



FOURTH SUNDAY OF LENT

MARCH 15, 2026

PRELUDE

Jesus, I will Ponder Now (Wilbur Held)
Brian Niebuhr, organ

WELCOME

GATHERING

CONFESSION AND FORGIVENESS

P In the name of the Father, and of the ☩ Son, and of the Holy Spirit.

C **Amen.**

P God of all mercy and consolation, come to the help of your people, turning us from our sin to live for you alone. Give us the power of your Holy Spirit that we may confess our sin, receive your forgiveness, and grow into the fullness of Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord.

C **Amen.**

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

Silence is kept for reflection.

P Most merciful God,

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

renew us, and lead us, so that we may delight in your will and walk in your ways, to the glory of your holy name. Amen.

P In the mercy of almighty God, Jesus Christ was given to die for us, and for his sake God forgives us all our sins. As a called and ordained minister of the church of Christ, and by his authority, I therefore declare to you the entire forgiveness of all your sins, in the name of the Father, and of the † Son, and of the Holy Spirit.

C **Amen.**

GATHERING HYMN

In the Cross of Christ I Glory (ELW 324)

1 **In the cross of Christ I glory,
tow'ring o'er the wrecks of time.
All the light of sacred story
gathers round its head sublime.**

2 **When the woes of life o'ertake me,
hopes deceive, and fears annoy,
never shall the cross forsake me;
lo, it glows with peace and joy.**

3 **When the sun of bliss is beaming
light and love upon my way,
from the cross the radiance streaming
adds more luster to the day.**

4 **Bane and blessing, pain and pleasure,
by the cross are sanctified;
peace is there that knows no measure,
joys that through all time abide.**

GREETING

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

C **And also with you.**

KYRIE

Cantor: In peace, in peace, let us pray to the...

Congregation: Refrain

Lord, have mer-cy, Christ, have mer-cy, Lord, have mer - cy.——

Cantor: For the Reign of God, and for peace throughout the world, for the unity of all, let us pray to the...*Refrain*

Cantor: For the people here, who have come to give you praise, for the strength to live your Word, let us pray to the..*Refrain*

Cantor: Help, save, and defend us, O God.

Congregation:

A - - - - men.

PRAYER OF THE DAY

P Let us pray.

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

PSALM

Psalm 23

Refrain: *Sing after cantor and at R*

My Shep - herd is our Lord. There is no - thing I shall want.

Verses

¹The Lord¹ is my shepherd;
I shall not¹ be in want.

²**The Lord makes me lie down¹ in green pastures
and leads me be-¹side still waters.**

³You restore my¹ soul, O Lord,

and guide me along right pathways¹ for your name's sake.

⁴**Though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I shall¹ fear no evil;
for you are with me; your rod and your staff, they¹ comfort me. R**

⁵You prepare a table before me in the presence¹ of my enemies;
you anoint my head with oil, and my cup is¹ running over.

⁶**Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me all the days¹ of my life,
and I will dwell in the house of the¹ Lord forever. R**

SECOND READING

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."

R Word of God. Word of Life.

C **Thanks be to God.**

KIDS' MESSAGE

GOSPEL ACCLAMATION

**Return to God with all your heart,
The Source of grace and mercy,
Come, seek the tender faithfulness of God.**

P The Holy Gospel according to St. John, the 9th chapter.

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

GOSPEL

John 9:1-41

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, ⁷ saying to him, "Go, wash in the pool of Siloam" (which means Sent). Then he went and washed and came back able to see. ⁸ The 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?" ⁹ Some were saying, "It is he." Others were saying, "No, but it is someone like him." He kept saying, "I am he." ¹⁰ But they kept asking him, "Then how were your eyes opened?" ¹¹ He 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." ¹² They said to him, "Where is he?" He said, "I do not know." ¹³ They brought to the Pharisees the man who had formerly been blind. ¹⁴ Now it was a Sabbath day when Jesus made the mud and opened his eyes. ¹⁵ Then 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." ¹⁶ Some 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. ¹⁷ So 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." ¹⁸ The 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 sight ¹⁹ and asked them, "Is this your son, who you say was born blind? How then does he now see?" ²⁰ His parents answered, "We know that this is our son and that he was born blind, ²¹ but 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." ²² His 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. ²³ Therefore his parents said, "He is of age; ask him." ²⁴ So 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." ²⁵ He answered, "I do not know whether he is a sinner. One thing I do know, that though I was blind, now I see." ²⁶ They said to him, "What did he do to you? How did he open your eyes?" ²⁷ He 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?" ²⁸ Then they reviled him, saying, "You are his disciple, but we are disciples of Moses. ²⁹ We know that God has spoken to Moses, but as for this man, we do not know where he comes from." ³⁰ The man answered, "Here is an astonishing thing! You do not know where he comes from, yet he opened my eyes. ³¹ We know that God does not listen to sinners, but he does listen to one who worships him and obeys his will. ³² Never since the world began has it been heard that anyone opened the eyes of a person born blind. ³³ If this man were not from God, he could do nothing." ³⁴ They answered him, "You were born entirely in sins, and are you trying to teach us?" And they drove him out. ³⁵ Jesus heard that they had driven him out, and when he found him he said, "Do you believe in the Son of Man?" ³⁶ He answered, "And who is he, sir? Tell me, so that I may believe in him." ³⁷ Jesus said to him, "You have seen him, and the one speaking with you is he." ³⁸ He said, "Lord, I believe." And he worshiped him. ³⁹ Jesus 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.”⁴⁰ Some of the Pharisees who were with him heard this and said to him, “Surely we are not blind, are we?”⁴¹ Jesus said to them, “If you were blind, you would not have sin. But now that you say, ‘We see,’ your sin remains.”

P The Gospel of the Lord.

C Praise to you, O Christ.

SERMON

Pastor Erin Heidelberger

HYMN OF THE DAY

Let My Spirit Always Sing (ACS 1020 on DIX)

- 1** Let my spirit always sing,
though my heart be wintering,
though the season of despair
give no sign that you are there,
God to whom my days belong,
let there always be a song.

- 2** Though my body be confined,
let your word engage my mind,
let the inner eye discern
how much more there is to learn,
see a world becoming whole
through the window of the soul.

- 3** Let your wisdom grace my years,
choose my words and chase my fears,
give me wit to welcome change,
to accept, and not estrange,
let my joy be full and deep
in the knowledge that I keep.

- 4** Let my spirit always sing,
to your Spirit answering,
through the silence, through the pain
know my hope is not in vain,
like a feather on your breath

trust your love, through life and death.

APOSTLES' CREED

P Living together in trust and hope, we confess our faith.

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.**

PRAYERS

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

After each petition, respond with, "Your mercy is great."

(In our prayers today, during a time of silence, pray for those listed below and for others according to their needs)

Recent concerns: Beth Strasheim, Jane Zatechka, Ruby Augustine, Linda Hinkle, and Carol Reckmeyer. *Those with ongoing concerns:* Marge Wessels, Pastor Bill Peterson, Mary Brass, Vern Westberg, and Michael Dalton. *Those who are part of our homebound community:* Sylvia Kempf, M. Joyce Hansen, Cindy Schuster, Betty Miller, Jeanette Metteer, Dennis Schuster, Rod Price, De Hansen, and Margrett Wehland.

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

C Amen.

PEACE OF CHRIST IS SHARED

P The peace of Christ be with you always.

C And also with you.

MUSIC OFFERING

Jesus, the Shepherd (Eugene Butler)
Adult Choir

Musical Offering response:

P To God be the glory.

C **Amen.**

OFFERTORY HYMN

**On my heart imprint your image,
Blessed Jesus, king of grace,
That life's troubles nor its pleasures
Ever may your work erase.
Let the clear inscription be:
Jesus, crucified for me,
Is my life, my hope's foundation,
All my glory and salvation!**

OFFERTORY PRAYER

P Let us pray.

C **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.**

GREAT THANKSGIVING

P The Lord be with you.

C **And also with you.**

P Lift up your hearts.

C **We lift them to the Lord.**

P Let us give thanks to the Lord our God.

C **It is right to give our thanks and praise.**

P It is indeed... (*here the minister continues with the proper preface, concluding:*) we praise your name and join their unending hymn:

Holy, holy, holy Lord,

**God of power and might,
Heav'n and earth are full of your glory.
Hosanna in the highest,
Hosanna in the highest.
Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord..
Hosanna, in the highest,
Hosanna in the highest.**

WORDS OF INSTITUTION

LORD'S PRAYER

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

INVITATION TO THE TABLE

P This is the Table of the Lord;
Come, not because you are strong but because you are weak.
Come, not because of any goodness of your own but because you need mercy and help.
Come, because you love the Lord a little and would like to love him more.
Come, because he loves you and gave himself for you.
These are the gifts of God for the people of God.
C **Thanks be to God.**

LAMB OF GOD

**Lamb of God, you take away the sin of the world,
have mercy on us,
Lamb of God, you take away our sin.
have mercy on us,
Lamb of God, you take away the sin of the world,
grant us peace, grant us peace.**

COMMUNION MUSIC

My Savior and My God (Jay Althouse)
Betsy Bjerke, vocal

COMMUNION HYMNS

Amazing Grace (ELW 779)

- 1 **Amazing grace! how sweet the sound
that saved a wretch like me!
I once was lost, but now am found;
was blind, but now I see.**

- 2 **'Twas grace that taught my heart to fear,
and grace my fears relieved;
how precious did that grace appear
the hour I first believed!**

- 3 **Through many dangers, toils, and snares
I have already come;
'tis grace has brought me safe thus far,
and grace will lead me home.**

- 4 **The Lord has promised good to me;
his word my hope secures;
he will my shield and portion be
as long as life endures.**

- 5 **When we've been there ten thousand years,
bright shining as the sun,
we've no less days to sing God's praise
than when we'd first begun.**

O Christ, Your Heart Compassionate (ELW 722)

- 1 **O Christ, your heart, compassionate,
bore ev'ry human pain.
Its beating was the pulse of God;
its breadth, God's vast domain.**

The heart of God, the heart of Christ
combined in perfect rhyme
to write God's love in human deeds,
eternity in time.

2 As once you welcomed those cast down
and healed the sick, the blind,
so may all bruised and broken lives
through us your help still find.
Lord, join our hearts with those who weep
that none may weep alone,
and help us bear another's pain
as though it were our own.

3 O Christ, create new hearts in us
that beat in time with yours,
that, joined by faith with your great heart,
become love's open doors.
We are your body, risen Christ;
our hearts, our hands we yield
that through our life and ministry
your love may be revealed.

4 O Love that made the distant stars,
yet marks the sparrow's fall,
whose arms stretched wide upon a cross
embrace and bear us all:
come, make your church a servant church
that walks your servant ways,
whose deeds of love rise up to you,
a sacrifice of praise!

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

C Amen.

PRAYER AFTER COMMUNION

P Let us pray.

C **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, help us be Christ's body in the world, bearing witness to your love for all creation, through Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord. Amen.**

SENDING

BLESSING

P 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.

C **Amen.**

SENDING HYMN

Be Thou My Vision (ELW 793)

- 1 **Be thou my vision, O Lord of my heart;
naught be all else to me, save that thou art:
thou my best thought both by day and by night,
waking or sleeping, thy presence my light.**
- 2 **Be thou my wisdom, and thou my true word;
I ever with thee and thou with me, Lord.
Thou my soul's shelter, and thou my high tow'r,
raise thou me heav'nward, O Pow'r of my pow'r.**
- 3 **Riches I heed not, nor vain, empty praise,
thou mine inheritance, now and always:
thou and thou only, the first in my heart,
great God of heaven, my treasure thou art.**
- 4 **Light of my soul, after victory won,
may I reach heaven's joys, O heaven's Sun!
Heart of my own heart, whatever befall,
still be my vision, O Ruler of all.**

DISMISSAL

P Go in peace. Believe the good news.

C **Thanks be to God.**

POSTLUDE

Communion (Gordon Young)
Brian Niebuhr, organ

Lead Pastor: Erin Heidelberger
Associate Pastor: Andrew Kitzing
Cantor: Betsy Bjerke
Live Streaming: Brian Niebuhr

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