

BETHLEHEM LUTHERAN CHURCH

Sunday, March 8, 2026

3rd Sunday in Lent

Pastor Lori Bonkoski

Music: Glenda McGaffee

Lay Reader: Colton Bass



WELCOME/ANNOUNCEMENTS

SILENT PRAYER

***Please stand as you are able**

***GATHERING HYMN ACS #924 (Sung to tune ELW #712) “As the Winter Days Grow Longer”**

1. As the winter days grow longer, drawing short the hours of night; as our eager expectation waits for Easter's dawning light— yearning people, here we gather, turning watchful eyes to you: God who blesses earth with springtime, shine within our world anew!

2. As the vines burst into blossom, fragrant in the morning air, lifting spirits with their sweetness, luring hearts to thankful prayer—Lenten people, here we gather, seeking lives refreshed from sin. God who blesses earth with springtime, bloom within our hearts again!

3. As we journey through this season, pilgrims through a thirsty land, quench us with your living presence; guide us with your loving hand. Wand'ring people, here we gather, called to rest along our way. God who blesses earth with springtime, grant us sabbath joy this day!

***GREETING:**

P: The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, the love of God, and the communion of the Holy Spirit be with you all.

C: And also with you.

***DIALOGUE**

P: Great is the Lord and greatly to be praised;

C: God's greatness is unsearchable.

P: O Lord, you are just in all your ways, faithful in all your works.

C: You are near to all who call upon you, to all who call upon you in truth.

P: Great is the Lord and greatly to be praised;

C: God's greatness is unsearchable.

***SCRIPTURE SONG-#513 “Listen, God Is Calling**

P: Listen,

C: listen, God is calling, through the Word inviting, offering forgiveness, comfort and joy.

P: Listen,

C: listen, God is calling, through the Word inviting, offering forgiveness, comfort and joy.

P: Jesus gave his mandate:

C: share the good news

P: that he came to save us

C: and set us free.

P: Listen,

C: listen, God is calling, through the Word inviting, offering forgiveness, comfort and joy.

P: Listen,

C: listen, God is calling, through the Word inviting, offering forgiveness, comfort and joy.

P: Let none be forgotten

C: throughout the world.

P: In the triune name of God

C: go and baptize

P: Listen,

C: listen, God is calling, through the Word inviting, offering forgiveness, comfort and joy.

P: Listen,

C: listen, God is calling, through the Word inviting, offering forgiveness, comfort and joy.

P: Help us to be faithful,

C: standing steadfast,

P: walking in your precepts,

C: led by your Word.

P: Listen,

C: listen, God is calling, through the Word inviting, offering forgiveness, comfort and joy.

P: Listen,

C: listen, God is calling, through the Word inviting, offering forgiveness, comfort and joy.

***PRAYER OF THE DAY**

Merciful God, the fountain of living water, you quench our thirst and wash away our sin. Give us this water always. Bring us to drink from the well that flows with the beauty of your truth through Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. **Amen.**

CHILDREN'S MOMENT

FIRST READING: Exodus 17:1-7

¹ From the wilderness of Sin the whole congregation of the Israelites journeyed by stages, as the LORD commanded. They camped at Rephidim, but there was no water for the people to drink. ² The people quarreled with Moses and said, "Give us water to drink." Moses said to them, "Why do you quarrel with me? Why do you test the LORD?" ³ But the people thirsted there for water, and the people complained against Moses and said, "Why did you bring us out of Egypt, to kill us and our children and livestock with thirst?" ⁴ So Moses cried out to the LORD, "What shall I do for this people? They are almost ready to stone me." ⁵ The LORD said to Moses, "Go on ahead of the people and take some of the elders of Israel with you; take in your hand the staff with which you struck the Nile and go. ⁶ I will be standing there in front of you on the rock at Horeb. Strike the rock, and water will come out of it, so that the people may drink." Moses did so, in the sight of the elders of Israel. ⁷ He called the place Massah and Meribah, because the Israelites quarreled and tested the LORD, saying, "Is the LORD among us or not?"

R: The Word of the Lord C: **Thanks be to God**

RESPONSIVE READING: Psalm 95

¹ Come, let us sing to the LORD; let us shout for joy to the rock of our salvation.
² **Let us come before God's presence with thanksgiving and raise a loud shout to the LORD with psalms.**
³ For you, LORD, are a great God, and a great ruler above all gods.
⁴ **In your hand are the caverns of the earth; the heights of the hills are also yours.**
⁵ The sea is yours, for you made it, and your hands have molded the dry land.
⁶ **Come, let us worship and bow down, let us kneel before the LORD our maker.**
⁷ For the LORD is our God, and we are the people of God's pasture and the sheep of God's hand. Oh, that today you would hear God's voice!
⁸ **"Harden not your hearts, as at Meribah, as on that day at Massah in the desert.**
⁹ There your ancestors tested me, they put me to the test, though they had seen my works.
¹⁰ **Forty years I loathed that generation, saying, 'The heart of this people goes astray; they do not know my ways.'**
¹¹ Indeed I swore in my anger, 'They shall never come to my rest.'

SECOND READING: Romans 5:1-11

¹ Since we are justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ, ² through whom we have obtained access to this grace in which we stand, and we boast in our hope of sharing the glory of God. ³ And not only that, but we also boast in our afflictions, knowing that affliction produces endurance, ⁴ and endurance produces character, and character produces hope, ⁵ and hope does not put us to shame, because God's love has been poured into our hearts through the Holy Spirit that has been given to us.

⁶ For while we were still weak, at the right time Christ died for the ungodly. ⁷ Indeed, rarely will anyone die for a righteous person—though perhaps for a good person

someone might actually dare to die. ⁸ But God proves his love for us in that while we still were sinners Christ died for us. ⁹ Much more surely, therefore, since we have now been justified by his blood, will we be saved through him from the wrath of God. ¹⁰ For if while we were enemies we were reconciled to God through the death of his Son, much more surely, having been reconciled, will we be saved by his life. ¹¹ But more than that, we even boast in God through our Lord Jesus Christ, through whom we have now received reconciliation.

R: The Word of the Lord **C: Thanks be to God**

***GOSPEL ACCLAMATION, p. 205 ELW:**

We are turning, Lord, to hear you; you are merciful and kind—slow to anger, rich in blessing, and with love to us inclined.

***GOSPEL READING: John 4:5-42**

⁵ [Jesus] came to a Samaritan city called Sychar, near the plot of ground that Jacob had given to his son Joseph. ⁶ Jacob's well was there, and Jesus, tired out by his journey, was sitting by the well. It was about noon.

⁷ A Samaritan woman came to draw water, and Jesus said to her, "Give me a drink." ⁸ (His disciples had gone to the city to buy food.) ⁹ The Samaritan woman said to him, "How is it that you, a Jew, ask a drink of me, a woman of Samaria?" (Jews do not share things in common with Samaritans.) ¹⁰ Jesus answered her, "If you knew the gift of God and who it is that is saying to you, 'Give me a drink,' you would have asked him, and he would have given you living water." ¹¹ The woman said to him, "Sir, you have no bucket, and the well is deep. Where do you get that living water?" ¹² Are you greater than our ancestor Jacob, who gave us the well and with his sons and his flocks drank from it?" ¹³ Jesus said to her, "Everyone who drinks of this water will be thirsty again, ¹⁴ but those who drink of the water that I will give them will never be thirsty. The water that I will give will become in them a spring of water gushing up to eternal life." ¹⁵ The woman said to him, "Sir, give me this water, so that I may never be thirsty or have to keep coming here to draw water."

¹⁶ Jesus said to her, "Go, call your husband, and come back." ¹⁷ The woman answered him, "I have no husband." Jesus said to her, "You are right in saying, 'I have no husband,' ¹⁸ for you have had five husbands, and the one you have now is not your husband. What you have said is true!" ¹⁹ The woman said to him, "Sir, I see that you are a prophet. ²⁰ Our ancestors worshiped on this mountain, but you say that the place where people must worship is in Jerusalem." ²¹ Jesus said to her, "Woman, believe me, the hour is coming when you will worship the Father neither on this mountain nor in Jerusalem. ²² You worship what you do not know; we worship what we know, for salvation is from the Jews. ²³ But the hour is coming and is now here when the true worshipers will worship the Father in spirit and truth, for the Father seeks such as these to worship him. ²⁴ God is spirit, and those who worship him must worship in spirit and truth." ²⁵ The woman said to him, "I know that Messiah is coming" (who is called Christ). "When he comes, he will proclaim all things to us." ²⁶ Jesus said to her, "I am he, the one who is speaking to you."

²⁷ Just then his disciples came. They were astonished that he was speaking with a woman, but no one said, "What do you want?" or, "Why are you speaking with

her?" ²⁸ Then the woman left her water jar and went back to the city. She said to the people, ²⁹ "Come and see a man who told me everything I have ever done! He cannot be the Messiah, can he?" ³⁰ They left the city and were on their way to him.

³¹ Meanwhile the disciples were urging him, "Rabbi, eat something." ³² But he said to them, "I have food to eat that you do not know about." ³³ So the disciples said to one another, "Surely no one has brought him something to eat?" ³⁴ Jesus said to them, "My food is to do the will of him who sent me and to complete his work. ³⁵ Do you not say, 'Four months more, then comes the harvest'? But I tell you, look around you, and see how the fields are ripe for harvesting. ³⁶ The reaper is already receiving wages and is gathering fruit for eternal life, so that sower and reaper may rejoice together. ³⁷ For here the saying holds true, 'One sows and another reaps.' ³⁸ I sent you to reap that for which you did not labor. Others have labored, and you have entered into their labor."

³⁹ Many Samaritans from that city believed in him because of the woman's testimony, "He told me everything I have ever done." ⁴⁰ So when the Samaritans came to him, they asked him to stay with them, and he stayed there two days. ⁴¹ And many more believed because of his word. ⁴² They said to the woman, "It is no longer because of what you said that we believe, for we have heard for ourselves, and we know that this is truly the Savior of the world."

P: This is, the Gospel of the Lord **C: Thanks be to God**

MESSAGE: Pastor Lori

*** HYMN OF THE DAY ELW #658 "O Jesus, Joy of Loving Hearts"**

1. O Jesus, joy of loving hearts, the fount of life, the light of all: from ev'ry bliss that earth imparts we turn, unfilled, to hear your call.
2. We taste you, ever-living bread, and long to feast upon you still; we drink of you, the fountain head; our thirsting souls from you we fill.
3. For you our restless spirits yearn, where'er our changing lot is cast; glad, when your smile on us you turn, blest, when by faith we hold you fast.
4. O Jesus, ever with us stay! Make all our moments fair and bright! Oh, chase the night of sin away! Shed o'er the world your holy light.

RESPONSE TO THE WORD

P: In Christ, you have heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation.

C: We believe in him and are marked with the seal of the promised Holy Spirit.

P: Living together in trust and hope, we 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 power of 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

P: Build yourselves up on your most holy faith;

C: pray in the Holy Spirit.

P: Keep yourselves in the love of God;

C: look forward to the mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ.

P: If anyone is in Christ, there is a new creation:

C: Everything old has passed away; behold, everything has become new!

P: God has given us the ministry of reconciliation. Therefore, let us be reconciled to God and to one another.

Gracious God,

C: have mercy on us. In your compassion forgive us our sins, known and unknown, things done and left undone. Uphold us by your Spirit so that we may live and serve you in newness of life, to the honor and glory of your holy name; through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

P: Almighty God have mercy on you, forgive you all your sins through our Lord Jesus Christ, strengthen you in all goodness, and by the power of the Holy Spirit keep you in eternal life.

C: Amen

***PEACE**

P: Sisters and brothers, rejoice. Mend your ways, encourage one another, agree with one another, live in peace. The peace of the Lord be with you always.

C: And also with you.

OFFERING

***OFFERING SONG #811 "On My Heart Imprint Your Image"**

On my heart imprint your image, blessed Jesus, king of grace, that life's troubles nor its pleasures ever may your work erase. Let the clear inscription be: Jesus, crucified for me, is my life, my hope's foundation, all my glory and salvation!

***OFFERING PRAYER**

Let us pray. Gracious God,

In the abundance of your steadfast love, you call us from death to life, from silence to speech, from idleness to action. With these gifts we offer ourselves to you, and with the Church through all ages we give thanks for your saving love in Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

***PRAYERS OF INTERCESSION**

P: Hear us, O God, **C: your mercy is great.**

***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; 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**

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 ELW #623 "Rock of Ages, Cleft for Me"**

1. Rock of Ages, cleft for me, let me hide myself in thee; let the water and the blood, from thy riven side which flowed, be of sin the double cure; cleanse me from its guilt and pow'r.
2. Not the labors of my hands can fulfill thy law's demands; could my zeal no respite know, could my tears forever flow, all for sin could not atone; thou must save, and thou alone.
3. Nothing in my hand I bring; simply to thy cross I cling. Naked, come to thee for dress; helpless, look to thee for grace; foul, I to the fountain fly; wash me, Savior, or I die.
4. While I draw this fleeting breath, when mine eyelids close in death, when I soar to worlds unknown, see thee on thy judgment throne, Rock of Ages, cleft for me, let me hide myself in thee.

***DISMISSAL**

P: Go in peace. Believe the good news. **C: Thanks be to God.**

Prayer Concerns: Marvin Albers; Addison Swenson, Doug McGuire, Peggy Goettsch,

ANNOUNCEMENTS

Lent service Wednesday, March 11th. Meal (pizza served by the Board of Deacons) beginning at 5:30; service follows at 6:30.

Interested in **dramatic reading**? Join a 10-minute soliloquy at the Lent service. Contact Pastor Lori to sign up—1 man is still needed.

Cemetery Association Annual Meeting will be held on Sunday, March 22, following regular worship service. All are welcome to attend.

Please let the office know if you will be dropping off an **Easter Lily** in honor/memory of loved ones.

Thank you to everyone who has volunteered as an **usher**. A few spots remain open, if you haven't signed up yet, please consider helping with this important part of worship.

Women's Gathering - Please save Saturday, March 14, from 10-noon to join in a conversation about what you would like to do as women of the church. Do you want a Bible study, a support group, a chance to do a craft together, make meals that you could share, a book club or reading group, an exercise group, or any ideas you might have. We could have someone teach us how to decorate cookies with royal icing. Do a Mother/Daughter event. We want to hear what you would enjoy doing. You can stop in and leave, bring your kids or not, we will have coffee and snacks to share that morning, but do stop by and let us know if you are interested in doing something. It can be a large or small group activity, maybe not all of you are interested in the same things. We want to give you the chance to be involved and do what you love to do!

Tuff Home Country Store is seeking donations of various items. A collection box can be found in the narthex. Requested items include: lip balm, lipstick, nail polish, body sprays, hair detangler/brush, socks, toothpaste, toothbrushes, hard candies, lotion, large print word searches, and seasonal room decorations.

Assistance is needed with **servicing communion**. Anyone who feels comfortable holding a tray of wine or grape juice is welcome to participate, regardless of age. Sign-up sheet on the bulletin board.

Generations Senior Meal Site is looking for volunteers to assist with serving their scheduled noon meals. If you enjoy visiting with people and serving others, consider becoming a volunteer. There are needs for dishwasher and dining room volunteers...on a regular and/or intermittent basis. Please call Pam at Generations: 507-283-9846 to volunteer or for additional information! Volunteer schedules allow people to select the days they can serve!

Shetek camp brochures available in the narthex.

Help Wanted: Need someone to help with power point on Sunday morning worship. If interested, please contact Dawn Leenderts. Will train! (507-962-3560)