

Welcome to
Bethlehem Lutheran Church

Loving God, Serving Others
Fourth Sunday in Lent
March 30, 2025



The psalm sets the tone this day: “Happy are they whose transgressions are forgiven, and whose sin is put away!” Happy are those who have “become the righteousness of God” in the merits of Christ Jesus. Happy are those for whom the forgiveness of God has “rolled away . . . the disgrace” of former times. Happy is the father at the return of his prodigal son. Happy are we that our sins are forgiven for Jesus’ sake. Rejoice!

GATHERING

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

CONFESSION AND FORGIVENESS

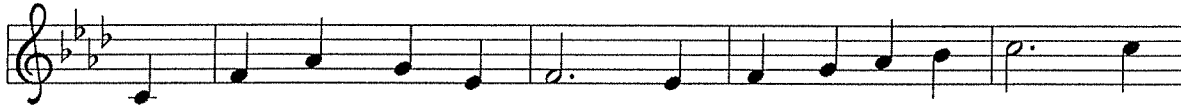
Blessed be the holy Trinity, † one God,
who forgives all our sin,
whose mercy endures forever.
Amen.

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.

Restore in Us, O God



1 Re - store in us, O God, the splen - dor of your love; re -
2 O Spir - it, wake in us the won - der of your pow'r; from
3 Bring us, O Christ, to share the full - ness of your joy; bap -
4 Three - per - soned God, ful - fill the prom - ise of your grace, that



new your im - age in our hearts, and all our sins re - move.
fruit - less fear un - furl our lives like spring - time bud and flow'r.
tize us in the ris - en life that death can - not de - stroy.
we, when all our search - ing ends, may see you face to face.

Text: Carl P. Daw Jr., b. 1944

Music: BAYLOR, Hal H. Hopson, b. 1933

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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.

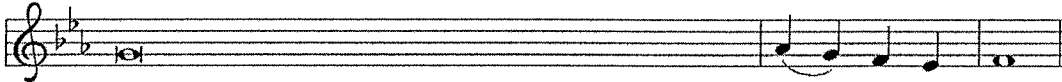
KYRIE



In peace, let us pray to the Lord.



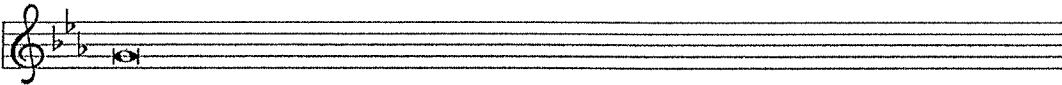
Lord, have mer - cy.



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



Lord, have mer - cy.



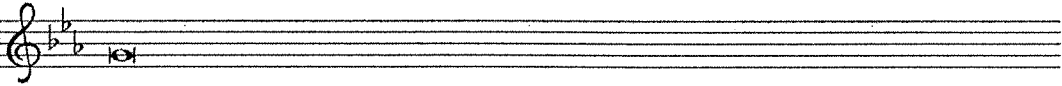
For the peace of the whole world, for the well-being of the church of God,



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

God of compassion, you welcome the wayward, and you embrace us all with your mercy. By our baptism clothe us with garments of your grace, and feed us at the table of your love, 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: Joshua 5:9-12

⁹ The LORD said to Joshua, “Today I have rolled away from you the disgrace of Egypt.” And so that place is called Gilgal to this day.

¹⁰ While the Israelites were camped in Gilgal they kept the passover in the evening on the fourteenth day of the month in the plains of Jericho. ¹¹ On the day after the passover, on that very day, they ate the produce of the land, unleavened cakes and parched grain. ¹² The manna ceased on the day they ate the produce of the land, and the Israelites no longer had manna; they ate the crops of the land of Canaan that year.

Psalm: Psalm 32

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.

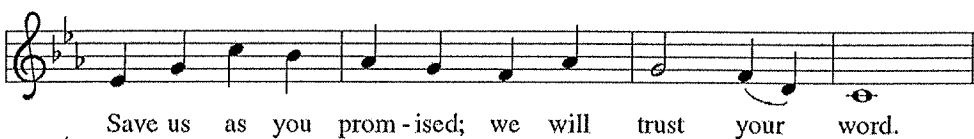
Second Reading: 2 Corinthians 5:16-21

¹⁶ From now on, therefore, we regard no one from a human point of view; even though we once knew Christ from a human point of view, we know him no longer in that way.

¹⁷ So if anyone is in Christ, there is a new creation: everything old has passed away; see, everything has become new! ¹⁸ All this is from God, who reconciled us to himself through Christ, and has given us the ministry of reconciliation; ¹⁹ that is, in Christ God was reconciling the world to himself, not counting their trespasses against them, and entrusting the message of reconciliation to us. ²⁰ So we are ambassadors for Christ, since God is making his appeal through us; we entreat you on behalf of Christ, be reconciled to God. ²¹ For our sake he made him to be sin who knew no sin, so that in him we might become the righteousness of God.

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

GOSPEL ACCLAMATION



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

Gospel: Luke 15:1-3, 11b-32

¹ Now all the tax collectors and sinners were coming near to listen to [Jesus.] ² And the Pharisees and the scribes were grumbling and saying, “This fellow welcomes sinners and eats with them.”

³ So he told them this parable: ^{11b} “There was a man who had two sons. ¹² The younger of them said to his father, ‘Father, give me the share of the property that will belong to me.’ So he divided his property between them. ¹³ A few days later the younger son gathered all he had and traveled to a distant country, and there he squandered his property in dissolute living. ¹⁴ When he had spent everything, a severe famine took place throughout that country, and he began to be in need. ¹⁵ So he went and hired himself out to one of the citizens of that country, who sent him to his fields to feed the pigs. ¹⁶ He would gladly have filled himself with the pods that the pigs were eating; and no one gave him anything. ¹⁷ But when he came to himself he said, ‘How many of my father’s hired hands have bread enough and to spare, but here I am dying of hunger! ¹⁸ I will get up and go to my father, and I will say to him, ‘Father, I have sinned against heaven and before you; ¹⁹ I am no longer worthy to be called your son; treat me like one of your hired hands.’” ²⁰ So he set off and went to his father. But while he was still far off, his father saw him and was filled with compassion; he ran and put his arms around him and kissed him. ²¹ Then the son said to him, ‘Father, I have sinned against heaven and before you; I am no longer worthy to be called your son.’ ²² But the father said to his slaves, ‘Quickly, bring out a robe—the best one—and put it on him; put a ring on his finger and sandals on his feet. ²³ And get the fatted calf and kill it, and let us eat and celebrate; ²⁴ for this son of mine was dead and is alive again; he was lost and is found!’ And they began to celebrate.

²⁵ “Now his elder son was in the field; and when he came and approached the house, he heard music and dancing. ²⁶ He called one of the slaves and asked what was going on. ²⁷ He replied, ‘Your brother has come, and your father has killed the fatted calf, because he has got him back safe and sound.’ ²⁸ Then he became angry and refused to go in. His father came out and began to plead with him. ²⁹ But he answered his father, ‘Listen! For all these years I have been working like a slave for you, and I have never disobeyed your command; yet you have never given me even a young goat so that I might celebrate with my friends. ³⁰ But when this son of yours came back, who has devoured your property with prostitutes, you killed the fatted calf for him!’ ³¹ Then the father said to him, ‘Son, you are always with me, and all that is mine is yours. ³² But we had to celebrate and rejoice, because this brother of yours was dead and has come to life; he was lost and has been found.’”

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

MESSAGE

REV. BOB HANSEN

HYMN OF THE DAY ELW 606

Our Father, We Have Wandered



1 Our Fa - ther, we have wan - dered and hid - den from your face;
2 And now at length dis - cern - ing the e - vil that we do,
3 O Lord of all the liv - ing, both ban - ished and re - stored,



in fool - ish - ness have squan - dered your leg - a - cy of grace.
be - hold us, Lord, re - turn - ing with hope and trust to you.
com - pas - sion - ate, for - giv - ing, and ev - er - car - ing Lord,



But now, in ex - ile dwell - ing, we rise with fear and shame,
In haste you come to meet us and home re - joic - ing bring,
grant now that our trans - gress - ing, our faith - less - ness may cease.



as, dis - tant but com - pel - ling, we hear you call our name.
in glad - ness there to greet us with calf and robe and ring.
Stretch out your hand in bless - ing, in par - don, and in peace.

Text: Kevin Nichols, 1929-2006

Music: HERZLICH TUT MICH VERLANGEN, Hans Leo Hassler, 1564-1612

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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.

God of faithful promise, make your church a new creation in Christ. As you reconcile us to yourself, guide us also in your way of reconciliation, that through confession and forgiveness, repentance and reparations, your church may bear witness to your love.

God, in your mercy,
receive our prayer.

God of new beginnings, restore balance to the earth. Send rain to places of drought and sunshine to places of flooding, that the produce of the land may again support life. God, in your mercy,
receive our prayer.

God of prodigal grace, unite the nations as fellow members of the human family. Give leaders the courage to put aside pride and ego, to cease squandering lives and time, and to work for the well-being of all. God, in your mercy,
receive our prayer.

God of boundless love, receive with open arms any in need of compassion. Embrace all who are far from home or estranged from loved ones, and all who live with regret. Embolden your people to offer and to seek forgiveness. God, in your mercy,
receive our prayer.

God of radical inclusion, widen human circles to welcome all who are excluded. Bless the work of disability ministries, ministries by and with neurodivergent people, and multicultural and ethnic-specific ministries; that the welcome of Jesus be extended to all. God, in your mercy,
receive our prayer.

God of resurrection life, welcome home all who have died. We thank you for their lives and entrust them into your keeping, where true reconciliation and eternal peace are found. 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.

The musical score is written on four staves in G major (one sharp) and 4/4 time. The lyrics are: 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.

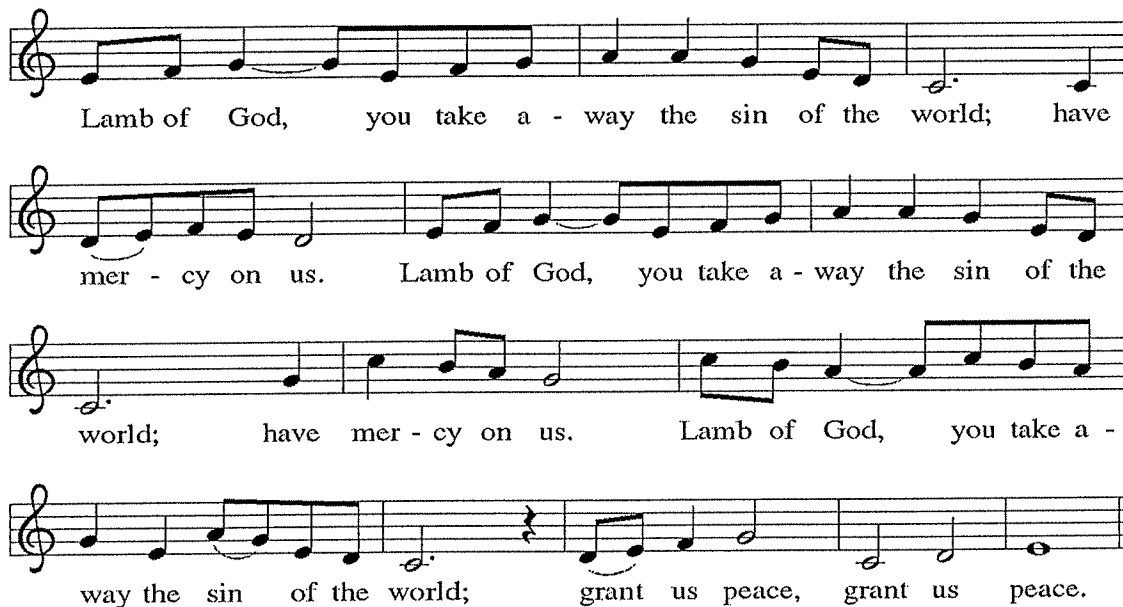
LORD'S PRAYER

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!

Come, Thou Fount of Every Blessing



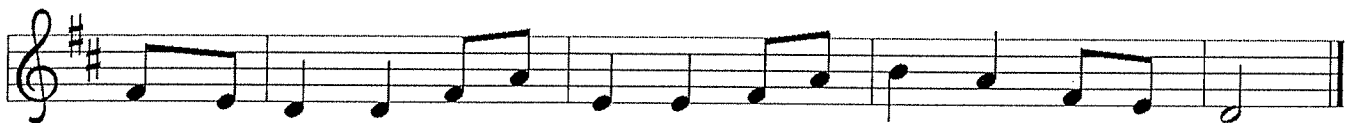
1 Come, thou Fount of ev - 'ry bless-ing, tune my heart to sing thy grace;
2 Here I raise my Eb - en - e - zer: "Hith-er by thy help I've come";
3 Oh, to grace how great a debt - or dai - ly I'm con-strained to be;



streams of mer - cy, nev - er ceas - ing, call for songs of loud - est praise.
and I hope, by thy good plea - sure, safe - ly to ar - rive at home.
let that grace now like a fet - ter bind my wan-d'ring heart to thee.



While the hope of end-less glo - ry fills my heart with joy and love,
Je - sus sought me when a strang-er, wan-d'ring from the fold of God;
Prone to wan - der, Lord, I feel it; prone to leave the God I love.



teach me ev - er to a - dore thee; may I still thy good-ness prove.
he, to res - cue me from dan - ger, in - ter - posed his pre-cious blood.
Here's my heart, oh, take and seal it; seal it for thy courts a - bove.

Text: Robert Robinson, 1735-1790, alt.

Music: NETTLETON, J. Wyeth, *Repository of Sacred Music*, Part II, 1813

The Week Ahead

March 31-April 6

Monday 3-31	8-1-Office Open 12:30-Cut-Ups
Tuesday 4-1	3-5-Feed My Sheep Food Pantry 7:30-9:00—Harmonessence
Wednesday 4-2	8-1 Office Open 10:30-Pantry Pick up Noon-Vac Lunch Served
Thursday 4-3	8-1-Office Open 8:30-Pantry Pick Up 9:30-11:30-Feed My Sheep Food Pantry 10:30-Martha's Sisters (zoom)
Saturday 4-5	9:30-Pantry Pick up 10:30-Pantry Pick up
Sunday 4-6	9:30-Worship

Presiding today:
Rev. Bob Hansen
Michael Graddy—Musician
Malena Graddy—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.