

# Sunday Worship Service – March 22, 2026

Using material from various sources as indicated in the footnotes.

## Welcome and Announcements

## LutherCare Communities Presentation

## A Moment of Reflection

### Opening Litany <sup>1</sup>

In your passion, O Lord, you fulfilled Isaiah's prophecy of old:

**He was oppressed, and he was afflicted, yet he did not open his mouth;**  
like a lamb that is led to the slaughter and like a sheep that before its shearers  
is silent,  
**so he did not open his mouth.**

By a perversion of justice he was taken away.

**For he was cut off from the land of the living, stricken for the transgression  
of my people.**

You persevered through your passion, O Lord. You did not become angry or  
fight back. You let the will of the Father be done for the salvation of all.

**Help us to persevere in hard times, O Lord, drawing strength from you.**

When the soldiers mocked you and put a purple robe on your scarred back  
and put a crown of thorns on your head, you kept quiet

**because you knew you really were a king, the king of heaven and earth.**

When bystanders told you to come down from the cross, you stayed where  
you were

**because you knew that it was for this reason that you were born into this  
world.**

When your final breath drew near, you said, "It is finished,"

**because you knew that your mission on earth had been completed.**

In our lives, help us to look to you as we persevere.

**In all we do, you give us strength.**

### Lenten Candle Liturgy <sup>2</sup> - The Candle of Sorrow

*(call the children forward)*

This is our Lenten Candelabra. It has seven candles on it – one for each week  
in the season of Lent. Each Sunday we will extinguish (put out) one more

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<sup>1</sup> Opening Litany from **Mercy. Passion and Joy** © 2026 Creative Communications for the Parish  
([www.creativecommunications.com](http://www.creativecommunications.com)), Fenton, MO.

<sup>2</sup> *A Liturgy for Extinguishing Lenten Candles* by Jo Anne Taylor ([pastorsings.com](http://pastorsings.com)).

candle, until only one candle is left. That candle will be extinguished on Good Friday, the day Jesus died.

We've experienced temptation, searching, confession, and joy through these weeks of Lent. Today we recognize sorrow.

We feel sorrow for those who are sick or are suffering right now.

We feel sorrow that the world isn't what God wants it to be.

We feel sorrow for people we have loved who are no longer with us, and for people who we wish we could hug.

We feel sorrow for Christ's death on a cross.

And we are sorry for our sins. That's why we will all confess our sins as part of this worship service. The good news is that God can turn our sorrow into joy through the forgiveness of sin made possible by Jesus the Christ.

*(children return to their seats)*

### **Confession and Forgiveness**<sup>3</sup> *The assembly stands.*

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

**Amen.**

Almighty God, to whom all hearts are open, all desires known, and from whom no secrets are hid: cleanse the thoughts of our hearts by the inspiration of your Holy Spirit, that we may perfectly love you and worthily magnify your holy name, through Jesus Christ our Lord.

**Amen.**

Let us confess our sin in the presence of God and of one another.

*The assembly kneels or stands. Silence is kept for reflection.*

Most merciful God,

**we confess that we are captive to sin and cannot free ourselves. We have sinned against you in thought, word, and deed, by what we have done and by what we have left undone. We have not loved you with our whole heart; we have not loved our neighbors as ourselves. For the sake of your Son, Jesus Christ, have mercy on us. Forgive us, renew us, and lead us, so that we may delight in your will and walk in your ways, to the glory of your holy name.**

**Amen.**

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<sup>3</sup> *Confession and Forgiveness* from the **Evangelical Lutheran Worship** hymnal © 2006 Evangelical Lutheran Church in America, published by Augsburg Fortress, Minneapolis, MN.

God, who is rich in mercy, loved us even when we were dead in sin, and made us alive together with Christ. By grace you have been saved. In the name of † Jesus Christ, your sins are forgiven. Almighty God strengthen you with power through the Holy Spirit, that Christ may live in your hearts through faith.  
**Amen.**

### **Hymn of Praise “Lord, I Lift Your Name on High” #857**

**Lord, I lift your name on high; Lord, I love to sing your praises.  
 I’m so glad you’re in my life, I’m so glad you came to save us.  
 You came from heaven to earth to show the way,  
 from the earth to the cross, my debt to pay,  
 from the cross to the grave, from the grave to the sky;  
 Lord, I lift your name on high. *(repeat song)***

### **Prayer of the Day**

The Lord be with you.

**And also with you.**

Let us pray:

**Almighty God, your Son came into the world to free us all from sin and death. Breathe upon us the power of your Spirit, that we may be raised to new life in Christ and serve you in righteousness all our days, through Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. Amen.**

### **Scripture Reading: Ezekiel 37:1-14**

The LORD’s power overcame me, and while I was in the LORD’s spirit, he led me out and set me down in the middle of a certain valley. It was full of bones. He led me through them all around, and I saw that there were a great many of them on the valley floor, and they were very dry.

He asked me, “Human one, can these bones live again?”

I said, “LORD God, only you know.”

He said to me, “Prophesy over these bones, and say to them, Dry bones, hear the LORD’s word! The LORD God proclaims to these bones: I am about to put breath in you, and you will live again. I will put sinews on you, place flesh on you, and cover you with skin. When I put breath in you, and you come to life, you will know that I am the LORD.”

I prophesied just as I was commanded. There was a great noise as I was prophesying, then a great quaking, and the bones came together, bone by

bone. When I looked, suddenly there were sinews on them. The flesh appeared, and then they were covered over with skin. But there was still no breath in them.

He said to me, "Prophecy to the breath; prophecy, human one! Say to the breath, The LORD God proclaims: Come from the four winds, breath! Breathe into these dead bodies and let them live."

I prophesied just as he commanded me. When the breath entered them, they came to life and stood on their feet, an extraordinarily large company.

He said to me, "Human one, these bones are the entire house of Israel. They say, 'Our bones are dried up, and our hope has perished. We are completely finished.' So now, prophecy and say to them, The LORD God proclaims: I'm opening your graves! I will raise you up from your graves, my people, and I will bring you to Israel's fertile land. You will know that I am the LORD, when I open your graves and raise you up from your graves, my people. I will put my breath in you, and you will live. I will plant you on your fertile land, and you will know that I am the LORD. I've spoken, and I will do it. This is what the LORD says."

Here ends the reading.

**Inspire our understanding, Spirit of God.**

### **Scripture Reading: Romans 8:6-11**

The attitude that comes from selfishness leads to death, but the attitude that comes from the Spirit leads to life and peace. So the attitude that comes from selfishness is hostile to God. It doesn't submit to God's Law, because it can't. People who are self-centered aren't able to please God.

But you aren't self-centered. Instead you are in the Spirit, if in fact God's Spirit lives in you. If anyone doesn't have the Spirit of Christ, they don't belong to him. If Christ is in you, the Spirit is your life because of God's righteousness, but the body is dead because of sin. If the Spirit of the one who raised Jesus from the dead lives in you, the one who raised Christ from the dead will give life to your human bodies also, through his Spirit that lives in you.

Here ends the reading.

**Inspire our understanding, Spirit of God.**

### **Gospel Verse for Lent "Return to God"** (from *Now the Feast and Celebration*)

**Return to God with all your heart, the source of grace and mercy;**

**Come, seek the tender faithfulness of God.** *(repeat)*

**Gospel Reading: John 11:1-45**

The holy gospel according to John, the 11<sup>th</sup> chapter.

**Glory to you, O Lord.**

A certain man, Lazarus, was ill. He was from Bethany, the village of Mary and her sister Martha. (This was the Mary who anointed the Lord with fragrant oil and wiped his feet with her hair. Her brother Lazarus was ill.) So the sisters sent word to Jesus, saying, "Lord, the one whom you love is ill."

When he heard this, Jesus said, "This illness isn't fatal. It's for the glory of God so that God's Son can be glorified through it." Jesus loved Martha, her sister, and Lazarus. When he heard that Lazarus was ill, he stayed where he was. After two days, he said to his disciples, "Let's return to Judea again."

The disciples replied, "Rabbi, the Jewish opposition wants to stone you, but you want to go back?"

Jesus answered, "Aren't there twelve hours in the day? Whoever walks in the day doesn't stumble because they see the light of the world. But whoever walks in the night does stumble because the light isn't in them."

He continued, "Our friend Lazarus is sleeping, but I am going in order to wake him up."

The disciples said, "Lord, if he's sleeping, he will get well." They thought Jesus meant that Lazarus was in a deep sleep, but Jesus had spoken about Lazarus' death.

Jesus told them plainly, "Lazarus has died. For your sakes, I'm glad I wasn't there so that you can believe. Let's go to him."

Then Thomas (the one called Didymus) said to the other disciples, "Let us go too so that we may die with Jesus."

When Jesus arrived, he found that Lazarus had already been in the tomb for four days. Bethany was a little less than two miles from Jerusalem. Many Jews had come to comfort Martha and Mary after their brother's death. When Martha heard that Jesus was coming, she went to meet him, while Mary remained in the house. Martha said to Jesus, "Lord, if you had been here, my brother wouldn't have died. Even now I know that whatever you ask God, God will give you."

Jesus told her, "Your brother will rise again."

Martha replied, "I know that he will rise in the resurrection on the last day."

Jesus said to her, "I am the resurrection and the life. Whoever believes in me will live, even though they die. Everyone who lives and believes in me will never die. Do you believe this?"

She replied, "Yes, Lord, I believe that you are the Christ, God's Son, the one who is coming into the world."

After she said this, she went and spoke privately to her sister Mary, "The teacher is here and he's calling for you." When Mary heard this, she got up quickly and went to Jesus. He hadn't entered the village but was still in the place where Martha had met him. When the Jews who were comforting Mary in the house saw her get up quickly and leave, they followed her. They assumed she was going to mourn at the tomb.

When Mary arrived where Jesus was and saw him, she fell at his feet and said, "Lord, if you had been here, my brother wouldn't have died."

When Jesus saw her crying and the Jews who had come with her crying also, he was deeply disturbed and troubled. He asked, "Where have you laid him?"

They replied, "Lord, come and see."

Jesus began to cry. The Jews said, "See how much he loved him!" But some of them said, "He healed the eyes of the man born blind. Couldn't he have kept Lazarus from dying?"

Jesus was deeply disturbed again when he came to the tomb. It was a cave, and a stone covered the entrance. Jesus said, "Remove the stone."

Martha, the sister of the dead man, said, "Lord, the smell will be awful! He's been dead four days."

Jesus replied, "Didn't I tell you that if you believe, you will see God's glory?" So they removed the stone. Jesus looked up and said, "Father, thank you for hearing me. I know you always hear me. I say this for the benefit of the crowd standing here so that they will believe that you sent me." Having said this, Jesus shouted with a loud voice, "Lazarus, come out!" The dead man came out, his feet bound and his hands tied, and his face covered with a cloth. Jesus said to them, "Untie him and let him go."

Therefore, many of the Jews who came with Mary and saw what Jesus did believed in him.

The gospel of our Lord.

**Praise to you, O Christ.**

### Hymn of the Day *“Awake, O Sleeper, Rise from Death”* #452

1. **Awake, O sleeper, rise from death, and Christ shall give you light;  
so learn his love, its length and breadth,  
its fullness, depth, and height.**
2. **To us on earth he came to bring from sin and fear release,  
to give the Spirit’s unity, the very bond of peace.**
3. **There is one body and one hope, one Spirit and one call,  
one Lord, one faith, and one baptism, one God who made us all.**
4. **Then walk in love as Christ has loved, who died that he might save;  
with kind and gentle hearts forgive as God in Christ forgave.**
5. **For us Christ lived, for us he died, and conquered in the strife.  
Awake, arise, go forth in faith, and Christ shall give you life.**

### Apostles’ Creed

Let us confess our common faith using the words of 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 <sup>4</sup>

Reconciled by God’s mercy and sustained by God’s presence, let us pray for the world and its needs. Each petition will end with “In your loving kindness, O God” and the congregational response “Have mercy and hear our prayer.”

*A brief silence.*

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<sup>4</sup> *Prayers of Intercession* from *Intercessions for Years A, B and C* © 2009 Ian Black, published by SPCK, London, UK.

Jesus, our resurrection and our life, raise our vision and centre it on your eternity. Breathe into your Church the vitality of your Spirit. Make us a holy dwelling place for you. In your loving kindness, **have mercy and hear our prayer.**

Jesus, our resurrection and our life, look with compassion on your world. Make the dry bones of political intrigue come to life that all may dance in your freedom. Loose the bonds of corruption and set free all that enhances godly living. In your loving kindness, **have mercy and hear our prayer.**

Jesus, our resurrection and our life, draw together into one body dispersed and fractured peoples. Connect the strands of society uniting people of all races, ages and gender. Dwell among us, Lord, that we may behold your glory. In your loving kindness, **have mercy and hear our prayer.**

Jesus, our resurrection and our life, be with all who are ill in mind or body. We pray for those in hospital or health care facilities (*names*). Reveal your glory in our frailty. In your loving kindness, **have mercy and hear our prayer.**

Jesus, our resurrection and our life, you restore life where it has been lost, and we rejoice in the warmth of your love. May we hear you call us from the place of death to delight in your new creation. In your loving kindness, **have mercy and hear our prayer.**

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

### **Offering & Offering Prayer**<sup>5</sup>

God breathes new life into us, giving us hope. We can trust God's promises. Grateful for God's presence, we bring our gifts this day.

*(An offering plate is placed on the altar, followed by the prayer)*

Spirit of God, you breathe new life into the dead and stuck places of our daily living. We are so grateful for the power of your transforming love. We bring these gifts, hoping that they will breathe new life into barren places of our world. We bring our lives, filled with new life, ready to serve all your creation.  
**Amen.**

*The Creedance Table is moved to the center of the chancel*

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<sup>5</sup> *Invitation to Offering and Offering Prayer* written by B.J. Beu from **Abingdon Worship Annual 2026** © 2025  
Abingdon Press, Nashville, TN.

## Thanksgiving at the Table for Lent <sup>6</sup>

O God, Creator of our wilderness world,  
 O God, Savior of the lost,  
 O God, Comforter of the sick and suffering,  
 we give you thanks for your everlasting might;  
 we glorify you for your covenant of mercy.

For forty days you cleansed the earth with the waters of the flood.  
 For forty days you illumined Moses with the words of your law.  
 For forty years you fed your people with manna from heaven.

You became truly human in Jesus our brother.  
 For forty days, with fasting and prayer,  
 he renounced the power of the devil.  
 On the night before he died he 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.

We extol his life. Amen:

**Amen.**

We lament his death. Amen:

**Amen.**

We celebrate his resurrection. Amen:

**Amen.**

Transform us, O God, with your lively Spirit.  
 Make this food into manna for our journey, the body and blood of your Son.  
 Teach us your words of wisdom and justice.  
 Renew the whole earth with baptismal grace.  
 At the last, lead all your pilgrim people through our deserts  
 to your Easter garden.

To you, O God, Creator, Savior, Comforter,  
 Father, Son, and Holy Spirit,

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<sup>6</sup> *Thanksgiving at the Table for Lent* from **Pray, Praise, and Give Thanks: A Collection of Litanies, Laments, and Thanksgivings at Font and Table** by Gail Ramshaw, copyright © 2017 Augsburg Fortress, Minneapolis, MN.

be our worship and praise, adoration and thanksgiving,  
now and forever. Amen.

**Amen.**

*The Lord's Prayer (spoken)*

Let us pray with confidence in the words our Savior gave us:

**Our Father in heaven,  
hallowed be your name, your kingdom come,  
your will be done, on earth as in heaven.  
Give us today our daily bread.  
Forgive us our sins as we forgive those who sin against us.  
Save us from the time of trial and deliver us from evil.  
For the kingdom, the power,  
and the glory are yours, now and forever. Amen.**

*Communion Invitation and Instructions*

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

*Those Communing online are invited to eat the bread and drink the wine/juice.*

*The congregation is ushered forward to receive the elements, starting with the Sunday School.*

***Hymn during Communion "Here Is Bread" #483***

1. **Here is bread, here is wine, Christ is with us, he is with us.  
Break the bread, taste the wine, Christ is with us here.**

*Refrain:* **In the bread there is healing, in this cup is life forever.  
In this moment by the Spirit, Christ is with us here.**

2. **Here is grace, here is peace, Christ is with us, he is with us.  
Know his grace, find his peace, feast on Jesus here. (Refrain)**
3. **Here we are, joined in one, Christ is with us, he is with us.  
We'll proclaim till he comes Jesus crucified. (Refrain)**

***Hymn during Communion "Let Us Ever Walk with Jesus" #802***

1. **Let us ever walk with Jesus, follow his example pure,  
through a world that would deceive us and to sin our spirits lure.  
Onward in his footsteps treading, trav'lers here, our home above,  
full of faith and hope and love, let us do our Savior's bidding.  
Faithful Lord, with me abide; I shall follow where you guide.**

2. **Let us suffer here with Jesus, and with patience bear our cross.  
Joy will follow all our sadness; where he is there is no loss.  
Though today we sow no laughter, we shall reap celestial joy:  
all discomforts that annoy shall give way to mirth hereafter.  
Jesus, here I share your woe; help me there your joy to know.**
3. **Let us gladly die with Jesus. Since by death he conquered death,  
he will free us from destruction, give to us immortal breath.  
Let us mortify all passion that would lead us into sin;  
and the grave that shuts us in shall but prove the gate of heaven.  
Jesus, here with you I die, there to live with you on high.**
4. **Let us also live with Jesus. He has risen from the dead  
that to life we may awaken. Jesus, you are now our head,  
We are your own living members; where you live, there we shall be  
in your presence constantly, living there with you forever.  
Jesus, let me faithful be; life eternal grant to me.**

### **Communion Blessing**

May the precious body and blood of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ, strengthen you, and keep you in his grace now, and unto life everlasting.

### **Prayer after Communion <sup>7</sup>**

Let us pray.

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.

### **Benediction Song “*May the Grace of Christ Attend Us*” (#963 Voices United)**

**May the grace of Christ attend us, and the love of God surround us,  
and the Holy Spirit keep us, now and ever. Amen.**

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<sup>7</sup> *Prayer after Communion* from **Sundays and Seasons** ([www.sundaysandseasons.com](http://www.sundaysandseasons.com)) © Augsburg Fortress, Minneapolis, MN.

**Blessing**<sup>8</sup>

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.

**Commission**

Go in peace, inspired by Christ to love and serve!  
**Thanks be to God.**

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<sup>8</sup> *Blessing* from **Sundays and Seasons** ([www.sundaysandseasons.com](http://www.sundaysandseasons.com)) © Augsburg Fortress, Minneapolis, MN.