

March 15, 2026

Fourth Sunday in Lent

10:00am Service with Holy Communion

Pastor Ben Groth, Preaching and Presiding

Matthew Harrison, Director of Music

Welcome!

We are so glad you have joined us for worship! If this is your first time here, please fill out the yellow welcome card in the pew and place it in the offering plate if you would like to be contacted by Pastor Ben, would like more information about the church, or would like to sign up for our weekly news email.

Restrooms: Our restrooms are located downstairs at the bottom of the stairways at the back of the sanctuary. There are signs about which side has the men's and women's restrooms. There are any-gender solo restrooms in the education wing, one of which has a changing table. Please knock and ensure no one else is inside!

Care and Prayer: If you would like to request prayer or speak with Pastor Ben about struggles, joys, or anything else, please feel free to email him at bgroth@1stlutherannb.org or call/text at 860-348-3966.

Children: We love having children in worship! At the front of the sanctuary there is a "pray ground" with lots of space to spread out and sit comfortably, some toys, and a great collection of books for different ages. All children and caretakers are welcome to use that space anytime during the service!

Volunteering: We have lots of opportunities at First Lutheran to volunteer and serve our community. Our Monday Morning Mingle free meal takes place from 8-9am each Monday, while our free Pasta Dinners take place from 5-6pm each Wednesday. Both of these programs can always use volunteers. If you'd like to help out, or are interested in helping with worship or other things at First Lutheran, please contact Pastor Ben.

Coffee Hour: After the service, please join us downstairs for refreshments, and a chance to get to know one another better!

Gathering

PRELUDE

ANNOUNCEMENTS

Please stand as able

CONFESSION AND FORGIVENESS

P Blessed be the holy Trinity, † one God,
who gathers us in the wilderness to redeem us,
anoint us, and make us new.

C Amen.

P In these forty days, let us be honest, confess our sin,
and receive God's promise of mercy. O God,

C **we have wandered far from our home;
again and again, we lose our way.
We turn inward, afraid of the world around us.
We forget that you have saved your people before
and promise to do so again.
Do not remember the deeds of our past,
but turn our faces toward the future,
where your forgiveness is sure,
your welcome is clear,
and your love overflows.
Amen.**

P Like a hen who gathers her chicks,
God embraces you in tender care.
Like manna in the desert,
God feeds you with surprising mercy.
Like a loving parent,
God runs to meet you again this day,
forgiving your sins for the sake of † Christ,
leading you from death into life.

C Amen.



1 O Christ, your heart, com - pas - sion - ate, bore ev - 'ry hu - man pain.
 2 As once you wel - comed those cast down and healed the sick, the blind,
 3 O Christ, cre - ate new hearts in us that beat in time with yours,
 4 O Love that made the dis - tant stars, yet marks the spar - row's fall,



Its beat - ing was the pulse of God; its breadth, God's vast do - main.
 so may all bruised and bro - ken lives through us your help still find.
 that, joined by faith with your great heart, be - come love's o - pen doors.
 whose arms stretched wide up - on a cross em - brace and bear us all:



The heart of God, the heart of Christ com - bined in per - fect rhyme
 Lord, join our hearts with those who weep that none may weep a - lone,
 We are your bod - y, ris - en Christ; our hearts, our hands we yield
 come, make your church a ser - vant church that walks your ser - vant ways,



to write God's love in hu - man deeds, e - ter - ni - ty in time.
 and help us bear an - oth - er's pain as though it were our own.
 that through our life and min - is - try your love may be re - vealed.
 whose deeds of love rise up to you, a sac - ri - fice of praise!

THE 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.**

THE PRAYER OF THE DAY

- P** Let us pray. Bend your ear to our prayers, Lord Christ, and come among us.
- C** **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.**

Please be seated

Word

THE FIRST READING

- A** A reading from the first book of Samuel: 1 Samuel 16:1-13

¹The 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.” ²Samuel 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.’ ³Invite 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.” ⁴Samuel 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?” ⁵He said, “Peaceably. I have come to sacrifice to the Lord; sanctify yourselves and come with me to the sacrifice.” And he sanctified Jesse and his sons and invited them to the sacrifice.

⁶When they came, he looked on Eliab and thought, “Surely his anointed is now before the Lord.” ⁷But the Lord said to Samuel, “Do not look on his appearance or on the height of his stature, because I have rejected him, for the Lord does not see as mortals see; they look on the outward appearance, but the Lord looks on the heart.” ⁸Then Jesse called Abinadab and made him pass before Samuel. He said, “Neither has the Lord chosen this one.” ⁹Then Jesse made Shammah pass by. And he said, “Neither has the Lord chosen this one.” ¹⁰Jesse made seven of his sons pass before Samuel, and Samuel said to Jesse, “The Lord has not chosen any of these.” ¹¹Samuel said to Jesse, “Are all your sons here?” And he said, “There remains

yet the youngest, but he is keeping the sheep.” And Samuel said to Jesse, “Send and bring him, for we will not sit down until he comes here.”¹²He sent and brought him in. Now he was ruddy and had beautiful eyes and was handsome. The Lord said, “Rise and anoint him, for this is the one.”¹³Then Samuel took the horn of oil and anointed him in the presence of his brothers, and the spirit of the Lord came mightily upon David from that day forward. Samuel then set out and went to Ramah. The word of the Lord.

☛ Thanks be to God.

THE PSALM 23

Read Responsively

A ¹The LORD is my shepherd;
I shall not be in want.

C ²**The LORD makes me lie down in green pastures
and leads me beside still waters.**

A ³You restore my soul, O LORD,
and guide me along right pathways for your name’s sake.

C ⁴**Though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I shall fear
no evil; for you are with me; your rod and your staff, they comfort me.**

A ⁵You prepare a table before me in the presence of my enemies;
you anoint my head with oil, and my cup is running over.

C ⁶**Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me all the days of my life,
and I will dwell in the house of the LORD forever.**

THE SECOND READING

A A reading from Ephesians:

Ephesians 5:8-14

⁸Once you were darkness, but now in the Lord you are light. Walk as children of light, ⁹for the fruit of the light is found in all that is good and right and true. ¹⁰Try to find out what is pleasing to the Lord. ¹¹Take no part in the unfruitful works of darkness; rather, expose them. ¹²For it is shameful even to mention what such people do secretly, ¹³but everything exposed by the light becomes visible, ¹⁴for everything that becomes visible is light. Therefore it says,

“Sleeper, awake!

Rise from the dead,
and Christ will shine on you.”

The word of the Lord.

☛ Thanks be to God.

Please stand as able

THE GOSPEL ACCLAMATION

Lord, Listen to Your Children



Lord, lis-ten to your chil-dren pray-ing, Lord, send your Spir-it in this place;



Lord, lis-ten to your chil-dren pray-ing, send us love, send us pow'r, send us grace.

THE HOLY GOSPEL

John 9:1-41

P The Holy Gospel according to John:

C Glory to you, O Lord.

P ¹As Jesus walked along, he saw a man blind from birth. ²His disciples asked him, “Rabbi, who sinned, this man or his parents, that he was born blind?” ³Jesus answered, “Neither this man nor his parents sinned; he was born blind so that God’s works might be revealed in him. ⁴We must work the works of him who sent me while it is day; night is coming, when no one can work. ⁵As long as I am in the world, I am the light of the world.” ⁶When he had said this, he spat on the ground and made mud with the saliva and spread the mud on the man’s eyes, ⁷saying to him, “Go, wash in the pool of Siloam” (which means Sent). Then he went and washed and came back able to see. ⁸The neighbors and those who had seen him before as a beggar began to ask, “Is this not the man who used to sit and beg?” ⁹Some were saying, “It is he.” Others were saying, “No, but it is someone like him.” He kept saying, “I am he.” ¹⁰But they kept asking him, “Then how were your eyes opened?” ¹¹He answered, “The man called Jesus made mud, spread it on my eyes, and said to me, ‘Go to Siloam and wash.’ Then I went and washed and received my sight.” ¹²They said to him, “Where is he?” He said, “I do not know.” ¹³They brought to the Pharisees the man who had formerly been blind. ¹⁴Now it was a Sabbath day when Jesus made the mud and opened his eyes. ¹⁵Then the Pharisees also began to ask him how he had received his sight. He said to them, “He put mud on my eyes.

Then I washed, and now I see.”¹⁶Some of the Pharisees said, “This man is not from God, for he does not observe the Sabbath.” Others said, “How can a man who is a sinner perform such signs?” And they were divided.¹⁷So they said again to the blind man, “What do you say about him? It was your eyes he opened.” He said, “He is a prophet.”¹⁸The Jews did not believe that he had been blind and had received his sight until they called the parents of the man who had received his sight¹⁹and asked them, “Is this your son, who you say was born blind? How then does he now see?”²⁰His parents answered, “We know that this is our son and that he was born blind,²¹but we do not know how it is that now he sees, nor do we know who opened his eyes. Ask him; he is of age. He will speak for himself.”²²His parents said this because they were afraid of the Jews, for the Jews had already agreed that anyone who confessed Jesus to be the Messiah would be put out of the synagogue.²³Therefore his parents said, “He is of age; ask him.”²⁴So for the second time they called the man who had been blind, and they said to him, “Give glory to God! We know that this man is a sinner.”²⁵He answered, “I do not know whether he is a sinner. One thing I do know, that though I was blind, now I see.”²⁶They said to him, “What did he do to you? How did he open your eyes?”²⁷He answered them, “I have told you already, and you would not listen. Why do you want to hear it again? Do you also want to become his disciples?”²⁸Then they reviled him, saying, “You are his disciple, but we are disciples of Moses.²⁹We know that God has spoken to Moses, but as for this man, we do not know where he comes from.”³⁰The man answered, “Here is an astonishing thing! You do not know where he comes from, yet he opened my eyes.³¹We know that God does not listen to sinners, but he does listen to one who worships him and obeys his will.³²Never since the world began has it been heard that anyone opened the eyes of a person born blind.³³If this man were not from God, he could do nothing.”³⁴They answered him, “You were born entirely in sins, and are you trying to teach us?” And they drove him out.³⁵Jesus heard that they had driven him out, and when he found him he said, “Do you believe in the Son of Man?”³⁶He answered, “And who is he, sir? Tell me, so that I may believe in him.”³⁷Jesus said to him, “You have seen him, and the one speaking with you is he.”³⁸He said, “Lord, I believe.” And he worshiped him.³⁹Jesus said, “I came into this world for judgment, so that those who do not see may see and those who do see may become blind.”⁴⁰Some of the Pharisees who were with him heard this and said to him, “Surely we are not blind, are we?”⁴¹Jesus said to them, “If you were blind, you would not have sin. But now that you say, ‘We see,’ your sin remains.”

The Gospel of the Lord.

☩ Praise to you, O Christ.

Please be seated

THE SERMON

Pastor Ben Groth

Please stand as able

THE HYMN OF THE DAY # 779

Amazing Grace

1 A - maz - ing grace!— how sweet the sound— that
 2 'Twas grace that taught my heart to fear, and
 3 Through man - y dan - gers, toils, and snares I
 4 The Lord has prom - ised good to me; his
 5 When we've been there ten thou - sand years, bright

saved a wretch like me! I once was lost, but
 grace my fears re - lieved; how pre - cious did that
 have al - read - y come; 'tis grace has brought me
 word my hope se - cures; he will my shield and
 shin - ing as the sun, we've no less days to

now am found; was blind, but now I see.
 grace ap - pear the hour I first be - lieved!
 safe thus far, and grace will lead me home.
 por - tion be as long as life en - dures.
 sing God's praise than when we'd first be - gun.

THE APOSTLES' CREED

P Let us confess the Christian faith, using the words of the Apostles' Creed.

C **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.

THE PRAYERS OF INTERCESSION

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

A brief silence.

A God, our shepherd, we pray that you guide the church. Lead Christians in our community and across the globe in right paths for your name's sake.
 Hear us, O God.

C **Your mercy is great.**

A God our sovereign, we plead for your peace on earth. Bring an end to war and violence, and raise up leaders in governments, courts, businesses, schools, and community organizations who seek goodness and mercy. Protect all those in our military, especially Nick. Hear us, O God.

C **Your mercy is great.**

A God our healer, we call to you in our need. Uplift all who are made to feel unimportant and transform the hearts of all infected by bigotry and prejudice. Care for all in special need this day especially Linda, Eileen, Tom, Allen, Scott, Lin, John, Izzy and Ruth. Hear us, O God.

C **Your mercy is great.**

A God our friend, we praise you for the diversity of people among us. Awaken us to share and receive the gifts we each possess, and stir up a spirit of understanding, celebration, and welcome for all. Hear us, O God.

C **Your mercy is great.**

A God our home, we thank you for all who have died and completed their baptismal journeys. Grant us faith to live until we dwell in your house forever. Hear us, O God.

C **Your mercy is great.**

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

C **Amen.**

THE PEACE

P The peace of the Lord be with you always.

C **And also with you.**

You may share with one another a sign of God's peace.

Peace be with you. **R** **Peace be with you.**

Please be seated.

The OFFERING is received as the Lord's Table is prepared.

OFFERING MUSIC

The offering is brought to the altar during the offertory response.

Please stand as able

POST OFFERTORY RESPONSE

To All Those With Bread

To all those with bread give hunger for justice, and to

all those who hunger give bread. To

THE OFFERTORY PRAYER

- A** Let us pray. Jesus, you are the bread of life and the host of this meal.
 Bless these gifts that we have gathered that all people may know your goodness.
 Feed us not only with this holy food but with hunger for justice and peace.
 We pray this in your name.
- C** Amen.

Holy Communion

THE DIALOGUE

The Lord be with you. And al - so 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.

THE PREFACE

- ☐ 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, who on this day overcame death and the grave, and by his glorious resurrection opened to us the way of everlasting life. 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:

Ho - ly, ho - ly, ho - ly Lord; God of pow-er and might. Heav-en and
 earth are full of your glo - - ry. Ho - san - na in the
 high - est! Ho - san - na in the high - est! Ho - san - na in the high - est! Blest is the
 one who comes in the name of the Lord. Ho - san - na in the
 high - est! Ho - san - na in the high - est! Ho - san - na in the high - est!

THE EUCHARISTIC PRAYER

P *Here the pastor continues with the Eucharistic Prayer.*

THE LORD'S PRAYER

P Gathered into one by the Holy Spirit, let us pray as Jesus taught us.

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.**

THE INVITATION TO COMMUNION

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

Please be seated

LAMB OF GOD



- 1 O Lamb of God, you bear the sin of all the world a - way;
 2 O Lamb of God, you bear the sin of all the world a - way;
 3 O Lamb of God, you bear the sin of all the world a - way;



you suf-fered death our lives to save: have mer-cy now, we pray.
 you set us free from guilt and grave: have mer-cy now, we pray.
 e - ter-nal peace with God you made: give us your peace, we pray.

THE COMMUNION HYMN # 614

There is a Balm in Gilead

Refrain

There is a balm in Gil-e-ad to make the wound-ed whole;

there is a balm in Gil-e-ad to heal the sin-sick soul.

1 Some - times I feel dis - cour - aged and think my work's in vain,
 2 If you can - not preach like Pe - ter, if you can - not pray like Paul,
 3 Don't ev - er be dis - cour - aged, for Je - sus is your friend;

Refrain

but then the Ho - ly Spir - it re - vives my soul a - gain.
 you can tell the love of Je - sus and say, "He died for all."
 and if you lack for knowl - edge, he'll ne'er re - fuse to lend.

Please stand as able

Sending

THE POST-COMMUNION BLESSING

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

G Amen

THE POST-COMMUNION PRAYER

A Let us pray.

Generous God,

at this table we have tasted your immeasurable grace.

As grains of wheat are gathered into one bread,

now make us one loaf to feed the world;

in the name of Jesus, the Bread of life.

G Amen.

THE BENEDICTION

P Beloved in God, God has shown you what is good. What does the Lord require of you but to do justice, love kindness, and to walk humbly with your God?

May the Father, † Son, and Holy Spirit, One God, mother of all, bless you, this day and always,

G Amen.

THE SENDING HYMN # 793

Be Thou My Vision



1 Be thou my vi - sion, O Lord of my heart;
 2 Be thou my wis - dom, and thou my true word;
 3 Rich - es I heed not, nor vain, emp - ty praise,
 4 Light of my soul, af - ter vic - to - ry won,



naught be all else to me, save that thou art:
 I ev - er with thee and thou with me, Lord.
 thou mine in - her - i - tance, now and al - ways:
 may I reach heav - en's joys, O heav - en's Sun!



thou my best thought both by day and by night,
 Thou my soul's shel - ter, and thou my high tow'r,
 thou and thou on - ly, the first in my heart,
 Heart of my own heart, what - ev - er be - fall,



wak - ing or sleep - ing, thy pres - ence my light.
 raise thou me heav'n - ward, O Pow'r of my pow'r.
 great God of heav - en, my trea - sure thou art.
 still be my vi - sion, O Rul - er of all.

THE DISMISSAL

- A** Go in peace. Believe the good news.
C Thanks be to God.

POSTLUDE

*Thanks to
Worship Assistant
Nancy Peterson*

*Communion Assistant
Louise Patterson*

*Reader
Kris Fletcher*

*Ushers
Chloe, John Henry, and Ellis Groth*

*Coffee Hour Goodies
Kris Fletcher*

and

*Videographer
Eric Nilsson*

*for volunteering
to be a part of the service this morning*

People Power for 3/22/2026

Worship Assistant - Gail Bates

Communion Assistant - John Halverson

Reader - Chloe Groth

Ushers - Cheryl Brideaux, Louise Patterson

Coffee Hour Goodies - Cheryl Brideaux

calendar

March 16 - Monday, 8am - Morning Mingle

March 16 - Monday, 5pm - Soup Night

March 17 - Tuesday, 6pm - AA Meeting

March 17 - Tuesday, 7pm - Council Meeting

March 18 - Wednesday, 4:30pm - Worship Service

March 18 - Wednesday, 5-6pm - Pasta Dinner

March 18 - Wednesday, 6pm - Choir

March 18 - Wednesday, 6pm - AA Meeting

March 22 - Sunday, 9:30am - Prayer Group

March 22 - Sunday, 10am - Worship with Holy Communion

March 23 - Monday, 8am - Morning Mingle

March 23 - Monday, 5pm - Pizza Night

March 24 - Tuesday, 6pm - AA Meeting

March 25 - Wednesday, 4:30pm - Worship Service

March 25 - Wednesday, 5-6pm - Pasta Dinner

March 25 - Wednesday, 6pm - Choir

March 25 - Wednesday, 6pm - AA Meeting

March 29 - Sunday, 9:30am - Prayer Group

March 29 - Sunday, 10am - Worship with Holy Communion - **PALM SUNDAY**

March 30 - Monday, 8am - Morning Mingle

March 31 - Tuesday, 6pm - AA Meeting

April 1 - Wednesday, 1pm - Mission/Outreach Meeting

April 1 - Wednesday, 4:30pm - Worship Service

April 1 - Wednesday, 5-6pm - Pasta Dinner

April 1 - Wednesday, 6pm - Choir

April 1 - Wednesday, 6pm - AA Meeting

April 2 - Thursday, 6pm - **MAUNDY THURSDAY SERVICE**

April 3 - Friday, 12pm - **GOOD FRIDAY SERVICE**

April 5 - Sunday, 9:30am - Prayer Group

April 5 - Sunday, 10am - Worship with Holy Communion - **EASTER SUNDAY**

Monday Morning Mingle 8am-9am
Wednesday Come-As- You-Are Worship Service 4:30pm
Wednesday Pasta Dinner 5pm-5:45pm
Clothing by appointment only. Please call Marianne Farr
for more information (860)-637-6460

PRAYER LIST

Please note: Prayer names will remain for two weeks unless renewed in the church office. Named in parentheses are those who submitted the names they follow.

Linda Carlson; Eileen Buys; Tom Abucewicz
Scott Johnson (Carol McQueeney);
Lin (Eileen Buys)
John Johnson, Izzy Garcia, Ruth Perrone (Jane Holmstrom)

In the military:

Nick, deployed to the Middle East (Laurie Kosich)

OUR VISION

First for what is first: Christ, our Lord
First in nurturing youth and families in faith
First with inspiring worship, fellowship and service
First by reaching out to all

First Lutheran Church of the Reformation

A community of believers in Jesus Christ

77 Franklin Square, New Britain, Connecticut
(860) 224-2475 + www.1stlutherannb.org



Evangelical Lutheran Church in America

God's work. Our hands.