

Worship Order
March 14, 2021
Fourth Sunday in Lent
9:30 AM Online Worship

WELCOME

+ WE GATHER BEFORE GOD +

MOMENT OF SILENCE

LIGHTING OF TRINITY CANDLE

As we strive to be a community of faith that is

Ignited by Spirit, Growing in Love,

we light this candle in the name of the Father, the Son and the Spirit
who surround us in this moment of worship.

WE COME TO GOD IN WORSHIP

Before we were born,

before we took our first breath,

before the week started,

before the year started,

before we said, "I love you,"

before we said, "I'm sorry,"

before we figured out who we really are,

before we figured out who we want to be,

before it all—

God loved us.

Unconditionally and freely,

fully and honestly—

God loved us.

Again and again, this is where our story begins.

Let us worship God!

HYMN ELW 631 Love Divine, All Loves Excelling

Love divine, all loves excelling,
Joy of heav'n, to earth come down!
Fix in us thy humble dwelling,
all thy faithful mercies crown.
Jesus, thou art all compassion,
pure, unbounded love thou art;
visit us with thy salvation,
enter ev'ry trembling heart.

Come, Almighty, to deliver;
let us all thy life receive;
suddenly return, and never,
nevermore thy temples leave.

Thee we would be always blessing,
serve thee as thy hosts above,
pray, and praise thee without ceasing,
glory in thy perfect love.

Text: Charles Wesley, 1707-1788, Public Domain

GREETING

The mercy of God, the love of Jesus
and the power and presence of the Holy Spirit be with you all.
And also with you.

WE CONFESS TO GOD

So let us pray to the God of love, trusting that God loved us first.

God of love,

we forget the beginning of the story—

that we were made from love, to be love, to give love.

Instead of rooting our narrative in the goodness refrain of creation,

we skip ahead and find our worth at the fall,

with Cain and Abel, lost in the wilderness.

We forget that first there was you, and you are love.

We forget that out of that love you created us.

We forget that from the very first day, you loved first.

We forget, because a love like that doesn't make sense to us.

Forgive our low self-esteem.

Forgive our resistance to love ourselves.

Forgive our hesitation to trust that even we could be made good.

And forgive our tendency to pass that doubt on—from generation to generation.

Write a new beginning for us that roots our confidence in your unrelenting love.

With hope we pray, again and again. Amen.

People of faith, no matter what we do, where we go, or what we tell ourselves—
God is love, and God is loving us.

Again and again, we are claimed, held, forgiven, and cared for.

In the name of the Lover, the Beloved, and Love itself—thanks be to God. Amen!

PRAYER FOR THIS DAY

God of the here and now—

We have heard the words,

“For God so loved the world
that he gave his only son,”

time and time again.

We have read them on billboards,

heard them in worship,

and seen them on signs.

And yet we know,

there is a difference between

hearing those words

in passing

and truly, deeply listening.
We long to listen, God.
We long to hear your truth.
We long to know your love.
Open our hearts and minds.
We are listening.

Amen.

+ WE HEAR GOD'S WORD +

FIRST READING: Ephesians 2:1-10

While we were dead in our sinfulness, God acted to make us alive as a gift of grace in Christ Jesus. We are saved not by what we do but by grace through faith. Thus our good works are really a reflection of God's grace at work in our lives.

¹You were dead through the trespasses and sins ²in which you once lived, following the course of this world, following the ruler of the power of the air, the spirit that is now at work among those who are disobedient. ³All of us once lived among them in the passions of our flesh, following the desires of flesh and senses, and we were by nature children of wrath, like everyone else. ⁴But God, who is rich in mercy, out of the great love with which he loved us ⁵even when we were dead through our trespasses, made us alive together with Christ—by grace you have been saved—⁶and raised us up with him and seated us with him in the heavenly places in Christ Jesus, ⁷so that in the ages to come he might show the immeasurable riches of his grace in kindness toward us in Christ Jesus. ⁸For by grace you have been saved through faith, and this is not your own doing; it is the gift of God—⁹not the result of works, so that no one may boast. ¹⁰For we are what he has made us, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand to be our way of life.

Word of God. Word of Life.

Thanks be to God

GOSPEL ACCLAMATION

We are turning, Lord to hear you, you are merciful and kind –
slow to anger, rich in blessing, and with love to us inclined.

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GOSPEL: John 3:14-21

To explain the salvation of God to the religious leader, Nicodemus, Jesus refers to the scripture passage quoted in today's first reading. Just as those who looked upon the bronze serpent were healed, so people will be saved when they behold Christ lifted up on the cross.

[Jesus said:] ¹⁴“Just as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, so must the Son of Man be lifted up, ¹⁵that whoever believes in him may have eternal life.

¹⁶“For God so loved the world that he gave his only Son, so that everyone who believes in him may not perish but may have eternal life.

¹⁷“Indeed, God did not send the Son into the world to condemn the world, but in order that the world might be saved through him. ¹⁸Those who believe in him are not condemned; but those who do not believe are condemned already, because they have not believed in the name of the

only Son of God. ¹⁹And this is the judgment, that the light has come into the world, and people loved darkness rather than light because their deeds were evil. ²⁰For all who do evil hate the light and do not come to the light, so that their deeds may not be exposed. ²¹But those who do what is true come to the light, so that it may be clearly seen that their deeds have been done in God.”

Word of God. Word of Life.

Thanks be to God.

CHILDREN’S SERMON

SERMON

WE PROFESS OUR FAITH IN GOD

We believe God is love—

unconditional, constant love.

**We believe this love exists for all,
choosing each and every one of us,**

**Day after day,
again and again and again.**

**We believe that God’s love is like a river.
Rivers cannot help but flow toward the sea;
God’s love cannot help but move toward us.
We are swimming in it.**

**We believe that God loved first.
We believe that God breathed life into dust.
We believe that God said, “This is good,”
and because we believe that God loved first,
we strive to build lives that reflect God’s love.
May we begin again here. Amen.**

WE PRAY TO GOD

O God..., receive our prayers:
your mercy endures forever.

To you, O God, our only God, we entrust all for whom we pray, through Jesus Christ our loving Lord.

Amen.

MUSICAL OFFERING God So Loved the World – Stainer
Bruce Aldinger, baritone

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+ WE FEAST AT GOD'S TABLE +

WE SHARE GOD'S PEACE

The peace of God, that washes over us again & again, be with you all.

And also with you.

*Take a moment to share a sign of the peace with those who are worshipping in your household.
If you are alone, take a moment to receive God's peace for yourself in the silence.*

WE COMMUNE WITH GOD

The Lord be with you.

And also with you.

Again & again, God promises to feed us,

and so we come to the table to receive grace after grace from our God.

WORDS OF INSTITUTION

LORD'S PRAYER

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.

WE SHARE THE MEAL CHRIST GAVE US

Share the bread and wine with those in your household using the words,

The body of Christ, broken for you.

The blood of Christ, shed for you.

PRAYER AFTER COMMUNION

God of steadfast love, at this table you gather your people into one body for the sake of the world. Send us in the power of your Spirit, that our lives bear witness to the love that has made us new in Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord. **Amen.**

+ WE ARE SENT OUT +

ANNOUNCEMENTS

HYMN ELW 779 Amazing Grace

Amazing grace! how sweet the sound
that saved a wretch like me!
I once was lost, but now am found;
was blind, but now I see.

Through many dangers, toils, and snares
I have already come;
'tis grace has brought me safe thus far,
and grace will lead me home.

The Lord has promised good to me;
his word my hope secures;
he will my shield and portion be
as long as life endures.

Text: John Newton, 1725-1807, alt., sts. 1-4; anonymous, st. 5
Public Domain

CHARGE AND BENEDICTION

As you leave this space,
May your mouth speak of God's goodness.
May your arms hold those in need.
May your feet walk toward justice.
May your heart trust its worth.
May your soul dance in God's grace.
And may this be your rhythm—
Again and again and again,
Until God's promised day.
In the name of the Lover, the Beloved, and Love itself,
Go with courage, go with heart, go in peace.
Amen.

SENDING MUSIC: More Love to Thee, O Christ – arr. Smith

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Please continue to keep the following people connected to our congregation in your prayers:

Alex Kunkel, Bob Moran, Betsy Rodger, Robin Seasock, Paige Seasock, Peyton Seasock, Nancy Terpoilli, Brian Allebach, Glen Van Dyke, Charles Krupp, RuthAnn Jadick, Jean Leister, Kenny Nace, Tom Ciesielka, Abigail and Eric Hails, Sonny Carson, Frank Puskoskie, Ann Brown Hager, Alyssa Gegan, David Mounts, Ann Lewis, Carolyn Iris, Melissa Snyder, Sandy Umstead, Theresa Hasson, Renaud Fix, Joseph and Lisa Yost and Theresa Gross.

Mark Your Calendar

Mon, Mar 15th 7:30pm Worship & Music Committee (zoom)
 Tues, Mar 16th 7:30pm Faith Formation (zoom)
 Wed, Mar 17th 7:30pm Mid Week Lenten – Friedens UCC (zoom)
 Sat, Mar 20th 8:30am Remarkable Faith Encounters (zoom)
 9-11am Drop Off Food for Open Link and Personal Care Kits –back door

 Sun, Mar 21st 8:30am Remarkable Faith Encounters (zoom)
 9:30am Fifth Sunday in Lent Worship (zoom)
 1:00pm Confirmation mini retreat (zoom)

OUR RESPONSE TO GOD’S LOVE

Worship Attendance 2/28/2021 – Zoom - 57 households		
Giving Amounts	Total received between 2/20-27/2021	Amount Needed between 2/20-27/2021
General Fund	\$5,419.50	\$5,608
Building Fund	\$467.50	
<i>Weekly average is based on the 2021 budget. A weekly building fund amount needed is no longer reported as the building fund has been used for the mortgage, which has been paid off. All other building expenses are included in General Fund budget and giving. The above numbers include electronic giving. Mint duty is being done every other week for the time being.</i>		

Capital Campaign Activity Update	
Capital Campaign Contributions Pledged	\$ 260,000.00
Capital Campaign Contributions received between 1/10-23/2021	\$132.50
Capital Campaign Contributions received to date	\$ 249,241.15

WORSHIP IN LENT

Sunday mornings – join us as we dig into the theme *Again & Again: A Lenten Refrain*
 9:30 AM Sundays on Zoom

In Lent, we’re reminded that, again and again, suffering and brokenness find us. We doubt again, we lament again, we mess up again. Again and again, the story of Jesus on the cross repeats – every time lives are taken unjustly, every time the powerful choose corruption and violence, every time individuals forget how to love. With exacerbation, we exclaim, ‘Again?! How long, O God?’ And yet, in the midst of the chaos of our lives, God offers a sacred refrain: ‘I choose you, I love you, I will lead you to repair.’ Again and again, God breaks the cycle and offers us a new way forward.

Tuesdays - Adult Faith Formation: Lenten Journeys of Faith

Tuesday evenings starting February 23 thru March 30
 7:30 PM on Zoom

Wednesday evenings – join us as we explore the theme Created for Community

7:30 PM Wednesday evenings on Zoom (see weekly email for link)

The invitation to Lent spoken on Ash Wednesday reminds us that we enter this season together “with the whole church.” It goes on to state that “we are created for communion with God, to love one another, and to live in harmony with creation.” Though many common Lenten practices rightly invite us to individual acts of “repentance, prayer and fasting, sacrificial giving and works of love,” Lent is also a time for deepening of community. Using readings from Mark’s gospel, our mid-week Lenten worship will invite participations to reflect on what it means to be in community with one another, with the world, with creation, and with God, especially at a time when we are physically distanced from one another.

- **March 17** – *In community with those on the margins* – Pastor Deb Schwartz and the people of Friedens UCC, Sumneytown
- **March 24** – *In community with Christ* – Pastor Homer Royer and the people of New Goshenhoppen UCC, East Greenville

Worship will be followed by a fellowship time utilizing breakout rooms on Zoom for small group gatherings.

Lenten At-Home Service Project

Lutheran World Relief (LWR) is in serious need of personal care kits. Their warehouse shelves are nearly empty and they cannot keep up with the demand. This Lent, St. John's invites you to create personal care kits at home. Make one - make 10. You determine what you are able to give based on your family's personal situation.

**The challenge - we have 200 active families at St. John's -
our hope is to collect 200 personal care kits - this Lent!**

Visit the LWR website (<https://lwr.org/kits/personal-care-kits/instructions>) to get all the information you need on what goes in each personal care kit and how to package it. If you want to participate but need the information sent to you, please call the church office.

Personal care kits can be dropped off at one of two times:

Sat. March 20 from 9-11 am (during the food collection drop-off time)

Sat. March 27 from 9-11 am (when palms will be available for pick-up)

You can also drop off personal care kits at the church office,
Monday thru Thursday (9 am to 12 noon) the week of March 22.

45 Personal Care Kits have been donated so far!

We're 155 kits away from our congregational goal of 200! See Weekly email or our website for info on what goes in a kit to make some at home! The next drop off time for Personal Care Kits is **Sat. March 20 from 9-11 AM** at the back entrance!

Meal Train for Brian & Jennifer Allebach

As you may be aware, Brian Allebach, former chancel choir director at St. John's, was diagnosed with ALS in 2019. As the disease progresses and life changes for the Allebachs each week, we are hoping to support them in whatever ways we can.

A meal train, to provide one home-made meal two Saturdays a month, has been started. To access the meal train sign-up, see what dates are available and find out all the pertinent information, see the weekly email or contact the church office.

Brian also loves to receive cards - so feel free to drop one in the mail to their home address, which is:

Brian Allebach

1096 Soffa Road

East Greenville, PA 18041

Thank you for your tender care for this family at this challenging time - and watch for new ways to be present with and for them in the months to come.

Reverse Egg Hunt - YPO missed the Egg Hunt last year - but we're not letting a pandemic ruin the fun this year ... so get ready for the First Ever Reverse Egg Hunt at St. John's.

How does it work?

1. Sign up your family to participate.
2. Let us know how many children are in the family and what their ages are.
3. On Sat. April 3rd between 9-11 AM, YPO members will visit your house and hide filled eggs in your yard for your kids to have their own safe egg hunt after we depart.
4. That's it!

Contact the office to sign your family up to participate in the Reverse Egg Hunt.

Candy Donations Needed! To help the YPO prepare for the Reverse Egg Hunt, donations of INDIVIDUALLY WRAPPED Easter Candy are needed.

Donations can be dropped off at church during normal business hours (8:30am - 12noon M-Th) as well as during the food collection drop-off time; Saturday, March 20.

Thank you for helping us share the sweetness of Jesus' love with the children of the church!

Join the Book Club in March!

Date: Thurs. March 25 at 7:30 PM (Zoom)

Book: Tomboy: The Surprising History and Future of Girls Who Dare to Be Different
by Lisa Selin Davis

YPO Spring Flower Sale! It's not too early to start dreaming about spring...and flowers! The YPO will be hosting their Mother's Day weekend Flower Sale. All proceeds will go to support the youth adults traveling to Minneapolis in July 2022 for the National Youth Gathering.

Flower Sale orders are **due by Sunday, April 18** - flower will be available for pick up at St. John's on Saturday, May 8 from 9-11 AM.

Order forms can be found on the website or by contacting the church office.
Thank you for supporting the youth as they participate in this life-changing experience.

Flower Orders! Help dress up the sanctuary for Easter Sunday and send some cheer to our homebound members! Place your order no later than Sunday, March 14th for flowers to honor or remember someone special. Order forms are available on the website (www.stjsumneytown.org) and in the weekly email (and below).

Easter Flowers Order

Orders are due in the church office by Sunday, March 14th.



Name: _____ Phone Number: _____

Plant Information:

_____ plant(s) Daffodils @ \$7.00
_____ plant(s) Lilies @ \$9.00
_____ plant(s) Tulips @ \$7.00
___ Asst. ___ Red ___ Purple ___ Yellow ___ Pink
_____ plant(s) Mums @ \$8.00
___ Asst. ___ Yellow ___ White ___ Purple ___ Pink

ALL flowers will be given to homebound members

_____ I volunteer to help deliver flowers to homebound members on Easter Sunday afternoon.

Please return this form in an envelope marked **Easter Flower Order** on the outside to the church office. Please provide exact cash or checks made payable to "St. John's Lutheran Church". Please place in box at top of the ramp or mail to 3104 Main Street, Green Lane, PA 18054.

Please indicate how you would like the flower donation listed in the Easter Sunday bulletins:

In honor of _____

by _____

In memory of _____

by _____