

***“People of Christ
Making a
Difference”***

**First Sunday in
Lent**

February 22, 2026

8:30 & 11:00AM

WELCOME TO ST. STEPHEN'S!

A nursery is provided for children through age 4 for both worship services and for infants and toddlers during Sunday School. The nursery is located at the end of the hall on the right side.

Children's bags can be found in the "Kid's Corner" of the narthex.

Restroom facilities are located down the hall on the left side.

First Aid, Emergency Equipment, and a wheelchair are located down the hall on the right by the stairwell.

If for any reason you must leave the sanctuary, the service is live streamed in the Agape Sunday School classroom. Any usher will be glad to direct you.

Sunday school classes are provided for 2 year olds through adults.

Listening devices and larger print bulletins are located in the narthex.

Ushers are also available to assist you.

If you are a visitor feel free to sign-in using the QR code. Here's how it works: Point your camera at the image, tap the link that appears on your screen, and share whatever information you desire. Thank you! Hope to see you again soon!



GREETING, ANNOUNCEMENTS, AND PEACE

PRELUDE

"The Glory of These Forty Days"

Wayne L. Wold

(We Stand)

GATHERING SONG

"O Lord, throughout These Forty Days"

ELW 319



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.

(We Sit)

THE GREAT LITANY

A meaningful Lenten practice in both Anglican and Lutheran traditions is the praying of the Great litany on the First Sunday of Lent. Quite simply, a litany is a series of petitions that are sung or spoken in a responsive fashion between leaders and an entire congregation. In the Great Litany, nearly every general area of prayer is addressed, including prayer for various aspects of the church, the world, the government, and the poor. These petitions are prefaced by a series of requests asking God to deliver us for all manner of afflictions.

The Great Litany was actually the first piece of liturgy that ever existed in the English language. Thomas Cranmer, appointed the first Anglican Archbishop of Canterbury in 1532, decreed that a litany be written in English. We know that he compiled the litany from a combination of Lutheran, Roman and Greek orthodox sources. It remains to the present day almost entirely unchanged. The Great Litany is our Lenten reminder that worshipping Christians earnestly desire God's intervention and involvement in all areas of life.

L Lord, have mercy. **R** Lord, have mer - cy.

L Christ, have mercy. **R** Christ, have mer - cy.

L Lord, have mercy. **R** Lord, have mer - cy.

L O Christ, hear us. **R** In mer - cy hear us.

L God, the Father in heaven, **R** have mer - cy on us.
L God, the Son, redeemer of the world, **R** have mer - cy on us.
L God, the Holy Spirit, **R** have mer - cy on us.
L Holy Trinity, one God, **R** have mer - cy on us.

L Be gra - cious to us. **R** Spare us, good Lord.

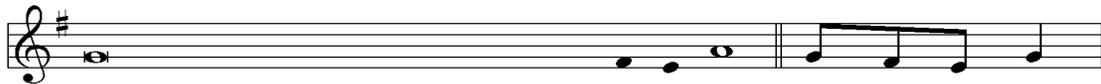
L Be gra - cious to us. **R** Spare us, good Lord.



☐ From all sin, from all error, from all evil;
from the cunning assaults of the devil;
from an unprepared and e- vil death: ☒ **Good Lord, de- liv- er us.**

☐ From war, bloodshed, and violence;
from corrupt and unjust government;
from sedi - tion and treason: ☒ **Good Lord, de- liv- er us.**

☐ From epidemic, drought, and famine;
from fire and flood, earthquake,
lightning and storm;
and from ever - last-ing death: ☒ **Good Lord, de- liv- er us.**



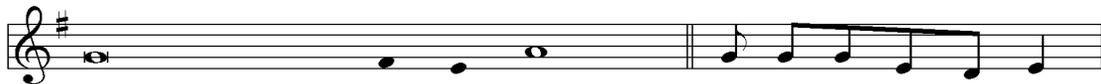
☐ By the mystery of your incarnation; by your ho-ly birth: ☒ **Help us, good Lord.**

☐ By your baptism, fasting, and temptation;
by your agony and bloody sweat;
by your cross and suffering;
by your death and burial: ☒ **Help us, good Lord.**

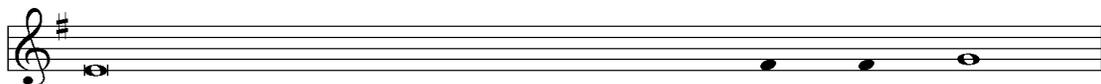
☐ By your resurrection and ascension;
by the gift of the Ho-ly Spirit: ☒ **Help us, good Lord.**



☐ In all time of our tribulation;
in all time of our prosperity;
in the hour of death;
and in the day of judgment: ☒ **Save us, good Lord.**



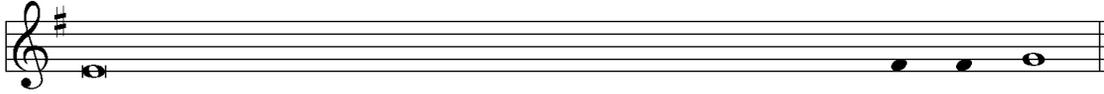
☐ Though unworthy, we im - plore you ☒ **to hear us, Lord our God.**



☐ To rule and govern your holy catholic Church;
to guide all servants of your Church
in the love of your Word and in holiness of life;
to put an end to all schisms
and causes of offense to those who would believe;
and to bring into the way of truth all who have gone a - stray:



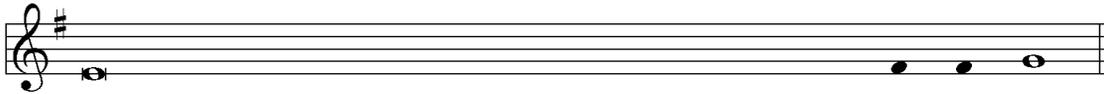
☒ **We im- plore you to hear us, good Lord.**



☐ To beat down Satan under our feet;
 to send faithful workers into your harvest;
 to accompany your Word with your Spirit and power;
 to raise up those who fall
 and to strengthen those who stand;
 and to comfort and help the fainthearted and the dis-tressed:



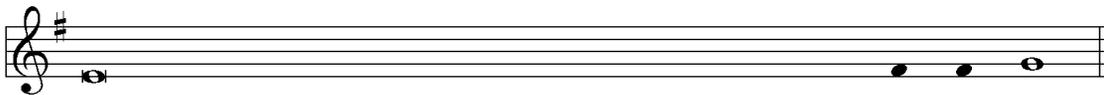
☑ **We im-plore you to hear us, good Lord.**



☐ To give to all nations justice and peace;
 to preserve our country from discord and strife;
 to direct and guard those who have civil authority;
 and to bless and guide all our people:



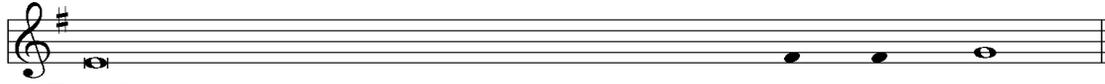
☑ **We im-plore you to hear us, good Lord.**



☐ To behold and help all who are in danger, need, or tribulation;
 to protect and guide all who travel;
 to preserve and provide for all women in childbirth;
 to watch over children and to guide the young;
 to heal the sick and to strengthen their families and friends;
 to bring reconciliation to families in discord;
 to provide for the unemployed and for all in need;
 to be merciful to all who are imprisoned;
 to support, comfort, and guide all orphans, widowers, and widows;
 and to have mercy on all your people:



☑ **We im-plore you to hear us, good Lord.**



To forgive our enemies, persecutors, and slanderers,
and to reconcile us to them;
to help us use wisely the fruits and treasures
of the earth, the sea, and the air;
and graciously to hear our prayers:



We im-plore you to hear us, good Lord.



Lord Jesus Christ, Son of God, **we im - plore you to hear us.**



Lamb of God, you take away the sin of the world; **have mer- cy on us.**



Lamb of God, you take away the sin of the world; **have mer- cy on us.**



Lamb of God, you take away the sin of the world; **give us peace. A-men.**



O Christ, hear us. **In mer - cy hear us.**



Lord, have mercy. **Lord, have mer - cy.**



Christ, have mercy. **Christ, have mer - cy.**



Lord, have mer - cy. **Lord, have mer - cy.**

(We Stand)

PRAYER OF THE DAY

(We Sit)

FIRST READING

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

¹⁵The LORD God took the man and put him in the garden of Eden to till it and keep it. ¹⁶And the LORD God commanded the man, "You may freely eat of every tree of the garden; ¹⁷but 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?'" ²The woman said to the serpent, "We may eat of the fruit of the trees in the garden; ³but 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.'" ⁴But the serpent said to the woman, "You will not die; ⁵for God knows that when you eat of it your eyes will be opened, and you will be like God, knowing good and evil." ⁶So 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. ⁷Then 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.

PSALMODY

Psalm 32



Mer-cy em - brac - es those who trust in the LORD.

¹Happy 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!**

³While 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. R**

⁵Then 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.**

⁷You 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. R**

⁹Do 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.**

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

SECOND READING

Romans 5:12-19

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—¹³sin was indeed in the world before the law, but sin is not reckoned when there is no law. ¹⁴Yet death exercised dominion from Adam to Moses, even over those whose sins were not like the transgression of Adam, who is a type 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 free gift in the grace of the one man, Jesus Christ, abounded for the many. ¹⁶And the free gift is not like the effect of the one man's sin. For the judgment following one trespass brought condemnation, but the free gift following many trespasses brings justification. ¹⁷If, because of the one man's trespass, death exercised dominion through that one, much more surely will those who receive the abundance of grace and the free gift of righteousness exercise dominion 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 by the one man's disobedience the many were made sinners, so by the one man's obedience the many will be made righteous.

The word of the Lord.
Thanks be to God.

(We Stand)

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.

THE HOLY GOSPEL

Matthew 4:1-11

The holy gospel according to St. Matthew, the 4th chapter.
Glory to you, O Lord.

¹Jesus was led up by the Spirit into the wilderness to be tempted by the devil. ²He fasted forty days and forty nights, and afterwards he was famished. ³The tempter came and said to him, "If you are the Son of God, command these stones to become loaves of bread." ⁴But he answered, "It is written, 'One does not live by bread alone, but by every word that comes from the mouth of God.'" ⁵Then the devil took him to the holy city and placed him on the pinnacle of the temple, ⁶saying 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.'" ⁷Jesus 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 splendor;⁹ and he said to him, “All these I will give you, if you will fall down and worship me.”¹⁰ 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.

(We Sit)

CHILDREN’S SERMON

Pastor Ralph

SERMON

Pastor Ralph

(We Stand)

HYMN OF THE DAY

“When We Are Tested”

ACS 922



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.

THE NICENE CREED

We believe in one God, the Father, the Almighty, maker of heaven and earth, of all that is, seen and unseen.

We believe in one Lord, Jesus Christ, the only Son of God, eternally begotten of the Father, God from God, Light from Light, true God from true God, begotten, not made, of one Being with the Father; through him all things were made. For us and for our salvation he came down from heaven, was incarnate of the Holy Spirit and the virgin Mary and became truly human. For our sake he was crucified under Pontius Pilate; he suffered death and was buried. On the third day he rose again in accordance with the scriptures; he ascended into heaven and is seated at the right hand of the Father. He will come again in glory to judge the living and the dead, and his kingdom will have no end.

We believe in the Holy Spirit, the Lord, the giver of life, who proceeds from the Father and the Son, who with the Father and the Son is worshiped and glorified, who has spoken through the prophets. We believe in one holy catholic and apostolic church. We acknowledge one baptism for the forgiveness of sins. We look for the resurrection of the dead, and the life of the world to come. Amen.

PRAYERS OF THE FAITHFUL

(We Sit)

OFFERING

God calls us to be generous stewards for the sake of our ministry near and far. You can support our ministry by putting your offering in the offering plate, mailing it to the church, giving online (sslc.org or use the QR Code) or through the Givelify app. If you would like more details on direct deposit giving please contact our Parish Administrator, Mrs. Tonya Reynolds, at (803) 359-6562.



(8:30) Anthem

“O Love That Will Not Let Me Go”

Paul S. Jones

O love that will not let me go, I rest my weary soul in thee;
I give thee back the life I owe, that in thine ocean depths its flow may richer, fuller be.

O light that follow'st all my way, I yield my flickering torch to thee;
my heart restores its borrowed ray, that in thy sunshine's blaze its day may brighter, fairer be.

O joy that seekest me through pain, I cannot close my heart to thee;
I trace the rainbow through the rain, and feel the promise is not vain that morn shall tearless be!

O cross that liftest up my head, I dare not ask to fly from thee;
I lay in dust life's glory dead, and from the ground there blossoms red life that shall endless be.

(11:00) Anthem

“I Want Jesus to Walk with Me”

Hal H. Hopson

I want Jesus to walk with me. All along my pilgrim journey,
Lord, I want Jesus to walk with me. In my trials, Lord, walk with me.
When my heart is almost breaking, Lord, I want Jesus to walk with me.

When I'm in trouble, Lord, walk with me. When my head is bowed in sorrow,
Lord, I want Jesus to walk with me. When storms are raging, Lord, walk with me.
When I am sinking, save my soul. Lord, I want Jesus to walk with me.

(We Stand)

OFFERTORY SONG

ELW 188

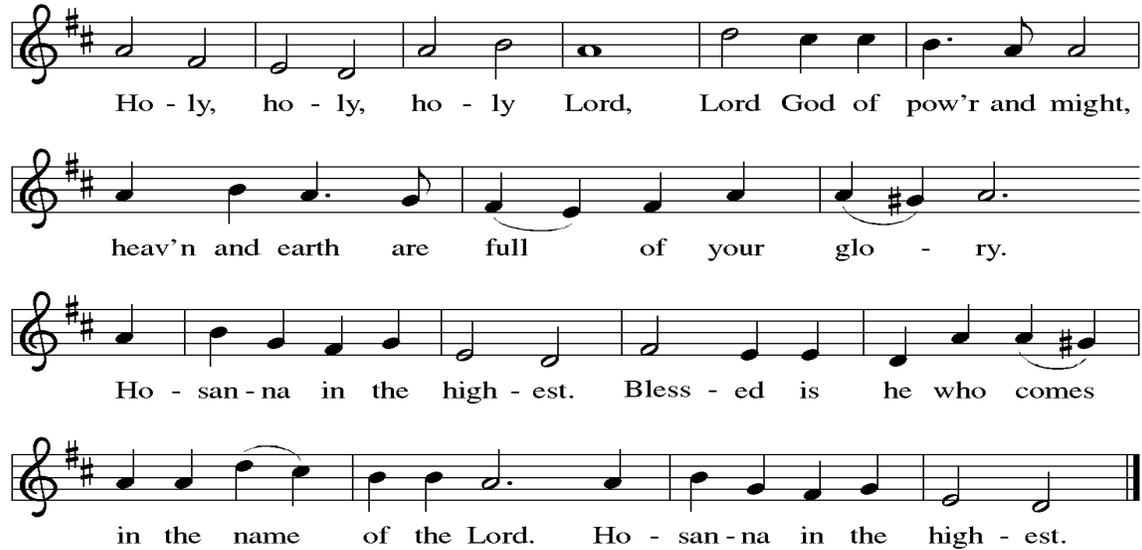
Cre - ate in me a clean heart, O God, and re - new a right
spir - it with - in me. Cast me not a - way from your
pres - ence, and take not your Ho - ly Spir - it from me. Re -
store un - to me the joy of your sal - va - tion,
and up - hold me with your free Spir - it.

THE GREAT THANKSGIVING

The Lord be with you. **And al - so 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 PREFACE

THE SANCTUS



Ho - ly, ho - ly, ho - ly Lord, Lord God of pow'r and might,
heav'n 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.

THE EUCHARISTIC PRAYER

THE LORD'S PRAYER

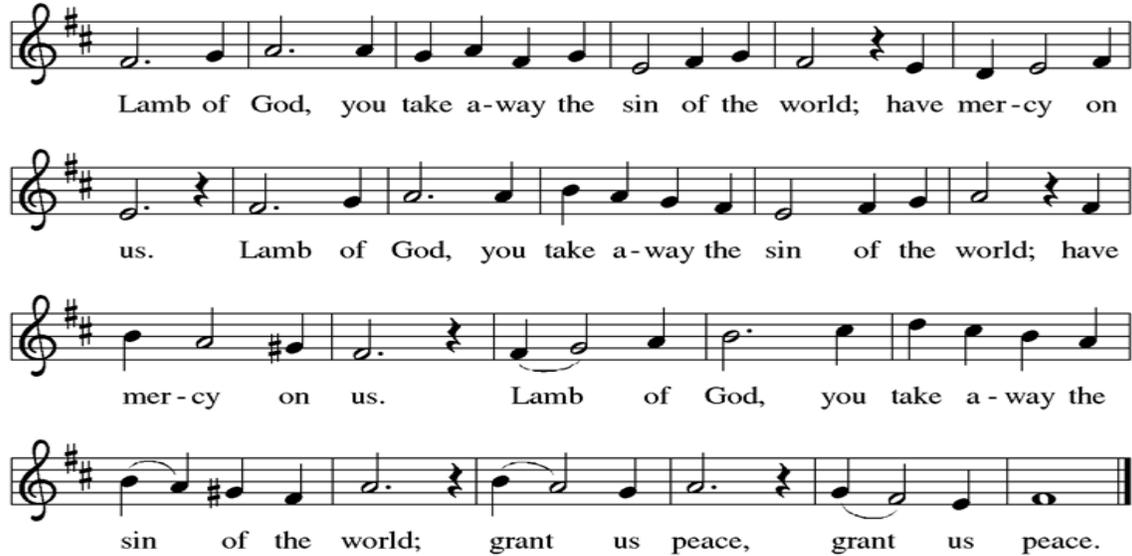
Our Father, who art in heaven, hallowed be thy name, thy kingdom come, thy will be done, on earth as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread; and forgive us our trespasses, as we forgive those who trespass against us; and lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil. For thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, forever and ever. Amen.

INVITATION TO COMMUNION

Taste and see that the Lord is good.

(We Sit)

THE AGNUS DEI



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, grant us peace.

RECEPTION OF THE BLESSED SACRAMENT

Christ welcomes you to this Holy Meal of the Baptized! We receive communion today at the center aisle. Communion will be brought to the front rows for those who wish to remain seated. Children who commune should be assisted by adults near them. Those unable to partake of wine or wheaten bread are assured of our Lord's presence in, with, and under each element alone. Gluten-free wafers are available upon request.

Communion Music

(8:30) "Forty Days and Forty Nights" Alec Wyton
(11:00) "O Love That Will Not Let Me Go" Paul S. Jones

*The Congregation is encouraged to participate in the following Communion Hymn.
The hymn can be found in the back portion of the LBW (Green) Hymnal in your pew rack.*

Communion Hymn "Lord Jesus, Think on Me" LBW 309
(We Stand)

BLESSING OF THE COMMUNICANTS

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

Amen.

BENEDICTION

God the Father, who fills the creation with abundance, + Christ the Son, who spreads his arms in forgiveness, and the Holy Spirit, who draws ever near to us, bless you and bring you to life everlasting.

Amen.

SENDING SONG*"Chief of Sinners Though I Be"*

ELW 609

1 Chief of sin - ners though I be, Je - sus shed his blood for me,
 2 Oh, the height of Je - sus' love! High - er than the heav'ns a - bove,
 3 On - ly Je - sus can im - part balm to heal the wound - ed heart,
 4 Chief of sin - ners though I be, Christ is all in all to me;
 5 O my Sav - ior, help af - ford by your Spir - it and your word!

died that I might live on high, lives that I might nev - er die.
 deep - er than the depths of sea, last - ing as e - ter - ni - ty.
 peace that flows from sin for - giv'n, joy that lifts the soul to heav'n,
 all my wants to him are known, all my sor - rows are his own.
 When my way - ward heart would stray, keep me in the nar - row way;

As the branch is to the vine, I am his, and he is mine.
 Love that found me—won - drous thought—found me when I sought him not.
 faith and hope to walk with God in the way that E - noch trod.
 He sus - tains the hid - den life safe with him from earth - ly strife.
 grace in time of need sup - ply while I live and when I die.

DISMISSAL

Marked with the cross of Christ, go forth to love and serve the Lord.
Thanks be to God.

POSTLUDE*"Jesus, Still Lead On"*

Adam Drese

Sunday, February 22, 2026

First Sunday in Lent

The Devil Doesn't Wear Tights

No one believes in the existence of the devil these days, do they? Do you? Perhaps we can thank Hollywood and Halloween's marketing blitz for our casual if not incredulous approach to the devil's existence. Pointy horns, pitch forks, red costumes, and box office ticket sales continue to shape our culture's collective consciousness of the devil. Though red tights and long tails may be a frightening thought as you consider a costume for a Halloween party, they do nothing to communicate the true terror of an honest-to-God encounter with the devil's power.

This Lent we are called to expunge the fantastical images of the devil from our minds and think seriously about the real presence of evil in our world. We know firsthand about the sin that caused, causes, and will cause suffering to us, our loved ones, our neighbors, our global communities, and creation itself. Sin is real; suffering is real; evil is real; indeed, the devil is real. This oppressive, tangible reality is as real as the air we breathe—felt but not always seen. Greed, envy, rage, hatred, war, discrimination, and apathy are just some of the ways the devil's forces wreak havoc upon us. These forces have one goal and one goal only: to turn us away from the will of God.

Matthew's gospel reorients us to the truth of the devil's power, and calls us to name Satan's presence in the world. In the wilderness Jesus encounters an evil as real as its opposite, resurrection. The great tempter seeks to undermine Jesus' mission before he even begins; testimony that evil has much to fear of our Jesus! Nonetheless, Jesus will not be dissuaded. "Away with you, Satan!" proclaims the redeemer of the cosmos. Thus, the Lenten journey begins—a journey that takes us to the cross, where the devil is named and crushed underfoot.

ALTAR GREENERY is given to the glory of God and in memory of Mr. Robert Bank, beloved father and father-in-law of Bob and Pat Bank.

SERVING TODAY:

Ushers: (8:30) Reuben Eargle, Sandy Shealy, Ron Redd, Steve Fowler, Jim Nantz, Rick Loging, and Daryl Hooker;

(11:00) Otis Rawl, G Kolb, Mike Burgess, Myra Strock, Manning Burgess, Roy Windham, and George Mathias

Cantor: Melissa Rawl

Greeters: (8:30) Julie and Adam Tworzyanski; (11:00) Carolinda Getz

Lay Readers: (8:30) Christy Hooker; (11:00) Melissa Rawl

Communion Assistants: (8:30) Neil Brown; (11:00) Jamie Early

Order of St. Stephen's: (8:30) [A] Ethan Kean [C] Jaime Wessinger; (11:00) [A] Stone Lewis [C] William Carrero

The Church Staff

Website: www.sslc.org

The Rev. Jason T. Antley

The Rev. Ralph G. Hill

Mrs. Shannon Burnett, Director of Family Life

Mrs. Tonya Reynolds, Parish Administrator

Ms. Susan Wilson, Director of Music/Organist

Mrs. Julie Tworzyanski, Preschool Director

Mrs. Sylvia Looney, Organist Emeritus

Sunday School Information:

Locations for Children's Classes

Locations for Adult Classes

Nursery – Room #105	Agape Adult Class Room #102 (Closest to Narthex)
2—4 year olds & 5K – Room #103	Saints & Sinners with PJ and PR Room #203 (Large Upstairs Room)
1st—5th Grade – Room # 216	Women Digging Deeper Parlor
6th—8th Grade – Room #212	For those not attending a Sunday School class but waiting on a child to get out of one, feel free to sit in the Social Hall!
9th—12th Grade – Room #217	If you are interested in beginning a new Sunday School class please contact Mrs. Shannon.

If you are not receiving the weekly announcements and monthly newsletter via email and would like to receive them, please email Shannon (Shannon@sslc.org) so she can add you to the distribution list.

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