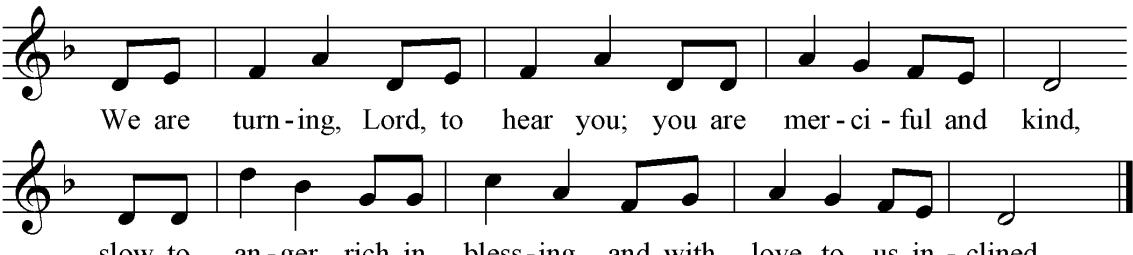
The word of the Lord. **Thanks be to God.**

Children’s Message

Stand

Gospel Acclamation

All sing the Acclamation, Choir sings the Verse.



We are turn-ing, Lord, to hear you; you are mer-ci-ful and kind,
slow to an-ger, rich in bless-ing, and with love to us in-clined.

*One does not live by¹ bread alone,
but by every word that comes from the¹ mouth of God.* (Matt. 4:4)

Gospel: Matthew 4:1-11

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 holy gospel according to Matthew. **Glory to you, O Lord.**

¹ Jesus was led up by the Spirit into the wilderness to be tested by the devil. ² He fasted forty days and forty nights, and afterward he was famished. ³ The tempter came and said to him, “If you are the Son of God, command these stones to become loaves of bread.” ⁴ But he answered, “It is written, ‘One does not live by bread alone, but by every word that comes from the mouth of God.’ ” ⁵ Then the devil took him to the holy city and placed him on the pinnacle of the temple, ⁶ saying to him, “If you are the Son of God, throw yourself down, for it is written, ‘He will command his angels concerning you,’ and ‘On their hands they will bear you up, so that you will not dash your foot against a stone.’ ” ⁷ Jesus said to him, “Again it is written, ‘Do not put the Lord your God to the test.’ ” ⁸ Again, the devil took him to a very high mountain and showed him all the kingdoms of the world and their glory, ⁹ and he said to him, “All these I will give you, if you will fall down and worship me.” ¹⁰ Then Jesus said to him, “Away with you, Satan! for it is written, ‘Worship the Lord your God, and serve only him.’ ” ¹¹ Then the devil left him, and suddenly angels came and waited on him.

The gospel of the Lord. **Praise to you, O Christ.**

Sit

Sermon

Silence for reflection follows the sermon.

Please stand when the hymn introduction begins.

Hymn of the Day ACS 922

When We Are Tested



1 When we are test - ed and wres - tle a - lone,
2 When in the des - ert we cry for re - lief,
3 When we are tempt - ed to bar - ter our souls,
4 When we have strug - gled and searched through the night,



fam - ished for bread when the world of - fers stone,
plead - ing for paths marked by cer - tain be - lief,
trad - ing the truth for the pow'r to con - trol,
sort - ing and sift - ing the wrong from the right,



nour - ish us, God, by your word and your way,
lift us to love you be - yond sign and test,
teach us to wor - ship and praise on - ly you,
Sav - ior, sur - round us with cir - cles of care,



food that sus - tains us by night and by day.
trust - ing your pres - ence, our on - ly true rest.
seek - ing your will in the work that we do.
an - gels of heal - ing, of hope, and of prayer.

Text: Ruth Duck, b. 1947

Music: SLANE, Irish traditional

Apostles' Creed With the whole church, let us confess our faith.

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.

Sit or kneel

Prayers of Intercession

A: Reconciled by God's mercy and sustained by God's presence, let us pray for the world and its needs. *A brief silence.*

God of all grace, grant faith to your church. Give to all the baptized the will to resist temptation and to worship and serve you alone. Hear us, O God. **Your mercy is great.**

God of all creation, tend this earth. When human greed and disobedience threaten this planet and the life it contains, lead us by your Spirit into ways of reverence, awe, and gentleness. Hear us, O God. **Your mercy is great.**

God of all nations, preserve us from trouble. Surround all living in places of violence with your steadfast love and give resilience to all who work for peace. Grant courage to those who challenge, especially around issues of racism and systemic oppression. Hear us, O God. **Your mercy is great.**

God of all healing, mend our wounds. Bring wholeness to all who are sick, give peace to all who groan in grief, and send companions to all who are lonely or isolated.

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

God of all people, provide for our community. For any among us who hunger for bread, bring nourishment. For any among us who hunger for truth, speak your life-giving word. Hear us, O God. **Your mercy is great.**

God of all life, bring us to you. We thank you for your free and abounding grace, and for those who, by that same grace, now rest eternally in you.

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

P: Receive our prayers, O God, through Jesus Christ, our strength and salvation.

Amen.

Stand

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

MEAL

Sit

Setting the Table + Presentation of Gifts

Choir

Out in the Wilderness

Jay Beech

*Driven by the Spirit out in the wilderness;
when the Spirit says, “Go,” you can’t say, “No.”
You listen for the voice when you’re bended low;
driven by the Spirit out in the wilderness.*

*Tempted by the devil out in the wilderness;
though you try to be strong, it’s been so long.
He whispers in your ear and you know he’s wrong;
tempted by the devil out in the wilderness.*

*Angels all around you out in the wilderness;
you are far from home where wild things roam.
There’s danger everywhere but you’re not alone;
angels all around you out in the wilderness.*

*“You are my beloved” out in the wilderness.
When you were baptized you realized
you’d heard the voice of God from the opening skies:
“You are my beloved” out in the wilderness.*

Offering Prayer

A: 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.**

Great Thanksgiving

The Lord be with you. **And also 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, that we should at all times and in all places give thanks and praise to you, almighty and merciful God, through our Savior Jesus Christ. You call your people to cleanse their hearts and prepare with joy for the paschal feast, that renewed in the gift of baptism, we may come to the fullness of your grace. And so, with all the choirs of angels, with the church on earth and the hosts of heaven, we praise your name and join their unending hymn:

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 in the high - est.
Bless - ed is he who comes in the name of the Lord.
Ho - san - na in the high - est.

Eucharistic Prayer

Blessed are you, O God of the universe. Your mercy is everlasting and your faithfulness endures from age to age.

Praise to you for creating the heavens and the earth. Praise to you for saving the earth from the waters of the flood. Praise to you for bringing the Israelites safely through the sea. Praise to you for leading your people through the wilderness to the land of milk and honey. Praise to you for the words and deeds of Jesus, your anointed one. Praise to you for the death and resurrection of Christ. Praise to you for your Spirit poured out on all nations.

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.

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: Pour out your Holy Spirit on us and on these gifts of bread and wine. Bless this feast. Grace our table with your presence.

Come, Holy Spirit.

Reveal yourself to us in the breaking of the bread. Raise us up as the body of Christ for the world. Breathe new life into us. Send us forth, burning with justice, peace, and love. **Come, Holy Spirit.**

With your holy ones of all times and places, with the earth and all its creatures, with sun and moon and stars, we praise you, O God, blessed and holy Trinity, now and forever. **Amen.**

Lord's Prayer Gathered into one by the Holy Spirit, let us pray as Jesus taught us.

The musical notation consists of three staves of music in G clef, common time. The first staff begins with a half note, followed by a dotted half note, a quarter note, and a half note. The lyrics for this staff are: "Our Fa - ther in heav - en, hal - lowed be your name,". The second staff begins with a half note, followed by a dotted half note, a quarter note, and a half note. The lyrics for this staff are: "your king-dom come, your will be done, on earth as in heav - en." The third staff begins with a half note, followed by a dotted half note, a quarter note, and a half note. The lyrics for this staff are: "Give us to - day our dai - ly bread. For - give us our sins as we".

for-give those who sin a-against us. Save us from the time of tri - al

and de - liv - er us from e - vil. For the king - dom, the pow'r,

and the glo - ry are yours, now and for - ev - er. A - men.

Sit

Invitation to Communion

*Gluten-free wafers are available. Please ask your server.
Red wine and white grape juice are available in each tray.*



Lamb of God

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

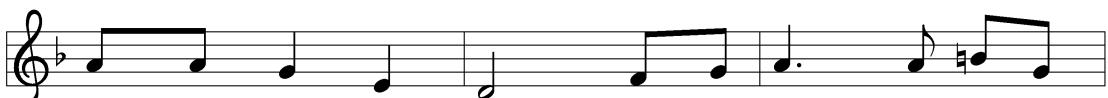
sin of the world; grant us peace. A - men.

Communion Hymn 334

Tree of Life and Awesome Mystery



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.

4 From the dawning of creation
you have loved us as your own;
stay with us through all temptation,
make us turn to you alone,
make us turn to you alone.



Text: Marty Haugen, b. 1950
Music: Marty Haugen

Communion Hymn 325

I Want Jesus to Walk with Me

1 I want Je - sus to walk with me;
2 In my tri - als, Lord, walk with me;
3 When I'm in trou - ble, Lord, walk with me;

I want Je - sus to walk with me;
in my tri - als, Lord, walk with me;
when I'm in trou - ble, Lord, walk with me;

all a - long my pil - grim jour - ney,
when my heart is al - most break - ing,
when my head is bowed in sor - row,

Lord, I want Je - sus to walk with me.
Lord, I want Je - sus to walk with me.
Lord, I want Je - sus to walk with me.

Text: African American spiritual

Music: SOJOURNER, African American spiritual

Table Blessing and Communion Prayer

P: The body and blood of our Lord Jesus Christ strengthen you and keep you in God's grace. **Amen.**

A: 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

Blessing

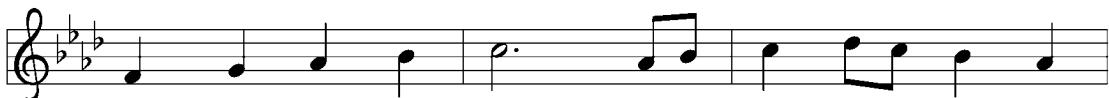
Receive the blessing of the holy Trinity: God, who calls all things into existence, Jesus Christ, who redeems us, and the Holy Spirit, whose breath sustains creation, + bless you now and always. **Amen.**

Sending Hymn 319

O Lord, throughout These Forty Days



1 O Lord, through - out these for - ty days you
2 You strove with Sa - tan, and you won; your
3 Though parched and hun - gry, yet you prayed and
4 Be with us through this sea - son, Lord, and



prayed and kept the fast; in - spire re - pen - tance
faith - ful - ness en - dured; lend us your nerve, your
fixed your mind a - bove; so teach us to de -
all our earth - ly days, that when the fi - nal



for our sin, and free us from our past.
skill and trust in God's e - ter - nal word.
ny our - selves that we may know God's love.
Eas - ter dawns, we join in heav - en's praise.

Sit

Announcements

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

Voluntary

Sarabande

G. F. Handel

*Everyone is invited to enjoy light refreshments and conversation
in the fellowship hall following worship.*

Commemorations this Week

Monday, February 23 Polycarp, Bishop of Smyrna, martyr, died 156 Because he is said to have been known by John, the author of Revelation, as well as the important early church fathers Irenaeus and Ignatius, Polycarp serves as a vital link in church history. He was burned at the stake at age 86 for refusing to renounce his faith.

Wednesday, February 25 Elizabeth Fedde, deaconess, died 1921 Born in Norway and trained there as a deaconess, Fedde was asked to come and minister to the poor and to seamen in New York City. She established the Deaconess House in Brooklyn as well as Deaconess Hospital in Minneapolis.

The comic strip *Agnus Day* is a lectionary-based comic strip. Each week, Rick (the one with the dark nose) and Ted discuss one of the assigned readings from the Common Lectionary. Their conversation drives at a point and sometimes sparks a laugh. *Agnus Day* is the creation of Pastor James Wetzstein, a Lutheran pastor who serves as one of the campus pastors at Valparaiso University. *Agnus Day* appears with the permission of www.agnusday.org.



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.



Trinity Evangelical Lutheran Church (ELCA)