

Welcome to  
Bethlehem Lutheran Church

*Loving God, Serving Others*

Third Sunday in Lent

March 23, 2025



The warnings are plentiful and blunt on the third Sunday in Lent. Cut it out or get cut down! The warnings are accompanied by God's invitation to attentiveness: "Incline your ear, and come to me; listen, so that you may live." The landowner's ultimatum is forestalled by the gardener's readiness to till the ground one more year. That is good news for all of us. Thanks be to God!

## GATHERING

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

### **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.**

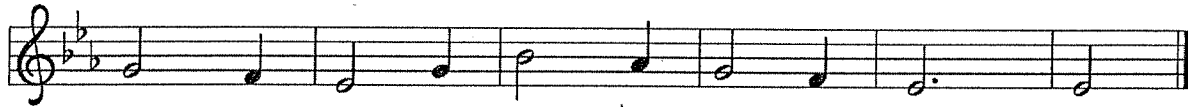
## Before the Waters Nourished Earth



1 Be - fore the wa - ters nour - ished earth or night im -  
2 This Love re - mained as time re - vealed the loss of  
3 De - spair, so deep it bears no name, or sor - rows  
4 The Love that called cre - a - tion good all good - ness



ag - ined morn - ing, a Love con - ceived the  
E - den's glo - ry and, griev - ing, holds in  
par - a - lyz - ing can - not re - voke Love's  
still is bring - ing. This Love turns death a -



u - ni - verse and rev - eled in its form - ing.  
mem - o - ry each trag - ic hu - man sto - ry.  
faith - ful claim to dwell with - in our dy - ing.  
gain to life and si - lence in - to sing - ing.

Text: Jeannette M. Lindholm, b. 1961

Music: ST. COLUMBA, Irish melody

Text © 1996 Jeannette M. Lindholm, admin. Augsburg Fortress

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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.**

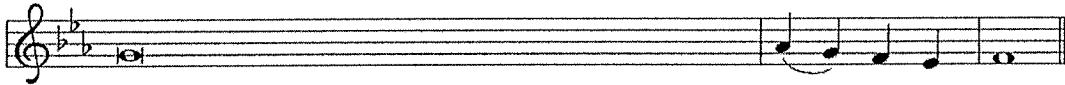
# KYRIE



In peace, let us pray to the Lord.



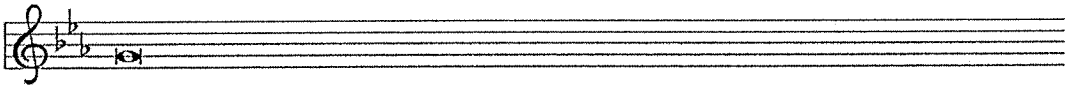
Lord, have mer - cy.



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



Lord, have mer - cy.



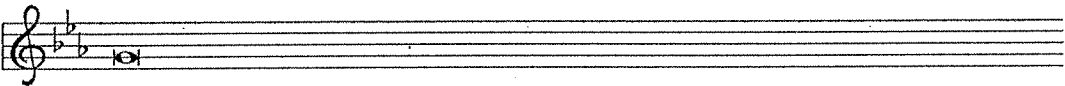
For the peace of the whole world, for the well-being of the church of God,



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 defend us, gra - cious Lord.



A - men, a - men.

## PRAYER OF THE DAY

Eternal God, your kingdom has broken into our troubled world through the life, death, and resurrection of your Son. Help us to hear your word and obey it, and bring your saving love to fruition in our lives, 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.*

### **First Reading: Isaiah 55:1-9**

<sup>1</sup> Ho, everyone who thirsts,  
come to the waters;

and you that have no money,  
come, buy and eat!

Come, buy wine and milk  
without money and without price.

<sup>2</sup> Why do you spend your money for that which is not bread,  
and your labor for that which does not satisfy?

Listen carefully to me, and eat what is good,  
and delight yourselves in rich food.

<sup>3</sup> Incline your ear, and come to me;  
listen, so that you may live.

I will make with you an everlasting covenant,  
my steadfast, sure love for David.

<sup>4</sup> See, I made him a witness to the peoples,  
a leader and commander for the peoples.

<sup>5</sup> See, you shall call nations that you do not know,  
and nations that do not know you shall run to you,  
because of the LORD your God, the Holy One of Israel,  
for he has glorified you.

<sup>6</sup> Seek the LORD while he may be found,  
call upon him while he is near;

<sup>7</sup> let the wicked forsake their way,  
and the unrighteous their thoughts;

let them return to the LORD, that he may have mercy on them,  
and to our God, for he will abundantly pardon.

<sup>8</sup> For my thoughts are not your thoughts,  
nor are your ways my ways, says the LORD.

<sup>9</sup> For as the heavens are higher than the earth,  
so are my ways higher than your ways  
and my thoughts than your thoughts.

## Psalm: Psalm 63:1-8

<sup>1</sup> O God, you are my God; eagerly I seek you;  
my soul thirsts for you, my flesh faints for you, as in a dry and weary land  
where there is no water.

<sup>2</sup> **Therefore I have gazed upon you in your holy place,  
that I might behold your power and your glory.**

<sup>3</sup> For your steadfast love is better than life itself;  
my lips shall give you praise.

<sup>4</sup> **So will I bless you as long as I live  
and lift up my hands in your name.**

<sup>5</sup> My spirit is content, as with the richest of foods,  
and my mouth praises you with joyful lips,

<sup>6</sup> **when I remember you upon my bed,  
and meditate on you in the night watches.**

<sup>7</sup> For you have been my helper,  
and under the shadow of your wings I will rejoice.

<sup>8</sup> **My whole being clings to you;  
your right hand holds me fast.**

## Second Reading: 1 Corinthians 10:1-13

<sup>1</sup> I do not want you to be unaware, brothers and sisters, that our ancestors were all under the cloud, and all passed through the sea, <sup>2</sup> and all were baptized into Moses in the cloud and in the sea, <sup>3</sup> and all ate the same spiritual food, <sup>4</sup> and all drank the same spiritual drink. For they drank from the spiritual rock that followed them, and the rock was Christ. <sup>5</sup> Nevertheless, God was not pleased with most of them, and they were struck down in the wilderness.

<sup>6</sup> Now these things occurred as examples for us, so that we might not desire evil as they did. <sup>7</sup> Do not become idolaters as some of them did; as it is written, "The people sat down to eat and drink, and they rose up to play." <sup>8</sup> We must not indulge in sexual immorality as some of them did, and twenty-three thousand fell in a single day. <sup>9</sup> We must not put Christ to the test, as some of them did, and were destroyed by serpents. <sup>10</sup> And do not complain as some of them did, and were destroyed by the destroyer. <sup>11</sup> These things happened to them to serve as an example, and they were written down to instruct us, on whom the ends of the ages have come. <sup>12</sup> So if you think you are standing, watch out that you do not fall. <sup>13</sup> No testing has overtaken you that is not common to everyone. God is faithful, and he will not let you be tested beyond your strength, but with the testing he will also provide the way out so that you may be able to endure it.

Word of God, Word of Life  
**Thanks be to God!**

## GOSPEL ACCLAMATION

Let your stead-fast love come to us, O Lord.

Save us as you prom-ised; we will trust your word.

The gospel according to Luke.  
**Glory to you, O Lord.**

### **Gospel: Luke 13:1-9**

<sup>1</sup> At that very time there were some present who told him about the Galileans whose blood Pilate had mingled with their sacrifices.<sup>2</sup> [Jesus] asked them, “Do you think that because these Galileans suffered in this way they were worse sinners than all other Galileans?”<sup>3</sup> No, I tell you; but unless you repent, you will all perish as they did.<sup>4</sup> Or those eighteen who were killed when the tower of Siloam fell on them—do you think that they were worse offenders than all the others living in Jerusalem? <sup>5</sup> No, I tell you; but unless you repent, you will all perish just as they did.”  
<sup>6</sup> Then he told this parable: “A man had a fig tree planted in his vineyard; and he came looking for fruit on it and found none.<sup>7</sup> So he said to the gardener, ‘See here! For three years I have come looking for fruit on this fig tree, and still I find none. Cut it down! Why should it be wasting the soil?’ <sup>8</sup> He replied, ‘Sir, let it alone for one more year, until I dig around it and put manure on it.<sup>9</sup> If it bears fruit next year, well and good; but if not, you can cut it down.’”

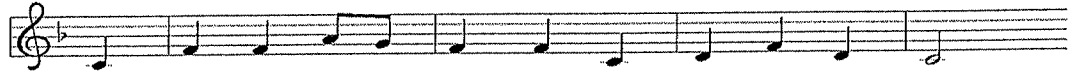
The gospel of the Lord.  
**Praise to you, O Christ.**

## MESSAGE

REV. SHARON ROGERS

# HYMN OF THE DAY ELW 508

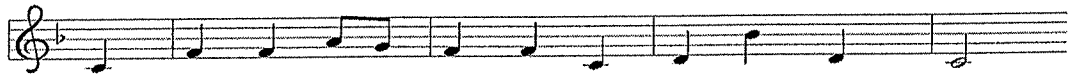
## As Rain from the Clouds



1 As rain from the clouds will your word come to earth,  
2 As grain that is scat - tered your word has been sown,  
3 As rays of the sun shall your word light the world,



as snow from the heav - ens re - fresh - ing the land.  
on rocks and on road - ways, in good earth and sand.  
a - wak - ing and warm - ing and heal - ing our land.



Then soft - en our soil that the good seed may grow  
Make fer - tile our soil that the good seed may grow  
Then shine in our hearts that the good seed may grow



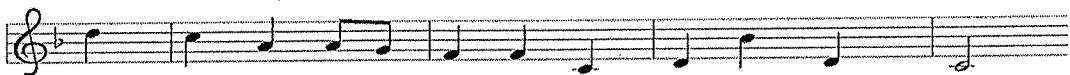
and rip - en rich fruit to re - turn to your hand.  
and rip - en rich fruit to re - turn to your hand.  
and rip - en rich fruit to re - turn to your hand.



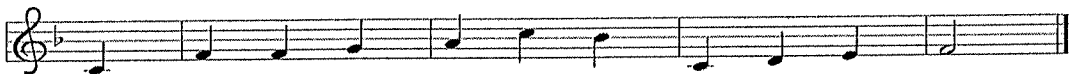
We praise you, our God, for the dew of your word;  
We praise you, our God, for the seed of your word;  
We praise you, our God, for the light of your word;



we thank you, good gar - d'ner, for your ten - der toil.  
we thank you, good gar - d'ner, for your ten - der toil.  
we thank you, good gar - d'ner, for your ten - der toil.



We bless you, best farm - er, for hun - dred - fold yield,  
We bless you, best farm - er, for hun - dred - fold yield,  
We bless you, best farm - er, for hun - dred - fold yield,



for har - vest of grace in our once - bar - ren soil.  
for har - vest of grace in our once - bar - ren soil.  
for har - vest of grace in our once - bar - ren soil.

Text: Delores Dufner, osh, b. 1939  
Music: AFTON WATER, Jonathan E. Spilman, 1812-1896  
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## APOSTLE'S CREED

With the whole church, let us confess our faith.

**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.**

## PRAYER OF INTERCESSION

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

*A brief silence.*

We pray for the church, called to be a witness to all peoples. Grant humility and wisdom to bishops, pastors, deacons, elders, councils, and congregations, that they may call upon you in making decisions. God, in your mercy,  
**receive our prayer.**

We pray for the earth, called to provide abundantly. Teach your people the goodness of your generosity, that in sharing what we have been given, all life may flourish on the planet that is our shared home. God, in your mercy,  
**receive our prayer.**

We pray for the nations, called to protect their inhabitants and collaborate in the work of justice and peace. Forge bonds of compassion and mutual care across human borders and boundaries, that all the world may have enough to live. God, in your mercy,  
**receive our prayer.**

We pray for those in need, called to receive your compassion. Comfort those whose lives have been disrupted through natural disasters and human conflict. Aid communities in coming together to mourn, heal, and rebuild. God, in your mercy,  
**receive our prayer.**

We pray for this assembly, called to welcome its neighbors to the table of your grace. Bless food pantries, community gardens and kitchens, clean water projects, and all ministries that address human hunger and thirst. God, in your mercy,  
**receive our prayer.**

We give thanks for the faithful lives of those who proclaimed your gospel in times of challenge and strife, and for all those whose lives of love and service have ended. May their witness inspire our own. 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.**

## **PEACE**

The peace of Christ be with you always.  
**And also with you.**

## **MEAL**

*God feeds us with the presence of Jesus Christ.*

## **OFFERING PRAYER**

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.**

It is indeed right, our duty and our joy, that we should at all times and in all places give thanks and praise.....we praise your name and join their unending hymn.

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.

### *Words of Institution*

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.

**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 time and place, 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.  
**Amen.**

**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;**

**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**

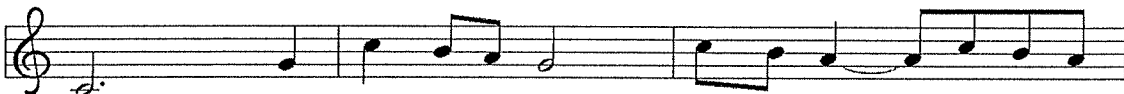
All who are hungry, come!  
 The feast of grace is spread..



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.

## COMMUNION BLESSING

### PRAYER AFTER COMMUNION

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 his mission to the world.*

### BLESSING

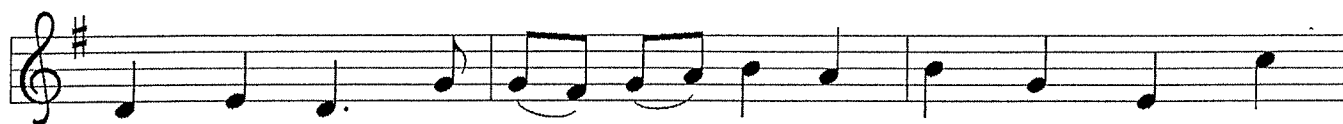
God our tender parent,  
God the crucified one,  
God the reconciling Spirit,  
✠ bless you now and forever.  
**Amen.**

**SENDING HYMN** (see page 14)

### DISMISSAL

God in peace. Care for others as God cares for you.  
**Thanks be to God!**

### Guide Me Ever, Great Redeemer



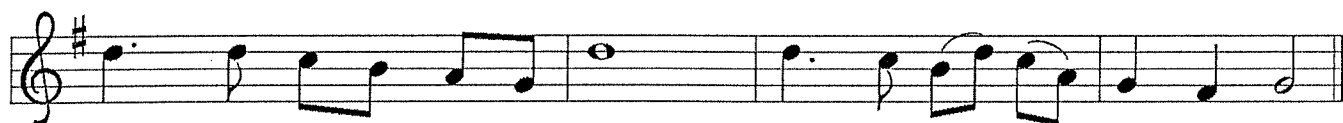
1 Guide me ev - er, great Re - deem - er, pil - grim through this  
2 O - pen now the crys - tal foun - tain where the heal - ing  
3 When I tread the verge of Jor - dan, bid my anx - ious



bar - ren land. I am weak, but you are might - y; hold me  
wa - ters flow; let the fire and cloud - y pil - lar lead me  
fears sub - side; death of death and hell's de - struc - tion, land me



with your pow'r - ful hand. Bread of heav - en, bread of heav - en,  
all my jour - ney through. Strong de - liv - 'rer, strong de - liv - 'rer,  
safe on Ca - naan's side. Songs and prais - es, songs and prais - es



feed me now and ev - er - more, feed me now and ev - er - more.  
shield me with your might - y arm, shield me with your might - y arm.  
I will raise for - ev - er - more, I will raise for - ev - er - more.

Text: William Williams, 1717-1791; tr. William Williams and Peter Williams, 1722-1796, alt.  
Music: CWM RHONDDA, John Hughes, 1873-1932

# The Week Ahead

## March 17-23

|                |   |
|----------------|---|
| Monday 3-17    | 8-1-Office Open<br>12:30-Cut-Ups  |
| Tuesday 3-18   | 3-5-Feed My Sheep Food Pantry<br>7:30-9:00—Harmonessence  |
| Wednesday 3-19 | 8-1 Office Open<br>10:30-Pantry Pick up<br>Noon-Vac Lunch Served  |
| Thursday 3-20  | 8-1-Office Open<br>8:30-Pantry Pick Up<br>9:30-11:30-Feed My Sheep Food Pantry<br>10:30-Martha's Sisters (zoom) |
| Saturday 3-22  | 9:30-Pantry Pick up<br>10:30-Pantry Pick up   |
| Sunday 3-23    | 9:30-Worship  |

**Presiding today:**  
**Rev. Sharon Rogers and Rev. Bob Hansen**  
**Michael Graddy—Musician**  
**Margie Hargrave—Reader**

- ◆ Address—1915 N First Street, DeKalb IL 60115
- ◆ Phone—815-758-3203
- ◆ Email—belcdekalb@comcast.net
- ◆ Facebook—bethlehemdekalb

## Pastor Schedule for March

2—Rev. Bob Hansen  
5—Rev. Bob Hansen, Ash Wednesday  
9—Rev. Bob Hansen  
16—Rev. Sharon Rogers  
23—Rev. Sharon Rogers  
30—Rev. Bob Hansen

If you are in need of pastoral care,  
please contact the office at 815-758-3203.

## Bethlehem's Church Council Communications

- ◆ Sunday Worship Music Coordinator is Michael Graddy.
- ◆ Thank you to our Volunteers who share their time and talent.
- ◆ Office Hours are Monday, Wednesday & Thursday 8:00am to 1:00pm.
- ◆ Office needs are served by Barb Luchsinger under the supervision of Sue Ann Brown.
- ◆ Sue Ann Brown is our Finance Administrator.
- ◆ Feed My Sheep Pantry Hours are Tuesday 3:00pm to 5:00pm & Thursday 9:30am to 11:30am.
- ◆ The Feed My Sheep Food Pantry coordinator is Karen Maciejewski under the supervision of Sue Ann Brown.
- ◆ Club 55 Senior Services Hours are Monday through Friday 9:00am to 4:30pm.
- ◆ Kate Sullivan is the Club 55 Coordinator with Sue Ann Brown as the Bethlehem liaison.
- ◆ Facility maintenance, key control or other building concerns are managed by Church Council.
  
- ◆ Church Council Members:
  - Tammie Farley
  - Dawn George
  - Bill Perian
  - Andy Velez.
  
- ◆ Questions?? Please call the Church Office at 815-758-3203 to leave a message for a Council Member.