Sunday, March 1, 2026
Second Sunday in Lent
SUNDAYS AND SEASONS 2026 – ELW SETTING # 10.

INTRODUCTION TO THE DAY

During Lent we journey with all those around the world who will be baptized at the Easter Vigil. In today's gospel Jesus tells Nicodemus that he must be born of water and Spirit. At the font we are a given a new birth as children of God. As God made a covenant with Abraham, in baptism God promises to raise us up with Christ to new life. From worship we are sent forth to proclaim God's love for all the world.

PRELUDE

WELCOME AND ANNOUNCEMENTS

RINGING OF THE CHIMES

GATHERING
Please rise as you are able in body or spirit.

CONFESSION AND FORGIVENESS
All may make the sign of the cross, the sign that is marked at baptism, as the presiding minister begins.

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.

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.

GATHERING SONG: ELW #597 "My Hope is Built on Nothing Less"

APOSTOLIC 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.

PRAYER OF THE DAY

O God, our leader and guide, in the waters of baptism you bring us to new birth to live as your children. Strengthen our faith in your promises, that by your Spirit we may lift up your life to all the world through your Son, Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever.
Amen.

Please be seated while the children come forward.

Children's Time

THE WORD – READINGS

FIRST READING: Genesis 12:1-4a
God's call of Abram and Sarai has a clear purpose—that through them all the families of the earth would gain a blessing. As they set out on their journey, they are accompanied by promises of land, nation, and a great reputation.
1 The LORD said to Abram, "Go from your country and your kindred and your father's house to the land
that I will show you. 2 I will make of you a great nation, and I will bless you and make your name great,
so that you will be a blessing. 3 I will bless those who bless you, and the one who curses you I will curse,
and in you all the families of the earth shall be blessed."
4a So Abram went, as the LORD had told him, and Lot went with him.

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

PSALM: Psalm 121 ***(Read Responsively)***
I lift up my eyes to the hills; my help comes from the LORD. (Ps. 121:1, 2)

1 I lift up my eyes to the hills;
from where is my help to come?
2 **My help comes from the LORD,**
the maker of heaven and earth.

[3] The LORD will not let your foot be moved
nor will the one who watches over you fall asleep.
[4] **Behold, the keeper of Israel**
will neither slumber nor sleep;
[5] the LORD watches over you;
the LORD is your shade at your right hand;
[6] **the sun will not strike you by day,**
nor the moon by night.
[7] The LORD will preserve you from all evil
and will keep your life.
[8] **The LORD will watch over your going out and your coming in,**
from this time forth forevermore.

Special Music: "The Sweetest Name of All" Chancel Choir.

SECOND READING: Romans 4:1-5, 13-17
In the person and example of Abraham we discover that a right relationship with God does not involve earning a reward from God but entails trusting God's promises. Abraham is the forebear and model for both Jews and Gentiles, because we too trust that ours is a God who gives life to the dead.

[1] What then are we to say was gained by Abraham, our ancestor according to the flesh? [2] For if Abraham was justified by works, he has something to boast about, but not before God. [3] For what does the scripture say? "Abraham believed God, and it was reckoned to him as righteousness." [4] Now to one who works, wages are not reckoned as a gift but as something due. [5] But to one who does not work but trusts him who justifies the ungodly, such faith is reckoned as righteousness.

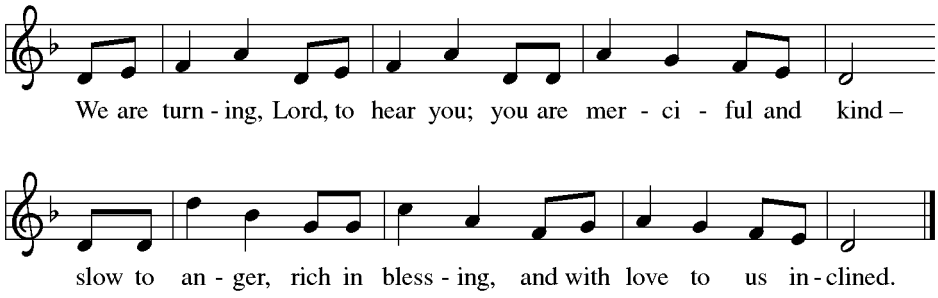
[13] For the promise that he would inherit the world did not come to Abraham or to his descendants through the law but through the righteousness of faith. [14] For if it is the adherents of the law who are to be the heirs, faith is null and the promise is void. [15] For the law brings wrath, but where there is no law, neither is there transgression.

[16] For this reason the promise depends on faith, in order that it may rest on grace, so that it may be guaranteed to all his descendants, not only to the adherents of the law but also to those who share the faith of Abraham (who is the father of all of us, [17] as it is written, "I have made you the father of many nations"), in the presence of the God in whom he believed, who gives life to the dead and calls into existence the things that do not exist.

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

Please rise as you are able in body or spirit.

Gospel Acclamation for Lent – ELW Setting #10 – S205b



GOSPEL: John 3:1-17
The Gospel according to Matthew, the 3rd Chapter, beginning at the 3rd verse. **Glory to You, O Lord.**

A curious Pharisee visits Jesus by night to learn from the teacher his friends reject. Jesus speaks to him about life in the Spirit and the kingdom of God.

[1] Now there was a Pharisee named Nicodemus, a leader of the Jews. [2] He came to Jesus by night and said
to him, "Rabbi, we know that you are a teacher who has come from God, for no one can do these signs
that you do unless God is with that person." [3] Jesus answered him, "Very truly, I tell you, no one can see
the kingdom of God without being born from above." [4] Nicodemus said to him, "How can anyone be born
after having grown old? Can one enter a second time into the mother's womb and be born?" [5] Jesus
answered, "Very truly, I tell you, no one can enter the kingdom of God without being born of water and
Spirit. [6] What is born of the flesh is flesh, and what is born of the Spirit is spirit. [7] Do not be astonished
that I said to you, 'You must be born from above.' [8] The wind blows where it chooses, and you hear the
sound of it, but you do not know where it comes from or where it goes. So it is with everyone who is born
of the Spirit." [9] Nicodemus said to him, "How can these things be?" [10] Jesus answered him, "Are you the
teacher of Israel, and yet you do not understand these things?
[11] "Very truly, I tell you, we speak of what we know and testify to what we have seen, yet you do not
receive our testimony. [12] If I have told you about earthly things and you do not believe, how can you
believe if I tell you about heavenly things? [13] No one has ascended into heaven except the one who
descended from heaven, the Son of Man. [14] And just as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, so
must the Son of Man be lifted up, [15] that whoever believes in him may have eternal life.
[16] "For God so loved the world that he gave his only Son, so that everyone who believes in him may
not perish but may have eternal life.
[17] "Indeed, God did not send the Son into the world to condemn the world but in order that the world
might be saved through him."

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

Please be seated.

SERMON **Pastor Steven Kuhl**

Please rise as you are able in body or spirit.

HYMN OF THE DAY: ELW #323 "God Loved the World"

THE APOSTLES' 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

Pastor: Reconciled by God's mercy and sustained by God's presence, let us pray for the world and its needs.

A brief silence.

Faithful One, you renew us by grace. As you have inspired faith through the work of church artists and hymnwriters throughout the ages (*like George Herbert whom the church remembers today*), give your church the means to praise your beauty today. Hear us, O God.
Your mercy is great.

Living One, you delight in this world. The sun and moon, the wind and the water declare your goodness. Preserve this earth, and protect conservationists, scientists, and all who labor in service to creation. Hear us, O God.
Your mercy is great.

Ruling One, you bless us to be a blessing. Open the hearts of all leaders to seek the flourishing of every person and lend your help to all who wait for justice, deliverance, and peace. Hear us, O God.
Your mercy is great.

Compassionate One, you send your Son to save. Declare your word of acceptance to any who feel condemned and lift up any brought low by hatred and exclusion. Tend to all who are struggling with illness or loss, *especially those we name aloud or in our hearts. (A brief silence)*. Hear us, O God.
Your mercy is great.

Guiding One, you watch over our going out and coming in. Bless newcomers and new members in this assembly (*especially*) and accompany those who have recently left this community to journey elsewhere (*especially*). Hear us, O God.
Your mercy is great.

Eternal One, you neither slumber nor sleep. Be our keeper in life and in death. Thank you for our beloved who have died, and for your promise which saves this whole world by your love. Hear us, O God.
Your mercy is great.

Pastor: Receive our prayers, O God, through Jesus Christ, our strength and salvation. **Amen.**

SHARING OF THE PEACE

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

The people may greet one another with a sign of Christ's peace and may say, "Peace be with you" or similar words. The assembly is seated.

OFFERING – Collection of our offerings.

Background music will be played during this time. (ELW # 685 "Take My Life, That I May Be")

Please rise as you are able in body or spirit.

OFFERING PRAYER
Let us pray:

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.

THE MEAL

GREAT THANKSGIVING

The Lord be with you.
And also with you.

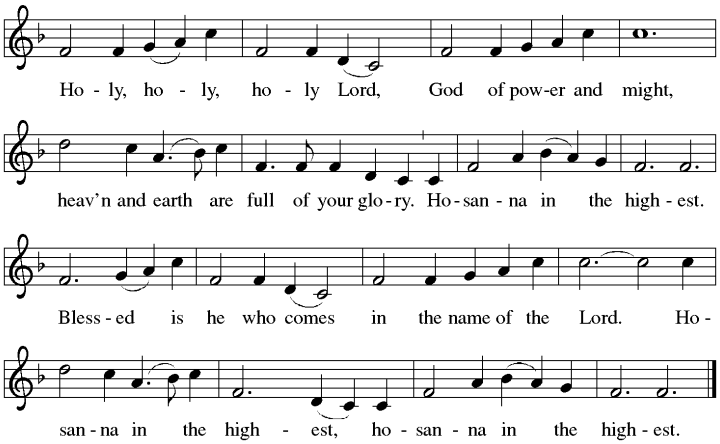
Lift up your hearts.
We lift them to the Lord.

Let us give thanks to the Lord our God.
It is right to give our thanks and praise.

PROPER PREFACE for LENT

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:

Sanctus: Holy, Holy, Holy – ELW Setting #10 – S207



THE WORD'S OF INSTITUTION

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.

THE LORD'S PRAYER

Let us pray as Jesus taught us:

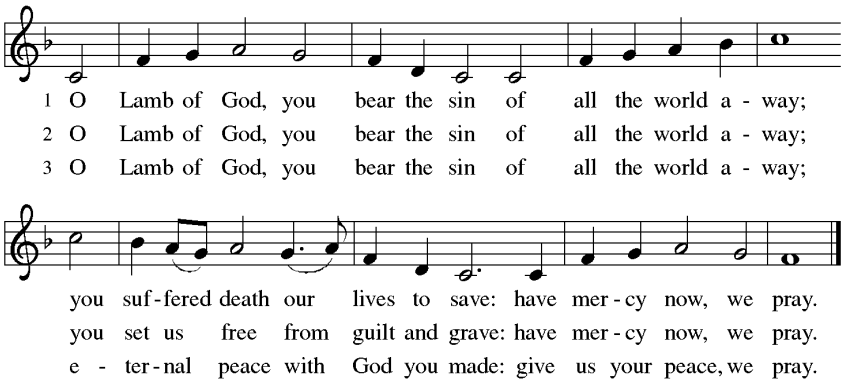
Our Father, who art in heaven,
hallowed be thy name,
thy kingdom come,
thy will be done,
on earth as it is in heaven.
Give us this day our daily bread;
and forgive us our trespasses,
as we forgive those
who trespass against us;
and lead us not into temptation,
but deliver us from evil.
For thine is the kingdom,
and the power, and the glory,
forever and ever. Amen.

INVITATION TO COMMUNION

Come to the table. Feast on God's goodness and mercy. Come.

Please be seated and wait to come forward for Holy Communion after the singing of The Lamb of God song.

Lamb of God – ELW Setting #10 – S208



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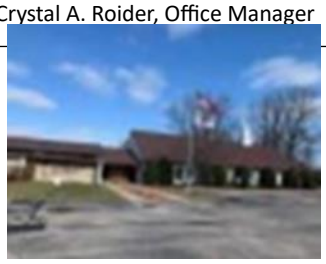

Hymn During Communion: ELW #581 "You Are Mine"

BLESSING AFTER COMMUNION

After all have returned to their places, the assembly stands. The presiding minister may say a table blessing; the assembly responds **Amen.**

PRAYER AFTER COMMUNION

Let us pray, together.

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 BLESSING

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.

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Sending Song: ELW #334 "Tree of Life and Awesome Mystery" Verses 1, 2, 3 & Lent 2

DISMISSAL

Go in peace. Believe the good news.
Thanks be to God.

Today's Lay Leaders

Lector: Jeanette Nowakowski

Ushers: Sue Clark and Judy Goodwin

Communion Assistant: Jeanette Nowakowski

Altar Guild: Deanna Posig

Music & Worship Coordinator: Barb Regent