Apostles Lutheran Church

THE REVEREND JAY SERAFIN
7092 Main Street, Gloucester, VA 23061
(804) 693-9098 | apostles-elca.org | facebook.com/ApostlesELCA

FOURTH SUNDAY IN LENT

Sunday, March 30, 2025 | 10:00 am

Our Mission is to be a Caring Inclusive Christian Community responding to God's grace through Worship, Service, and Sharing the Gospel.

RECONCILING *in* CHRIST

Evangelical Lutheran Church in America
God's work. Our hands.

WELCOME TO APOSTLES LUTHERAN CHURCH!

It is an honor to worship God with you this morning. We pray you experience the Spirit's loving presence as we share our words, our actions, and the Holy Meal.

If this is your first time worshipping with us, please fill out a card in the pew rack with your contact info. A restroom can be found by exiting the rear door of the worship space. It is directly in front of you to the right. Additional restrooms can be found in the back corner of the fellowship area, near the Pastor's office.

RECONCILING *in* CHRIST

We, the people of Apostles Lutheran Church, follow Paul's message to the Galatians (3:28): "There is no longer Jew or Greek, there is no longer slave or free, there is no longer male and female; for all of you are one in Christ Jesus." Believing that because we are all one in Christ, and created in God's image, all are welcome as beloved children of God. We welcome into the full life of the church all those whom God sends us. **Rejoicing in God's amazing diversity, we welcome people of all ages, races, gender identities and expressions, sexual orientations, and physical and mental abilities.** Centered in Christ, we commit ourselves to racial equity, breaking down dividing walls and building a community where all are beloved.

FOR PASTORAL CARE

The Reverend Jay Serafin is our pastor. Pastor Jay's **schedule is noted in the calendar on the back of this bulletin.** Call Pastor Jay at 570-205-7506 or email him at j80j84@msn.com (preferred) or pastor.apostles@gmail.com. Messages can also be left on the Apostles answering machine 804-693-9098.

PRAYGROUND

Welcome to our youngest members! The area in the front of our sanctuary is for families and young children. There are quiet toys, books and drawing materials. **We ask two things: 1) sit in the front pews near your children** and **2) please sit with your children in the pews during the sermon.** They may return immediately after. Thank you and welcome!

NAME TAGS

Please wear your nametag! Guests: please fill out and put on a name tag before worship today. Blank nametags are in the baskets located in the pews.

GATHERING

The psalm sets the tone this day: "Happy are they whose transgressions are forgiven, and whose sin is put away!" Happy are those who have "become the righteousness of God" in the merits of Christ Jesus. Happy are those for whom the forgiveness of God has "rolled away . . . the disgrace" of former times. Happy is the father at the return of his prodigal son. Happy are we that our sins are forgiven for Jesus' sake. Rejoice!

Prelude and Silent Prayer

Martin Luther said of music: "Next to the Word of God, the noble art of music is the greatest treasure in the world." Please take a moment to ***silence all cell phones.***

Welcome and Announcements

Please rise in body or in spirit. All may make the sign of the cross, the sign marked at baptism.

Confession and Forgiveness

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.

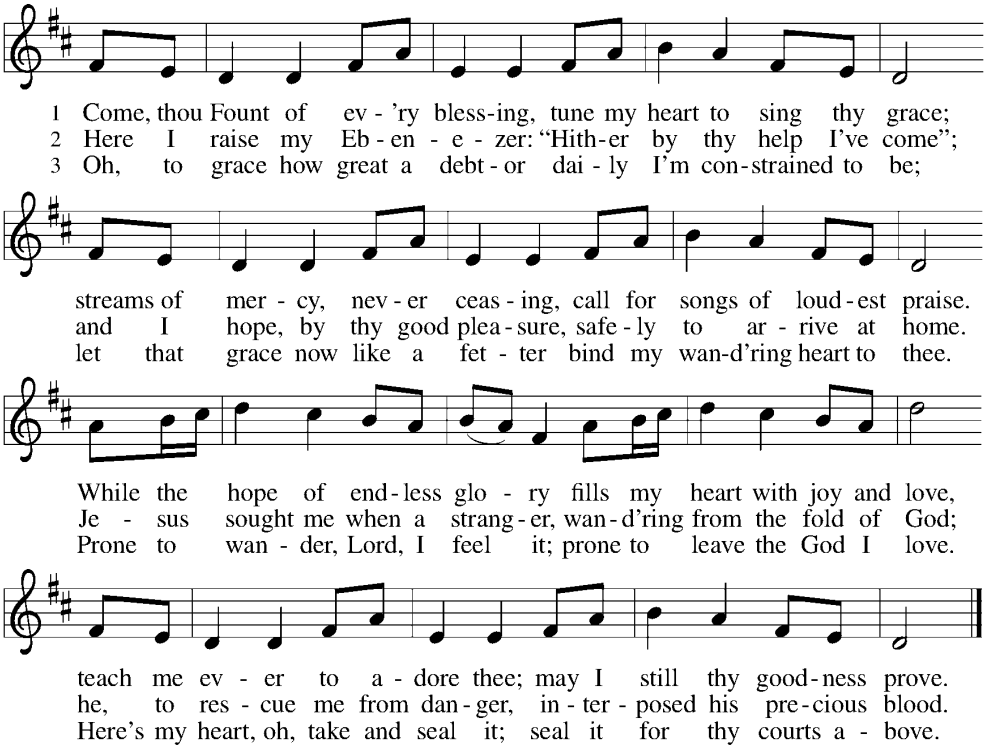
Beloved in Christ, God's arms are always stretched open wide to welcome the wandering ones home. In ☩ Christ your sins are forgiven. You have a place in God's house forever.

Amen.

Gathering Hymn

ELW #807

"Come, Thou Fount of Every Blessing"



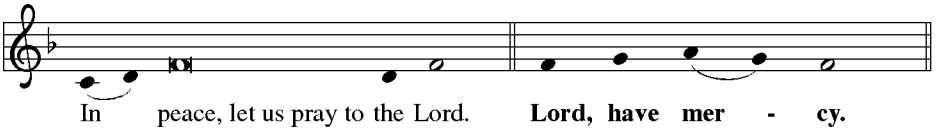
Text: Robert Robinson, 1735–1790, alt.
Music: NETTLETON, J. Wyeth, *Repository of Sacred Music*, Part II, 1813

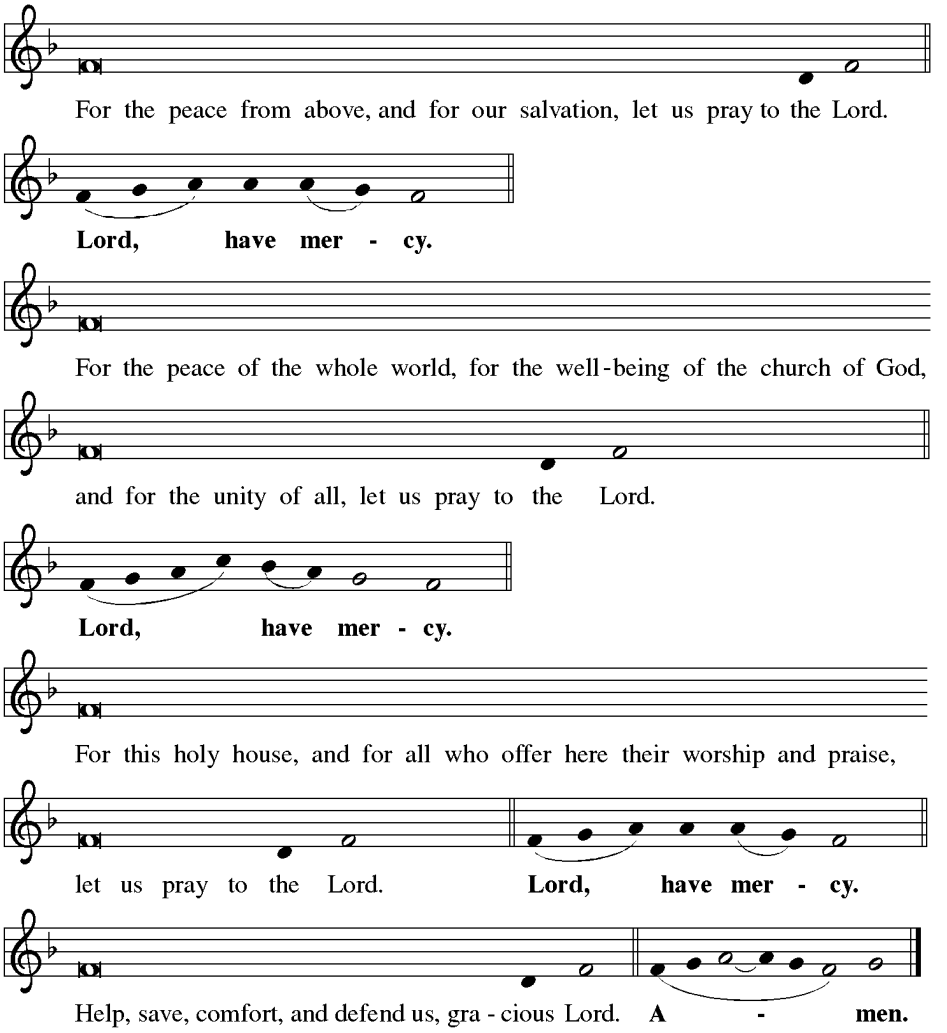
Apostolic Greeting

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





Prayer of the Day

Let us pray. God of compassion, you welcome the wayward, and you embrace us all with your mercy. By our baptism clothe us with garments of your grace, and feed us at the table of your love, through 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.

Sit

First Reading — Joshua 5:9-12

By celebrating the Passover and eating the produce of the promised land instead of the miraculous manna that had sustained them in the desert, the Israelites symbolically bring their forty years of wilderness wandering to an end at Gilgal.

9 The LORD said to Joshua, "Today I have rolled away from you the disgrace of Egypt." And so
that place is called Gilgal to this day.

10 While the Israelites were camped in Gilgal they kept the passover in the evening on the
fourteenth day of the month in the plains of Jericho. 11 On the day after the passover, on that
very day, they ate the produce of the land, unleavened cakes and parched grain. 12 The
manna ceased on the day they ate the produce of the land, and the Israelites no longer had
manna; they ate the crops of the land of Canaan that year.

Response after the First Reading

The word of the Lord.

Thanks be to God.

Psalm — Psalm 32

1 Happy are they whose transgressions | are forgiven,
and whose sin is | put away!
2 **Happy are they to whom the Lord im- | putes no guilt,**
and in whose spirit there | is no guile! R

3 While I held my tongue, my bones with- | ered away,
because of my groaning | all day long.
4 **For your hand was heavy upon me | day and night;**
my moisture was dried up as in the | heat of summer.
5 Then I acknowledged my sin to you, and did not con- | ceal my guilt.
I said, "I will confess my transgressions to the Lord."
Then you forgave me the guilt | of my sin.

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

7 You are my hiding-place; you preserve | me from trouble;
you surround me with shouts | of deliverance.
8 **"I will instruct you and teach you in the way that | you should go;**
I will guide you | with my eye.
9 Do not be like horse or mule, which have no | understanding;
who must be fitted with bit and bridle, or else they will | not stay near you."
10 **Great are the tribulations | of the wicked;**
but mercy embraces those who trust | in the Lord.
11 Be glad, you righteous, and rejoice | in the Lord;
shout for joy, all who are | true of heart. **R**

Second Reading — 2 Corinthians 5:16-21

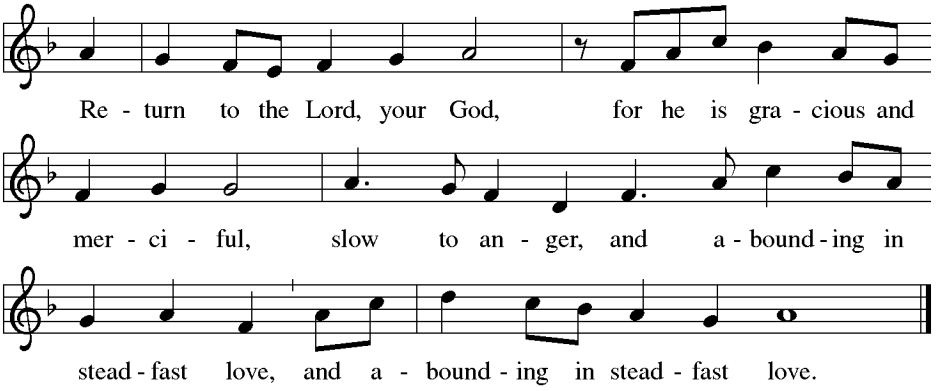
One way to describe the gospel is the promise that in Christ everything is transformed into newness. All mistakes, all deliberate sins, all old history is reconciled with Christ's resurrection. This is Paul's strong message to the congregation in the city of Corinth.

16 From now on, therefore, we regard no one from a human point of view; even though we
once knew Christ from a human point of view, we know him no longer in that way. 17 So if
anyone is in Christ, there is a new creation: everything old has passed away; see, everything
has become new! 18 All this is from God, who reconciled us to himself through Christ, and has
given us the ministry of reconciliation; 19 that is, in Christ God was reconciling the world to
himself, not counting their trespasses against them, and entrusting the message of
reconciliation to us. 20 So we are ambassadors for Christ, since God is making his appeal
through us; we entreat you on behalf of Christ, be reconciled to God. 21 For our sake he
made him to be sin who knew no sin, so that in him we might become the righteousness of
God.

Response after the Second Reading
The word of the Lord.
Thanks be to God.

Please rise in body or in spirit.

Gospel Acclamation



The gospel is announced.

The Holy Gospel according to Saint Luke, the Fifteenth Chapter.

Glory to you, O Lord.

Gospel — Luke 15:1-3, 11b-32

Jesus tells a parable about a son who ponders his father's love only after he has spurned it. The grace he receives is beyond his hopes. That same grace is a crisis for an older brother who believes it is his obedience that has earned his place in the father's home.

1 Now all the tax collectors and sinners were coming near to listen to [Jesus.] 2 And the
Pharisees and the scribes were grumbling and saying, "This fellow welcomes sinners and
eats with them."

3 So he told them this parable: 11b "There was a man who had two sons. 12 The younger of
them said to his father, 'Father, give me the share of the property that will belong to me.' So
he divided his property between them. 13 A few days later the younger son gathered all he
had and traveled to a distant country, and there he squandered his property in dissolute
living. 14 When he had spent everything, a severe famine took place throughout that country,
and he began to be in need. 15 So he went and hired himself out to one of the citizens of that
country, who sent him to his fields to feed the pigs. 16 He would gladly have filled himself
with the pods that the pigs were eating; and no one gave him anything. 17 But when he came
to himself he said, 'How many of my father's hired hands have bread enough and to spare,
but here I am dying of hunger! 18 I will get up and go to my father, and I will say to him,

"Father, I have sinned against heaven and before you; [19] I am no longer worthy to be called your son; treat me like one of your hired hands."' [20] So he set off and went to his father. But while he was still far off, his father saw him and was filled with compassion; he ran and put his arms around him and kissed him. [21] Then the son said to him, 'Father, I have sinned against heaven and before you; I am no longer worthy to be called your son.' [22] But the father said to his slaves, 'Quickly, bring out a robe—the best one—and put it on him; put a ring on his finger and sandals on his feet. [23] And get the fatted calf and kill it, and let us eat and celebrate; [24] for this son of mine was dead and is alive again; he was lost and is found!' And they began to celebrate.

[25] "Now his elder son was in the field; and when he came and approached the house, he heard music and dancing. [26] He called one of the slaves and asked what was going on. [27] He replied, 'Your brother has come, and your father has killed the fatted calf, because he has got him back safe and sound.' [28] Then he became angry and refused to go in. His father came out and began to plead with him. [29] But he answered his father, 'Listen! For all these years I have been working like a slave for you, and I have never disobeyed your command; yet you have never given me even a young goat so that I might celebrate with my friends. [30] But when this son of yours came back, who has devoured your property with prostitutes, you killed the fatted calf for him!' [31] Then the father said to him, 'Son, you are always with me, and all that is mine is yours. [32] But we had to celebrate and rejoice, because this brother of yours was dead and has come to life; he was lost and has been found.'"

The gospel concludes:
The Gospel of the Lord.

Praise to you, O Christ.

Sit

SERMON — PASTOR JAY SERAFIN

Silence is kept after the reflection.

Please rise in body or in spirit.

Hymn of the Day — ELW #608

"Softly and Tenderly Jesus Is Calling"

Text: Will L. Thompson, 1847–1909
Music: THOMPSON, Will L. Thompson

Apostles Creed

With the whole church, let us confess our faith in the words of the 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
power of 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 Intercession

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

Each portion of the prayers ends with these words:
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.

Sharing of the Peace

The peace of Christ be with you always.

And also with you.

*We share a sign of Peace with our neighbors saying **Peace be with you** to which we respond **And also with you**. Please know that it is fine if you do not want to shake hands but would rather just share a sign of peace.*

MEAL

God feeds us with the presence of Jesus Christ.

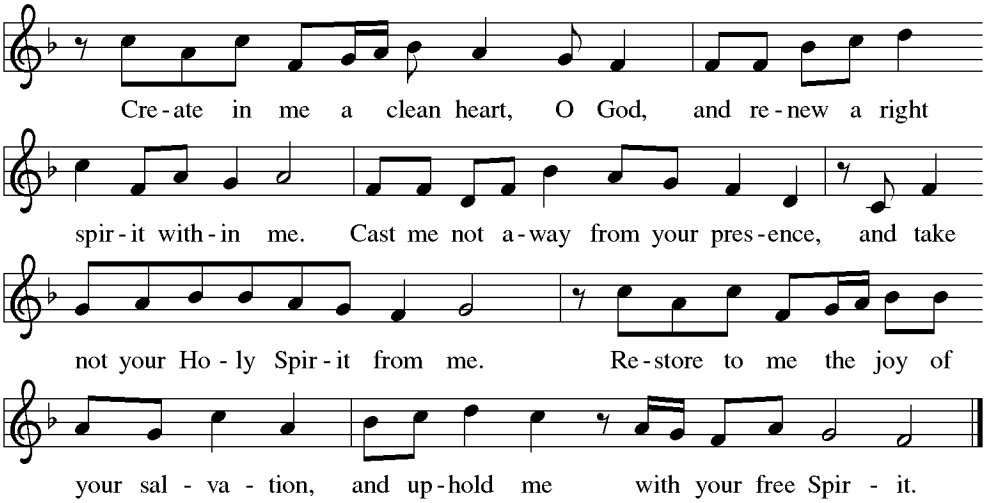
Sit

OFFERING

An offering is gathered for the mission of the church, including the care of those in need.
To give online:

- **Visit apostles-elca.org/contributions**
- **From your mobile phone, text the word GIVE to 844-215-5453**

OFFERTORY HYMN ELW #186



Music: Richard W. Hillert, b. 1923
Music © 1978 *Lutheran Book of Worship*, admin. Augsburg Fortress.

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Please rise in body or in spirit

OFFERING PRAYER

Let us pray. 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.

Great Thanksgiving

The Lord be with you.

And also with you.

Lift up your hearts.

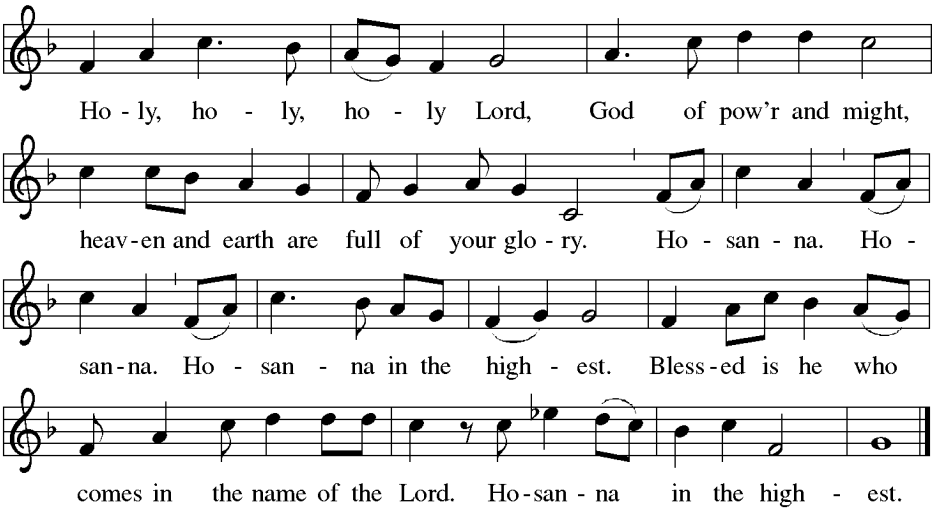
We lift them to the Lord.

Let us give thanks to the Lord our God.

It is right to give our thanks and praise.

The great thanksgiving continues.

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



The great thanksgiving continues.

... as we proclaim the mystery of faith:

Christ has died.

Christ is risen.

Christ will come again.

The great thanksgiving continues.

... Grace our table with your presence.

Come, Holy Spirit.

The great thanksgiving continues.

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

Come, Holy Spirit.

The great thanksgiving concludes.

… we praise you, O God, blessed and holy Trinity, now and forever.

Amen.

The Lord's Prayer

Lord, remember us in your kingdom and teach us to pray.

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.

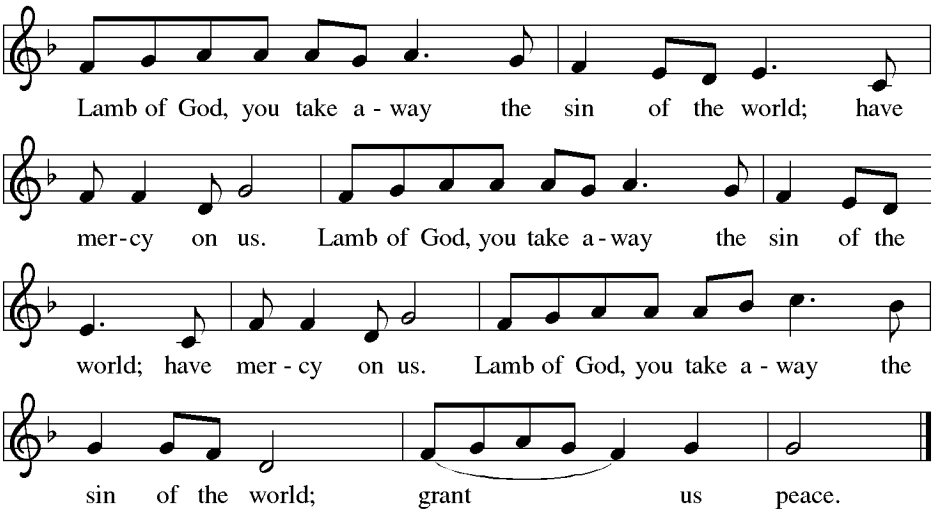
Sit

Communion

All are invited to join us at the Lord's table to receive the presence of Jesus through the bread and wine. Jesus himself invites you and Jesus turns no one away.

You will be invited to come forward either to receive the elements or to receive a blessing. For those receiving the elements, after receiving the bread, please take a glass from the tray held by the acolyte. There are pre-filled glasses of grape juice in the tray for those who do not drink wine. Gluten free wafers are also available upon request.

Lamb of God



After all have returned to their places, all rise in body or in spirit.

The body and blood of our Lord Jesus Christ strengthen you and keep you in his grace.

Amen.

Prayer after Communion

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.

SENDING

God blesses us and sends us in mission back into the world.

Blessing

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

Amen.

Sending Hymn — ELW #779

"Amazing Grace, How Sweet the Sound"

Text: John Newton, 1725–1807, alt., sts. 1–4; anonymous, st. 5
Music: NEW BRITAIN, W. Walker, *Southern Harmony*, 1835

Dismissal

Go in peace. Care for others as God cares for you.

Thanks be to God.

Postlude

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No Sunday School

Sunday School will resume on Palm Sunday, April 13th.

Worship Leaders

	Serving Today	Serving Next Week
Worship Leader/Preacher	Pastor Jay Serafin	Pastor Jay Serafin
Lay Assisting Minister	Sue Turner	Doug Dalager
Lector	Sue Turner	Irene Albert
Acolyte	Ray Scholz	Ray Scholz
Accompanist	Kathy Merithew	Kathy Merithew
Altar Care	Jamie Serafin	The Alberts
Communion Bread	The Lowes	The Alberts
Greeter/Usher	Jason Lowe	Heinz Albert
Technology	Chris Hawkins	Chris Hawkins

Servants for the Week

	Serving This Week	Serving Next Week
Cleaning Team	Ambrose/Scholz	Alberts
Tellers	Ben Grimes/Ray Scholz	Don Garfield/Chris Hawkins
Fellowship Set Up	Ray Scholz	Jennie Hawkins
Fellowship Food	Nancy Wagner/Ellen Quirk	Alberts
Fellowship Clean Up	Scholzs	Scholzs/Alberts

Thank You To. . .

Kathy Merithew for playing for our worship service today!!

Readings For Next Sunday

First Reading: Isaiah 43:16-21

The LORD gives water in the wilderness to the chosen people

Psalm 126

Those who sowed with tears will reap with songs of joy

Second Reading: Philippians 3:4b-14

To know Christ and his resurrection, to share in his sufferings

Gospel: John 12:1-8

Mary anoints Jesus for his burial

Easter Lilies

Orders are being taken for Easter lilies – please see the display in narthex.

Fourth Sunday in Lent

We are half way to the feast of Pascha, the Three Days, but also today we share in God's banquet of mercy. We remember our baptismal white robe as we celebrate the new creation that God has brought about through Christ. In Lent, even as we are still feeding the pigs and grumping in the fields, we are already in the Promised Land. Every Sunday, Easter comes out to meet us, like the father running out to welcome his son.

Mid-Week Lenten Meal and Worship

We will be holding a mid-week Lenten meal (soup and bread) followed by a worship service on Wednesdays during Lent. The meal will be at 6:00 PM and the service will start at 7:00 PM. There is a signup sheet in the narthex to sign up to provide the soup and bread and also to set up and clean up. We hope you can join us!!

Commemorations

"The saints are to be remembered so that we may strengthen our faith when we see how they experienced grace and how they were helped by faith."

- On March 31st, we remember **John Donne**, a poet who died in 1631. After finishing his education at Oxford University, Donne seemed headed for a career in the English public service. But a series of circumstances led him into the ordained ministry. He is well known as a writer of both secular and sacred poetry.
- On April 4th, we remember **Benedict the African,** a confessor, who died in 1589. Born into slavery on the island of Sicily, Benedict lived as a hermit until the pope ordered all hermits to attach themselves to a monastery, at which time Benedict joined the Franciscans. Though illiterate, he was highly respected as a confessor and later superior of his community.

Church Work Day – Saturday, April 12th

A church workday to clean up outside and inside has been scheduled for Saturday, April 12th, starting at 9:00 AM – there is a signup sheet in the narthex – many hands make light work – please come and help – thanks!

Please Keep in Your Prayers

Heinz Albert, Rich Bitting, Manning Freeman, Don Garfield, Betty Hauch, Ellen Kendzierski, Ellen Quirk, Michael Schlemmer, Keith & Juanita Sturdy, George Thomas, Jewel Thomas, Lena Woodlief, Nancy Wagner

Our Family and Friends

Patricia Armentor, Paul Bauer, **Karen Bell** (Pam Moore's sister), **Bob & Dixie, Calli Bonfey, Patricia Boyd & Brad Zelmer, Amanda Brown, David Brown, Dennis & Dorothy Brown, Sally Burkholder, Amy Carter, the Clements family, Laura Clodfelter, Jackie Collier, Ben Davis** (friend of Donna Ambrose), **Tommy & Kathie Davis, Jenny DeSha, Linda Edwards, Colton Elliot** (Michael Schlemmer's cousin), **Emily, Melissa Ethan, Laura Fleige** (Janet Gomez's sister)**, Teresa Floersheim-Miller** (Ingrid Peterson's mother), **Suzanne and Frank Gibson, Steven Godwin** (Juanita Sturdy's grandson), **Jimmy & Fay Gray** (Chris Hawkins' family), **Karen Guire, Mike Hall, Melvin Hawkins** (Chris Hawkins' father), **Chaneice Hayden** (Daniel Hayden), **Rosie Heins, Sherry Helpap, Carl & Kaleb Hess, Adam Hewko** (nephew of the Hansons), **Aris Hibbs** (friend of Ray Scholz), **Spencer Hodges, Ray Hughes, Wendy Isernia** (Heinz and Irene's daughter), **Suzanne Kinkade** (friend of Ellen Quirk), **the Little Family, Marion Lucier, Manuel, Lotte Mathias, Wayne Mathews, Wayne McCormick, Michael, Sylvia Midgette** (grandmother of Krystle McMahan), **Debbie Minteins, Keith Morgan, Gary Mowery, Carol Pascale** (Lynn Jaeger's mother), **Chastity Perkins** (co-worker and friend of Donna Ambrose), **Brad Person** (Lilly Frost's uncle), **Dick Peterson & his brother, Monique Raposa, Joan Ritter, Glen Robertson, Carol Schlemmer, James Schollian** (friend of Nancy Wagner), **Michael Scholz** (nephew of Ray Scholz), **Scott, Erin Seamonson** (Lara Jaeger), **Joseph Serafin** (Pastor Jay's father), **Kathy Shackleford, Elana Sierson, Fred Smith, Tammy Smith, Jean Sterling, Susie, Dave Wagner** (husband of Nancy), **Wayne McCormick, Chuck Webb** (Tina Britt's father), **Makenzie Webb** (niece of Tina Britt), **Elizabeth & Steven White, Cory Woodlief, Jim Wright** (Judy Wright's husband), **Logan & Shannon Wymer, Greg Yvonovich** (friend of Margaret & Ben Grimes), **Derek Zwiers** (friend of CK Ambrose)

Our sponsored children in Guatemala

Amayra, **Hugolino** and **Manuela**

Prayer Requests

There is a book located at the rear of the worship space for you to write any prayer requests you have for today. Fill out a "Prayer Request" (on the back of each pew) and place it in the offering plate to add a prayer request to the "Prayer List" included in the bulletin and the newsletter. **Please print legibly!**

THIS WEEK AT APOSTLES

MARCH 30, 2025 – APRIL 6, 2025

TODAY	**10:00 AM**	**Worship Service**
	11:00 AM	Coffee Fellowship

GUATEMALA MEDICAL MISSION TEAM DEPARTS FOR GUATEMALA

MONDAY	**10:00 AM – 1:00 PM**	**Pastor Jay in the office**
	7:00 PM	AA
TUESDAY	7:00 PM	Al-Anon/AA
WEDNESDAY	**4:00 PM – 8:00 PM**	**Pastor Jay in the office**
	6:00 PM	Mid-Week Lent Meal/Worship
FRIDAY		Girls Scouts
SATURDAY	6:30 PM	Young and Sober
SUNDAY	10:00 AM	**Worship Service**
	11:00 AM	Coffee Fellowship

GUATEMALA MEDICAL MISSION TEAM RETURNS FROM GUATEMALA

HAPPY BIRTHDAY TO ...

Ann Albert – Apr 3rd | **Jack Baur, Jennie Hawkins, Pam Moore** and **Ray Kendzierski** – Apr 5th | **April Anby** – Apr 6th

HAPPY BAPTISMAL ANNIVERSARY TO ...

Jack and **Juliet Baur** – Mar 31st | **Rich Bitting** – Apr 1st

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