

St. Stephen's Lutheran Church

+ Third Sunday in Lent
March 23, 2025



You are welcome here! As a Reconciling in Christ congregation of the ELCA, we believe that the gospel is God's gift to all people, shared unconditionally and without regard to race, sexual orientation, gender identity, gender expression, socio-economic or family status, age, physical or mental abilities, outward appearance, or religious affiliation. We seek racial equality and justice. In this way, we live into the truth (Ephesians 2:14)—that Christ breaks down the dividing walls between us and makes us one.

Gathering

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

Prelude

Welcome

Joys & Concerns

**** Confession and Forgiveness**

All may make the sign of the cross, the sign that is marked at baptism.

Blessed be the holy Trinity, ☩ one God, who forgives all our sin,
whose mercy endures forever. **Amen.**

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.**

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.**

** Please stand as you are able. **Items in bold are to be spoken by the assembly.**

** Gathering Hymn

Before the Waters Nourished the Earth

ACS 1049

1 Be - fore the wa - ters nour - ished earth or night im -
2 This Love re - mained as time re - vealed the loss of
3 De - spair, so deep it bears no name, or sor - rows
4 The Love that called cre - a - tion good all good - ness

ag - ined morn - ing, a Love con - ceived the
E - den's glo - ry, and, griev - ing, holds in
par - a - lyz - ing can - not re - voke Love's
still is bring - ing. This Love turns death a -

u - ni - verse and rev - eled in its form - ing.
mem - o - ry each trag - ic hu - man sto - ry.
faith - ful claim to dwell with - in our dy - ing.
gain to life and si - lence in - to sing - ing.

Text: Jeannette M. Lindholm, b. 1961

Music: ST. COLUMBA, Irish melody

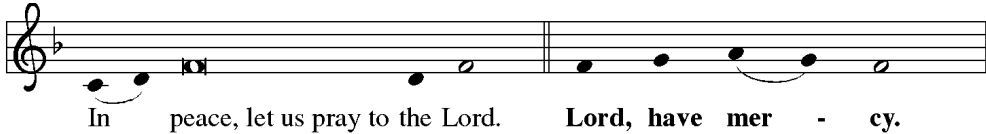
Text © 1996 Jeannette M. Lindholm, admin. Augsburg Fortress

** Please stand as you are able. **Items in bold** are to be spoken by the assembly.

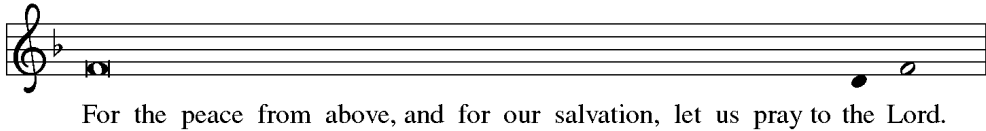
** Greeting

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.

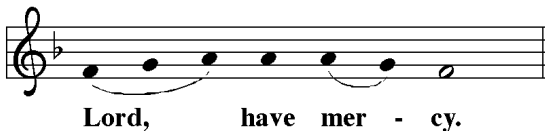
** Kyrie



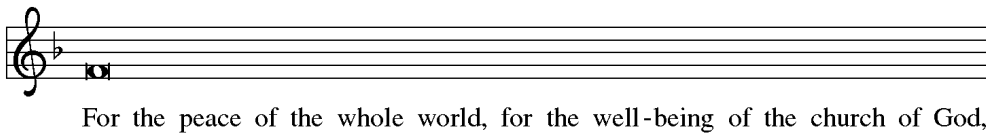
In peace, let us pray to the Lord. **Lord, have mer - cy.**



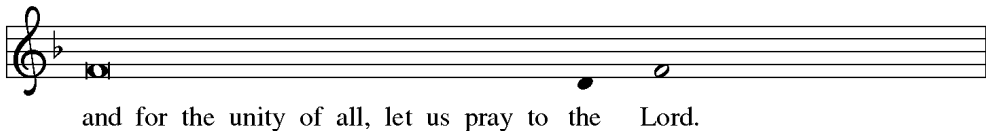
For the peace from above, and for our salvation, let us pray to the Lord.



Lord, have mer - cy.



For the peace of the whole world, for the well-being of the church of God,

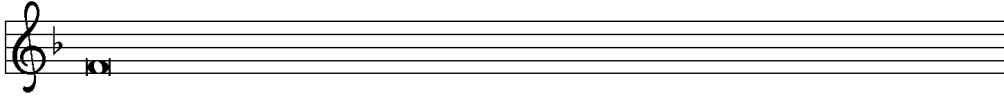


and for the unity of all, let us pray to the Lord.

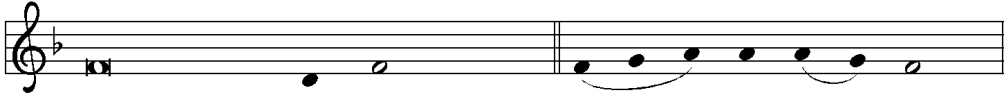


Lord, have mer - cy.

** Please stand as you are able. **Items in bold are to be spoken by the assembly.**

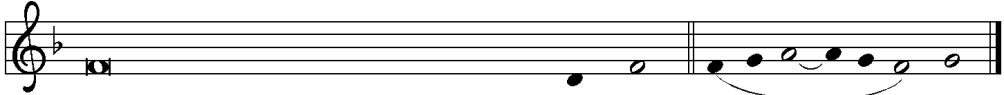


For this holy house, and for all who offer here their worship and praise,



let us pray to the Lord.

Lord, have mer - cy.



Help, save, comfort, and defend us, gra - cious Lord. **A - men.**

**** Prayer of the Day**

The Lord be with you.

And also with you.

Let us pray.

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.**

**** Please stand as you are able. Items in bold are to be spoken by the assembly.**

Word

God speaks to us in scripture, preaching and song.

First Reading

Isaiah 55:1-9

Word of God, Word of Life.

Thanks be to God.

Psalm

Psalm 63:1-8

¹O God, you are my God, 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.

²**So I have looked upon you in the sanctuary,
beholding your power and glory.**

³Because your steadfast love is better than life,
my lips will praise you.

⁴**So I will bless you as long as I live;
I will lift up my hands and call on your name.**

⁵My soul is satisfied as with a rich feast,
and my mouth praises you with joyful lips

⁶**when I think of you on my bed,
and meditate on you in the watches of the night;**

⁷for you have been my help,
and in the shadow of your wings I sing for joy.

⁸**My soul clings to you;
your right hand upholds me.**

** Please stand as you are able. Items in bold are to be spoken by the assembly.

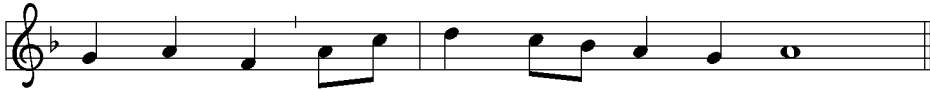
**** Gospel Acclamation**



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**

Luke 13:1-9

The Holy Gospel according to Luke.
The Gospel of the Lord.

**Glory to you O Lord.
Praise to you O Christ.**

**** Gospel Acclamation**

Please see gospel acclamation on page 6.

Sermon

The Rev. Barbara Melosh

** Please stand as you are able. **Items in bold are to be spoken by the assembly.**

**** Hymn of the Day**

As Rain from the Clouds

ELW 508

The musical score is written for a four-part choir (Soprano, Alto, Tenor, Bass) and piano accompaniment. It consists of six systems of music. Each system includes a vocal line with lyrics and a piano accompaniment line. The key signature is one flat (B-flat major or D minor), and the time signature is 4/4. The lyrics are as follows:

1 As rain from the clouds will your word come to earth,
2 As grain that is scat - tered your word has been sown world,
3 As rays of the sun shall your word light the world,

as snow from the heav - ens re - fresh - ing the land.
on rocks and on road - ways, in good earth and sand.
a - wak - ing and warm - ing and heal - ing our land.

Then soft - en our soil that the good seed may grow
Make fer - tile our soil that the good seed may grow
Then shine in our hearts that the good seed may grow

and rip - en rich fruit to re - turn to your hand.
and rip - en rich fruit to re - turn to your hand.
and rip - en rich fruit to re - turn to your hand.

**** Please stand as you are able. Items in bold are to be spoken by the assembly.**

We praise you, our God, for the dew of your word;
 We praise you, our God, for the seed of your word;
 We praise you, our God, for the light of your word;

we thank you, good gar - d'ner, for your ten - der toil.
 we thank you, good gar - d'ner, for your ten - der toil.
 we thank you, good gar - d'ner, for your ten - der toil.

We bless you, best farm - er, for hun - dred - fold yield,
 We bless you, best farm - er, for hun - dred - fold yield,
 We bless you, best farm - er, for hun - dred - fold yield,

for har - vest of grace in our once - bar - ren soil.
 for har - vest of grace in our once - bar - ren soil.
 for har - vest of grace in our once - bar - ren soil.

Text: Delores Dufner, o.s.b. 1939
 Music: AFTON WATER, Jonathan E. Spilman, 1812-1896; arr. hymnal version
 Text © 1983, 2003 GIA Publications, Inc., 7404 S. Mason Ave., Chicago, IL 60638. www.giamusic.com. 800.442.3358.
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 Arr. © 2003 Augsburg Fortress.

** Please stand as you are able. Items in bold are to be spoken by the assembly.

** **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 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 the People**

Each portion of the prayer ends with:

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

** Please stand as you are able. Items in bold are to be spoken by the assembly.

Meal

God feeds us at the table of mercy and grace.

Sharing of the Peace

The peace of the Lord be with you.

And also with you.

Offering

Each week we give thanks to God for what God has given us: ourselves, our time, and our possessions. A financial gift to St. Stephen's supports the work of the congregation in our community.

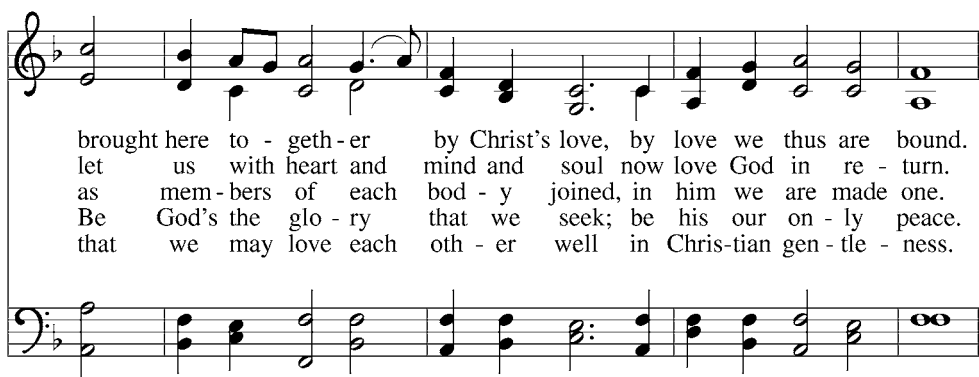
** Offering Song

Where Charity and Love Prevail

ELW 359



1 Where char - i - ty and love pre - vail, there God is ev - er found;
2 With grate - ful joy and ho - ly fear, God's char - i - ty we learn;
3 Let us re - call that in our midst dwells Christ, God's ho - ly Son;
4 Let strife a - mong us be un - known; let all con - ten - tions cease.
5 Let us for - give each oth - er's faults as we our own con - fess,



brought here to - geth - er by Christ's love, by love we thus are bound.
let us with heart and mind and soul now love God in re - turn.
as mem - bers of each bod - y joined, in him we are made one.
Be God's the glo - ry that we seek; be his our on - ly peace.
that we may love each oth - er well in Chris - tian gen - tle - ness.

Text: Latin hymn, 9th cent.; tr. Omer Westendorf, 1916–1997, alt.

Music: TWENTY-FOURTH, attr. Lucius Chapin, 1760–1842

Text © 1960 World Library Publications, 3708 River Rd., Franklin Park, IL 60131-2158. All Rights Reserved.

** Please stand as you are able. **Items in bold are to be spoken by the assembly.**

** Offering Prayer

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.

** Dialogue

The Lord be with you.

Lift up your hearts.

Let us give thanks to the Lord our God.

And also with you.

We lift them to the Lord.

**It is right to give our thanks and
praise.**

** Preface

** 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.

** Please stand as you are able. **Items in bold are to be spoken by the assembly.**

**** Thanksgiving at the Table**

...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.

**** Lord's Prayer**

Our Father in heaven,
hallowed be your name,
your kingdom come,
your will be done,
on earth as in heaven.

Give us today our daily bread.

Forgive us our sins

as we forgive those who sin against us.

Save us from the time of trial
and deliver us from evil.

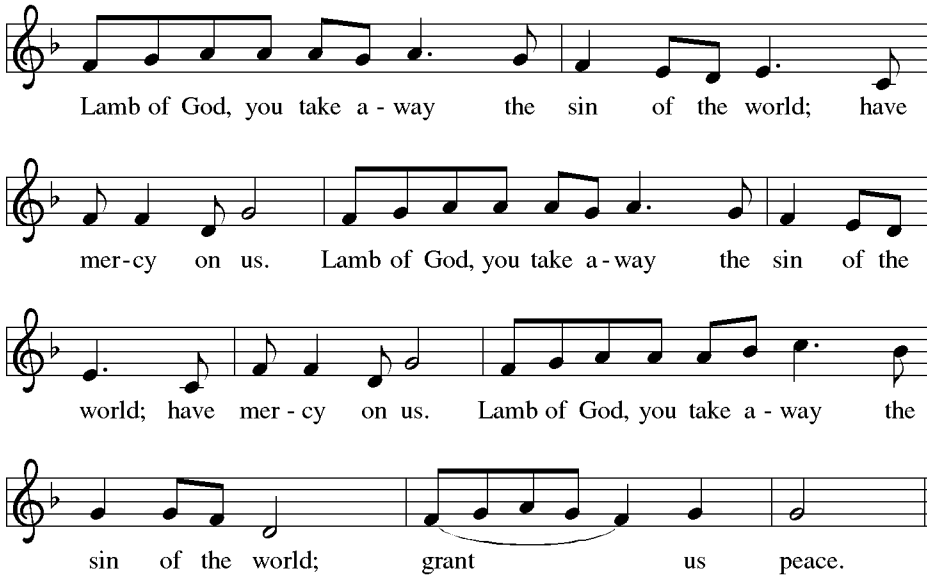
For the kingdom, the power,
and the glory are yours,
now and forever.

Amen.

**** Invitation to Communion**

**** Please stand as you are able. Items in bold are to be spoken by the assembly.**

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.

Communion

Holy Communion is a free gift of God's grace and love. Everyone is welcome to share in this meal. Come forward, take an empty cup from the table, then kneel or stand along the Communion rail. If you require GF wafers, please tell the minister. Our chalices contain red wine and amber-colored juice. As you return to your seat, place your used cup in the receptacle at the end of the first row of pews. If you wish to receive words of blessing, simply tell the minister.

** Please stand as you are able. **Items in bold are to be spoken by the assembly.**

Communion Hymn

As the Grains of Wheat

ELW 465

Refrain



As the grains of wheat once scat-tered on the hill were



gath-ered in - to one to be - come our bread; so may all your peo-ple from



all the ends of earth be gath-ered in - to one in you.



1 As this cup of bless-ing is shared with - in our midst,
2 Let this be a fore-taste of all that is to come when

Refrain



may we share the pres - ence of your love.
all cre - a - tion shares this feast with you.

Text: Didache, 2nd cent.; Marty Haugen, b. 1950

Music: AS THE GRAINS, Marty Haugen

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** Please stand as you are able. Items in bold are to be spoken by the assembly.

**** Communion Blessing**

**** Post Communion Prayer**

Together, let us pray.

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.

Announcements

Sending

We are sent into the world to serve.

**** Blessing**

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

**** Sending Hymn**

Guide Me Ever, Great Redeemer

ELW 618

1 Guide me ev - er, great Re - deem - er, pil - grim through this
2 O - pen now the crys - tal foun - tain where the heal - ing
3 When I tread the verge of Jor - dan, bid my anx - ious

**** Please stand as you are able. Items in bold are to be spoken by the assembly.**

bar - ren land. I am weak, but you are might - y; hold me
wa - ters flow; let the fire and cloud - y pil - lar lead me
fears sub - side; death of death and hell's de - struc - tion, land me

with your pow'r - ful hand. Bread of heav - en, bread of heav - en,
all my jour - ney through. Strong de - liv - 'rer, strong de - liv - 'rer,
safe on Ca - naan's side. Songs and prais - es, songs and prais - es

feed me now and ev - er - more, ev - er - more, feed me now and ev - er - more.
shield me with your might - y arm, might - y arm, shield me with your might - y arm.
I will raise for - ev - er - more, ev - er - more, I will raise for - ev - er - more.

Text: William Williams, 1717–1791; tr. William Williams and Peter Williams, 1722–1796, alt.
Music: CWM RHONDDA, John Hughes, 1873–1932

** Please stand as you are able. **Items in bold are to be spoken by the assembly.**

**** Dismissal**

Go in peace,
To Love, To Invite, To Serve.
God is gracious and merciful.
Thanks be to God.

Postlude

*Chancel flowers are given by Bill & Betty Sperati
in honor of Glorianna Rial's birthday*

Participants in Today's Service

Presiding Minister:

The Rev. Barbara Melosh

Music Director:

Dr. Claudio Espejo

Assisting Minister/Lector:

Ann Dransfield

Camera:

John Gordon

Altar Guild:

Sally Dudderar

Ministers:

The people of St. Stephen's

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Text the word "welcome" to 855-965-5200 to receive our weekly e-newsletter.

May God go with you today and every day.

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