



St. Peter's Lutheran Church
Highspire
Lent 1
February 22, 2026

Introduction

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.

Overview

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.

WORDS OF WELCOME
PRELUDE

Create in Me

Praise Team

The Gathering

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

*CONFESSION AND FORGIVENESS

ELW p. 94

P In the name of the Father, and of the ✠ Son, and of the Holy Spirit.

C Amen.

P God of all mercy and consolation, come to the help of your people, turning us from our sin to live for you alone. Give us the power of your Holy Spirit that we may confess our sin, receive your forgiveness, and grow into the fullness of Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord

C Amen.

P Let us confess our sin in the presence of God and of one another. Most merciful God,

C we confess that we are captive to sin and cannot free ourselves. We have sinned against you in thought, word, and deed, by what we have done and by what we have left undone. We have not loved you with our whole heart; we have not loved our neighbors as ourselves. For the sake of your Son, Jesus Christ, have mercy on us. Forgive us, renew us, and lead us, so that we may delight in your will and walk in your ways, to the glory of your holy name. Amen.

P In the mercy of almighty God, Jesus Christ was given to die for us, and for his sake God forgives us all our sins. As a called and ordained minister of the church of Christ, and by his authority, I therefore declare to you the entire forgiveness of all your sins, in the name of the Father, and of the ✠ Son, and of the Holy Spirit.

C Amen.

*GATHERING HYMN I Want Jesus to Walk with Me ELW #325

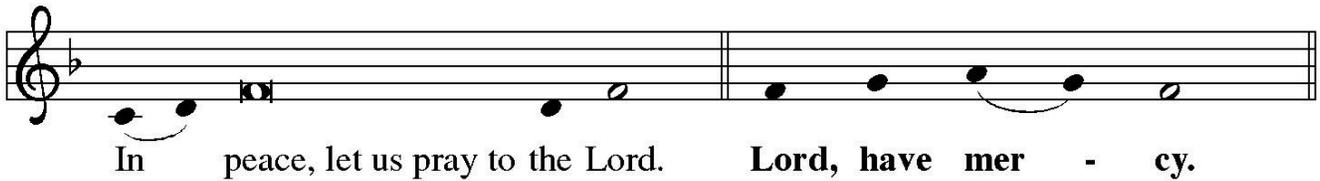
*GREETING

P The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, the love of God, and the communion of the Holy Spirit be with you all.

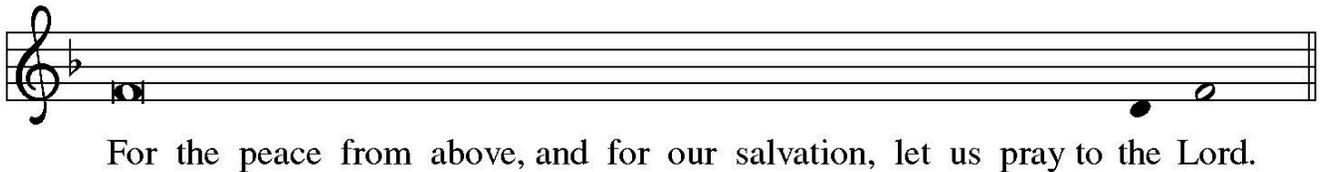
C And also with you.

*KYRIE

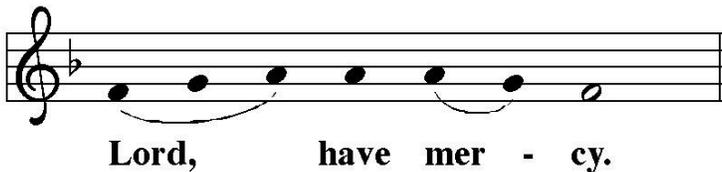
ELW p. 138



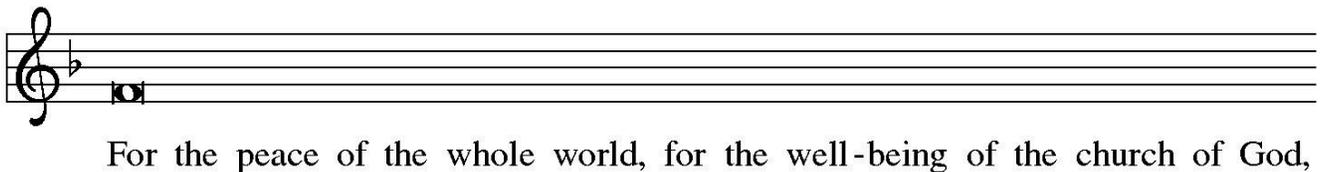
In peace, let us pray to the Lord. Lord, have mer - cy.



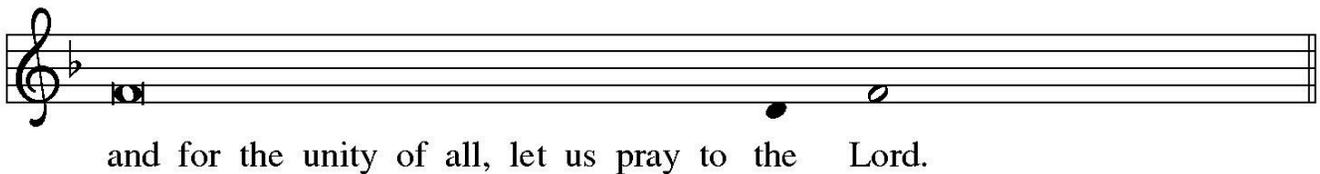
For the peace from above, and for our salvation, let us pray to the Lord.



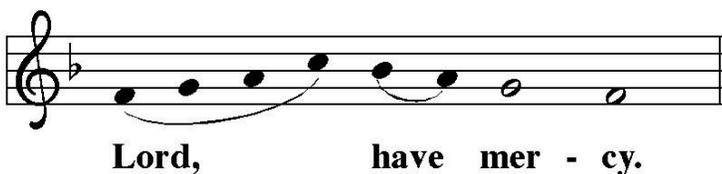
Lord, have mer - cy.



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.

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.

L The word of the Lord

C Thanks be to God

PSALM: **Psalm 32** (read responsively)

Mercy embraces those who trust in the Lord. (Ps. 32:10)

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

**2 Happy are they to whom the Lord imputes no guilt,
and in whose spirit there is no guile!**

3 While I held my tongue, my bones withered 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 conceal 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.

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

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.

12 Just as sin came into the world through one man, and death came through sin, and so death spread to all because all have sinned 13 for sin was indeed in the world before the law, but sin is not reckoned when there is no law. 14 Yet 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.

15 But 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. 16 And 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. 17 If, 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.

18 Therefore 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. 19 For 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.

L The word of the Lord

C Thanks be to God

*GOSPEL ACCLAMATION Return to the Lord

ELW p. 142



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: **Matthew 4:1-11**

P The holy gospel according to Matthew

C Glory to you, O Lord.

Jesus experiences anew the temptations that Israel faced in the wilderness. As the Son of God, he endures the testing of the evil one.

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.

P The gospel of the Lord.

C Praise to you, O Christ.

SERMON

Rev. Gail Wolling

*HYMN OF THE DAY A Mighty Fortress

ELW # 504

*APOSTLES' CREED

ELW p.105

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 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. Especially we pray for *Don Alsedek, Connie Barner, Rachel Benkovic, Richard Deutsch, Rose Hoover, Tracy Keene, Samson Kennedy, Bernie Kunz, Rob Lipsitt, and Sally Schonewolf.* 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.**
Here other intercessions may be offered.

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.

C Amen.

*PEACE

ELW p. 106

P The peace of Christ be with you always.

C And also with you.

SPECIAL MUSIC

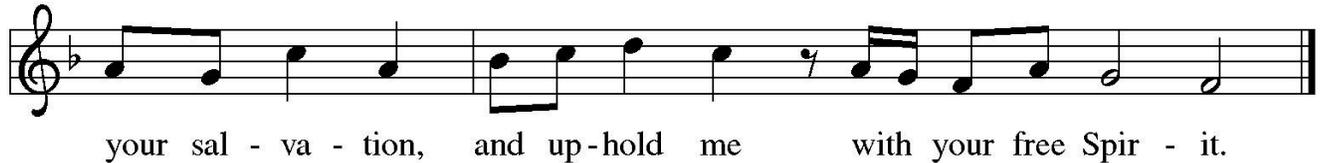
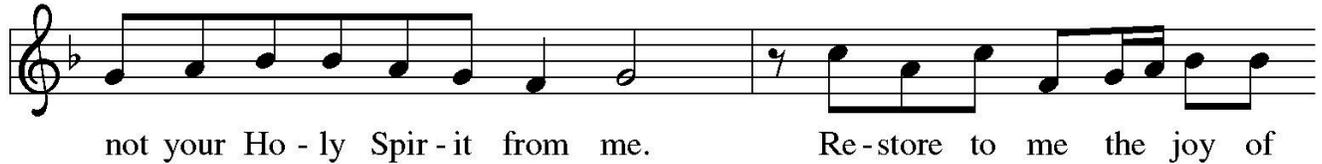
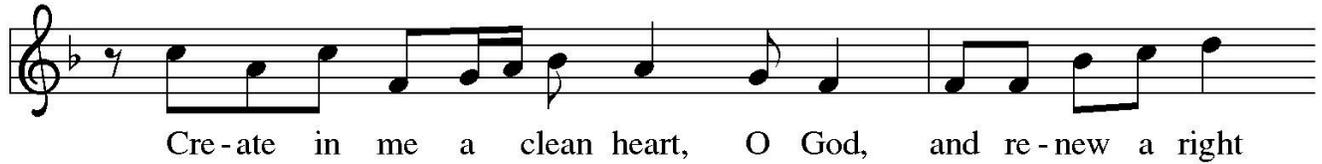
No Fear

Praise Team

The Meal

God feeds us with the presence of Jesus Christ.

*OFFERTORY HYMN Create In Me a Clean Heart ELW# 186



*OFFERTORY PRAYER

A 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.

C Amen

*THE GREAT THANKSGIVING

ELW p.144

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 image shows four staves of musical notation in G major (one flat) and 4/4 time. Each staff contains a melody line with lyrics underneath. The first staff has two measures, the second and third have two measures each, and the fourth has one measure. The lyrics are: '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.', and 'It is right to give our thanks and praise.'

*PREFACE

It is indeed right, our du - ty and our joy,
that we should at all times and in all places give thanks and praise to you,
al - mighty and merciful God, through our Sav - ior Je - sus Christ.
You call your people to cleanse their hearts and prepare with joy for the
pas - chal feast, that re - newed in the gift of bap - tism,

The image shows five staves of musical notation in G major (one flat) and 4/4 time. Each staff contains a melody line with lyrics underneath. The lyrics are: 'It is indeed right, our du - ty and our joy,', 'that we should at all times and in all places give thanks and praise to you,', 'al - mighty and merciful God, through our Sav - ior Je - sus Christ.', 'You call your people to cleanse their hearts and prepare with joy for the', and 'pas - chal feast, that re - newed in the gift of bap - tism,'.

we may come to the full - ness of your grace.

And so, with all the choirs of an - gels,

with the church on earth and the hosts of heav - en,

we praise your name and join their un - end - ing 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. 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.

*EUCCHARISTIC PRAYER

P 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.

C Amen.

*THE LORD'S PRAYER

ELW p.145

P 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.

*SHARING THE MEAL

P Come to the table. Feast on God's goodness and mercy.

COMMUNION HYMNS:

Lamb of God

ELW p.146

I Received the Living God

ELW# 477

Jesus Remember Me (3 times)

ELW# 616

*PRAYER AFTER COMMUNION

A 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.

C Amen.

The Sending

God blesses us and sends us in mission to the world.

*BENEDICTION

P 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.

C Amen.

*SENDING HYMN O Lord, throughout These Forty Days ELW#319

*DISMISSAL

A Go in peace. Believe the good news.

C Thanks be to God.

POSTLUDE

Create In Me (Reprise)

Praise Team

Thank you, Rev. Gail Wolling for presiding over worship today, you are a blessing to us.

We appreciate Juliet Mitton for sharing her musical talent with us this morning. Thank you Juliet.

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Prelude - "Create in Me" words & music by Rend Collective CCLI Song #7014652 @2014 Thankyou Music Ltd Praise Team

Gathering Hymn - "I Want Jesus to Walk with Me" ELW #325 SOJOURNER African American spiritual arr. @2006 Augsburg Fortress PUBLIC DOMAIN "Kyrie" p.138-139, ELW, setting 3

Lenten Acclamation - "Return to the Lord, Your God" p.142 ELW, setting 3

Hymn of the Day - "A Mighty Fortress" ELW #504 EIN FESTE BURG words & music - Martin Luther, words @1978 LBW, Augsburg Fortress music - PUBLIC DOMAIN

Special Music - "No Fear" words & music Jon Reddick, Jeff Pardo & Matthew West CCLI Song #7247249 @BrentHood Music Praise Team

Offertory Hymn - "Create in Me a Clean Heart" ELW #186 music - @ 2006, Augsburg Fortress, Richard Hillert words - PUBLIC DOMAIN

Great Thanksgiving - p.144 ELW, setting 3

Sanctus - "Holy, Holy, Holy Lord" p.144 ELW, setting 3

Distribution Hymns - "Lamb of God" p.146 ELW, setting 3 "I Received the Living God" ELW #477 word & music - anonymous @OCP "Jesus, Remember Me" ELW #616 (3 times) Jacques Berthier @ 1981 Les Presses de Taize, GIA Publications

Sending hymn - "O Lord, throughout These Forty Days" ELW #319 @1978 LBW admin. Augsburg Fortress CONSOLATION

Postlude - "Create in Me" (REPRISE) Praise Team

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For pastoral care, please reach out to the church office at 717-939-3492 or by email at stpetershighspire240@gmail.com. You can also call Patrick Hawkins at 717-903-2987.

ALTAR FLOWERS

Altar flowers are presented to the Glory of God by Diana Keyser and Helene Hoch in honor of their parents Don and Carol Dell's 61st Wedding Anniversary on February 20th, their mother Carol's birthday February 22nd, and the Wedding Anniversary of Frank and Sheryl Keyser on February 18th.

The following dates are available for sponsors. If you are interested, please let Helene Hoch know at 717-343-8397.

March 29th Palm Sunday
April 2nd Maundy Thursday
April 5th Easter Sunday

Worship Participants for February 22, 2026

Presiding Minister	Rev Gail Wolling
Music Director	Stephen Strauss
Worship Assistant	Brian Keyser
Musician	Juliet Mitton
Lector	Doris Reynolds

Worship Participants for March 1, 2026

Presiding Minister	Sr. Marianne Brock
Music Director	Stephen Strauss
Worship Assistant	Patrick Hawkins
Musician	Juliet Mitton
Lector	Randy Hoover

CHOIR REHEARSALS

This Wednesday, February 25th, there will be rehearsal for the bell choir at 7pm and choir at 7:45pm. Join us at rehearsals and offer your talents to the Lord through music! Any questions, call or text Steve at 717-265-6854.

All are Welcome Bible Study

The All are Welcome Bible Study meets on Tuesday nights at 6:30pm. We are currently reading Psalms. We send out a weekly email with the Zoom link, as well as a brief summary of what we covered the previous week. To get the link for attending the Zoom session, or just to get on the weekly email list, please contact Matt and Mary Hunt at allarewelcomebiblestudy@gmail.com

Meet Pastor Alex

As discussed at our congregational meeting, we will welcome Pastor Alex on Sunday March 15th. On March 15th our worship service time will also change to 11:00 AM. However, her first time with us will be on March 11th during Evening Prayer at 6:30 pm. Please come out and meet Pastor Alex. There will be refreshments after the service.

Services for Wednesdays in Lent:

February 25th	Evening Prayer	6:30pm
March 4th	Evening Prayer	6:30pm
March 11th	Evening Prayer	6:30pm (meet Pastor Alex)
March 18th	Evening Prayer	6:30pm
March 25th	Evening Prayer	6:30pm

Come to church and stay for fellowship every Sunday in the Parlor. Enjoy coffee and snacks and friendly conversation! If you would be interested in "Hosting a Sunday" please check the sign-up sheet posted on the bulletin board located in the hallway outside the Music Room/Church Office.