

THE LUTHERAN CHURCH OF ST. MARK

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FOURTH SUNDAY IN LENT SERVICE OF WORD AND SACRAMENT March 15, 2026

Baptism is sometimes called enlightenment. The gospel for this Sunday is the story of the man born blind healed by Christ. "I was blind, now I see," declares the man. In baptism God opens our eyes to see the truth of who we are: God's beloved children. As David was anointed king of Israel, in baptism God anoints our head with oil, and calls us to bear witness to the light of Christ in our daily lives.

WELCOME CHILDREN OF GOD TO THE HOUSE OF THE LORD.

Guests—please take a moment to fill out a guest card located in the pew rack and place it in the offering plate. We would like to acknowledge your time with us and extend a friendly hand of hospitality.

*Please **turn all cell phones off** or on vibrate before the worship service begins.*

**Stand as you are able, in body or spirit.*

*The responses of the people are printed in **bold**.*

GATHERING

PRELUDE

Your Grace is Enough
Folk Group

M. Maher

1. Great is your faithfulness, O God;
You wrestle with the sinner's restless heart.
You lead us by still waters into mercy
and nothing can keep us apart.
So remember Your people,
remember Your children,
remember Your promise O God.

2. Great is your love and justice, God of Jacob,
You use the weak to lead the strong.
You lead us in the song of Your salvation
and all Your people sing along.
Your grace is enough, heaven reaches out to us.
Your grace is enough, I'm covered in Your love.
Your grace is enough for me.

Chorus: Your grace is enough for me.

*We gather in the name of the Father and the † Son and the Holy Spirit. **Amen**

*GATHERING HYMN

Mercy, we abide in you

ACS 1077

Refrain — All *Fine*

Mer - cy, we a - bide in you. Stir in us, we pray.

Leader

1 In peace, may we as - sem - ble. In
2 For all who suf - fer in war, for
3 We are bro - ken, long - ing for peace, for -

Assembly

Hm Stir in us, we

peace, may we u - nite. In peace, may we be
 all who strug - gle for com - fort, for all who slum - ber in
 give - ness, flow a - mong us. May we be rec - on -
 pray. Stir in us, we pray.

Refrain

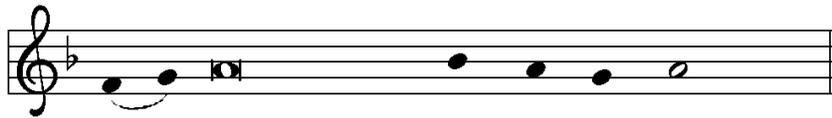
whole.
 ease.
 ciled. Move with - in each heart.
 Stir in us, we pray.

Text: Bret Hesla, b. 1957
 Music: MERCY, WE ABIDE, Bret Hesla
 Text and music © 2006 Augsburg Fortress

*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 a - bove, and for our sal - va - tion, let us pray to the Lord.



Lord, have mer - cy.



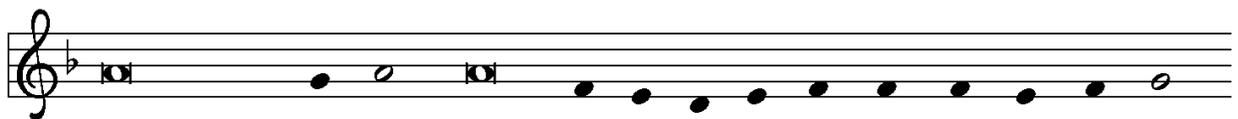
For the peace of the whole world, for the well - being of the church of God,



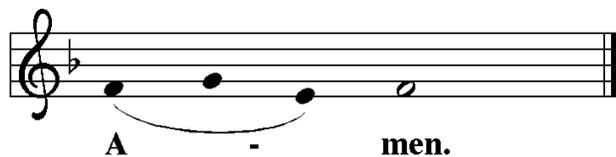
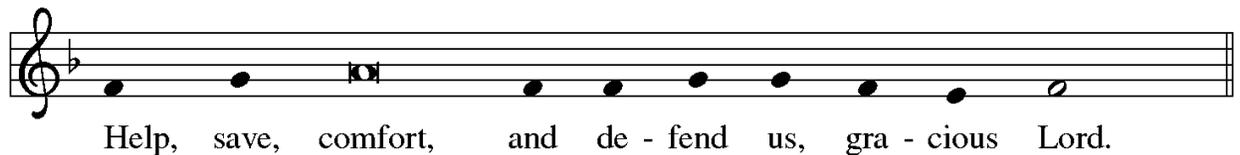
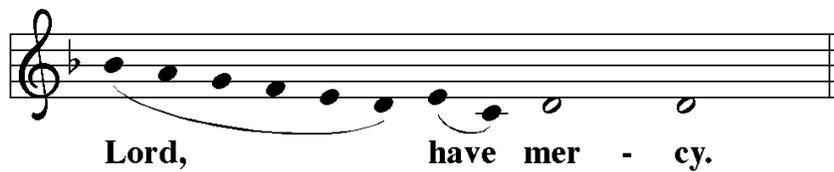
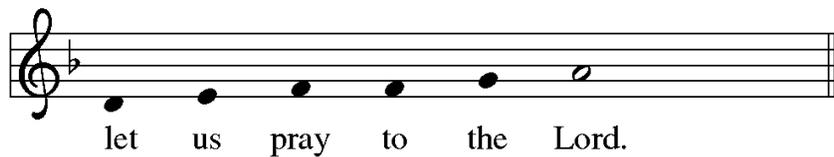
and for the unity of all, let us pray to the Lord.



Lord, have mer - cy.



For this ho - ly house, and for all who of - fer here their wor - ship and praise,



*PRAYER OF THE DAY

The Lord be with you. **And also with you.**

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.

WORD

FIRST READING

1 SAMUEL 16:1-13

Samuel anointed David even though he was the eighth-oldest son of Jesse and did not match his brothers in height or other physical characteristics. With the anointing came endowment with the Spirit of the Lord, designating David as the Lord's chosen successor to Saul.

A reading from 1 Samuel:

¹ 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." ² 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.'" ³ 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." ⁴ 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?" ⁵ He said, "Peaceably. I have come to sacrifice to the Lord; sanctify yourselves and come with me to the sacrifice." And he

me, the very one.”¹⁰ They said, “How did your eyes get opened?”¹¹ “A man named Jesus made a paste and rubbed it on my eyes and told me, ‘Go to Siloam and wash.’ I did what he said. When I washed, I saw.”¹² “So where is he?” “I don’t know.”

¹³⁻¹⁵ They marched the man to the Pharisees. This day when Jesus made the paste and healed his blindness was the Sabbath. The Pharisees grilled him again on how he had come to see. He said, “He put a clay paste on my eyes, and I washed, and now I see.”¹⁶ Some of the Pharisees said, “Obviously, this man can’t be from God. He doesn’t keep the Sabbath.” Others countered, “How can a bad man do miraculous, God-revealing things like this?” There was a split in their ranks.¹⁷ They came back at the blind man, “You’re the expert. He opened *your* eyes. What do you say about him?” He said, “He is a prophet.”

¹⁸⁻¹⁹ The Jews didn’t believe it, didn’t believe the man was blind to begin with. So they called the parents of the man now bright-eyed with sight. They asked them, “Is this your son, the one you say was born blind? So how is it that he now sees?”²⁰⁻²³ His parents said, “We know he is our son, and we know he was born blind. But we don’t know how he came to see—haven’t a clue about who opened his eyes. Why don’t you ask him? He’s a grown man and can speak for himself.” (His parents were talking like this because they were intimidated by the Jewish leaders, who had already decided that anyone who took a stand that this was the Messiah would be kicked out of the meeting place. That’s why his parents said, “Ask him. He’s a grown man.”)²⁴ They called the man back a second time—the man who had been blind—and told him, “Give credit to God. We know this man is an impostor.”²⁵ He replied, “I know nothing about that one way or the other. But I know one thing for sure: I was blind . . . I now see.”²⁶ They said, “What did he do to you? How did he open your eyes?”²⁷ “I’ve told you over and over and you haven’t listened. Why do you want to hear it again? Are you so eager to become his disciples?”⁸⁻²⁹ With that they jumped all over him. “*You* might be a disciple of that man, but we’re disciples of Moses. We know for sure that God spoke to Moses, but we have no idea where this man even comes from.”³⁰⁻³³ The man replied, “This is amazing! You claim to know nothing about him, but the fact is, he opened my eyes! It’s well known that God isn’t at the beck and call of sinners, but listens carefully to anyone who lives in reverence and does his will. That someone opened the eyes of a man born blind has never been heard of—ever. If this man didn’t come from God, he wouldn’t be able to do anything.”³⁴ They said, “You’re nothing but dirt! How dare you take that tone with us!” Then they threw him out in the street.³⁵ Jesus heard that they had thrown him out, and went and found him. He asked him, “Do you believe in the Son of Man?”³⁶ The man said, “Point him out to me, sir, so that I can believe in him.”³⁷ Jesus said, “You’re looking right at him. Don’t you recognize my voice?”³⁸ “Master, I believe,” the man said, and worshiped him.³⁹ Jesus then said, “I came into the world to bring everything into the clear light of day, making all the distinctions clear, so that those who have never seen will see, and those who have made a

great pretense of seeing will be exposed as blind.”⁴⁰ Some Pharisees overheard him and said, “Does that mean you’re calling us blind?”

⁴¹ Jesus said, “If you were really blind, you would be blameless, but since you claim to see everything so well, you’re accountable for every fault and failure.”

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

SERMON

*HYMN OF THE DAY *Amazing grace (My chains are gone)* C. Tomlin,
J. Newton, L. Giglio

Amazing grace how sweet the sound
That saved a wretch like me
I once was lost, but now I’m found
Was blind, but now I see

Refrain

My chains are gone, I’ve been set free
My God, my Savior has ransomed me
And like a flood His mercy reigns
Unending love
Amazing grace

'Twas grace that taught my heart to fear
And grace my fears relieved
How precious did that grace appear
The hour I first believed

Refrain

The Lord has promised good to me
His word my hope secures
He will my shield and portion be
As long as life endures

Refrain X2

*APOSTLES' CREED

Living together in trust and hope we confess what we believe:

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 THE PEOPLE

*The assisting minister prays the petition. The congregation responds to the petitions that end "Lord in your mercy with: "**hear our prayer.**" and those that end "O, God we give you thanks" with: "**Thanks be to God**"
The prayers conclude with the pastoral petition followed by a congregational "**Amen.**"*

Lord, in your mercy, **hear our prayer.**

O, God we give you thanks. **Thanks be to God.**

Into your hands... Jesus Christ our Lord. **Amen**

*THE PEACE

The Peace of the Lord be with you always. **And also with you.**

MEAL

OFFERING ANTHEM

I Will Follow C. Tomlin, J. Ingram, R. Morgan
Folk Group

Where You go, I'll go; Where You stay I'll stay;
When You move, I'll move,
I will follow.

1. All Your ways are good, all Your ways are sure; I will trust in You alone.
Higher than my sight, high above my life; I will trust in You alone.
Where You go, I'll go; Where You stay, I'll stay; When You move, I'll move.
I will follow You.
Whom You love, I'll love, How You serve, I'll serve; If this life I lose,
I will follow You.

2. Light into the world, Light into my life, I will live for You along,
You're the one I seek, knowing I will find, all I need in You alone.

In You, there's life everlasting. In You. There's freedom for my soul.
In You there's joy, unending joy; and I will follow you.

*CONFESSION

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

Let us confess our sin before God, who removes our guilt and blots out all offenses.

Sit or kneel.

Silence is kept for reflection.

Gracious God,

have mercy on us according to your steadfast love.

For seeking worldly delights that deceive us and dishonor you:

Gracious God,

have mercy on us according to your steadfast love.

For desiring self-reliance instead of hungering for your word:

Gracious God,

have mercy on us according to your steadfast love.

For failing to recognize your coming reign,

and for hindering the work of the Spirit: Gracious God,

have mercy on us according to your steadfast love.

For drawing from the well of self-serving ambition,

and for disdaining the living water Christ offers: Gracious God,

have mercy on us according to your steadfast love.

For disregarding voices from the margin,

and for distrusting signs of your healing and hope in the world:

Gracious God,

have mercy on us according to your steadfast love.

For dwelling in tombs of self-pity and discontent,

and for disregarding Christ's call to come forth to life:

Gracious God,

have mercy on us according to your steadfast love.

God's steadfast love, grace, and forgiveness abound. Through faith, the free gift of God, you have been clothed in the righteousness of Christ. In the name of † Jesus Christ, your sins are forgiven. The Spirit of the One who raised Christ from the dead dwells in you, pours God's love into your hearts, and gives you life and peace. **Amen.**

*THE OFFERTORY PRAYER

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.

*PREFACE DIALOGUE

The Lord be with you. **And also with you.**

Lift up your hearts. **We lift them to the Lord.**

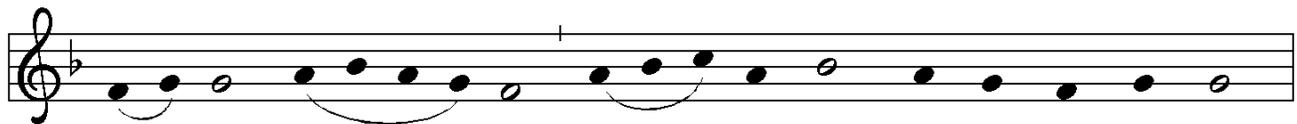
Let us give thanks to the Lord our God.

It is right to give our thanks and praise.

*PROPER PREFACE

It is indeed ... unending hymn:

SANCTUS



Ho - ly, ho - ly, ho - ly Lord, God of pow'r and might,



heav - en and earth are full of your glo - ry.



Ho - san - na in the high - est.



Bless - ed is he who comes in the name of the Lord.

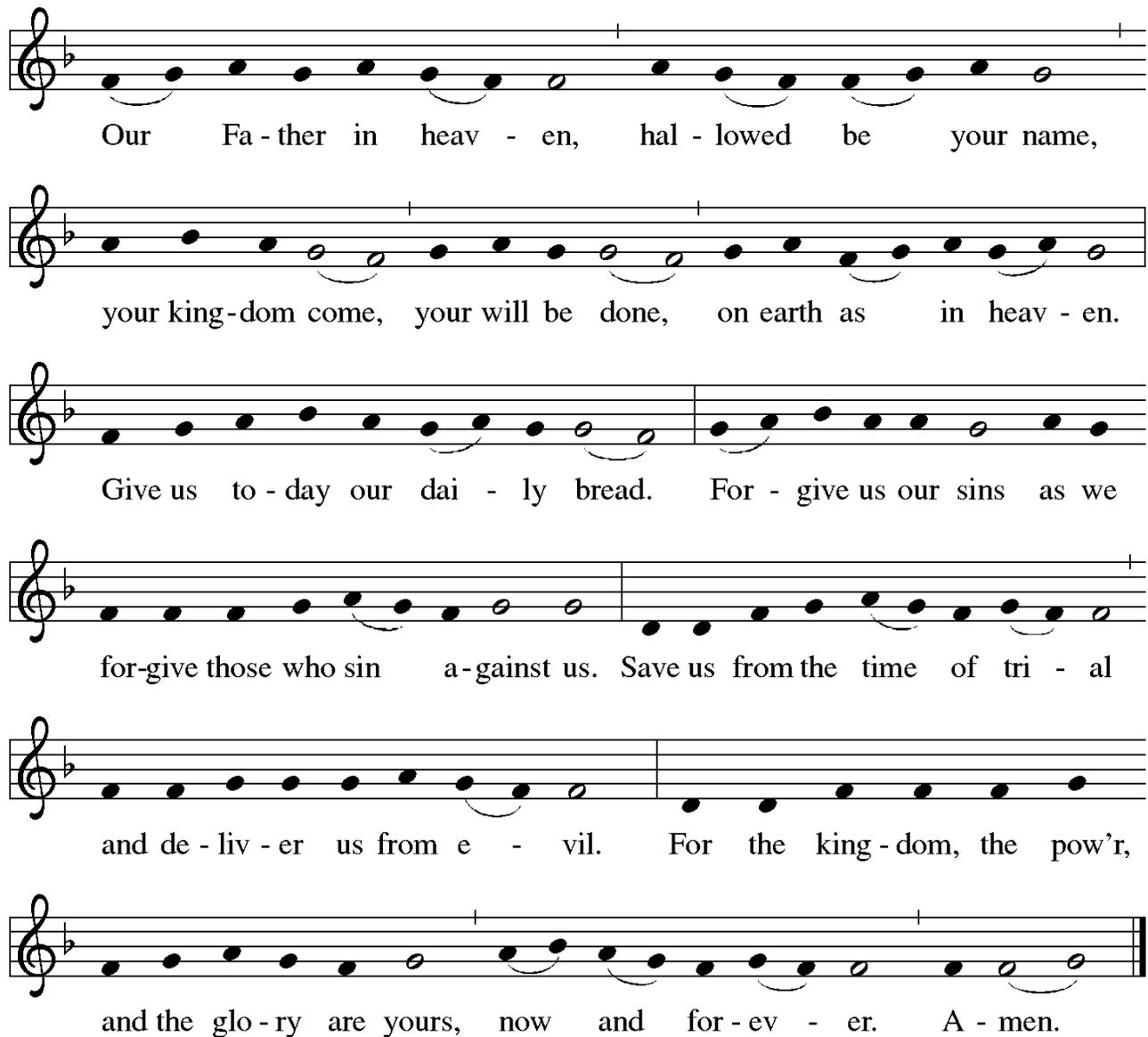


Ho - san - na in the high - est.

*EUCHARISTIC PRAYER

*THE LORD'S PRAYER

With boldness and confidence, we pray as Christ taught us:



Our Fa - ther in heav - en, hal - lowed be your name,
your king - dom come, your will be done, on earth as in heav - en.
Give us to - day our dai - ly bread. For - give us our sins as we
for - give those who sin a - gainst us. Save us from the time of tri - al
and de - liv - er us from e - vil. For the king - dom, the pow'r,
and the glo - ry are yours, now and for - ev - er. A - men.

*COMMUNION INVITATION

Come to the table.

Feast on God's goodness and mercy.

ADMINISTRATION OF THE SACRAMENT

*All are welcome to partake of the Holy Sacrament. Inform the pastor if you need a **gluten-free host**. Grape juice is available in the center rings of the wine tray. Children or adults who do not or choose not to partake of the sacrament today may come forward and receive a blessing. Please indicate you would like a blessing by crossing your arms over your chest in the form of an X*

COMMUNION HYMNS

Lamb of God

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. A - men.

Shepherd me, O God

Choir, Folk Group
(Congregation sings refrain)

ELW 780

Refrain
All

Shep-herd me, O God, be - yond my wants, be - yond my fears, from death in - to life. life.

to stanzas 1, 2, 3, 5 | to stanza 4

Final refrain

All

Shep-herd me, O God, be - yond my wants, be -
yond my fears, from death in - to life.

The image shows two staves of musical notation in G major (one sharp) and 4/4 time. The first staff contains the melody for the first line of the refrain, and the second staff contains the melody for the second line. The lyrics are printed below the notes.

Text: Marty Haugen, b. 1950, based on Psalm 23

Music: SHEPHERD ME, Marty Haugen

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PRAYER IN THE ABSENCE OF COMMUNION

Those not receiving communion are invited to pray the following while communion is being distributed:

Lord Jesus Christ, you are the bread of life and the cup of salvation. I believe that you are truly present in the sacrament of Holy Communion. I am baptized into your death and resurrection. I seek you daily and worship and adore you. When I cannot receive you in the eucharistic bread and wine, I pray that you continue to come into my heart and soul, as you always have, through Confession and Forgiveness, through the proclamation of your holy Word, and through the prayers of your people; that I may remain united to you by your all-powerful and ever-present Holy Spirit. Let me receive you and be nourished by your abundant grace. Be for me the manna in my wilderness, the bread of angels for my very human journey, a foretaste of the heavenly banquet, and solace in the hour of my death. I pray this, trusting that you are my life, my peace, and my everlasting joy. Amen.

*SACRAMENTAL BLESSING

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

*POST COMMUNION PRAYER

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

ANNOUNCEMENTS

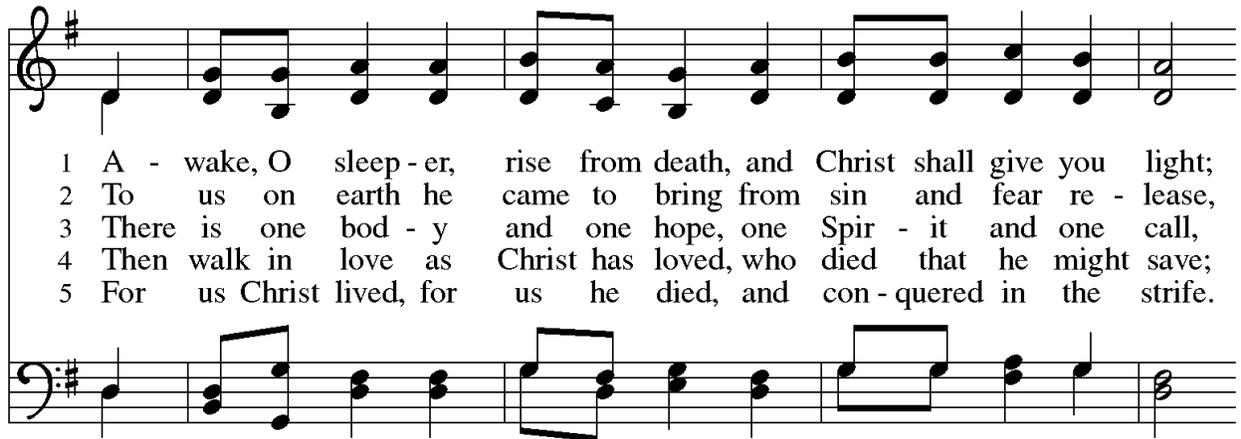
***BENEDICTION**

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.**

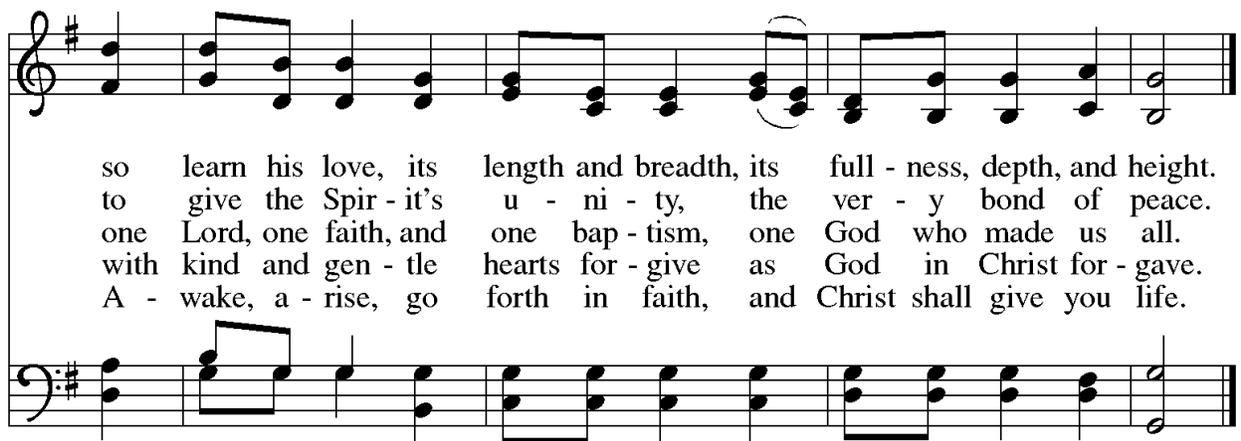
***SENDING HYMN**

Awake, O sleeper, rise from death

ELW 452



1 A - wake, O sleep - er, rise from death, and Christ shall give you light;
2 To us on earth he came to bring from sin and fear re - lease,
3 There is one bod - y and one hope, one Spir - it and one call,
4 Then walk in love as Christ has loved, who died that he might save;
5 For us Christ lived, for us he died, and con - quered in the strife.



so learn his love, its length and breadth, its full - ness, depth, and height.
to give the Spir - it's u - ni - ty, the ver - y bond of peace.
one Lord, one faith, and one bap - tism, one God who made us all.
with kind and gen - tle hearts for - give as God in Christ for - gave.
A - wake, a - rise, go forth in faith, and Christ shall give you life.

Text: F. Bland Tucker, 1895–1984
Music: AZMON, Carl G. Gläser, 1784–1829
Text © 1980 Augsburg Publishing House, admin. Augsburg Fortress.

***DISMISSAL**

Go in peace. Believe the good news.

Thanks be to God.

POSTLUDE

Thrive
Folk Group

M. West, M. Hall

ANNOUNCEMENTS

- **Please join us for Bible Study this evening at 6:00pm**
- **Lenten Weekday Prayer Offices:** Please join us for Matins via Zoom Tuesdays at 9:00am. Join us Thursdays in Lent for Soup and Bread at 6:15pm, followed by Matins (in-person & Zoom) at 7:00pm. Please sign up to bring soup or bread on the sign-up sheet on the narthex bulletin board. **We still need people to sign up for March 19 and March 26.** Thank you.
- **PLEASE consider donating to the "Snow Heart" Project to help offset the cost of this winter's snow removal.** Choose a doily heart from the window in the lounge. Write your envelope # or last name on the heart. Place your heart and donation in the envelope provided. Drop the envelope in the collection plate or place it in the financial secretary's drawer. *Thank you from the bottom of our HEARTS.* ♥♥
- **The deadline to order Easter flowers is Sunday, March 22.**
- **Concert at St. Mark next Sunday at 5:00pm!** (Postponed from last month) **Tenuto**, Hartford's own one-on-a-part a cappella vocal ensemble performs a full-length program at St. Mark. We invite everyone to come out and soak in an evening of close harmony, good ears, and beautiful singing. Not to be missed!
- **The deadline for the April/May Messenger newsletter is Friday, March 20.**
- **Easter Egg Hunt April 2nd:** Following last year's enthusiastic response to the Easter Egg Hunt, St. Mark will once again hold it for the VRABE ESL children and their families on April 2nd after the classes are done for the day. **We are asking for donations of small, wrapped Easter candy that can fit within plastic Easter Eggs. Please leave the candy in the box labelled 'Easter Egg Hunt'.** For more information, please contact Deb Gresens or Jan Frick.
- **Please join us for a special Congregation Meeting on Sunday, April 12, following worship, to vote on changes to the church constitution.**

THIS WEEK'S CALENDAR:

Sunday, March 15	9:00am	Service of Word and Sacrament followed by Coffee Hour sponsored by Folk Group Friends
Tuesday, March 17	9:00am	Matins via Zoom
Thursday, March 19	6:15pm	Soup & Bread
	7:00pm	Lenten Vespers
	7:30pm	Choir Rehearsal
Sunday, March 22	9:00am	Service of Word and Sacrament Followed by Coffee Hour Sponsored by Godfellas
	5:00pm	Tenuto Concert

Your Grace is Enough

Matt Maher CCLI Song # 4477026

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Amazing Grace (My Chains are Gone)

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I Will Follow

Chris Tomlin | Jason Ingram | Reuben Morgan CCLI Song # 5806878

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Thrive

Mark Hall | Matthew West CCLI Song # 7006228

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