

Bethel Evangelical Lutheran Church
3rd Sunday in Lent, March 23, 2025, Year C



Worship Assistants
Assisting Minister: Doug Hanson
Reader: Karl Peterson
Altar Guild: Gayle Peot
Communion Assistant: Dawn Schroeder
Ushers: Dave & Mary Hansen
Video Tech: Rick Johnson

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

GATHERING

Welcome

Call to Worship

Worship is a place to rest.

We breathe deeply here.

We still our aching bones.

We sit in the quiet.

We surround ourselves with music.

Worship is a place to rest.

Worship is a place to grow.

We listen for God's word.

We invite it to challenge us.

We lean in with curiosity.

We ask questions.

Worship is a place to grow.

So come into this space.

Come rest and grow here.

For where two or more are gathered, God is always there.

Let us worship our gracious God.

Opening Hymn *Joyful, Joyful We Adore Thee* **Cranberry 836**



- 1 Joy - ful, joy - ful we a - dore thee, God of glo - ry, Lord of love!
- 2 All thy works with joy sur - round thee, earth and heav'n re - flect thy rays,
- 3 Thou art giv - ing and for - giv - ing, ev - er bless - ing, ev - er blest,



Hearts un - fold like flow'rs be - fore thee, prais - ing thee, their sun a - bove.
stars and an - gels sing a - round thee, cen - ter of un - bro - ken praise.
well - spring of the joy of liv - ing, o - cean - depth of hap - py rest!



Melt the clouds of sin and sad - ness, drive the gloom of doubt a - way.
Field and for - est, vale and moun - tain, flow - 'ry mead - ow, flash - ing sea,
Thou our Fa - ther, Christ our broth - er, all who live in love are thine;



Giv - er of im - mor - tal glad - ness, fill us with the light of day.
chant - ing bird, and flow - ing foun - tain call us to re - joice in thee.
teach us how to love each oth - er, lift us to the joy di - vine!

Text: Henry van Dyke, 1852–1922

Music: HYMN TO JOY, Ludwig van Beethoven, 1770–1827, adapt.

Confession and Forgiveness

Friends, we carve out time for confession in worship because it is not enough to hear about God's grace once. We need that reminder again, and again, and again.

So join me in speaking the truth of our lives, and join me in receiving God's grace *again*.

Holy God,

There are days when we fail to rest.

We stretch ourselves too thin. We say "yes" to every invitation. We run a million miles a minute. We ignore your command to rest.

There are also days when we fail to act.

We wait for someone else. We take the easy road. We find excuses and justify our inaction.

God, forgive our imbalance.

Remind us that birds rest, and they also fly.

Show us how to do the same. Amen.

Family of faith, I have good news! Our God does not keep score. Our God does not hold grudges. Our God does not assume the worst about us. No, our God offers grace, and endless second chances, and boundless love. So join me in proclaiming the good news of the gospel:

God's grace is deeper than the ocean. God's love is wider than the sky. We are seen. We are claimed. We are forgiven.

May this realization change and inspire us.

Thanks be to God! Amen.



In peace, let us pray to the Lord.



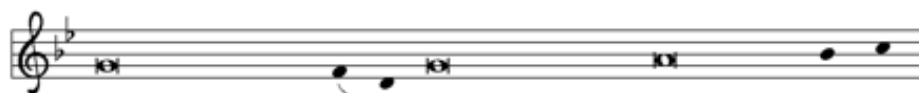
Lord, have mer - cy.



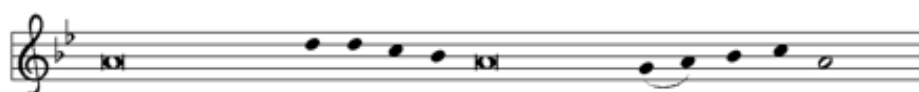
For the peace from a - bove, and for our sal - vation, let us pray to the Lord.



Lord, have mer - cy.



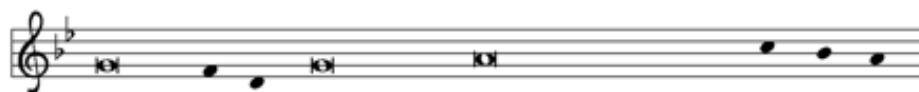
For the peace of the whole world, for the well - being of the church of



God, and for the u - ni - ty of all, let us pray to the Lord.



Lord, have mer - cy.



For this ho - ly house, and for all who offer here their wor - ship and



praise, let us pray to the Lord.



Lord, have mer - cy.



Help, save, comfort, and de - fend us, gra - cious Lord.



A - men.

Prayer of the Day

Let us pray, Creator God,

**Your Word is like soil,
something we can root ourselves in.**

**Your Word is like the sun,
big enough to touch everything with its warmth.**

**And your Word is like a gardener, a love that prunes and encourages, waters
and delights,
seeds and tends.**

**So as we turn to your text today, warm our bones,
tend to our broken pieces,
and show us how to grow.
With hope we pray, Amen.**

Bethel Choir

As the Deer

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

WORD

Psalm 63:1-8 (read responsively by verse)

¹O God, you are my God, I seek you,
my soul thirsts for you;
my flesh faints for you,
as in a dry and weary land where there is no water.

**²So I have looked upon you in the sanctuary,
beholding your power and glory.**

³Because your steadfast love is better than life,
my lips will praise you.

**⁴So I will bless you as long as I live;
I will lift up my hands and call on your name.**

⁵My soul is satisfied as with a rich feast,
and my mouth praises you with joyful lips

⁶when I think of you on my bed,
and meditate on you in the watches of the night;

**⁷for you have been my help,
and in the shadow of your wings I sing for joy.**

⁸My soul clings to you;
your right hand upholds me.

Word for All Ages



Let your stead - fast love come to us, O Lord.



Save us as you prom - ised; we will trust your word.

Gospel Luke 13:6-9

The Holy Gospel according to Luke. **Glory to you, O Lord.**

⁶ Then he told this parable: "A man had a fig tree planted in his vineyard, and he came looking for fruit on it and found none. ⁷ So he said to the man working the vineyard, 'See here! For three years I have come looking for fruit on this fig tree, and still I find none. Cut it down! Why should it be wasting the soil?' ⁸ He replied, 'Sir, let it alone for one more year, until I dig around it and put manure on it. ⁹ If it bears fruit next year, well and good, but if not, you can cut it down.' "

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

Sermon

Hymn of the Day

Beneath the Soil

Sanctified Art

(to the tune of *God is Our Refuge and Our Strength*)

Beneath the soil in the dark
There's growth too slow to see
A transformation not displayed
In branches, fruit, and leaves

Remember when the world demands
More than you can produce
We each grow at a different pace
And growth starts in the roots

The rest and nurture we receive
Will turn to fruit in time
For God made us to grow and change
As toward the sky we climb

In every season of our lives
The Spirit is at work
To nurture us to bear good fruit
While rooted in the earth

Affirmation of Faith

We believe in a God who loves and tends to us like a gardener.

**We believe that like the trees,
some seasons are for growth,
and some seasons are for rest.**

**Some days require pruning,
and some require planting.**

**Fortunately, we believe that our green-thumbed God sees us
and cultivates the sweetest fruit.**

**So may we plant roots,
reach for the sky,
grow where we can,
and rest when we need,
for we believe there is holiness in the pruning and in the planting.
And we do not grow alone. Thanks be to God,
Amen.**

Prayers of the People

Led by the Spirit, let us turn to God in prayer for the church, the world, and all those in need.

We pray for the church, called to be a witness to all peoples. Grant humility and wisdom to bishops, pastors, deacons, elders, councils, and congregations, that they may call upon you in making decisions. God, in your mercy, **receive our prayer.**

We pray for the earth, called to provide abundantly. Teach your people the goodness of your generosity, that in sharing what we have been given, all life may flourish on the planet that is our shared home. God, in your mercy, **receive our prayer.**

We pray for the nations, called to protect their inhabitants and collaborate in the work of justice and peace. Forge bonds of compassion and mutual care across human borders and boundaries, that all the world may have enough to live. God, in your mercy, **receive our prayer.**

We pray for those in need, called to receive your compassion. Comfort those whose lives have been disrupted through natural disasters and human conflict. Aid communities in coming together to mourn, heal, and rebuild. God, in your mercy, **receive our prayer.**

We pray for this assembly, called to welcome its neighbors to the table of your grace. Bless food pantries, community gardens and kitchens, clean water projects, and all ministries that address human hunger and thirst. God, in your mercy, **receive our prayer.**

We give thanks for the faithful lives of those who proclaimed your gospel in times of challenge and strife, and for all those whose lives of love and service have ended. May their witness inspire our own. God, in your mercy, **receive our prayer.**

Receive the prayers of your people and draw all things together in your love, in the name of Jesus, who leads us from death to life. **Amen.**

Peace

The peace of the Lord be with you always. **Add also with you.**

God feeds us with the presence of Jesus Christ.

MEAL

Offering Prayer

Let us pray, **We offer you these gifts, O God, Knowing that nothing can compare with the gift of life you offer us through Jesus Christ our Lord. Use these gifts and use our lives to proclaim the saving power of Christ's death and resurrection as we press on toward the goal for the prize of your heavenly call; in Jesus' name we pray. Amen.**

Words of Institution

The Lord be with you. **Add 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.

On the night in which he was betrayed

Which is to say, on the night *before* he was sentenced to death by those who didn't like him challenging their power and disturbing their status quo,

Which is to say, on the night *before* he was subjected to an unjust trial, torture and humiliation,

On *that* night, with the heart of God on full display, as feet were washed, a meal was shared and encouragement to carry on ministry was given,

On *that night*, Jesus took bread and gave thanks. He broke it and shared it among them saying:

Take, eat; this is my body given for you. Do this, and remember me.

In the same way after supper,

In the *same* way, which is to say, with those same *incredibly imperfect and fallible* people there,

His closest friends, the ones who knew him the best, the ones who had watched him heal, heard him teach and yet would doubt, deny and betray him,

In the *same* way, among those same *flawed and forgiven* people, with their fear and confusion on full display,

In the same way, after supper, Jesus took the cup and he gave thanks. He gave it to his friends, (his deeply loved, fully human friends), each of them in turn, saying:

Drink. This cup is poured out for you and for all people. It is the promise of God. Drink it, and remember me.

We remember Jesus' death and resurrection, our hope and our life. We break the bread and share the one cup.

Thanks be to God.

Lord's Prayer

Gathered into one by the Holy Spirit 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.

Lamb of God (setting 9)

Pg. 201

Lamb of God, you take a - way the sin of the
 world; have mer - cy on us. Lamb of God, you
 take a - way the sin of the world; have mer - cy on us.
 Lamb of God, you take a - way the sin of the
 world; grant us peace, grant us peace.



1 As rain from the clouds will your word come to earth,
2 As grain that is scat - tered your word has been sown
3 As rays of the sun shall your word light the world.



as snow from the heav - ens re - fresh - ing the land,
on rocks and on road - ways, in good earth and sand,
a - wak - ing and warm - ing and heal - ing our land.



Then soft - en our soil that the good seed may grow
Make fer - tile our soil that the good seed may grow
Then shine in our hearts that the good seed may grow



and rip - en rich fruit to re - turn to your hand,
and rip - en rich fruit to re - turn to your hand,
and rip - en rich fruit to re - turn to your hand.



We praise you, our God, for the dew of your word;
We praise you, our God, for the seed of your word;
We praise you, our God, for the light of your word;



we thank you, good gar - d'ner, for your ten - der toil,
we thank you, good gar - d'ner, for your ten - der toil,
we thank you, good gar - d'ner, for your ten - der toil.



We bless you, best farm - er, for hun - dred - fold yield,
We bless you, best farm - er, for hun - dred - fold yield,
We bless you, best farm - er, for hun - dred - fold yield.



for har - vest of grace in our once - bar - ren soil.
for har - vest of grace in our once - bar - ren soil.
for har - vest of grace in our once - bar - ren soil.

Text: Delores Dufree, cma, b. 1939

MUSIC: AFTON WATERS, Jonathan B. Spilman, 1812-1896

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Tryg - ga - re kan ing - en va - ra än Guds lil - la bar - na - ska - ra,
 1 Chil - dren of the heav'n-ly Fa-ther safe - ly in his bo - som gath - er;
 2 God his own doth tend and nour-ish, in his ho - ly courts they flour - ish.
 3 Nei - ther life nor death shall ev - er from the Lord his chil - dren sev - er;
 4 Though he giv - eth or he tak - eth, God his chil-dren ne'er for - sak - eth;



stjär - nan ej på him - la - fäs - tet, få - geln ej i kän - da näs - tet.
 nest - ling bird nor star in heav - en such a ref - uge e'er was giv - en.
 From all e - vil things he spares them, in his might - y arms he bears them.
 un - to them his grace he show - eth, and their sor - rows all he know - eth.
 his the lov - ing pur - pose sole - ly to pre - serve them pure and ho - ly.

Text: Carolina Sandell Berg, 1832–1903; tr. Ernst W. Olson, 1870–1958

Music: TRYGGARE KAN INGEN VARA, Swedish folk tune

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Prayer after Communion

Let us pray, Lord God, **we give thanks for your mercy-**
welcoming us home from wandering,
clothing us with your loving-kindness,
and feeding us from your abundant table.
Prepare a place for us in your holy realm,
where the lost are found,
Heaven and earth embrace, and the dead are raised to new life;
through Jesus Christ our Savior. Amen.

God blesses us and sends us in mission to the world.

SENDING

Announcements

Blessing


As you leave this place,
 may you find God in every messy middle.
 May you know that the world is bigger than two sides.
 May you trust that you are made in the image of God,
 and therefore, you contain multitudes.
 So may you move through this world with an open heart,
 with a curious mind, and with the confidence that you do not go alone. God is
 with you in the mountains,
 in the valleys,
 and everywhere in between.

Almighty God,
 motherly, majestic, and mighty,
 ✠ bless you this day and always.

Amen.

Sending Hymn *For the Fruit of All Creation*


Cranberry 679



1 For the fruit of all cre - a - tion, thanks be to God.
 2 In the just re - ward of la - bor, God's will is done.
 3 For the har - vests of the Spir - it, thanks be to God.



For these gifts to ev - 'ry na - tion, thanks be to God.
 In the help we give our neigh - bor, God's will is done.
 For the good we all in - her - it, thanks be to God.



For the plow - ing, sow - ing, reap - ing, si - lent growth while we are sleep - ing,
 In our world - wide task of car - ing for the hun - gry and de - spair - ing,
 For the won - ders that as - tound us, for the truths that still con - found us,



fu - ture needs in earth's safe - keep - ing, thanks be to God.
 in the har - vests we are shar - ing, God's will is done.
 most of all, that love has found us, thanks be to God.

Text: Fred Pratt Green, 1903–2000
 Music: AR HYD Y NOS, Welsh traditional
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Dismissal

Marked with the cross of Christ, go peaceably,
looking upon the hearts of others with the same compassion
Christ has shown you. **Thanks be to God.**

Funding for Mission & Budget

Monthly Receipts through 3/18/25:	\$ 16,990.40
Monthly Budget Expenses:	\$ 20,033.00
YTD Receipts through 2/28/25:	\$ 45,662

The Bethel Weekly

Fellowship Hour: Please, if you are able to help on a future date in April, sign up in the hallway.

Easter Flowers: Lilies and Tulips are \$14 each this year. Orders need to be received by April 6th. Order forms can be found in the office and lounge.

Midweek Lenten Services: Continue this Wednesday, March 26th at Bethel at 6:30pm. The theme this season is *Be Transformed*.

Palm Sunday Brunch: Is Sunday, April 13th. Please see the sign-up sheet in the hallway if you can help out by picking up the cinnamon rolls or fruit platter, baking, set-up or clean-up.

Now Hiring - Administrative Assistant: We give thanks for the gifts that Dawn has brought to the position but wish her well as she plans to retire. Do you know someone who might want to apply? The part-time position (up to 20 hours/week) offers flexible Monday-Thursday work hours in a comfortable and caring environment and includes paid vacation and sick leave. Position potential start date is May 1st and will be trained by Dawn. More information can be found at: <https://bethelonbond.org/now-hiring-admin-assistant/>

Handbags for Hope: In conjunction with the Resurrection Food Pantry, we are asking all the ladies to bring in any unwanted purses. Donations are also needed of travel size hygiene items such as toothbrushes, shampoo, lip balm,

etc. to fill the purses prior to distribution. Suggestions can be found on the front of the bin in the lounge.

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Adapted from a prayer by Rev. Sarah A. Speed | A Sanctified Art LLC |
sanctifiedart.org.

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David Gamrell, editor.