

“This is my Son,
the Beloved, with whom
I am well pleased.”



FIRST SUNDAY IN LENT

**THEME: COME, FOLLOW ME: A Disciple's Journey Through Lent
February 22, 2026**

**MEMORIAL LUTHERAN CHURCH
34 E. Orange Street
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**Welcoming all
Reaching out in love
Growing together in Christ
Worshiping and serving in Jesus' name**

**Reverend Godfred Effisah
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pastor@memluth.org
Office hours: Monday to Thursday: 9:00 am to 3:00 pm**

Children are an active part of Memorial's community of faith! We welcome you to worship each week! Children's bulletins and Quiet Bags (lots of exciting things to do!) are available at the doors coming from the parking lot. Please take one of each as they may help your children bring smiles into our time of worship!

Welcome to Memorial Lutheran Church. As you prepare for Worship, please silence your cell phone.

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.

GATHERING

WELCOME

PRELUDE *"Jesus Walked This Lonesome Valley"* - Wood

CONFESSION AND FORGIVENESS

Please kneel or stand as you are able.

All may make the sign of the cross, the sign that is marked at baptism, as the presiding minister begins.

In the name of the Father, and of the + Son, and of the Holy Spirit.
Amen.

Let us return to God, confessing our sin in the assurance of God's abiding love.

Silence is kept for reflection.

Compassionate One, **you are slow to anger and abounding in steadfast love, but our lives do not always reflect you and your love for the world. We do not show others the tender compassion you have shown to us. We do not welcome others with the radical hospitality you grant to all people. We oppress others, even though you have set us free again and again. We squander the abundant gifts of the earth. Transform our lives and guide us again in the way of the cross.**

Amen.

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

Amen.

Please remain standing or stand as you are able.

GATHERING HYMN “*I Want Jesus to Walk with Me*”

ELW 325

GREETING

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

And also with you.

KYRIE

SING IN UNISON



- 1 Have mer - cy on us, Lord, and hear our sol - emn prayer.
- 2 Have mer - cy on us, Christ, and wash a - way our sin.
- 3 Have mer - cy on us, Lord; make sin and shame de - part.



We come to hear your liv - ing word; it saves us from de - spair.
Pour out your grace and make us whole that new life may be - gin.
Re - new us with your sav - ing pow'r; cre - ate in us new hearts!

PRAYER OF THE DAY

Let us pray together.

Lord God, our strength, the struggle between good and evil rages within and around us, and the devil and all the forces that defy you tempt us with empty promises. Keep us steadfast in your word, and when we fall, raise us again and restore us through your Son, Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. Amen.

Please be seated.

WORD

FIRST READING

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

Human beings were formed with great care, to be in relationship with the creator, creation, and one another. The serpent's promise to the first couple that their eyes would be opened led, ironically, to the discovery only that they were naked.

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.

Word of God. Word of Life.

Thanks be to God.

PSALM

Psalms 32

READ RESPONSIVELY

¹Happy 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!**

³While 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.**

⁵Then 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.**

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.**

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.**

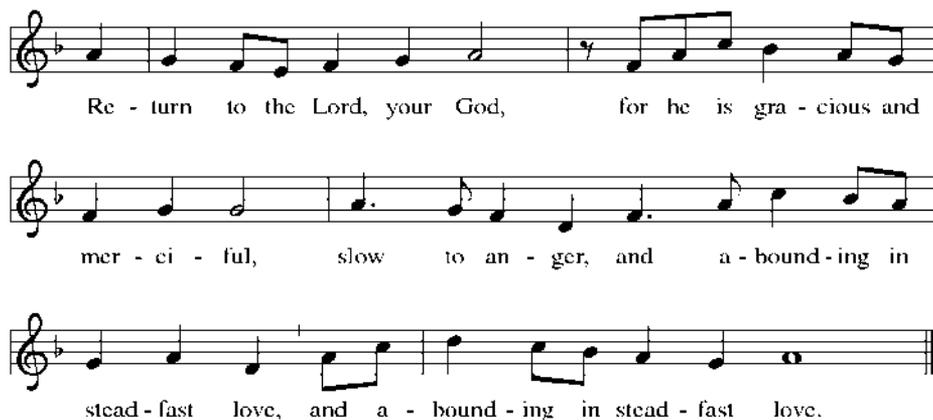
¹¹Be glad, you righteous, and rejoice in the LORD;
shout for joy, all who are true of heart.

Word of God. Word of Life.
Thanks be to God.

Please stand as you are able.

GOSPEL ACCLAMATION - LENT

page 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.

The Holy Gospel according to St. Matthew the 3rd chapter.
Glory to you, O Lord.

GOSPEL

Matthew 3:13-17

¹³ Then Jesus came from Galilee to John at the Jordan, to be baptized by him. ¹⁴ John would have prevented him, saying, "I need to be baptized by you, and do you come to me?" ¹⁵ But Jesus answered him, "Let it be so now, for it is proper for us in this way to fulfill all righteousness." Then he consented. ¹⁶ And when Jesus had been baptized, just as he came up from the water, suddenly the heavens were opened to him and he saw God's Spirit descending like a dove and alighting on him. ¹⁷ And a voice from the heavens said, "This is my Son, the Beloved, with whom I am well pleased."

The gospel of the Lord.
Praise to you, O Christ.

Please be seated.

CHILDREN'S MESSAGE

SERMON

Please stand as you are able.

HYMN OF THE DAY "When Jesus Came to Jordan"

ELW 305

APOSTLES' CREED

I believe in God, the Father almighty,
creator of heaven and earth.

I believe in Jesus Christ, God's only Son, our Lord,
who was conceived by the Holy Spirit,
born of the virgin Mary,
suffered under Pontius Pilate,
was crucified, died, and was buried;
he descended into hell.
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

As God's beloved children united in Christ, let us pray for the church, the whole human community, and the well-being of the earth, our home.

A brief silence.

Eternal Father, you invite each of us to share in the life and ministry of your Son, Jesus Christ. Send your Holy Spirit to transform our faith family into a community of disciples. In this year of discipleship, teach us how to listen to Jesus, to love Jesus deeply, and to share Jesus with everyone we meet. Through the Holy Spirit, guide us to deepen our commitment as disciples of Jesus. Lead us, we pray, to grow as an intentional community, committed to our call to discipleship. Hear us, O God. **Your mercy is great.**

Almighty God, giver of all that is good, the beauty and dignity of human life was the crowning of your creation. Help us to respect and protect human life in all its stages, recognizing it as a gift from God. Give us the courage to speak with truth and love, and with conviction, in the protection of human life. Hear us, O God. **Your mercy is great.**

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 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 . . .*) 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 (*especially*). Hear us, O God. **Your mercy is great.**

Receive our prayers, O God, through Jesus Christ, our strength and salvation.

Amen.

SHARING OF THE PEACE

The peace of Christ be with you always.

And also with you.

Please be seated.

OFFERTORY “Lead Me Lord”

Senior Choir

The Ushers will collect the offering.

Please stand as you are able.

OFFERTORY RESPONSE

“Create in Me a Clean Heart”

ELW 188

Create in me a clean heart, O God, and renew a right spirit within me. Cast me not away from your presence, and take not your Holy Spirit from me. Restore to me the joy of your salvation, and uphold me with your free Spirit.

MEAL

OFFERTORY PRAYER

Let us pray together.

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.

Amen.

THE GREAT THANKSGIVING

The Lord be with you.

And also with you.

Lift up your hearts.

We lift them to the Lord.

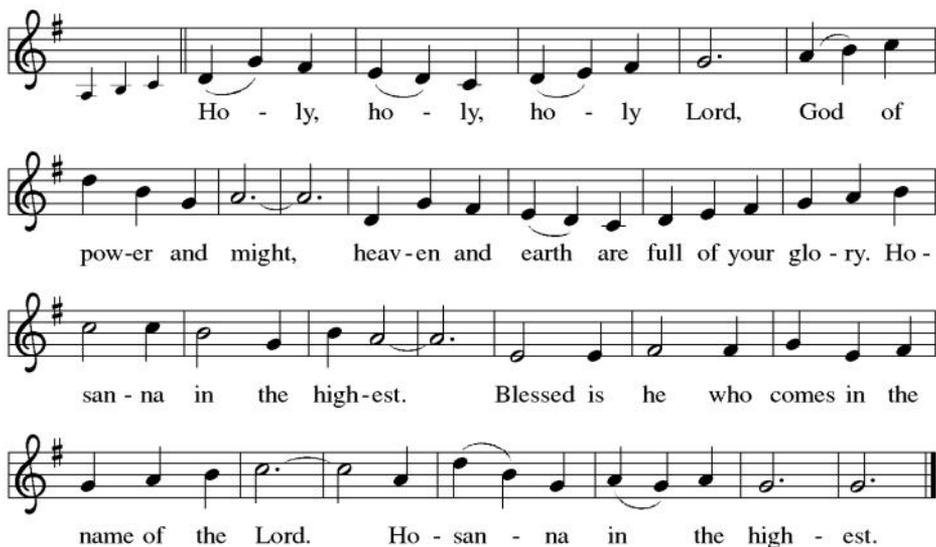
Let us give thanks to the Lord our God.

It is right to give our thanks and praise.

PREFACE - LENT

It is indeed right and good to give you thanks and praise, almighty God and everlasting Father, through Jesus Christ your Son our Lord. For in these forty days you lead us into the desert of repentance that through a pilgrimage of prayer and discipline we may grow in grace and learn to be your people once again. Through fasting, prayer and acts of service you bring us back to your generous heart. Through the study of your holy word you open our eyes to your presence in the world and free our hearts and hands to welcome others into the radiant splendor of your love. As we prepare to celebrate the paschal mystery with mind and heart renewed, we bless you for your mercy. And so, with all the choirs of angels, with the church on earth and the hosts of heaven, we praise your name and join their un-ending hymn:

HOLY, HOLY, HOLY



Ho - ly, ho - ly, ho - ly Lord, God of
pow-er and might, heav-en and earth are full of your glo - ry. Ho -
san - na in the high-est. Blessed is he who comes in the
name of the Lord. Ho - san - na in the high - est.

EUCCHARISTIC PRAYER

Holy God, holy and mighty, holy and immortal: you we praise and glorify, you we worship and adore. God of judgment and mercy. We give you thanks through your beloved son, Jesus Christ. From the earliest days, you turned toward your creation, bringing light from darkness, firm ground from the deep, and life from the dust. Adam and Eve turned from the garden to toil and struggled. Abraham and Sarah moved from a life of wandering to the land that you showed them. Your people Israel turned from captivity to cry unto you, and you delivered them from captivity. In the wilderness, Jesus turned away from the tempter and toward his proclamation of the heavenly kingdom. You ordained for everything: a season, a time to break down and a time to build up, a time to keep, and a time to put aside. Let this be a time of prayer, forgiveness, reconciliation, and peace.

WORDS OF INSTITUTION

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.

Therefore, remembering Christ's turn toward the world, his journey to the cross, and his resurrection from the dead, we turn toward you in the gifts of bread and wine, signs of your mercy, and food for our souls.

Amen. Come, Lord Jesus.

Send now, we pray, your Holy Spirit, that these gifts may be healing and redemption for us and for your world, the turning toward a new day of righteousness.

Amen. Come Holy Spirit.

And now, may all creation turn toward you, seeking your mercy and trusting in your word, that we may share in your glory with all the saints in light.

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,

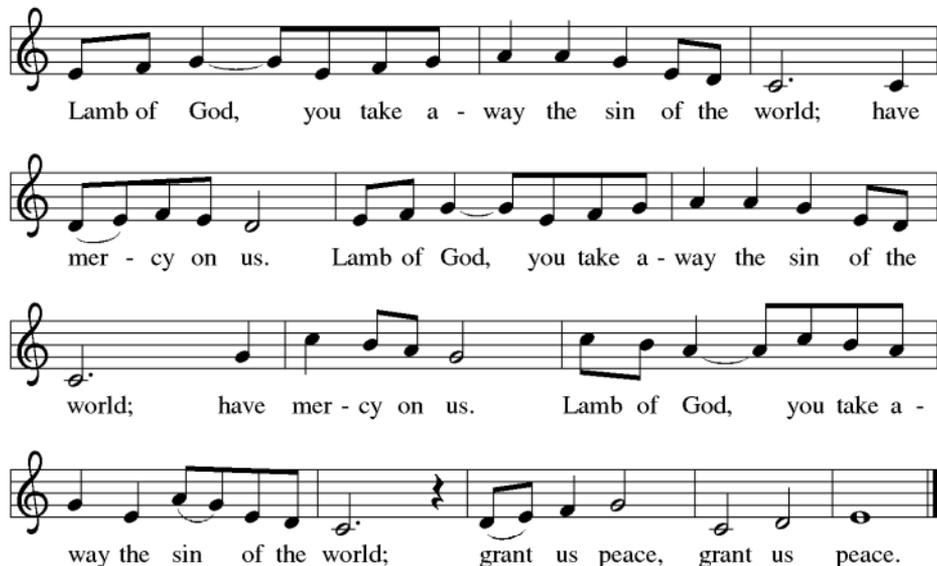
on earth as it is in heaven.

**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.**

LAMB OF GOD

page 112



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.

INVITATION TO COMMUNION

Behold the Lamb of God, behold him who takes away the sins of the world. Blessed are those invited to the supper of the Lamb. **Lord, I am not worthy that you should enter under my roof, but only say the word and my soul shall be healed.**

Please be seated.

COMMUNION DISTRIBUTION

All are welcome at the Lord's table. Please come forward by the center aisle at the usher's direction. If you choose to have wine for communion, take an empty cup from the usher. If you prefer grape juice, receive a pre-filled cup at the altar. If you or a child has never received the sacrament, fold hands to receive a blessing instead. After receiving communion or a blessing, you may choose to remain at the altar for extra time in prayer. When you return to your pew do so by the side aisles. Please deposit the empty cup in the basket.

Please stand as you are able.

POST-COMMUNION BLESSING

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

Amen.

PRAYER AFTER COMMUNION

Let us pray together.

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.

Amen.

SENDING

BLESSING

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.

Amen.

SENDING HYMN *"Jesus, Still Lead On"*

ELW 624

DISMISSAL

Go in peace. Believe the good news.

Thanks be to God.

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Trina Ruth

All Caregivers

Church Staff

Pastor

Pastor Godfred Effisah

Organist & Pianist

Nancy Fogelsanger

Senior Choir / Bell Choir

Director

Kathy Kerr

Parish Coordinator

Amy Piper



Check out our church website using this QR Code!