

St. John's Evangelical Lutheran Church March 30, 2025

ST. JOHN'S EVANGELICAL LUTHERAN CHURCH

106 Scheid Road, Sandusky, OH 44870 (419) 625-2192 www.stjohnlcsandusky.com Sanctuary Worship 10:30 a.m. Live streamed to Facebook

Stacy Lauer-Scovanner, Pastor

March 30, 2025

Fourth Sunday in Lent

Welcome to Worship! The psalm sets the tone this day: "Happy are they whose transgressions are forgiven, and whose sin is put away!" Happy are those who have "become the righteousness of God" in the merits of Christ Jesus. Happy are those for whom the forgiveness of God has "rolled away . . . the disgrace" of former times. Happy is the father at the return of his prodigal son. Happy are we that our sins are forgiven for Jesus' sake. Rejoice!

As Lutheran Christians, we believe and teach that Christ is truly present in the celebration of Holy Communion as he is God with us. Christians of all denominations are encouraged to come to the Lord's table. We commune children of any age who have received communion instruction at St. John or another Christian church. Children who have not yet received communion instruction will receive a blessing. Both red wine and white grape juice are offered to accommodate various traditions. Gluten free wafers are provided for those with dietary restrictions. Please make the pastor aware of your need.

If you are visiting today, please sign the guest register after worship. Plan to worship with us again next Sunday.

Bell

Welcome and announcements Please stand if you are able

Gathering

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

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. 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.

You have a place in God's house forever.

Amen.

Gathering Hymn

"Come, Thou Fount of Every Blessing"

ELW 807

Text: Robert Robinson, 1735-1790, alt. Music: J. Wyeth, Repository of Sacred Music, Part II, 1813 Public Domain

1 Come, thou Fount of ev'ry blessing, tune my heart to sing thy grace; streams of mercy, never ceasing, call for songs of loudest praise. While the hope of endless glory fills my heart with joy and love, teach me ever to adore thee; may I still thy goodness prove.

3 Oh, to grace how great a debtor daily I'm constrained to be; let that grace now like a fetter bind my wand'ring heart to thee.

2 Here I raise my Ebenezer:
"Hither by thy help I've come";
and I hope, by thy good pleasure,
safely to arrive at home.
Jesus sought me when a stranger,
wand'ring from the fold of God;
he, to rescue me from danger,
interposed his precious blood.

Prone to wander, Lord, I feel it; prone to leave the God I love. Here's my heart, oh, take and seal it; seal it for thy courts above.

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.

Lenten Wreath

"Beneath the Cross of Jesus"

ELW **338**

Text: Elizabeth C. Clephane, 1830-1869 Music: Frederick C. Maker, 1844-1927 Public Domain

During the singing of "Beneath the Cross of Jesus" verse 1, a single candle on the Lenten wreath is extinguished. Our space becomes a little darker as we journey together toward the Passion of Christ.

1 Beneath the cross of Jesus I long to take my stand; the shadow of a mighty rock within a weary land,

a home within a wilderness, a rest upon the way, from the burning of the noontide heat and burdens of the day.

Prayer of the Day

Let us pray.

God of compassion, you welcome the wayward, and you embrace us all with your mercy. By our baptism clothe us with garments of your grace, and feed us at the table of your love, through Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. Amen.

Please be seated

First Reading: Joshua 5:9-12

A reading from Joshua.

By celebrating the Passover and eating the produce of the promised land instead of the miraculous manna that had sustained them in the desert, the Israelites symbolically bring their forty years of wilderness wandering to an end at Gilgal.

⁹ The LORD said to Joshua, "Today I have rolled away from you the disgrace of Egypt." And so that place is called Gilgal to this day.

¹⁰ While the Israelites were camped in Gilgal they kept the passover in the evening on the fourteenth day of the month in the plains of Jericho. ¹¹ On the day after the passover, on that very day, they ate the produce of the land, unleavened cakes and parched grain. ¹² The manna ceased on the day they ate the produce of the land, and the Israelites no longer had manna; they ate the crops of the land of Canaan that year.

The word of the Lord. Thanks be to God.

Psalm: Psalm 32 (Read responsively)

- ¹ Happy are they whose transgressions are forgiven, and whose sin is put away!
 - ² Happy are they to whom the LORD imputes no guilt, and in whose spirit there is no guile!
 - ³ While I held my tongue, my bones withered away, because of my groaning all day long.

- ⁴ For your hand was heavy upon me day and night; my moisture was dried up as in the heat of summer.
- ⁵ 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.
 - ⁶ Therefore all the faithful will make their prayers to you in time of trouble; when the great waters overflow, they shall not reach them.
 - ⁷You are my hiding-place; you preserve me from trouble; you surround me with shouts of deliverance.
 - ⁸ "I will instruct you and teach you in the way that you should go; I will guide you with my eye.
 - ⁹Do 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."
 - ¹⁰ Great are the tribulations of the wicked; but mercy embraces those who trust in the LORD.
 - ¹¹ Be glad, you righteous, and rejoice in the LORD; shout for joy, all who are true of heart.

Second Reading: 2 Corinthians 5:16-21

A reading from 2 Corinthians.

One way to describe the gospel is the promise that in Christ everything is transformed into newness. All mistakes, all deliberate sins, all old history is reconciled with Christ's resurrection. This is Paul's strong message to the congregation in the city of Corinth.

¹⁶ From now on, therefore, we regard no one from a human point of view; even though we once knew Christ from a human point of view, we know him no longer in that way. ¹⁷ So if anyone is in Christ, there is a new creation: everything old has passed away; see, everything has become new! ¹⁸ All this is from God, who reconciled us to himself through Christ, and has given us the ministry of reconciliation; ¹⁹ that is, in Christ God was reconciling the world to himself, not counting their trespasses against them, and entrusting the message of reconciliation to us. ²⁰ So we are ambassadors for Christ, since God is making his appeal through us; we entreat you on behalf of Christ, be reconciled to God. ²¹ For our sake he made him to be sin who knew no sin, so that in him we might become the righteousness of God.

The word of the Lord. **Thanks be to God.** *Please stand*

Text and music © 1985 Prince of Peace Publishing, Changing Church, Inc.

Lord, let my heart be good soil, open to the seed of your word.

Lord, let my heart be good soil, where love can grow and peace is understood.

When my heart is hard, break the stone away. When my heart is cold, warm it with the day. When my heart is lost, lead me on your way. Lord, let my heart, Lord, let my heart, Lord, let my heart be good soil.

Gospel: Luke 15:1-3, 11b-32 The holy gospel according to Luke. Glory to you, O Lord.

Jesus tells a parable about a son who ponders his father's love only after he has spurned it. The grace he receives is beyond his hopes. That same grace is a crisis for an older brother who believes it is his obedience that has earned his place in the father's home.

¹ Now all the tax collectors and sinners were coming near to listen to [Jesus.] ² And the Pharisees and the scribes were grumbling and saying, "This fellow welcomes sinners and eats with them."

³ So he told them this parable: ^{11b} "There was a man who had two sons. ¹² The younger of them said to his father, 'Father, give me the share of the property that will belong to me.' So he divided his property between them. ¹³ A few days later the younger son gathered all he had and traveled to a distant country, and there he squandered his property in dissolute living. 14 When he had spent everything, a severe famine took place throughout that country, and he began to be in need. 15 So he went and hired himself out to one of the citizens of that country, who sent him to his fields to feed the pigs. 16 He would gladly have filled himself with the pods that the pigs were eating; and no one gave him anything. ¹⁷ But when he came to himself he said, 'How many of my father's hired hands have bread enough and to spare, but here I am dying of hunger! 18 I will get up and go to my father, and I will say to him, "Father, I have sinned against heaven and before you; 19 I am no longer worthy to be called your son; treat me like one of your hired hands."' 20 So he set off and went to his father. But while he was still far off, his father saw him and was filled with compassion; he ran and put his arms around him and kissed him. ²¹ Then the son said to him, 'Father, I have sinned against heaven and before you; I am no longer worthy to be called your son.' 22 But the father said to his slaves, 'Quickly, bring out a robe—the best one—and put it on him; put a ring on his finger and sandals on his feet. ²³ And get the fatted calf and kill it, and let us eat and celebrate; ²⁴ for this son of mine was dead and is alive again; he was lost and is found!' And they began to celebrate.

²⁵ "Now his elder son was in the field; and when he came and approached the house, he heard music and dancing. ²⁶ He called one of the slaves and asked what was going on. ²⁷ He replied, 'Your brother has come, and your father has killed the fatted calf, because he has got him back safe and sound.' ²⁸ Then he became angry and refused to go in. His father came out and began to plead with him. ²⁹ But he answered his father, 'Listen! For all these years I have been working like a slave for you, and I have never disobeyed your command; yet you have never given me even a young goat so that I might celebrate with my friends. ³⁰ But when this son of yours came back, who has devoured your property with prostitutes, you killed the fatted calf for him!' ³¹ Then the father said to him, 'Son, you are always with me, and all that is mine is yours. ³² But we had to celebrate and rejoice, because this brother of yours was dead and has come to life; he was lost and has been found.'"

The gospel of the Lord. Praise to you, O Christ.

Please be seated.

Youth Time

"Jesus Loves Me"

Text: Anna B. Warner, 1820–1915, alt. Music: William B. Bradbury, 1816–1868 Public Domain

Sermon

Please stand if you are able

Hymn of the Day

"What Wondrous Love Is This"

ELW **666**

Arr. © 1955 Augsburg Publishing House, admin. Augsburg Fortress

- 1 What wondrous love is this,
 O my soul, O my soul!
 What wondrous love is this, O my soul!
 What wondrous love is this
 that caused the Lord of bliss
 to bear the dreadful curse
 for my soul, for my soul,
 to bear the dreadful curse for my soul?
- I will sing, I will sing; to God and to the Lamb I will sing; to God and to the Lamb I will sing; to God and to the Lamb, who is the great I AM, while millions join the theme, I will sing, I will sing, while millions join the theme, I will sing.
- 2 When I was sinking down, sinking down, sinking down, sinking down, when I was sinking down sinking down beneath God's righteous frown, Christ laid aside his crown for my soul, Christ laid aside his crown for my soul.
- 4 And when from death I'm free,
 I'll sing on, I'll sing on;
 and when from death I'm free, I'll sing on;
 and when from death I'm free,
 I'll sing God's love for me,
 and through eternity
 I'll sing on, I'll sing on;
 and through eternity I'll sing on.

Prayers of the people:

Response: God, in your mercy, receive our prayer.

Peace

The peace of Christ be with you always.

And also with you.

Please be seated

Offering

"What Wondrous Love Is This"

Arr. © 1955 Augsburg Publishing House, admin. Augsburg Fortress

Please stand if you are able

Offertory

"As the Grains of Wheat"

ELW **465**

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Refrain

As the grains of wheat once scattered on the hill were gathered into one to become our bread; so may all your people from all the ends of earth be gathered into one in you.

- 1 As this cup of blessing is shared within our midst,
- may we share the presence of your love. Refrain
- 2 Let this be a foretaste of all that is to come when all creation shares this feast with you. Refrain

Offering Prayer

God our provider, you have not fed us with bread alone, but with words of grace and life. Bless us and these your gifts, which we receive from your bounty, through Jesus Christ our Lord.

Amen.

Great Thanksgiving

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.

Thanksgiving at the Table

Holy, mighty, and merciful Lord, heaven and earth are full of your glory.

In great love you sent to us Jesus, your Son, who reached out to heal the sick and suffering, who preached good news to the poor, and who, on the cross, opened his arms to all.

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.

Remembering, therefore, his death, resurrection, and ascension, we await his coming in glory.

Pour out upon us the Spirit of your love, O Lord, and unite the wills of all who share this heavenly food, the body and blood of Jesus Christ, our Lord; to whom, with you and the Holy Spirit, be all honor and glory, now and forever.

Amen.

The 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

Invitation to Communion

Taste and see that the Lord is good. *Please be seated*

Communion Song



Distribution Hymn

"Amazing Grace, How Sweet the Sound"

ELW **779**

Text: John Newton, 1725-1807, alt., sts. 1-4; anonymous, st. 5 Music: W. Walker, *Southern Harmony*, 1835; arr. Edwin O. Excell, 1851-1921, alt.

- 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.
- 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.
- 5 When we've been there ten thousand years, bright shining as the sun,

- 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!
- 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.

we've no less days to sing God's praise than when we'd first begun.

Distribution Hymn

"Baptized and Set Free"

ELW **453**

Text and music © 1999 Augsburg Fortress

1 We are people created, chosen by God.
Then we're washed, ever gently, in mercy and love.
Sin has power no more.
Jesus opened the door to a fountain bringing healing, and wholeness and more.

2 We are fed and we're nourished, filled and refreshed.
Then our hunger returns and again we are blessed.
For whatever the need,
God is greater indeed:
endless ocean, always deeper than all of our need.

3 We are nourished by water, all living things, and by life that the Spirit abundantly brings. As we journey toward home, may your presence be known: precious river, ever-flowing, now carry us home.

4 Now with praise and thanksgiving, we join the song.
All are welcome! We gather to sing loud and strong.
Not enslaved, but set free!
From now on, all will be one in Jesus, one in water, baptized and set free!

Post Communion Blessing

The body and blood of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ strengthen you and keep you in His care.

Amen

Prayer After Communion

Let us pray.

Compassionate God, you have fed us with the bread of heaven. Sustain us in our Lenten pilgrimage: may our fasting be hunger for justice; our alms, a making of peace; and our prayer, the song of grateful hearts, through Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord.

Amen.

Sending

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

Blessing

The Lord bless you and keep you. The Lord's face shine on you with grace and mercy. The Lord look upon you with favor and give you peace.

Amen

Sending Hymn "My Life Flows On in Endless Song"

ELW **763**

Text: Robert Lowry, 1826-1899 Music: Robert Lowry, alt. Public Domain

1 My life flows on in endless song; above earth's lamentation, I catch the sweet, though far-off hymn that hails a new creation.

2 Through all the tumult and the strife, I hear that music ringing. It finds an echo in my soul. How can I keep from singing? Refrain

Refrain

No storm can shake my inmost calm while to that Rock I'm clinging. Since Christ is Lord of heaven and earth, how can I keep from singing?

3 What though my joys and comforts die? The Lord my Savior liveth.
What though the darkness gather round?
Songs in the night he giveth. Refrain

4 The peace of Christ makes fresh my heart, a fountain ever springing!

All things are mine since I am his! How can I keep from singing? Refrain

Dismissal

Go in peace. Serve the Lord!

Thanks be to God.

Postlude

"My Life Flows On in Endless Song"

Text: Robert Lowry, 1826-1899 Music: Robert Lowry, alt. Public Domain

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St. John's Evangelical Lutheran Church is:

"A Family of Disciples, Faithfully Making Christ Known" And a congregation of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America (ELCA)

PEOPLE OF ST. JOHN'S, MINISTERS

Stacy Lauer-Scovanner, Pastor Pastor Stacy's Day Off – Friday

Mrs. Sandy Thompson, Secretary

Nathan Samsa, Organist Usher: Chuck Thompson

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Lay Reader: Melinda Zorn

Communion Assistant: Melinda Zorn

Attendance: Mar. 23 - 46

Audio/Visual Tech: Ann Voight Website: www.stjohnlcsandusky.com

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2025 The Year of Listening Memory Verse.

"Incline your ear, and come to me; listen, so that you may live..." (Isaiah 55:3a).

In this season of Hope, Council asks the congregation to pray that people at St. John's, and everywhere, follow the Holy Spirit and remain open to journeying on whatever spiritual adventures we may be led on.

Communion Clean-up today: Jim Kluding

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Apr. 6 – Set-up – Elizabeth Libben Cleanup – Elizabeth
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13 – Set-up – Joleen Dillender Cleanup – Sandy Thompson

17 – Set-up – Toni Nossaman Cleanup –

20 – Set-up – Jim Kluding Cleanup – Jim

27 – Set-up – Toni Nossaman Cleanup -

Thank you for your willingness to help with this important ministry. If you would like to help, please see Toni Nossaman, Joleen Dillender or Sandy Thompson.

The Season of Lent: Join us at St. John's for special opportunities for fellowship and worship on Wednesday evenings during Lent featuring soup suppers at 5:30 pm followed by worship at 6:30 pm. Holden Evening Prayer along with focus on the Psalms and that God can handle all of our emotions! The soup supper sign-up sheet is on the back window for you to share your delicious soup recipes. May God bless you in your Lenten journey.

Needed:

Lent Offerings: All offerings from our Wednesday evening Lenten services will be donated to Border Servant Corps. The BSC began in 1997 as a ministry of Peace Lutheran Church in Las Cruces, New Mexico through the ELCA. BSC seek to live out a vision of service, faith, and caring – imagining a world where peace and justice are pursued through non-violence, honoring each other and the earth we share. BSC promotes and demonstrates justice, kindness, and humility.... in the U.S.-Mexico border region. We serve together to "Create the change we want to see in the world". St. John's Council approved sending our Lenten offerings in support of Border Servant Corps. If you are unable to attend Lenten worship and would like to contribute to this ministry, place your loose offering in an envelope marked for BSC or on the memo line of your check which is made payable to St. John's Lutheran Church.

Easter Breakfast is on hold this year as a team is looking at remodeling the kitchen.

Easter Candy needed: St. John's annual Easter Egg Hunt will take place on Easter Sunday. If you would like to help out with individually wrapped candy, please bring it to church by Sunday, April 6th. A container will be at the handicap entrance for your candy donations.

It's time for a new directory! Universal Church Directories will help us with our new church directory. Our dates for photography will be **May 6 & 7, 2025**. More information to follow with the options to sign-up for your photography appointment.

Holy Week Worship Opportunities

April 13 - Palm Sunday Worship - 10:30 am

April 17 – Maundy Thursday Joint Worship – 6:30 pm at St. John's with celebration of Holy Communion

April 18 – Good Friday Joint Worship at Zion, Huron – 7:00 pm

Easter Sunday Schedule:

Easter Sunday, April 20

Easter egg hunt will be held for the youth at 9:30 am.

Easter Worship at 10:30 am with Holy Communion.

Note: only one service will be held on Easter morning.

Serving Our Seniors will hold their annual Spring show fund-raiser, American Bandstand Show. The show will be held on Saturday, April 12, 2025. Doors open at 12:30 pm and show starts at 1:00 pm until 3:00 pm at Sandusky High School Theater/Auditorium, 2130 Hayes Ave. Sandusky. Tickets are \$20.00 per person. Buy your tickets NOW! Call Serving Our Seniors, 419-624-1856 to purchase over the phone. Ask for Brenda or walk-in to Service Our Seniors office, 310 E Boalt St. Sandusky, 8 am – 5 pm (M-F) **NO TICKETS SOLD ON THE DAY OF THE SHOW**

Happy Birthday to Heather Ruggles.

Weekly Listening Plan

For this Year of Listening, we have invited local musicians to select a song for collective reflection each month. We encourage you to explore the monthly scripture and weekly listening practices.

We invite you to join us in these four unique listening practices each month!

March 2025 God is Truly Present

Week 5 – "As the tender flowers, willingly unfolding..."

Enjoy the song selection video.

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=su3kAJbuzu8&t=9s

- 1. Read and reflect on the scripture that inspired the song. Habakkuk 2:20
- 2. Explore weekly practices connected to the lyrics throughout your week.
- 3. Do some gardening as the spring "flowers unfold". Meditate on this.

ST. JOHN'S CALENDAR FOR MARCH 30TH THRU APRL 13TH

Sunday, March 30	9:30 am 10:30 am	Choir Practice Worship
Tuesday, April 1	10:00 am 1:00 am	Book Discussion Chapters 13 & 14 Faith Life Team
Wednesday, April 2	12 noon 5:30 pm 6:30 pm 7:00 pm	Scripture and Prayer Soup Supper Mid-week Lenten Worship Choir Practice
Sunday, April 6	9:30 am 10:30 am	Choir Practice Worship
Wednesday, April 9	5:30 pm 6:30 pm 7:00 pm	Soup Supper Mid-Week Lenten Worship Choir Practice
Thursday, April 10	6:00 pm	Worship Team
Sunday, April 13	9:15 am 10:00 am 10:30 am	Study with Lynn Choir Practice Palm Sunday Worship

Thank you for caring for neighbors in California affected by the devastating wildfires. Your \$1000.00 gift will do so much good for families wo are feeling overwhelmed and helpless.

Because of you, our emergency response team is working with organizations in and around Los Angeles to ensure people get the care and support they need, like food, water, shelter and essential supplies. Your act of compassion and kindness provides them with immediate aid and ongoing support.

We are so thankful to have you by our side because you truly go above and beyond when disaster strikes, whether at home or abroad. Thank you for extending God's love where it is needed most.

Thank you for always thinking of others and letting your faith guide you. In faith and gratitude, Daniel V Speckhard, President and CEO Lutheran World Relief