



**BLESSED TRINITY LUTHERAN CHURCH  
LIGHT OF CHRIST\*ST. JOHN'S WINDISH\*ST. PETER'S**



**FOURTH SUNDAY IN LENT**

Saturday, March 18 5PM @ St. Peter's

Sunday, March 19 10AM @ St. Peter's

## WELCOME TO BLESSED TRINITY LUTHERAN CHURCH!

Thank you for joining us today! We are a brand-new congregation formed from the merger of three historic Bethlehem congregations. Blessed Trinity is being served by **Pastor Mike Button** in an interim capacity while the congregation prepares to call its own pastor. This week's organist is **Marisa Deshler**.

We follow an ancient pattern of worship that we call **liturgy**. It sounds fancy, but we're just imitating the first followers of Christ who (1) **gathered** to read the (2) **word of God**, (3) **share a meal**, and encourage one another before (4) **sending** each other out into the world to share God's love.



## **GATHERING**

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

### **WELCOME**

**PRELUDE**      *Chorale Prelude on Rockingham arr. By Parry*

### **CONFESSION AND FORGIVENESS**

Blessed be the holy Trinity, ✝ one God,  
who journeys with us these forty days,  
and sustains us with the gift of grace.

**Amen.**

Let us acknowledge before God and one another  
our need for repentance and God's mercy.

*Silence is kept for reflection.*

Holy God,

**we confess to you our faults and failings.**

**Too often we neglect and do not trust your  
holy word; we take for ourselves instead of  
giving to others; we spoil rather than steward**

**your creation; we cause hurt though you call  
us to heal; we choose fear over compassion.  
Forgive us, renew us, and lead us,  
as we seek to follow in your way of life.  
Amen.**

Hear the good news: God so loved the world that  
God gave the only Son, so that all may receive  
life. This promise is for you!  
God embraces you with divine mercy,  
✝ forgives you in Christ's name,  
and revives you in the Spirit's power.  
**Amen.**

**GATHERING SONG**    *Lead Me, Guide Me (ELW 768)*

## **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.**

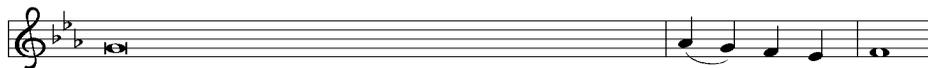
## **KYRIE**



In peace, let us pray to the Lord.



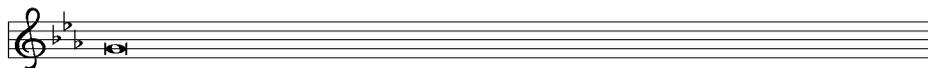
Lord, have mer - cy.



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.



For this holy house, and for all who offer here their worship and praise,



let us pray to the Lord.



Lord, have mer - cy.



Help, save, comfort, and de - fend us, gra - cious Lord.



A - men, a - men.

## PRAYER OF THE DAY

Let us pray.

*A brief silence is kept before the prayer.*

Bend your ear to our prayers, Lord Christ, and come among us. By your gracious life and death for us, bring light into the darkness of our hearts, and anoint us with your Spirit, for you live and reign with the Father and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever.

**Amen.**

**FIRST READING:**    *1 Samuel 16:1-13*

A reading from 1 Samuel.

<sup>1</sup>The LORD said to Samuel, "How long will you grieve over Saul? I have rejected him from being king over Israel. Fill your horn with oil and set out; I will send you to Jesse the Bethlehemite, for I have provided for myself a king among his sons." <sup>2</sup>Samuel said, "How can I go? If Saul hears of it, he will kill me." And the LORD said, "Take a heifer with you, and say, 'I have come to sacrifice to the LORD.'" <sup>3</sup>Invite Jesse to the

sacrifice, and I will show you what you shall do; and you shall anoint for me the one whom I name to you.”<sup>4</sup> Samuel did what the LORD commanded, and came to Bethlehem. The elders of the city came to meet him trembling, and said, “Do you come peaceably?”<sup>5</sup> He said, “Peaceably; I have come to sacrifice to the LORD; sanctify yourselves and come with me to the sacrifice.” And he sanctified Jesse and his sons and invited them to the sacrifice.

<sup>6</sup>When they came, he looked on Eliab and thought, “Surely the LORD’s anointed is now before the LORD.”<sup>7</sup> But the LORD said to Samuel, “Do not look on his appearance or on the height of his stature, because I have rejected him; for the LORD does not see as mortals see; they look on the outward appearance, but the LORD looks on the heart.”<sup>8</sup> Then Jesse called Abinadab, and made him pass before Samuel. He said, “Neither has the LORD chosen this one.”<sup>9</sup> Then Jesse made Shammah pass by. And he said, “Neither has the LORD chosen this one.”<sup>10</sup> Jesse made seven of his sons pass before Samuel, and Samuel said to

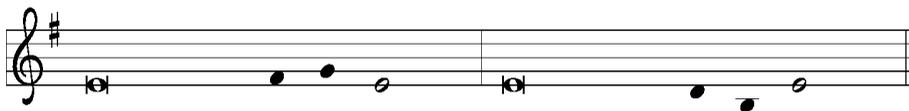
Jesse, "The LORD has not chosen any of these."  
<sup>11</sup>Samuel said to Jesse, "Are all your sons here?"  
And he said, "There remains yet the youngest,  
but he is keeping the sheep." And Samuel said to  
Jesse, "Send and bring him; for we will not sit  
down until he comes here." <sup>12</sup>He sent and brought  
him in. Now he was ruddy, and had beautiful  
eyes, and was handsome. The LORD said, "Rise  
and anoint him; for this is the one." <sup>13</sup>Then  
Samuel took the horn of oil, and anointed him in  
the presence of his brothers; and the spirit of the  
LORD came mightily upon David from that day  
forward. Samuel then set out and went to Ramah.

The word of the Lord.

**Thanks be to God**

**PSALM:** *Psalm 23*

*The psalm for the day is sung responsively*



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<sup>1</sup>The LORD<sup>l</sup> is my shepherd;  
I shall not <sup>l</sup> be in want.

<sup>2</sup>**The LORD makes me lie down <sup>l</sup> in green pastures  
and leads me be- <sup>l</sup> side still waters.**

<sup>3</sup>You restore my <sup>l</sup> soul, O LORD,  
and guide me along right pathways <sup>l</sup> for  
your name's sake.

<sup>4</sup>**Though I walk through the valley of the  
shadow of death, I shall <sup>l</sup> fear no evil;  
for you are with me; your rod and your  
staff, they <sup>l</sup> comfort me.**

<sup>5</sup>You prepare a table before me in the  
presence <sup>l</sup> of my enemies;  
you anoint my head with oil, and my cup  
is <sup>l</sup> running over.

<sup>6</sup>**Surely goodness and mercy shall follow  
me all the days <sup>l</sup> of my life,  
and I will dwell in the house of the <sup>l</sup>  
LORD forever.**

**SECOND READING:** *Ephesians 5:8-14*

A reading from Ephesians.

<sup>8</sup>Once you were darkness, but now in the Lord you are light. Live as children of light—<sup>9</sup>for the fruit of the light is found in all that is good and right and true. <sup>10</sup>Try to find out what is pleasing to the Lord. <sup>11</sup>Take no part in the unfruitful works of darkness, but instead expose them.

<sup>12</sup>For it is shameful even to mention what such people do secretly; <sup>13</sup>but everything exposed by the light becomes visible, <sup>14</sup>for everything that becomes visible is light. Therefore it says,

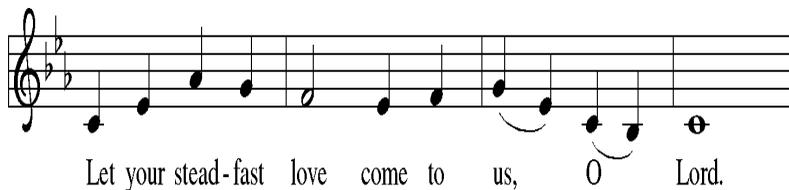
“Sleeper, awake!  
Rise from the dead,  
and Christ will shine on you.”

The word of the Lord.

**Thanks be to God.**

**SOLO-** *When I Survey the Wondrous Cross- James Ritchie, soloist*

## GOSPEL ACCLAMATION



### GOSPEL: *John 9:1-41*

The Holy Gospel according to St. John, chapter 9. **Glory to you, O Lord.**

<sup>1</sup>As [Jesus] walked along, he saw a man blind from birth. <sup>2</sup>His disciples asked him, "Rabbi, who sinned, this man or his parents, that he was born blind?" <sup>3</sup>Jesus answered, "Neither this man nor his parents sinned; he was born blind so that God's works might be revealed in him. <sup>4</sup>We must work the works of him who sent me while it is day; night is coming when no one can work. <sup>5</sup>As

long as I am in the world, I am the light of the world.”<sup>6</sup> When he had said this, he spat on the ground and made mud with the saliva and spread the mud on the man’s eyes,<sup>7</sup> saying to him, “Go, wash in the pool of Siloam” (which means Sent). Then he went and washed and came back able to see.<sup>8</sup> The neighbors and those who had seen him before as a beggar began to ask, “Is this not the man who used to sit and beg?”<sup>9</sup> Some were saying, “It is he.” Others were saying, “No, but it is someone like him.” He kept saying, “I am the man.”<sup>10</sup> But they kept asking him, “Then how were your eyes opened?”<sup>11</sup> He answered, “The man called Jesus made mud, spread it on my eyes, and said to me, ‘Go to Siloam and wash.’ Then I went and washed and received my sight.”<sup>12</sup> They said to him, “Where is he?” He said, “I do not know.”

<sup>13</sup>They brought to the Pharisees the man who had formerly been blind.<sup>14</sup> Now it was a sabbath day when Jesus made the mud and opened his eyes.<sup>15</sup> Then the Pharisees also began to ask him how he had received his sight. He said to them,

“He put mud on my eyes. Then I washed, and now I see.” <sup>16</sup>Some of the Pharisees said, “This man is not from God, for he does not observe the sabbath.” But others said, “How can a man who is a sinner perform such signs?” And they were divided. <sup>17</sup>So they said again to the blind man, “What do you say about him? It was your eyes he opened.” He said, “He is a prophet.”

<sup>18</sup>The Jews did not believe that he had been blind and had received his sight until they called the parents of the man who had received his sight <sup>19</sup>and asked them, “Is this your son, who you say was born blind? How then does he now see?” <sup>20</sup>His parents answered, “We know that this is our son, and that he was born blind; <sup>21</sup>but we do not know how it is that now he sees, nor do we know who opened his eyes. Ask him; he is of age. He will speak for himself.” <sup>22</sup>His parents said this because they were afraid of the Jews; for the Jews had already agreed that anyone who confessed Jesus to be the Messiah would be put out of the synagogue. <sup>23</sup>Therefore his parents said, “He is

of age; ask him.”

<sup>24</sup>So for the second time they called the man who had been blind, and they said to him, “Give glory to God! We know that this man is a sinner.” <sup>25</sup>He answered, “I do not know whether he is a sinner. One thing I do know, that though I was blind, now I see.” <sup>26</sup>They said to him, “What did he do to you? How did he open your eyes?” <sup>27</sup>He answered them, “I have told you already, and you would not listen. Why do you want to hear it again? Do you also want to become his disciples?” <sup>28</sup>Then they reviled him, saying, “You are his disciple, but we are disciples of Moses. <sup>29</sup>We know that God has spoken to Moses, but as for this man, we do not know where he comes from.” <sup>30</sup>The man answered, “Here is an astonishing thing! You do not know where he comes from, and yet he opened my eyes. <sup>31</sup>We know that God does not listen to sinners, but he does listen to one who worships him and obeys his will. <sup>32</sup>Never since the world began has it been heard that anyone opened the eyes of a person born blind. <sup>33</sup>If this

man were not from God, he could do nothing.”

<sup>34</sup>They answered him, “You were born entirely in sins, and are you trying to teach us?” And they drove him out.

<sup>35</sup>Jesus heard that they had driven him out, and when he found him, he said, “Do you believe in the Son of Man?” <sup>36</sup>He answered, “And who is he, sir? Tell me, so that I may believe in him.” <sup>37</sup>Jesus said to him, “You have seen him, and the one speaking with you is he.”

<sup>38</sup>He said, “Lord, I believe.” And he worshiped him. <sup>39</sup>Jesus said, “I came into this world for judgment so that those who do not see may see, and those who do see may become blind.”

<sup>40</sup>Some of the Pharisees near him heard this and said to him, “Surely we are not blind, are we?”

<sup>41</sup>Jesus said to them, “If you were blind, you would not have sin. But now that you say, ‘We see,’ your sin remains.”

The gospel of the Lord.

**Praise to you, O Christ.**

## **SERMON**

**HYMN OF THE DAY**    *Amazing Grace, How Sweet the Sound (ELW 779)*

## **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 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**

Sustained by God's abundant mercy, let us pray for the church, the world, and all of creation.

*A brief silence.*

Eternal God, you seal us by the Holy Spirit and mark us with the cross of Christ forever in baptism. Inspire us by your love as together we strive for justice and peace in all the earth.

Merciful God,

**receive our prayer.**

Creating God, by your word you have made all things, and you hate nothing you have made. Teach us to perceive the beauty of the breadth of your creation, from the grandest mountain

range to the smallest springtime bud. Merciful God,

**receive our prayer.**

Powerful God, you anoint kings and establish rulers. Guide the work of heads of state and elected officials, the President, Vice President, and Speaker of the House of Representatives. Encourage them to lead with justice and to remove barriers that impede the well-being of all. Merciful God,

**receive our prayer.**

Shepherding God, you lead us beside still waters and restore our souls. Keep watch over those who weep; tend all who are sick and comfort those who grieve. Merciful God,

**receive our prayer.**

God our host, you fill us at your table with more than we could ever ask. Feed us with hunger for justice. Equip the feeding ministries of this congregation and community, especially New Bethany Ministries. Nourish us so we can nourish our neighbors. Merciful God,

**receive our prayer.**

*Here other intercessions may be offered.*

God of history, with thanksgiving we remember our ancestors in faith who cared for your people, We praise you for the ways they formed the faith of others and continue to inspire us. Merciful God,

**receive our prayer.**

We lift our prayers to you, O God, trusting in your steadfast love and your promise to renew your whole creation; through Jesus Christ our Savior.

**Amen.**

## **PEACE**

The peace of Christ be with you always.

**And also with you.**

**ANTHEM**     *Precious Lord*     *arr by. Richard Kingsmore*

## OFFERTORY: *Create in Me a Clean Heart ELW 188*

### Create in Me a Clean Heart

The musical score is written on five staves in a single system. Each staff begins with a treble clef and a key signature of two flats (B-flat and E-flat). The melody consists of quarter and eighth notes, with some phrases connected by slurs. The lyrics are printed below the notes, with hyphens indicating syllables that span across multiple notes.

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.

Music: J. A. Freylinghausen, 1670–1739

## OFFERING PRAYER

Let us pray.

God our provider, you have not fed us with bread alone, but with words of grace and life. Bless us and these your gifts, which we receive from your bounty, through Jesus Christ our Lord.

**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.

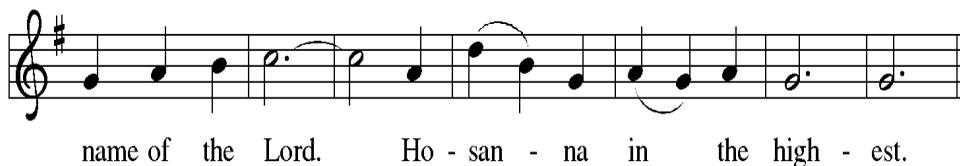
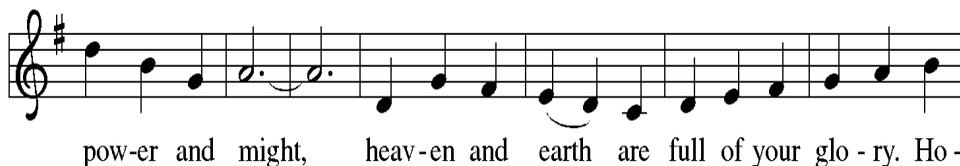
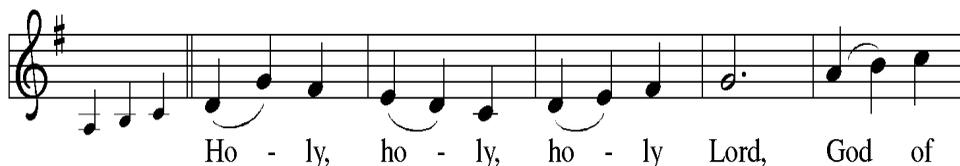
**It is right to give our thanks and praise.**

## **PREFACE**

It is indeed right, our duty and our joy, that we should at all times and in all places give thanks and praise to you, almighty and merciful God, through our Savior Jesus Christ. You call your people to cleanse their hearts and prepare with joy for the paschal feast,

that, renewed in the gift of baptism,  
we may come to the fullness of your grace.  
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 unending  
hymn:

## HOLY, HOLY, HOLY



## **THANKSGIVING AT THE TABLE**

Holy God,

our living Water and our merciful Guide,  
together with rivers and seas, wells and  
springs we bless and magnify you.

You led your people Israel through the desert,  
and provided them water from the rock.

We praise you for Christ, our Rock and our  
Water,

who joined us in our desert,  
pouring out his life for the world.

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.

Remembering, therefore,  
his life, death, and resurrection,  
we await your salvation for all this thirsty  
world.

Pour out your Spirit on this holy food  
and on all the baptized gathered for this  
feast: wash away our sin,  
that we may be revived for our journey by  
the love of Christ.

Through him all glory and honor is yours,  
Almighty Father, with the Holy Spirit,  
in your holy Church,  
both now and forever. **Amen**

## **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**

Come and receive Jesus, our strength in the wilderness.

## **COMMUNION SONG**



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.

**HYMNS** *Beneath the Cross of Jesus (ELW 338)*  
*Seed That In Earth Is Dying (ELW330)*

## **PRAYER AFTER COMMUNION**

Compassionate God, you have fed us with the bread of heaven. Sustain us in our Lenten pilgrimage: may our fasting be hunger for justice; our alms, a making of peace; and our prayer, the song of grateful hearts, through Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord.

**Amen.**

## **ANNOUNCEMENTS**

This week's flowers are sponsored by Dolores Kennedy in memory of William and Vilma Doebele, Helen Doebele and Floyd Kennedy.

## **BLESSING**

God, the giver of love,

✝ Christ, the resurrection and the life,  
and the Holy Spirit of rebirth  
bless you in this Lenten journey.

**Amen.**

**SENDING SONG**    *Jesus, Keep Me Near the Cross (ELW 335)*

## **DISMISSAL**

Go in peace. Serve in love.

**Thanks be to God.**

**POSTLUDE**    *Just a Closer Walk with Thee – arr. by Denton*

## **GOSPEL MESSAGE What? Or Why?**

What do we believe? Our Lutheran heritage is rooted in theological debate, and such conversations have always been a part of our tradition.

Disagreements about theological propositions and biblical interpretations have led to split after split among Lutheran church bodies and congregations. At the same time, our theological and biblical commitments have led us to seek the unity of the church with mergers among Lutheran denominations and with common communion agreements with our ecumenical neighbors. In our broader culture it also seems that theology often leads the way in conversations about faith. Theological principles from various religious communities are used to argue for or against laws, corporate practices, and cultural expectations.

In today's gospel story we find something different leading the way: the blind man's experience of the healing power of Jesus. This experience is at odds with the theological thought of the religious leaders. The narrative reads like a trial, one in which the primary witness is hostile to the line of questioning from the prosecution. The conversations the leaders have with the man and his parents are a mess of misunderstanding that leads to insult and accusation. They are talking about theology; he and his parents are talking about experience. No one is there to translate between the two. Why do you believe? Our understandings of God are certainly shaped by the communities of which we have been a part and theologies we have learned. Yet, God's grace is not something we logic our way through; it is something we experience. The early church debated all sorts of theological positions, but their witness was grounded in their experience of death and resurrection. *What* we believe is important, but as we step into each day as witnesses of God's love for the world, *why* we believe may be the most hope-filled message we have to share.