

# ST. MICHAEL'S LUTHERAN CHURCH

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*Our mission is to celebrate and share God's love in Jesus Christ*

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<sup>62</sup> The next day, that is, after the day of Preparation, the chief priests and the Pharisees gathered before Pilate <sup>63</sup> and said, "Sir, we remember what that impostor said while he was still alive, 'After three days I will rise again.'<sup>64</sup> Therefore command the tomb to be made secure until the third day; otherwise,



his disciples may go and steal him away and tell the people, 'He has been raised from the dead,' and the last deception would be worse than the first."<sup>65</sup> Pilate said to them, "You have a guard of soldiers; go, make it as secure as you can."<sup>66</sup> So they went with the guard and made the tomb secure by sealing the stone.

## **Palm Sunday**

March 29, 2026 at 8:15 & 11:00 AM

*Liturgy of Holy Communion*

*WOV Setting Six*

## **WELCOME TO ST. MICHAEL'S!**

If you are visiting with us for the first time, please share in all that is ours in Christ! We invite you to consider making St. Michael's your church home. Please ask us about our participation in God's mission in the world. By God's grace we celebrate and share Christ.

*Our worship services this morning are streamed live to St. Michael's Facebook and YouTube pages. Please keep conversation to a minimum in the sanctuary, you may be picked up by our sound system. If you prefer not to be seen on camera please speak to an usher and they will seat you outside of the video frame. Thank you for your understanding.*

## **DIGITAL SIGN IN**

You are welcome to sign in with our digital sign in. Please use the QR Code that can be found here in the bulletin or use the iPad on the table in the Narthex.



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## **ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS**

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## **INTRODUCTION**

*Today, we encounter the paradox that defines our faith: Jesus Christ is glorified king and humiliated servant. We too are full of paradox: like Peter, we fervently desire to follow Christ, but find ourselves afraid, denying God. We wave palms in celebration today as Christ comes into our midst, and we follow with trepidation as his path leads to death on the cross. Amid it all we are invited into this paradoxical promise of life through Christ's broken body and outpoured love in a meal of bread and wine. We begin this week that stands at the center of the church year, anticipating the completion of God's astounding work.*

## **WELCOME & ANNOUNCEMENTS**

### **PRELUDE**

*"Hosanna, Loud Hosanna"*

### **GATHERING**

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

*The assembly is invited to stand. All may make the sign of the cross, the sign that is marked at baptism, as the presiding minister begins.*

### **CONFESSION AND FORGIVENESS**

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

Let us return to God, confessing our sin in the assurance of God's abiding love.  
*Silence is kept for reflection.*

Compassionate One,

**you are slow to anger and abounding in steadfast love, but our lives do not always reflect you and your love for the world. We do not show others the tender compassion you have shown to us. We do not welcome others with the radical hospitality you grant to all people. We oppress others, even though you have set us free again and again. We squander the abundant gifts of the earth. Transform our lives and guide us again in the way of the cross. Amen.**

Beloved in Christ, God's arms are always stretched open wide to welcome the wandering ones home. In † Christ your sins are forgiven. You have a place in God's house forever.

**Amen.**

## PROCESSIONAL GOSPEL:

Matthew 21:1-11

*Jesus enters Jerusalem.*

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

<sup>1</sup> When they had come near Jerusalem and had reached Bethphage, at the Mount of Olives, Jesus sent two disciples, <sup>2</sup> saying to them, “Go into the village ahead of you, and immediately you will find a donkey tied and a colt with her; untie them and bring them to me. <sup>3</sup> If anyone says anything to you, just say this, ‘The Lord needs them.’ And he will send them immediately.” <sup>4</sup> This took place to fulfill what had been spoken through the prophet:

<sup>5</sup> “Tell the daughter of Zion,  
Look, your king is coming to you,  
humble and mounted on a donkey,  
and on a colt, the foal of a donkey.”

<sup>6</sup> The disciples went and did as Jesus had directed them; <sup>7</sup> they brought the donkey and the colt and put their cloaks on them, and he sat on them. <sup>8</sup> A very large crowd spread their cloaks on the road, and others cut branches from the trees and spread them on the road. <sup>9</sup> The crowds that went ahead of him and that followed were shouting,

“Hosanna to the Son of David!  
Blessed is the one who comes in the name of the Lord!  
Hosanna in the highest heaven!”

<sup>10</sup> When he entered Jerusalem, the whole city was in turmoil, asking, “Who is this?” <sup>11</sup> The crowds were saying, “This is the prophet Jesus from Nazareth in Galilee.”

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

## BLESSING OF THE PALMS

The Lord be with you. **And also with you**

Let us pray. We praise you, O God, for redeeming the world through our Savior Jesus Christ. Today he entered the holy city in triumph and was proclaimed messiah and king by those who spread garments and branches along his way. Bless these branches and those who carry them. Grant us grace to follow our Lord in the way of the cross, so that, joined to his death and resurrection, we enter into life with you; through the same Jesus Christ, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. **Amen.**

**GATHERING HYMN :**

“All Glory, Laud, and Honor”

ELW 344

*Refrain*

All glory, laud, and honor  
to you, redeemer, king,  
to whom the lips of children  
made sweet hosannas ring.

1 You are the king of Israel  
and David's royal Son,  
now in the Lord's name coming,  
our King and Blessed One. *Refrain*

2 The company of angels  
are praising you on high;  
creation and all mortals  
in chorus make reply. *Refrain*

3 The multitude of pilgrims  
with palms before you went;  
our praise and prayer and anthems  
before you we present. *Refrain*

4 To you, before your passion,  
they sang their hymns of praise.  
To you, now high exalted,  
our melody we raise. *Refrain*

5 Their praises you accepted;  
accept the prayers we bring,  
great author of all goodness,  
O good and gracious King. *Refrain*

*Text: Theodulph of Orleans, 760-821; tr. John Mason Neale, 1818-1866, alt. Used by permission from OneLicense.net #A-711336*

**GREETING**

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

**And also with you.**

**PRAYER OF THE DAY**

Everlasting God, in your endless love for the human race you sent our Lord Jesus Christ to take on our nature and to suffer death on the cross. In your mercy enable us to share in his obedience to your will and in the glorious victory of his resurrection, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever.

**Amen.**

*The assembly is seated.*

**ANTHEM:**

“Let the Rocks Cry Out”

Festival Choir

**WORD**

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

**FIRST READING****Isaiah 50:4-9a**

*The servant of the Lord expresses absolute confidence in his final vindication, despite the fact that he has been struck and spit upon. This characteristic of the servant played an important role in the early church's understanding of the suffering, death, and resurrection of Jesus.*

A reading from Isaiah.

<sup>4</sup>The Lord GOD has given me

the tongue of a teacher,  
that I may know how to sustain  
the weary with a word.

Morning by morning he wakens—  
wakens my ear  
to listen as those who are taught.

<sup>5</sup>The Lord GOD has opened my ear,  
and I was not rebellious,  
I did not turn backward.

<sup>6</sup>I gave my back to those who struck me,  
and my cheeks to those who pulled out the beard;  
I did not hide my face  
from insult and spitting.

<sup>7</sup>The Lord GOD helps me;  
therefore I have not been disgraced;  
therefore I have set my face like flint,  
and I know that I shall not be put to shame;  
<sup>8</sup>he who vindicates me is near.

Who will contend with me?  
Let us stand up together.

Who are my adversaries?  
Let them confront me.

<sup>9a</sup>It is the Lord GOD who helps me;  
who will declare me guilty?

The word of the Lord.

**Thanks be to God.**

## **SECOND READING**

**Philippians 2:5-11**

*Paul uses an early Christian hymn to help us comprehend Jesus' obedient selflessness on*

*the cross and how God has made Christ lord over all reality. The perspective of the cross becomes the way we rightly understand God, Christ, our own lives, and fellowship within the community of Christ.*

A reading from Philippians.

<sup>5</sup>Let the same mind be in you that was in Christ Jesus,

<sup>6</sup>who, though he was in the form of God,  
did not regard equality with God  
as something to be exploited,

<sup>7</sup>but emptied himself,  
taking the form of a slave,  
being born in human likeness.

And being found in human form,

<sup>8</sup>he humbled himself  
and became obedient to the point of death—  
even death on a cross.

<sup>9</sup>Therefore God also highly exalted him  
and gave him the name  
that is above every name,

<sup>10</sup>so that at the name of Jesus  
every knee should bend,  
in heaven and on earth and under the earth,

<sup>11</sup>and every tongue should confess  
that Jesus Christ is Lord,  
to the glory of God the Father.

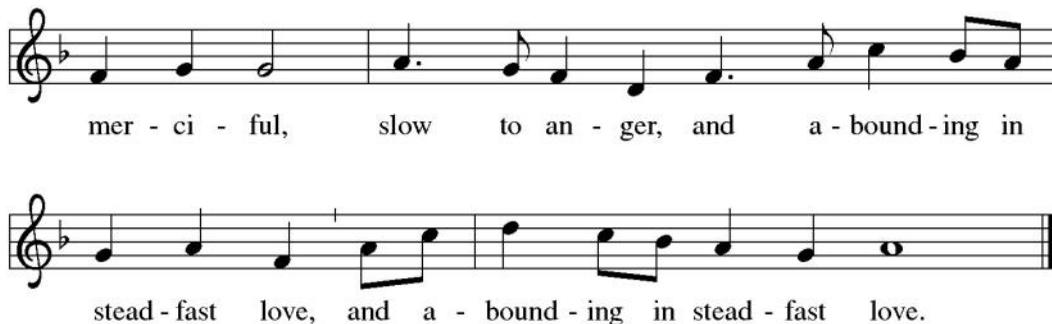
The word of the Lord.

**Thanks be to God.**

*The assembly is invited to stand.*

**GOSPEL ACCLAMATION**

Re - turn to the Lord, your God, for he is gra - cious and



**GOSPEL:**

**Matthews 26:14-27:-27:66**

In fulfillment of scripture and obedience to God’s will, Jesus goes to the cross so that a new covenant in his blood may bring forgiveness of sins. Even the soldiers who crucify him recognize him to be the Son of God.

The holy gospel according to Matthew. **Glory to you, O Lord.**

<sup>14</sup> One of the twelve, who was called Judas Iscariot, went to the chief priests <sup>15</sup> and said, “What will you give me if I betray him to you?” They paid him thirty pieces of silver. <sup>16</sup> And from that moment he began to look for an opportunity to betray him.

<sup>17</sup> On the first day of Unleavened Bread the disciples came to Jesus, saying, “Where do you want us to make the preparations for you to eat the Passover?” <sup>18</sup> He said, “Go into the city to a certain man and say to him, ‘The Teacher says, My time is near; I will keep the Passover at your house with my disciples.’ ” <sup>19</sup> So the disciples did as Jesus had directed them, and they prepared the Passover meal.

<sup>20</sup> When it was evening, he took his place with the twelve disciples, <sup>21</sup> and while they were eating he said, “Truly I tell you, one of you will betray me.” <sup>22</sup> And they became greatly distressed and began to say to him one after another, “Surely not I, Lord?” <sup>23</sup> He answered, “The one who has dipped his hand into the bowl with me will betray me. <sup>24</sup> The Son of Man goes as it is written of him, but woe to that one by whom the Son of Man is betrayed! It would have been better for that one not to have been born.” <sup>25</sup> Judas, who betrayed him, said, “Surely not I, Rabbi?” He replied, “You have said so.”

<sup>26</sup> While they were eating, Jesus took a loaf of bread, and after blessing it he broke it, gave it to the disciples, and said, “Take, eat; this is my body.” <sup>27</sup> Then he took a cup, and after giving thanks he gave it to them, saying, “Drink from it, all of you, <sup>28</sup> for this is my blood of the covenant, which is poured out for many for the forgiveness of sins. <sup>29</sup> I tell you, I will never again drink of this fruit of the vine until that day when I drink it new with you in my

Father's kingdom.”

<sup>30</sup> When they had sung the hymn, they went out to the Mount of Olives.

<sup>31</sup> Then Jesus said to them, “You will all fall away because of me this night, for it is written,

‘I will strike the shepherd,

and the sheep of the flock will be scattered.’

<sup>32</sup> “But after I am raised up, I will go ahead of you to Galilee.” <sup>33</sup> Peter said to him, “Even if all fall away because of you, I will never fall away.” <sup>34</sup> Jesus said to him, “Truly I tell you, this very night, before the cock crows, you will deny me three times.” <sup>35</sup> Peter said to him, “Even though I must die with you, I will not deny you.” And so said all the disciples.

<sup>36</sup> Then Jesus went with them to a place called Gethsemane, and he said to his disciples, “Sit here while I go over there and pray.” <sup>37</sup> He took with him Peter and the two sons of Zebedee and began to be grieved and agitated. <sup>38</sup> Then he said to them, “My soul is deeply grieved, even to death; remain here, and stay awake with me.” <sup>39</sup> And going a little farther, he threw himself on the ground and prayed, “My Father, if it is possible, let this cup pass from me, yet not what I want but what you want.” <sup>40</sup> Then he came to the disciples and found them sleeping, and he said to Peter, “So, could you not stay awake with me one hour? <sup>41</sup> Stay awake and pray that you may not come into the time of trial; the spirit indeed is willing, but the flesh is weak.” <sup>42</sup> Again he went away for the second time and prayed, “My Father, if this cannot pass unless I drink it, your will be done.” <sup>43</sup> Again he came and found them sleeping, for their eyes were heavy. <sup>44</sup> So leaving them again, he went away and prayed for the third time, saying the same words. <sup>45</sup> Then he came to the disciples and said to them, “Are you still sleeping and taking your rest? Now the hour is at hand, and the Son of Man is betrayed into the hands of sinners. <sup>46</sup> Get up, let us be going. Look, my betrayer is at hand.”

<sup>47</sup> While he was still speaking, Judas, one of the twelve, arrived; with him was a large crowd with swords and clubs, from the chief priests and the elders of the people. <sup>48</sup> Now the betrayer had given them a sign, saying, “The one I will kiss is the man; arrest him.” <sup>49</sup> At once he came up to Jesus and said, “Greetings, Rabbi!” and kissed him. <sup>50</sup> Jesus said to him, “Friend, do what you are here to do.” Then they came and laid hands on Jesus and arrested him. <sup>51</sup> Suddenly one of those with Jesus put his hand on his sword, drew it, and struck the slave of the high priest, cutting off his ear. <sup>52</sup> Then Jesus said to him, “Put your sword back into its place, for all who take the sword will die by the sword. <sup>53</sup> Do you think that I cannot appeal to my Father, and he will at once send me more than twelve legions of angels? <sup>54</sup> But how then would the scriptures be fulfilled, which say it must happen in this way?” <sup>55</sup> At that hour Jesus said to the crowds, “Have you come out with swords and clubs

to arrest me as though I were a rebel? Day after day I sat in the temple teaching, and you did not arrest me. <sup>56</sup> But all this has taken place, so that the scriptures of the prophets may be fulfilled.” Then all the disciples deserted him and fled.

<sup>57</sup> Those who had arrested Jesus took him to Caiaphas the high priest, where the scribes and the elders had gathered. <sup>58</sup> But Peter was following him at a distance, as far as the courtyard of the high priest, and going inside he sat with the guards in order to see how this would end. <sup>59</sup> Now the chief priests and the whole council were looking for false testimony against Jesus so that they might put him to death, <sup>60</sup> but they found none, though many false witnesses came forward. At last two came forward <sup>61</sup> and said, “This fellow said, ‘I am able to destroy the temple of God and to build it in three days.’” <sup>62</sup> The high priest stood up and said, “Have you no answer? What is it that they testify against you?” <sup>63</sup> But Jesus was silent. Then the high priest said to him, “I put you under oath before the living God, tell us if you are the Messiah, the Son of God.” <sup>64</sup> Jesus said to him, “You have said so. But I tell you,

From now on you will see the Son of Man  
seated at the right hand of Power  
and coming on the clouds of heaven.”

<sup>65</sup> Then the high priest tore his clothes and said, “He has blasphemed! Why do we still need witnesses? You have now heard his blasphemy. <sup>66</sup> What do you think?” They answered, “He deserves death.” <sup>67</sup> Then they spat in his face and struck him, and some slapped him, <sup>68</sup> saying, “Prophecy to us, you Messiah! Who is it that struck you?”

<sup>69</sup> Now Peter was sitting outside in the courtyard. A female servant came to him and said, “You also were with Jesus the Galilean.” <sup>70</sup> But he denied it before all of them, saying, “I do not know what you are talking about.” <sup>71</sup> When he went out to the porch, another female servant saw him, and she said to the bystanders, “This man was with Jesus the Nazarene.” <sup>72</sup> Again he denied it with an oath, “I do not know the man.” <sup>73</sup> After a little while the bystanders came up and said to Peter, “Certainly you are also one of them, for your accent betrays you.” <sup>74</sup> Then he began to curse, and he swore an oath, “I do not know the man!” At that moment the cock crowed. <sup>75</sup> Then Peter remembered what Jesus had said: “Before the cock crows, you will deny me three times.” And he went out and wept bitterly.

<sup>27:1</sup> When morning came, all the chief priests and the elders of the people conferred together against Jesus in order to bring about his death. <sup>2</sup> They bound him, led him away, and handed him over to Pilate the governor.

<sup>3</sup> When Judas, his betrayer, saw that Jesus was condemned, he repented and brought back the thirty pieces of silver to the chief priests and the elders. <sup>4</sup> He said, “I have sinned by betraying innocent blood.” But they said, “What is that to us? See to it yourself.” <sup>5</sup>

Throwing down the pieces of silver in the temple, he departed, and he went and hanged himself. <sup>6</sup> But the chief priests, taking the pieces of silver, said, "It is not lawful to put them into the treasury, since they are blood money." <sup>7</sup> After conferring together, they used them to buy the potter's field as a place to bury foreigners. <sup>8</sup> For this reason that field has been called the Field of Blood to this day. <sup>9</sup> Then was fulfilled what had been spoken through the prophet Jeremiah, "And they took the thirty pieces of silver, the price of the one on whom a price had been set, on whom some of the people of Israel had set a price, <sup>10</sup> and they gave them for the potter's field, as the Lord commanded me."

<sup>11</sup> Now Jesus stood before the governor, and the governor asked him, "Are you the king of the Jews?" Jesus said, "You say so." <sup>12</sup> But when he was accused by the chief priests and elders, he did not answer. <sup>13</sup> Then Pilate said to him, "Do you not hear how many accusations they make against you?" <sup>14</sup> But he gave him no answer, not even to a single charge, so that the governor was greatly amazed.

<sup>15</sup> Now at the festival the governor was accustomed to release a prisoner for the crowd, anyone whom they wanted. <sup>16</sup> At that time they had a notorious prisoner called Jesus Barabbas. <sup>17</sup> So after they had gathered, Pilate said to them, "Whom do you want me to release for you, Jesus Barabbas or Jesus who is called the Messiah?" <sup>18</sup> For he realized that it was out of jealousy that they had handed him over. <sup>19</sup> While he was sitting on the judgment seat, his wife sent word to him, "Have nothing to do with that innocent man, for today I have suffered a great deal because of a dream about him." <sup>20</sup> Now the chief priests and the elders persuaded the crowds to ask for Barabbas and to have Jesus killed. <sup>21</sup> The governor again said to them, "Which of the two do you want me to release for you?" And they said, "Barabbas." <sup>22</sup> Pilate said to them, "Then what should I do with Jesus who is called the Messiah?" All of them said, "Let him be crucified!" <sup>23</sup> Then he asked, "Why, what evil has he done?" But they shouted all the more, "Let him be crucified!"

<sup>24</sup> So when Pilate saw that he could do nothing but rather that a riot was beginning, he took some water and washed his hands before the crowd, saying, "I am innocent of this man's blood; see to it yourselves." <sup>25</sup> Then the people as a whole answered, "His blood be on us and on our children!" <sup>26</sup> So he released Barabbas for them, and after flogging Jesus he handed him over to be crucified.

<sup>27</sup> Then the soldiers of the governor took Jesus into the governor's headquarters, and they gathered the whole cohort around him. <sup>28</sup> They stripped him and put a scarlet robe on him, <sup>29</sup> and after twisting some thorns into a crown they put it on his head. They put a reed in his right hand and knelt before him and mocked him, saying, "Hail, King of the Jews!" <sup>30</sup> They spat on him and took the reed and struck him on the head. <sup>31</sup> After mocking him, they

stripped him of the robe and put his own clothes on him. Then they led him away to crucify him.

<sup>32</sup> As they went out, they came upon a man from Cyrene named Simon; they compelled this man to carry his cross. <sup>33</sup> And when they came to a place called Golgotha (which means Place of a Skull), <sup>34</sup> they offered him wine to drink, mixed with gall, but when he tasted it, he would not drink it. <sup>35</sup> And when they had crucified him, they divided his clothes among themselves by casting lots; <sup>36</sup> then they sat down there and kept watch over him. <sup>37</sup> Over his head they put the charge against him, which read, “This is Jesus, the King of the Jews.”

<sup>38</sup> Then two rebels were crucified with him, one on his right and one on his left. <sup>39</sup> Those who passed by derided him, shaking their heads <sup>40</sup> and saying, “You who would destroy the temple and build it in three days, save yourself! If you are the Son of God, come down from the cross.” <sup>41</sup> In the same way the chief priests also, along with the scribes and elders, were mocking him, saying, <sup>42</sup> “He saved others; he cannot save himself. He is the King of Israel; let him come down from the cross now, and we will believe in him. <sup>43</sup> He trusts in God; let God deliver him now, if he wants to, for he said, ‘I am God’s Son.’ ” <sup>44</sup> The rebels who were crucified with him also taunted him in the same way.

<sup>45</sup> From noon on, darkness came over the whole land until three in the afternoon. <sup>46</sup> And about three o’clock Jesus cried with a loud voice, “Eli, Eli, lema sabachthani?” that is, “My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?” <sup>47</sup> When some of the bystanders heard it, they said, “This man is calling for Elijah.” <sup>48</sup> At once one of them ran and got a sponge, filled it with sour wine, put it on a stick, and gave it to him to drink. <sup>49</sup> But the others said, “Wait, let us see whether Elijah will come to save him.” <sup>50</sup> Then Jesus cried again with a loud voice and breathed his last. <sup>51</sup> At that moment the curtain of the temple was torn in two, from top to bottom. The earth shook, and the rocks were split. <sup>52</sup> The tombs also were opened, and many bodies of the saints who had fallen asleep were raised. <sup>53</sup> After his resurrection they came out of the tombs and entered the holy city and appeared to many. <sup>54</sup> Now when the centurion and those with him, who were keeping watch over Jesus, saw the earthquake and what took place, they were terrified and said, “Truly this man was God’s Son!”

<sup>55</sup> Many women were also there, looking on from a distance; they had followed Jesus from Galilee, ministering to him. <sup>56</sup> Among them were Mary Magdalene, and Mary the mother of James and Joseph, and the mother of the sons of Zebedee.

<sup>57</sup> When it was evening, there came a rich man from Arimathea named Joseph, who also was himself a disciple of Jesus. <sup>58</sup> He went to Pilate and asked for the body of Jesus; then Pilate ordered it to be given to him. <sup>59</sup> So Joseph took the body and wrapped it in a clean linen cloth <sup>60</sup> and laid it in his new tomb, which he had hewn in the rock. He then rolled a great stone to the door of the tomb and went away. <sup>61</sup> Mary Magdalene and the other Mary

were there, sitting opposite the tomb.

<sup>62</sup> The next day, that is, after the day of Preparation, the chief priests and the Pharisees gathered before Pilate <sup>63</sup> and said, “Sir, we remember what that impostor said while he was still alive, ‘After three days I will rise again.’ <sup>64</sup> Therefore command the tomb to be made secure until the third day; otherwise, his disciples may go and steal him away and tell the people, ‘He has been raised from the dead,’ and the last deception would be worse than the first.” <sup>65</sup> Pilate said to them, “You have a guard of soldiers; go, make it as secure as you can.” <sup>66</sup> So they went with the guard and made the tomb secure by sealing the stone.

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

*The assembly is seated.*

### **NICENE’S 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*, 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 THE INTERCESSION**

Reconciled by God’s mercy and sustained by God’s presence, let us pray for the world and its needs, responding with “Your mercy is great”.

*A brief silence.*

O God, you announce words of grace and truth. Give wisdom to all preachers in your church both globally and locally, especially Rev. Christopher Bruesehoff, our Pastor, Rev. Christa Compton, our Bishop, and Rev. Yehiel Curry, our Presiding Bishop. Open our hearts to encounter the infinite life you offer in Jesus. Hear us, O God.

**Your mercy is great.**

You hold the whole universe. Gather sun and moon, clouds and stars, land and sea, and plants and animals around the cross, so that all creation bears witness to your saving love. Hear us, O God.

**Your mercy is great.**

Your power is sure. Destroy inequity and division in every place, and build your beloved community among all people. Guide judges, attorneys, and juries so that they act with justice and fairness. Hear us, O God.

**Your mercy is great.**

Your heart breaks open at our pain. Send healing and vindication to all who, like Jesus, know the sting of betrayal, denial, abuse, or false accusations. Be with those experiencing pain or loss this day, especially...those we name aloud...and those we hold in our hearts. Hear us, O God.

**Your mercy is great.**

Your ways show compassion. Let this same mind be in us as we enter Holy Week. Bless those here who will lead worship and tell the story of Jesus' death and resurrection. Hear us, O God.

**Your mercy is great.**

O God, your embrace is eternal. Praise and thanks to you for Hans Nielsen Hauge and all the faithful departed who rest in your mercy. Deliver us all from death's power and raise us to life in you. Hear us, O God.

**Your mercy is great.**

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

**Amen.**

## **SHARING OF THE PEACE**

The peace of Christ be with you always. **And also with you.**

*The assembly is seated.*

## **MEAL**

*God feeds us with the presence of Jesus Christ.*

## **OFFERING**

**MUSICAL OFFERING:** 8:15-”Ah, Holy Jesus”  
11:00-”Once Upon A Tree” -

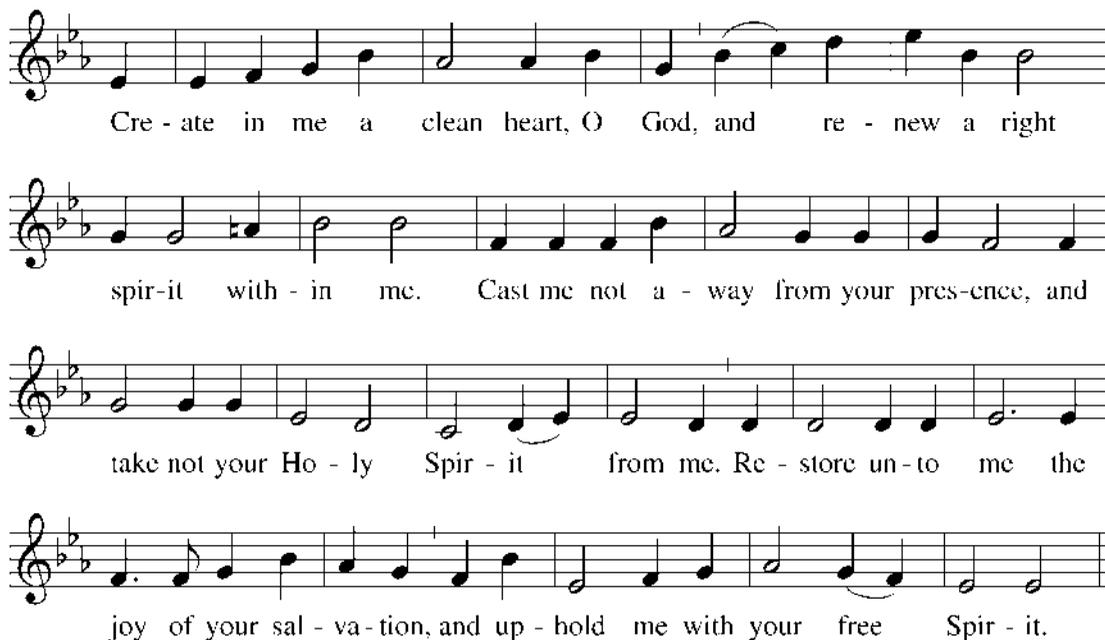
Festival Choir

*Offering is being gathered for the mission of the church, including the care of those in need. You are invited to place your offering in one of the offering plates located in the rear of the Sanctuary or send your offering to the church office through the mail or by having your bank mail a check directly. You can also contribute using any of the electronic giving options found on our church website.*

*The assembly is invited to stand.*

**OFFERATORY** “Create In Me A Clean Heart”

ELW 186



Cre - ate in me a clean heart, O God, and re - new a right  
spir-it with - in me. Cast me not a - way from your pres-ence, and  
take not your Ho - ly Spir - it from me. Re - store un-to me the  
joy of your sal - va - tion, and up - hold me with your free Spir - it.

Text: Psalm 51:10-12

Music: FRANCKE, J.A. Freylinghausen. 1670 1739

## OFFERING PRAYER

O God, maker of heaven and earth, your steadfast love embraces all creation. You send rain and sunshine to nourish the earth and bring forth its bounty. Through these gifts of bread and wine, draw us into the death and life of your Son, who calls us to bear witness to his saving work. We ask this in Jesus' name. **Amen.**

## THE GREAT THANKSGIVING

### DIALOGUE

The Lord be with you. **And 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.**

### PROPER PREFACE

It is indeed right and salutary that we should at all times and in all places offer thanks and praise to you, O Lord, holy Father, through Christ our Lord; who on the tree of the cross gave salvation to all, that, where death began, there life might be restored, and that he, who by a tree once overcame, might by a tree be overcome. And so, with the Church on earth and the hosts of heaven, we praise your name and join their unending hymn:

### HOLY, HOLY, HOLY



Ho - ly, ho - ly, ho - ly Lord, God of pow'r and might,



ho - ly, ho - ly, ho - ly Lord, God of pow'r and might,



heav-en and earth are full, full of your glo - ry.



Ho - san - na in the high - est, ho - san - na in the high - est.



Bless - ed is he who comes in the name of the Lord.



Ho - san - na in the high - est, ho - san - na in the high - est.

### **THANKSGIVING AT THE TABLE**

Blessed are you, O God of the universe. Your mercy is everlasting and your faithfulness endures from age to age.

Praise to you for creating the heavens and the earth.

Praise to you for saving the earth from the waters of the flood.

Praise to you for bringing the Israelites safely through the sea.

Praise to you for leading your people through the wilderness to the land of milk and honey.

Praise to you for the words and deeds of Jesus, your anointed one.

Praise to you for the death and resurrection of Christ.

Praise to you for your Spirit poured out on all nations.

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

With this bread and cup we remember our Lord's passover from death to life as we proclaim the mystery of faith:

**Christ has died. Christ is risen. Christ will come again.**

O God of resurrection and new life: Pour out your Holy Spirit on us and on these gifts of bread and wine. Bless this feast. Grace our table with your presence.

**Come, Holy Spirit.**

Reveal yourself to us in the breaking of the bread. Raise us up as the body of Christ for the world. Breathe new life into us. Send us forth, burning with justice, peace, and love.

**Come, Holy Spirit.**

With your holy ones of all times and places, with the earth and all its creatures, with sun and moon and stars, we praise you, O God, blessed and holy Trinity, now and forever.

**Amen.**

### **THE 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.**

### **DISTRIBUTION OF COMMUNION**

*We give thanks as we receive the real presence of our resurrected Lord in, with, and under the bread and the wine. Communion will be distributed continuously under the direction of the ushers. Take an empty cup to receive from a pouring chalice (let the communion assistant know if you prefer grape juice). Please let the pastor know if you require a gluten free host. When giving the bread and cup, the communion ministers say "The body of Christ, given for you. The blood of Christ, shed for you." and each person may respond, "Amen". Worshippers who are not yet communing are invited to come forward for a blessing.*

### **INVITATION TO COMMUNION**

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

# LAMB OF GOD



1. O Lamb of God, you bear the sin of  
2. O Lamb of God, you bear the sin of  
3. O Lamb of God, you bear the sin of



all the world a way; you  
all the world a way; you  
all the world a way; e



suf - fered death our lives to save; have  
set us free from guilt and grave; have  
-ter - nal peace with God you made; give



mer - cy now, we pray.  
mer - cy now, we pray.  
us your peace we pray.

*The assembly is seated.*

## COMMUNION HYMN

“Come to the Table”

ELW 481

Come to the table of mercy,  
prepared with the wine and the bread.  
All who are hungry and thirsty,  
come, and your souls will be fed.  
Come at the Lord's invitation;  
receive from his nail-scarred hand.  
Eat of the bread of salvation;  
drink of the blood of the Lamb.

*Text: Claire Cloninger, b. 1942. Text © 1991 Integrity's Hosanna! Music (ASCAP) c/o Integrity Media, Inc., 1000 Cody Road, Mobile, AL 36695; Juniper Landing Music (admin. Word Music); and Word Music (ASCAP). Used by permission from OneLicense.net #A-711336*

“Jesus, Keep Me Near the Cross”

ELW 335

- |   |  |
|---|--|
| 1 Jesus, keep me near the cross,<br>there's a precious fountain;<br>free to all, a healing stream<br>flows from Calv'ry's mountain.               | 3 Near the cross! O Lamb of God,<br>bring its scenes before me;<br>help me walk from day to day<br>with its shadow o'er me. <i>Refrain</i> |
| <i>Refrain</i><br>In the cross, in the cross<br>be my glory ever;<br>till my ransomed soul shall find<br>rest beyond the river.                   | 4 Near the cross I'll watch and wait,<br>hoping, trusting ever,<br>till I reach the golden strand<br>just beyond the river. <i>Refrain</i> |
| 2 Near the cross, a trembling soul,<br>love and mercy found me;<br>there the bright and morning star<br>sheds its beams around me. <i>Refrain</i> |  |

*Text: Fanny J. Crosby, 1820-1915. Used by permission from OneLicense.net #A-711336*

*After all have communed the assembly is invited to stand.*

## TABLE BLESSING

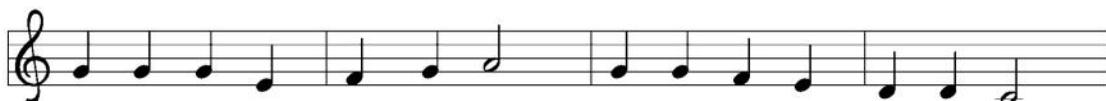
The Body and Blood of our Lord, Jesus Christ, strengthen you and keep you in Christ's Grace. **Amen.**



On my heart im - print your im - age, bless - ed Je - sus, king of grace,



that life's trou-bles nor its plea-sures ev - er may your work e - rase.



Let the clear in - scrip - tion be: Je - sus, cru - ci - fied for me,



is my life, my hope's foun-da-tion, all my glo-ry and sal - va - tion!

Text: Thomas H. Kingo, 1634–1703; tr. Peer O. Strømme, 1856–1921, alt.

Music: DER AM KREUZ, Johann B. König, 1691–1758

### PRAYER AFTER COMMUNION

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.**

### SENDING

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***“There in God’s Garden”*

ELW 342

- |   |   |
|---|---|
| 1 There in God's garden<br>stands the Tree of Wisdom,<br>whose leaves hold forth<br>the healing of the nations:<br>Tree of all knowledge,<br>Tree of all compassion,<br>Tree of all beauty.       | 4 See how its branches<br>reach to us in welcome;<br>hear what the Voice says,<br>"Come to me, ye weary!<br>Give me your sickness,<br>give me all your sorrow,<br>I will give blessing."  |
| 2 Its name is Jesus,<br>name that says, "Our Savior!"<br>There on its branches<br>see the scars of suff'ring;<br>see where the tendrils<br>of our human selfhood<br>feed on its lifeblood.        | 5 This is my ending,<br>this my resurrection;<br>into your hands, Lord,<br>I commit my spirit.<br>This have I searched for;<br>now I can possess it.<br>This ground is holy.              |
| 3 Thorns not its own<br>are tangled in its foliage;<br>our greed has starved it,<br>our despite has choked it.<br>Yet, look! it lives!<br>its grief has not destroyed it<br>nor fire consumed it. | 6 All heav'n is singing,<br>"Thanks to Christ whose passion<br>offers in mercy<br>healing, strength, and pardon.<br>Peoples and nations,<br>take it, take it freely!"<br>Amen! My Master! |

*Text: Király Imre von Pécselyi, c. 1590-c. 1641; tr. Erik Routley, 1917-1982. Text © 1976 Hinshaw Music, Inc. Used by permission from OneLicense.net #A-711336*

**DISMISSAL**

Go in peace. Believe the good news.

**Thanks be to God.**

**POSTLUDE***“When I Survey the Wondrous Cross”*

*The Eternal Candle is given in honor and celebration of Bruce Ogden’s 90th birthday from his children and grandchildren.*

## **UPCOMING COMMEMORATIONS**

### **Hans Nielsen Hauge, renewer of the church, died 1824**

*Sunday, March 29, 2026*

Hauge was a layperson who wished to revitalize the church in Norway. As a result of a mystical experience, he felt called to preach. Many professionals in the church feared his motives and influence, and he was imprisoned for leading unauthorized gatherings.

### **John Donne, poet, died 1631**

*Tuesday, March 31, 2026*

After finishing his education at Oxford University, Donne seemed headed for a career in the English public service. But a series of circumstances led him into the ordained ministry. He is well known as a writer of both secular and sacred poetry.

### **Benedict the African, confessor, died 1589**

*Saturday, April 4, 2026*

Born into slavery on the island of Sicily, Benedict lived as a hermit until the pope ordered all hermits to attach themselves to a monastery, at which time Benedict joined the Franciscans. Though illiterate, he was highly respected as a confessor and later superior of his community.

### **CONFIRMATION CLASS**

Confirmation class will meet on an irregular schedule. The class schedule for the next few weeks is as follows:

- Sundays, April 12, 19, & 26

All classes start at 7:00 PM. If you have any questions about confirmation or are interested in being a presenter for this years program please contact Pastor Chris.

### **CHRISTIAN ED**

Check out our bulletin board for full details and schedules for our groups. The schedule for the next few weeks is as follows:

- Pray & Grow (K-5th grade) will meet on 3/29
- Faith in Conversation ( All Adults) will meet on 4/12
- Michaelights (6-12th grade) will meet on 4/19
- Little Ones & Loved Ones (birth to 4/years) will meet on 5/17

All groups meet at 9:30 AM. Please see Pastor Chris, or Kim Billet with questions.

### **RENTING SPACE AT ST. MICHAEL'S**

We welcome opportunities to share our space with St Michael's family members and friends in our community. There are a variety of rooms available for social gatherings, such as bridal or baby showers, birthday and retirement celebrations and memorial events. We have hosted music lessons, recitals, auditions and rehearsals. Our social hall stage is well-suited to support students or performers at all levels. Civic groups or social / hobby clubs are also invited. Flexible office space is available for those who work from home but occasionally need a site for meetings or interviews. Honorariums for the use of church spaces vary based on event details. Please note that the church building and grounds are smoke and alcohol free.

### **SNOW REMOVAL APPEAL**

This winter brought two major snowstorms, and keeping our church property safe for worship and ministry has come at a significant cost. We budgeted \$12,000 for lawn and snow maintenance in 2026, but the severity of the storms means we have already spent over \$11,000. With the possibility of more snow later this year, we are inviting special gifts to help cover these unexpected expenses.

If you feel moved to contribute, please note "snow removal" with your offering, go to [smlc.churchtrac.com/give](https://smlc.churchtrac.com/give). or use the QR code Thank you for your generosity and for helping us care for our shared space and one another.



### EASTER FLOWERS

Easter Tulips, Daffodils and Hyacinths will adorn the chancel for our Easter celebration on April 5th. If you would like to sponsor the beauty of our Sanctuary, please fill out a form and return it to the office by no later than **TODAY, Sunday, March 29th**. Each flower costs \$12. Checks should be payable to "St. Michael's Lutheran Church." Write Easter Flowers on the envelope and in the check memo. Forms are available in the Narthex and through Constant Contact.

### DINNER CASSEROLES FOR JOSEPH'S HOUSE

SMLC continues to support Joseph's House in Camden with their mission to feed the homeless. The next opportunity to volunteer to make DINNER casseroles will be **SUNDAY, APRIL 12, 2026**. Casseroles can be dropped off to the church kitchen before or after Sunday worship services. Please mark your casserole as **BEEF** or **TURKEY**. This will assist the staff serving to meet any dietary needs for the dinner guests.

Use this link to sign-up: <https://bit.ly/4lV2C0D>

*Volunteers are needed to serve dinner at Joseph's House on the second Tuesday of each month. We will meet at church at 4:45pm (Dinner is served at 6:00pm) and return around 8:00pm. You can also drive yourself and meet at Joseph's House at 5:15pm. If you would like to serve, please contact Ray Kratz by phone (609-923-5718) or email ([raykratz@gmail.com](mailto:raykratz@gmail.com)).*

### BOOK CLUB

Join The SMLC Book Club on April 6th at 7:00 PM for our discussion of *Dear Edward* by Ann Napolitano. All are welcome to join us—you do not need to be a member, just have a love for books and good conversation. See Trudy Carr with questions or contact the office.

### MONTHLY PRAYER SERVICE

Start a new month off on the right foot. Join us on Wednesday, April 1 at 7:00 AM for our monthly prayer service.

### OFFICE CLOSED FOR EASTER

The church office will be closed on Monday, April 6, 2026 in observance of Easter.

## PARISH CALENDAR

### Sunday, March 29

8:15 AM Worship In-Person  
9:30 AM Pray & Grow  
11:00 AM Worship In-Person, Facebook,  
YouTube  
12:00 PM Vocal Choir Rehearsal  
6:00 PM NA Meeting

### Monday, March 30

### Tuesday, March 31

### Wednesday, April 1

7:00 AM Monthly Prayer Service  
9:30 AM Weight Watchers Meeting  
7:00 PM Mid-Week Lent Service

### Thursday, April 2

12:00 PM Maundy Thursday Spoken  
Communion  
7:00 PM Maundy Thursday Holy  
Communion

### Friday, April 3

10:30 AM Good Friday Children's Activity  
7:00 PM Good Friday Service

### Saturday, April 4

### Sunday, April 5

8:15 AM Worship In-Person  
11:00 AM Worship In-Person, Facebook,  
YouTube  
6:00 PM NA Meeting



**Evangelical Lutheran Church in America**  
God's work. Our hands.