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St. John Evangelical Lutheran Church  
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Sunday, February 26, 2023

First Sunday of Lent



**Introduction to the day**

*Today's gospel tells of Jesus' temptation in the desert. His forty-day fast becomes the basis of our Lenten pilgrimage. In the early church Lent was a time of intense preparation for those to be baptized at the Easter Vigil. This catechetical focus on the meaning of faith is at the heart of our Lenten journey to the baptismal waters of Easter. Hungry for God's mercy, we receive the bread of life to nourish us for the days ahead.*

**SHARING OUR JOYS AND CONCERNS**

**PRELUDE**

**GATHERING**

The Holy Spirit calls us together as the people of God.

**CONFESSION AND FORGIVENESS**

Blessed be the holy Trinity, † one God,  
who journeys with us these forty days,  
and sustains us with the gift of grace.

**Amen.**

Let us acknowledge before God and one another  
our need for repentance and God's mercy.

*Silence is kept for reflection.*

Holy God,

**we confess to you our faults and failings.**

**Too often we neglect and do not trust your holy word;**

**we take for ourselves instead of giving to others;**

**we spoil rather than steward your creation;**

**we cause hurt though you call us to heal;**

**we choose fear over compassion.**

**Forgive us, renew us, and lead us,**

**as we seek to follow in your way of life.**

**Amen.**

Hear the good news:  
 God so loved the world that God gave the only Son,  
 so that all may receive life.  
 This promise is for you!  
 God embraces you with divine mercy,  
 † forgives you in Christ's name,  
 and revives you in the Spirit's power.  
**Amen.**

**GATHERING SONG: *When We Are Tested* ACS 922**

## When We Are Tested



1 When we are test - ed and wres - tle a - lone,  
 2 When in the des - ert we cry for re - lief,  
 3 When we are tempt - ed to bar - ter our souls,  
 4 When we have strug - gled and searched through the night,



fam - ished for bread when the world of - fers stone,  
 plead - ing for paths marked by cer - tain be - lief,  
 trad - ing the truth for the pow'r to con - trol,  
 sort - ing and sift - ing the wrong from the right,



nour - ish us, God, by your word and your way,  
 lift us to love you be - yond sign and test,  
 teach us to wor - ship and praise on - ly you,  
 Sav - ior, sur - round us with cir - cles of care,



food that sus - tains us by night and by day.  
 trust - ing your pres - ence, our on - ly true rest.  
 seek - ing your will in the work that we do.  
 an - gels of heal - ing, of hope, and of prayer.

Text: Ruth Duck, b. 1947  
 Music: SLANE, Irish traditional  
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## **GREETING**

P: The love of God poured into our hearts,  
the saving grace of Jesus Christ,  
and the abundant life of the Holy Spirit  
be with you all.

**C: And also, with you.**

**Kyrie p. 138**

## **PRAYER OF THE DAY**

P: Let us pray.

**Lord God, our strength, the struggle between good and evil rages within and around us, and the devil and all the forces that defy you tempt us with empty promises. Keep us steadfast in your word, and when we fall, raise us again and restore us 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.**

*The assembly is seated.*

## **WORD**

God speaks to us in scripture reading, preaching, and song.

L: A reading from Genesis.

### **FIRST READING: Genesis 2:15-17; 3:1-7**

*Human beings were formed with great care, to be in relationship with the creator, creation, and one another. The serpent's promise to the first couple that their eyes would be opened led, ironically, to the discovery only that they were naked.*

<sup>15</sup>The LORD God took the man and put him in the garden of Eden to till it and keep it. <sup>16</sup>And the LORD God commanded the man, "You may freely eat of every tree of the garden; <sup>17</sup>but of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil you shall not eat, for in the day that you eat of it you shall die."

<sup>3:1</sup>Now the serpent was more crafty than any other wild animal that the LORD God had made. He said to the woman, "Did God say, 'You shall not eat from any tree in the garden'?" <sup>2</sup>The woman said to the serpent, "We may eat of the fruit of the trees in the garden; <sup>3</sup>but God said, 'You shall not eat of the fruit of the tree that is in the middle of the garden, nor shall you touch it, or you shall die.'" <sup>4</sup>But the serpent said to the woman, "You will not die; <sup>5</sup>for God knows that when you eat of it your eyes will be opened, and you will be like God, knowing good and evil." <sup>6</sup>So when the woman saw that the tree was good for food, and that it was a delight to the eyes, and that the tree was to be desired to make one wise, she took of its fruit and ate; and she also gave some to her husband, who was with her, and he ate. <sup>7</sup>Then the eyes of both were opened, and they knew that they were naked; and they sewed fig leaves together and made loincloths for themselves.

L: The word of the Lord.

**C: Thanks be to God.**

**L** Let us read the Psalm responsively by verse.

**PSALM: Psalm 32**

<sup>1</sup>Happy are they whose transgressions are forgiven,  
and whose sin is put away!

<sup>2</sup>**Happy are they to whom the LORD imputes no guilt,  
and in whose spirit there is no guile!**

<sup>3</sup>While I held my tongue, my bones withered away,  
because of my groaning all day long.

<sup>4</sup>**For your hand was heavy upon me day and night;  
my moisture was dried up as in the heat of summer.**

<sup>5</sup>Then I acknowledged my sin to you, and did not conceal my guilt.

I said, "I will confess my transgressions to the LORD." Then you forgave me  
the guilt of my sin.

<sup>6</sup>**Therefore all the faithful will make their prayers to you in time of trouble;  
when the great waters overflow, they shall not reach them.**

<sup>7</sup>You are my hiding-place; you preserve me from trouble;  
you surround me with shouts of deliverance.

<sup>8</sup>**"I will instruct you and teach you in the way that you should go;  
I will guide you with my eye.**

<sup>9</sup>Do not be like horse or mule, which have no understanding;  
who must be fitted with bit and bridle, or else they will not stay near you."

<sup>10</sup>**Great are the tribulations of the wicked;  
but mercy embraces those who trust in the LORD.**

<sup>11</sup>Be glad, you righteous, and rejoice in the LORD;  
shout for joy, all who are true of heart.

**L:** A reading from Romans.

**Second Reading: Romans 5:12-19**

*Through Adam's disobedience, humanity came under bondage to sin and death, from which we cannot free ourselves. In Christ's obedient death, God graciously showers on us the free gift of liberation and life.*

<sup>12</sup>Just as sin came into the world through one man, and death came through sin, and so death spread to all because all have sinned—<sup>13</sup>sin was indeed in the world before the law, but sin is not reckoned when there is no law. <sup>14</sup>Yet death exercised dominion from Adam to Moses, even over those whose sins were not like the transgression of Adam, who is a type of the one who was to come.

<sup>15</sup>But the free gift is not like the trespass. For if the many died through the one man's trespass, much more surely have the grace of God and the free gift in the grace of the one man, Jesus Christ, abounded for the many. <sup>16</sup>And the free gift is not like the effect of the one man's sin. For

the judgment following one trespass brought condemnation, but the free gift following many trespasses brings justification. <sup>17</sup>If, because of the one man's trespass, death exercised dominion through that one, much more surely will those who receive the abundance of grace and the free gift of righteousness exercise dominion in life through the one man, Jesus Christ.

<sup>18</sup>Therefore just as one man's trespass led to condemnation for all, so one man's act of righteousness leads to justification and life for all. <sup>19</sup>For just as by the one man's disobedience the many were made sinners, so by the one man's obedience the many will be made righteous.

L: The word of the Lord.

C: **Thanks be to God.**

*The assembly stands.*

### GOSPEL ACCLAMATION



Ⓒ Re - turn to the Lord, your God, for he is gra - cious and  
mer - ci - ful, slow to an - ger, and a - bound - ing in  
stead - fast love, and a - bound - ing in stead - fast love.

P: The holy gospel according to St. Matthew.

C: **Glory to you, O Lord.**

### GOSPEL: Matthew 4:1-11

*Jesus experiences anew the temptations that Israel faced in the wilderness. As the Son of God, he endures the testing of the evil one.*

<sup>1</sup>Jesus was led up by the Spirit into the wilderness to be tempted by the devil. <sup>2</sup>He fasted forty days and forty nights, and afterwards he was famished. <sup>3</sup>The tempter came and said to him, "If you are the Son of God, command these stones to become loaves of bread." <sup>4</sup>But he answered, "It is written,

'One does not live by bread alone,  
but by every word that comes from the mouth of God.'

<sup>5</sup>Then the devil took him to the holy city and placed him on the pinnacle of the temple, <sup>6</sup>saying to him, "If you are the Son of God, throw yourself down; for it is written,

'He will command his angels concerning you,'

and 'On their hands they will bear you up,  
so that you will not dash your foot against a stone.' ”

<sup>7</sup>Jesus said to him, “Again it is written, ‘Do not put the Lord your God to the test.’ ”

<sup>8</sup>Again, the devil took him to a very high mountain and showed him all the kingdoms of the world and their splendor; <sup>9</sup>and he said to him, “All these I will give you, if you will fall down and worship me.” <sup>10</sup>Jesus said to him, “Away with you, Satan! for it is written,

‘Worship the Lord your God,  
and serve only him.’ ”

<sup>11</sup>Then the devil left him, and suddenly angels came and waited on him.

P: The gospel of the Lord.

C: **Praise to you, O Christ.**

*The assembly is seated.*

## **SERMON**

**HYMN OF THE DAY: *I Want Jesus To Walk with Me* 325**

## **THE NICENE CREED**

**We believe in one God,  
the Father, the Almighty,  
maker of heaven and earth,  
of all that is, seen and unseen.**  
**We believe in one Lord, Jesus Christ,  
the only Son of God,  
eternally begotten of the Father,  
God from God, Light from Light,  
true God from true God,  
begotten, not made,  
of one Being with the Father;  
through him all things were made.**

**For us and for our salvation  
he came down from heaven,  
was incarnate of the Holy Spirit and the virgin Mary  
and became truly human.  
For our sake he was crucified under Pontius Pilate;  
he suffered death and was buried.  
On the third day he rose again  
in accordance with the scriptures;  
he ascended into heaven  
and is seated at the right hand of the Father.  
He will come again in glory to judge the living and the dead,  
and his kingdom will have no end.**

**We believe in the Holy Spirit, the Lord, the giver of life,  
who proceeds from the Father and the Son,\*  
who with the Father and the Son is worshiped and glorified,  
who has spoken through the prophets.  
We believe in one holy catholic and apostolic church.  
We acknowledge one baptism for the forgiveness of sins.  
We look for the resurrection of the dead,  
and the life of the world to come. Amen.**

## **PRAYERS OF INTERCESSION**

A: Sustained by God's abundant mercy, let us pray for the church, the world, and all of creation.

*A brief silence.*

You alone are God. Sustain your church in times of wilderness. Give vision and wisdom to bishops, their staff, and all entrusted with the ministry of administration (*especially*). Counsel all who faithfully lead your people into the future. Merciful God,

**C: receive our prayer.**

A: You create verdant gardens and expansive deserts. Tend to the needs of every living creature. Bless those who work in fields and orchards (*local sources of food and food distributors may be named*), that the world is nourished by the fruits of their labor. Merciful God,

**C: receive our prayer.**

A: You know our temptations. Sustain those who govern and legislate. Instill in them a sense of your justice and righteousness, that equity and peace would pervade all the regions and nations of the world. Merciful God,

**C: receive our prayer.**

A: You are a hiding place for all in distress. Draw near to exiles, and accompany all refugees and immigrants, especially children who travel alone. In times of trouble, trauma, or illness, surround your people with your steadfast love (*especially*). Merciful God,

**C: receive our prayer.**

A: You offer abundance to all. Bless the ministries of hospitality in this place. Care for those who tend to the needs of others, especially worship greeters, coffee hour hosts, and nursery attendants (*other ministries of care and hospitality may be named*). Merciful God,

**C: receive our prayer.**

A: You are a nurturing God. We pray for the Young Adults in Global Mission serving around the world. Help them form meaningful connections with their communities, deepen their understanding of you and your creation, and comfort them in times of trial or uncertainty. We are grateful for the work of Claire Weisner as she does Your work with her hands in Argentina and Uruguay. Merciful God,

**C: receive our prayer.**

*Here other intercessions may be offered.*

A: You alone are God. We praise you for the faithful departed in every age. Unite our prayers with theirs, until our wilderness journey is complete, and we rest in you. Merciful God,

**C: receive our prayer.**

P: We lift our prayers to you, O God, trusting in your steadfast love and your promise to renew your whole creation; through Jesus Christ our Savior. **Amen.**

*The assembly is seated.*  
Responding in Love

**Our Offering of Music**

**CHOIR ANTHEM** *Anchored to the Rock*

*The assembly stands.*

**OFFERTORY**

*Create in me a clean heart, O God, and renew a right spirit with me.  
Cast me not away from your presence and take not your Holy Spirit from me.  
Restore to me the joy of your salvation, and uphold me with your free Spirit.*

**OFFERING PRAYER**

A: God of good gifts,  
receive these and all our offerings  
as we present them in faithful service  
for the sake of your gospel.  
Prepare our hearts to receive you in this meal  
as you pour out your very presence  
through Christ Jesus, the wellspring of eternal life. **Amen.**

**GREAT THANKSGIVING P.144** *(in the beginning of the hymnal)*

**Dialogue**

**Preface by the Pastor**

**Holy Holy Holy**

**THANKSGIVING AT THE TABLE**

**Words of Institution**

God of our weary years, God of our silent tears,  
you have brought us this far along the way.

In times of bitterness you did not abandon us,  
but guided us into the path of love and light.

In every age you sent prophets  
to make known your loving will for all humanity.

The cry of the poor has become your own cry;  
our hunger and thirst for justice is your own desire.

In the fullness of time, you sent your chosen servant  
to preach good news to the afflicted,  
to break bread with the outcast and despised,  
and to ransom those in bondage to prejudice and sin.



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 all people for the forgiveness of sin.  
Do this for the remembrance of me.

For as often as we eat of this bread and drink from this cup  
we proclaim the Lord's death until he comes.

**Christ has died.**

**Christ is risen.**

**Christ will come again.**

Remembering, therefore, his death and resurrection,  
we await the day when Jesus shall return  
to free all the earth from the bonds of slavery and death.  
Come, Lord Jesus! And let the church say, Amen.  
**Amen.**

Send your Holy Spirit, our advocate,  
to fill the hearts of all who share this bread and cup  
with courage and wisdom to pursue love and justice in all the world.  
Come, Spirit of freedom! And let the church say, Amen.  
**Amen.**

Join our prayers and praise with your prophets and martyrs of every age,  
that, rejoicing in the hope of the resurrection,  
we might live in the freedom and hope of your Son.  
Through him, with him, in him, in the unity of the Holy Spirit,  
all glory and honor is yours, almighty Father, now and forever.  
**Amen.**

#### **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.**