



St. John's Lutheran Church

A congregation of The Lutheran Church – Missouri Synod

Third Sunday in Lent
March 23, 2025
10:45 a.m. Worship



TO VIEW THE SERVICE WHILE IT IS GOING ON LIVE ... go to our Facebook Page <https://www.facebook.com/sjlmidland/>. Since this is a PUBLIC PAGE, you do not need to have a personal Facebook account in order to view the livestream.

The video of the service will be available for viewing on Facebook following the service so others can view it later.

NOTE: Announcements and Prayers can now be found online by clicking on the "Church" tab and then going to "Church"

A Period of Grace

Jesus used the parable of the fig tree, representing Israel's last chance to repent before God's judgment. During a period of grace, Jesus will tend to the tree in hopes that it will bear fruit. If it doesn't, the tree will be cut down. This gracious and compassionate opportunity is extended for a year, but not infinitely. The final judgment is coming one day to the entire world. True repentance is the key to bearing life-producing fruit.

"The Wonderful Cross"

Words by Isaac Watts, J.D. Walt and Chris Tomlin
Music by Lowell mason, Chris Tomlin and Jesse Reeves
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When I survey the wondrous cross
On which the Prince of glory died,
My richest gain I count but loss,
And pour contempt on all my pride.
See, from His head, His hands, His feet,
Sorrow and love flow mingled down;
Did e'er such love and sorrow meet,
Or thorns compose so rich a crown?

Chorus: O the wonderful cross! O the wonderful cross
Bids me come and die, and find that I may truly live.
O the wonderful cross! O the wonderful cross!
All who gather here by grace draw near
And bless Your Name.

Were the whole realm of nature mine,
That were an offering far too small;
Love so amazing, so divine,
Demands my soul, my life, my all. (Chorus 2x)

Invocation

P In the name of the Father and of the T Son and of the Holy Spirit.
C **Amen.**

Confession and Absolution

P The proof of God's amazing love is this: While we were sinners, Christ died for us. Because we have faith in Him, we dare to approach God with confidence, trusting that He will forgive our sin and cleanse us from every kind of wrong. Let us therefore confess with confidence.

C God of mercy, who longs to gather us in the wide embrace of His love, we confess that we have been wayward children. We have disobeyed Your commands; our ears have been deaf to Your call; our hearts have been cold to Your love. In thought, in word, and in deed we have hurt others and dishonored Your name. In Your great mercy receive us yet again as Your well-beloved children, not because we are worthy but for the sake of Him who loved us and gave Himself for us.

P If anyone is in Christ, there is a new creation: everything old has passed away; see, everything has become new! All this is from God, who reconciled us to Himself through Christ, and has given us the ministry of reconciliation. Receive the good news of the gospel: In Jesus Christ, your sins are forgiven.

C Amen.

Introit

Ps. 5:4–8; antiphon: Ps. 1:6

For the LORD knows the way of the righteous,
but the way of the wicked will perish.

**For you are not a God who delights in wickedness;
evil may not dwell with you.**

The boastful shall not stand before your eyes;
you hate all evil-doers.

**You destroy those who speak lies;
the LORD abhors the bloodthirsty and deceitful man.**

But I, through the abundance of your steadfast love, will enter your house.
I will bow down toward your holy temple in the fear of you.

**Lead me, O LORD, in your righteousness because of my enemies;
make your way straight before me.**

**Glory be to the Father and to the Son and to the Holy Spirit;
as it was in the beginning, is now, and will be forever. Amen.**

For the LORD knows the way of the righteous,
but the way of the wicked will perish.

Collect of the Day

P Let us pray.

O God, whose glory it is always to have mercy, be gracious to all who have gone astray from Your ways and bring them again with penitent hearts and steadfast faith to embrace and hold fast the unchangeable truth of Your Word; through Jesus Christ, Your Son, our Lord, who lives and reigns with You and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever.

C Amen.

Old Testament Reading

Ezekiel 33:7-20

“So you, son of man, I have made a watchman for the house of Israel. Whenever you hear a word from my mouth, you shall give them warning from me. If I say to the wicked, O wicked one, you shall surely die, and you do not speak to warn the wicked to turn from his way, that wicked person shall die in his iniquity, but his blood I will require at your hand. But if you warn the wicked to turn from his way, and he does not turn from his way, that person shall die in his iniquity, but you will have delivered your soul.

“And you, son of man, say to the house of Israel, Thus have you said: ‘Surely our transgressions and our sins are upon us, and we rot away because of them. How then can we live?’ Say to them, As I live, declares the Lord God, I have no pleasure in the death of the wicked, but that the wicked turn from his way and live; turn back, turn back from your evil ways, for why will you die, O house of Israel?

“And you, son of man, say to your people, The righteousness of the righteous shall not deliver him when he transgresses, and as for the wickedness of the wicked, he shall not fall by it when he turns from his wickedness, and the righteous shall not be able to live by his righteousness when he sins. Though I say to the righteous that he shall surely live, yet if he trusts in his righteousness and does injustice, none of his righteous deeds shall be remembered, but in his injustice that he has done he shall die. Again, though I say to the wicked, ‘You shall surely die,’ yet if he turns from his sin and does what is just and right, if the wicked restores the pledge, gives back what he has taken by robbery, and walks in the statutes of life, not doing injustice, he shall surely live; he shall not die. None of the sins that he has committed shall be remembered against him. He has done what is just and right; he shall surely live.

“Yet your people say, ‘The way of the Lord is not just,’ when it is their own way that is not just. When the righteous turns from his righteousness and does injustice, he shall die for it. And when the wicked turns from his wickedness and does what is just and right, he shall live by them. Yet you say, ‘The way of the Lord is not just.’ O house of Israel, I will judge each of you according to his ways.”

P This is the Word of the Lord.

C **Thanks be to God.**

Epistle

1 Corinthians 10:1-13

I want you to know, brothers, that our fathers were all under the cloud, and all passed through the sea, and all were baptized into Moses in the cloud and in the sea, and all ate the same spiritual food, and all drank the same spiritual drink. For they drank from the spiritual Rock that followed them, and the Rock was Christ. Nevertheless, with most of them God was not pleased, for they were overthrown in the wilderness.

Now these things took place as examples for us, that we might not desire evil as they did. Do not be idolaters as some of them were; as it is written, “The people sat down to eat and drink and rose up to play.” We must not indulge in sexual immorality as some of them did, and twenty-three thousand fell in a single day. We must not put Christ to the test, as some of them did and were destroyed by serpents, nor grumble, as some of them did and were destroyed by the Destroyer. Now these things happened to them as an example, but they were written down for our instruction, on whom the end of the ages has come. Therefore let anyone who thinks that he stands take heed lest he fall. No temptation has overtaken you that is not common to man. God is faithful, and he will not let you be tempted beyond your ability, but with the temptation he will also provide the way of escape, that you may be able to endure it.

P This is the Word of the Lord.

C **Thanks be to God.**

Holy Gospel

Luke 13:1-9

P The Holy Gospel according to St. Luke, the 13th chapter.

C **Glory to You, O Lord.**

There were some present at that very time who told [Jesus] about the Galileans whose blood Pilate had mingled with their sacrifices. And he answered them, “Do you think that these Galileans were worse sinners than all the other Galileans, because they suffered in this way? No, I tell you; but unless you repent, you will all likewise perish. Or those eighteen on whom the tower in Siloam fell and killed them: do you think that they were worse offenders than all the others who lived in Jerusalem? No, I tell you; but unless you repent, you will all likewise perish.”

And he told this parable: “A man had a fig tree planted in his vineyard, and he came seeking fruit on it and found none. And he said to the vinedresser, ‘Look, for three years now I have come seeking fruit on this fig tree, and I find none. Cut it down. Why should it use up the ground?’ And he answered him, ‘Sir, let it alone this year also, until I dig around it and put on manure. Then if it should bear fruit next year, well and good; but if not, you can cut it down.’”

P This is the Gospel of the Lord.

C **Praise to You, O Christ.**

Apostles’ Creed

**I believe in God, the Father Almighty,
maker of heaven and earth.**

And in Jesus Christ, His 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.
The third day He rose again from the dead.
He ascended into heaven
and sits at the right hand of God the Father Almighty.
From thence He will come to judge the living and the dead.**

**I believe in the Holy Spirit,
the holy Christian Church,
the communion of saints,
the forgiveness of sins,
the resurrection of the body,
and the life T everlasting. Amen.**

Children's Message

Anna Kruger

♪ “Living Hope”

Words and Music by Phil Wickham and Brian Johnson
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How great the chasm that lay between us.
How high the mountain I could not climb.
In desperation I turned to heaven
And spoke Your name into the night.
Then through the darkness Your loving kindness
Tore through the shadows of my soul.
The work is finished, the end is written.
Jesus Christ, my living hope.

Who could imagine so great a mercy?
What heart could fathom such boundless grace?
The God of ages stepped down from glory
To wear my sin and bear my shame.
The cross has spoken; I am forgiven.
The King of kings calls me His own.
Beautiful Savior, I'm Yours forever.
Jesus Christ, my living hope.

Hallelujah, praise the One who set me free!
Hallelujah, death has lost its grip on me!
You have broken every chain. There's salvation in Your name.
Jesus Christ, my living hope. *(Repeat)*

Then came the morning that sealed the promise,
Your buried body began to breathe.
Out of the silence, the Roaring Lion
Declared the grave has no claim on me.

Then came the morning that sealed the promise,
Your buried body began to breathe.
Out of the silence, the Roaring Lion
Declared the grave has no claim on me.
Jesus, Yours is the victory!

Hallelujah, praise the One who set me free!
Hallelujah, death has lost its grip on me!
You have broken every chain. There's salvation in Your name.
Jesus Christ, my living hope. (*Repeat*)

Jesus Christ, my living hope.
O God, You are my living hope.

Sermon

Offering

Prayer of the Church

The Lord's Prayer

C 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.

Benediction

P The Lord bless thee and keep thee.
The Lord make His face shine upon thee and be gracious to thee.
The Lord lift up His countenance upon thee and T give thee peace.

C Amen.

Announcements (see pg. 10)

Blessing and Dismissal

P May the God of love, who shared His love, strengthen us in our love for others. May the Son who shared His life grant us grace, that we might share our life. And may the Holy Spirit dwelling in us empower us to be only and always for others.

C Amen.

P Go in peace, serve the Lord.

C Thanks be to God.

“There’s Nothing That Our God Can’t Do”

Words and Music by Brandon Lake, Kristian Stanfill and Jonathan Smith
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worshiptogether.com songs | Be Essential Songs | Cashagamble Jet Music | Bethel Music Publishing

Just one word, You calm the storm that surrounds me.
Just one word, The darkness has to retreat.
Just one touch, I feel the presence of heaven.
Just one touch, My eyes were opened to see.
My heart can't help but believe.

There's nothing that our God can't do,
There's not a mountain that He can't move.
Oh, praise the name that makes a way!
There's nothing that our God can't do.

Just one word, You heal what's broken inside me.
Just one word, and you revive ev'ry dream.
Just one touch, I feel the power of heaven.
Just one touch, My eyes were opened to see.
My heart can't help but believe.

There's nothing that our God can't do.
There's not a mountain that He can't move.
Oh, praise the name that makes a way!
There's nothing that our God can't do.

There's nothing that our God can't do.
There's not a prison wall He can't break through.
Oh, praise the name that makes a way!
There's nothing that our God can't do.

Bridge (2x): I will believe for greater things
There's no power like the power of Jesus
Let faith arise let all agree
There's no power like the power of Jesus

I will believe for greater things
There's no power like the power of Jesus
Let faith arise let all agree
There's no power like His power.

There's nothing that our God can't do.
There's not a mountain that He can't move.
Oh, praise the name that makes a way!
There's nothing that our God can't do.

There's nothing that our God can't do.
There's not a prison wall He can't break through.
Oh, praise the name that makes a way!
There's nothing that our God can't do. Oh!

Acknowledgments

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*Pulpit flowers are given in celebration of
Lowell Tolly's 90th birthday.*

Happy
Birthday

General Announcements

1. Easter Lilies

- a. If you wish to purchase an Easter lily for Easter Sunday, April 20th, please fill out and return your order form with payment to the church office by **Friday, April 11th**.
- b. Order forms can be found outside the church office on the bulletin board. Details are provided on the order forms.
- c. If you have questions please contact Robin Steinke at (989) 859-7148.

2. Easter Egg Hunt

- a. **Saturday, April 19th at 10am**
- b. CANDY needed! Donations can be dropped off at Anna's office.

3. Vacation Bible School

- a. "Magnified!" is coming to St. John's **Monday, June 9-Thursday, June 12**.
- b. The fun begins with family meals at 5:30pm followed by the VBS program from 6:00-8:00pm.
- c. Children age 3 (must be potty trained) through grade 5 are invited to attend.
- d. Save the date and look for registration info coming soon! Interested in volunteering? Connect with Anna to sign up.

4. Men's Softball

- a. Please contact Jon Steinke if interested.
Phone: (989) 430-4817
Email: jonathansteinke@gmail.com

5. St. John's Lutheran School

- a. SJL School is currently enrolling for the 25/26 calendar year.
- b. Anyone interested should contact the School office or visit the sjlmidland.org website.

6. Lutherans for Life of Michigan

- a. Presents *The Noble Quest: Defending Life in the Trenches* **Sunday, April 27th** from **2-5pm** at St. Paul Lutheran Church, 329 N. Sorrell St., Fowler, MI.
- b. Hear and learn how we can be involved in proclaiming and defending the value of every human life.
- c. The event is FREE. Light refreshments will be served.
- d. Please RSVP (if possible by April 10) to Pastor Paul Clark at revpmclark@gmail.com – or call or text (517) 420-4826.