

Sunday, February 22, 2026  
First Sunday in Lent

St. Stephen Lutheran Church  
Rooted in our Tradition, Open to Yours

Welcome and Prelude

### Confession and Forgiveness

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

Let us confess our sin before God, who removes our guilt and blots out all offenses.

*Silence is kept for reflection.*

Gracious God,

**have mercy on us according to your steadfast love.**

For seeking worldly delights that deceive us and dishonor you: Gracious God,

**have mercy on us according to your steadfast love.**

For desiring self-reliance instead of hungering for your word: Gracious God,

**have mercy on us according to your steadfast love.**

For failing to recognize your coming reign, and for hindering the work of the Spirit: Gracious God,

**have mercy on us according to your steadfast love.**

For drawing from the well of self-serving ambition, and for disdaining the living water Christ offers: Gracious God,

**have mercy on us according to your steadfast love.**

For disregarding voices from the margin, and for distrusting signs of your healing and hope in the world: Gracious God,

**have mercy on us according to your steadfast love.**

For dwelling in tombs of self-pity and discontent, and for disregarding Christ's call to come forth to life: Gracious God,

**have mercy on us according to your steadfast love.**

God's steadfast love, grace, and forgiveness abound. Through faith, the free gift of God, you have been clothed in the righteousness of Christ. In the name of ✝ Jesus Christ, your sins are forgiven. The Spirit of the One who raised Christ from the dead dwells in you, pours God's love into your hearts, and gives you life and peace.

**Amen.**

## O Lord, Throughout These Forty Days

ELW 319



1 O Lord, through - out these for - ty days you  
2 You strove with Sa - tan, and you won; your  
3 Though parched and hun - gry, yet you prayed and  
4 Be with us through this sea - son, Lord, and



prayed and kept the fast; in - spire re - pen - tance  
faith - ful - ness en - dured; lend us your nerve, your  
fixed your mind a - bove; so teach us to de -  
all our earth - ly days, that when the fi - nal



for our sin, and free us from our past.  
skill and trust in God's e - ter - nal word.  
ny our - selves that we may know God's love.  
Eas - ter dawns, we join in heav - en's praise.

## Greeting

The grace of 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

Lord God, our strength, the struggle between good and evil rages within and around us, and the devil and all the forces that defy you tempt us with empty promises. Keep us steadfast in your word, and when we fall, raise us again and restore us through your Son, Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever.

**Amen.**

## The Reading: Amos 5:18-24

<sup>18</sup> Woe to you who desire the day of the LORD!

Why do you want the day of the LORD?

It is darkness, not light,

<sup>19</sup> as if someone fled from a lion

and was met by a bear

or went into the house and rested a hand against the wall

and was bitten by a snake.

<sup>20</sup> Is not the day of the LORD darkness, not light,

and gloom with no brightness in it?

<sup>21</sup> I hate, I despise your festivals,

and I take no delight in your solemn assemblies.

<sup>22</sup> Even though you offer me your burnt offerings and grain offerings,

I will not accept them,

and the offerings of well-being of your fatted animals

I will not look upon.

<sup>23</sup> Take away from me the noise of your songs;

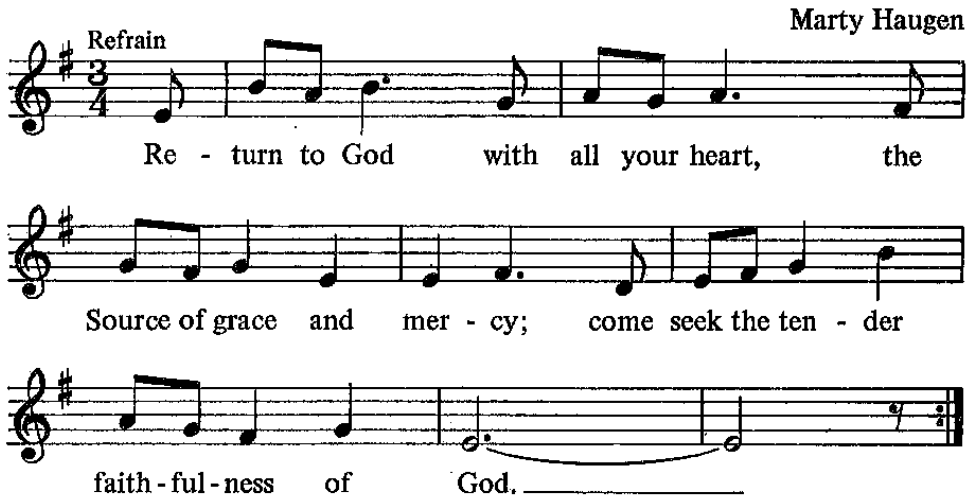
I will not listen to the melody of your harps.

<sup>24</sup> But let justice roll down like water

and righteousness like an ever-flowing stream.

The Word of the Lord.

**Thanks be to God**



### The Gospel: **Matthew 4:1-11 Glory to you, O Lord.**

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

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

<sup>5</sup> Then the devil took him to the holy city and placed him on the pinnacle of the temple, <sup>6</sup> saying to him, "If you are the Son of God, throw yourself down, for it is written, 'He will command his angels concerning you,' and 'On their hands they will bear you up, so that you will not dash your foot against a stone.' "

<sup>7</sup> Jesus said to him, "Again it is written, 'Do not put the Lord your God to the test.' "

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

'Worship the Lord your God, and serve only him.' "

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

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

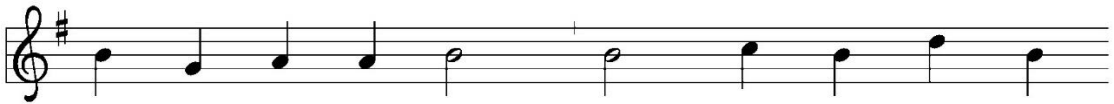
## Sermon

### The Glory of These Forty Days

ELW 320



1 The glo - ry of these for - ty days we cel - e -  
2 A - lone and fast - ing Mo - ses saw the lov - ing  
3 So Dan - iel trained his mys - tic sight, de - liv - ered  
4 Then grant, O God, that we may, too, re - turn in



brate with songs of praise; for Christ, through whom all  
God who gave the law; and to E - li - jah,  
from the li - ons' might; and John, the Bride - groom's  
fast and prayer to you. Our spir - its strength - en



things were made, him - self has fast - ed and has prayed.  
fast - ing, came the steeds and char - i - ots of flame.  
friend, be - came the her - ald of Mes - si - ah's name.  
with your grace, and give us joy to see your face.

## THE SMALL CATECHISM OF MARTIN LUTHER

In ancient and modern times, Lent has been the time for instruction of candidates preparing for their baptism at the Easter Vigil. At the same time, the whole Church anticipates Easter through acts of repentance and spiritual renewal. It is therefore appropriate that we review the basics of our faith during these Sundays in Lent, so that we all might be renewed by our baptismal covenants and made ready for the celebration of Easter.

The First Article of the Apostles' Creed concerns Creation. What does it mean?

**I believe that God has created me and all that exists. He has given me and still preserves my body and soul with all their powers. He provides me with food and clothing, home and family, daily work, and all I need from day to day. God also protects me in time of danger and guards me from every evil. All this he does out of fatherly and divine goodness and mercy, though I do not deserve it. Therefore I surely ought to thank and praise, serve and obey him. This is most certainly true.**

The Second Article of the Creed concerns Redemption. What does this mean?

**I believe that Jesus Christ -- true God, Son of the Father from eternity, and true man, born of the Virgin Mary -- is my Lord. At great cost he has saved and redeemed me, a lost and condemned person. He has freed me from sin, death, and the power of the devil -- not with silver or gold, but with his holy and precious blood and his innocent suffering and death. All this he has done that I may be his own, live under him in his kingdom, and serve him in everlasting righteousness, innocence, and blessedness, just as he is risen from the dead and lives and rules eternally. This is most certainly true.**

The Third Article of the Creed concerns Sanctification. What does this mean?

**I believe that I cannot by my own understanding or effort believe in Jesus Christ my Lord, or come to him. But the Holy Spirit has called me through the Gospel, enlightened me with his gifts, and sanctified and kept me in true faith. In the same way he calls, gathers, enlightens, and sanctifies the whole Christian church on earth, and keeps it united with Jesus Christ in the one true faith. In this Christian church day after day he fully forgives my sins and the sins of all believers. On the last day he will raise me and all the dead and give me and all believers in Christ eternal life. This is most certainly true.**

## Prayers of the People

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

*A brief silence.*

God of all grace, grant faith to your church. **Give to all the baptized the will to resist temptation and to worship and serve you alone.** Hear us, O God.  
**Your mercy is great.**

God of all creation, tend this earth. **When human greed and disobedience threaten this planet and the life it contains, lead us by your Spirit into ways of reverence and gentleness.** Hear us, O God. **Your mercy is great.**

God of all nations, preserve us from trouble. Surround all living in places of violence with your steadfast love and give resilience to all who work for peace. **Grant courage to those who challenge, especially around issues of racism and systemic oppression.** Hear us, O God. **Your mercy is great.**

God of all healing, mend our wounds. Bring wholeness to all who are sick, give peace to all who groan in grief, and send companions to all who are lonely or isolated. We especially pray for Judy Prinz, Donna, Todd, Ted & Jacqui, Bud, Carolyn, Doris, Janet, Dan & Mary, Beth, Jim & Alice, the Harper family and all those we hold in our hearts  
Hear us, O God.

**Your mercy is great.**

God of all people, provide for our community. For any among us who hunger for bread, bring nourishment. **For any among us who hunger for truth, speak your life-giving word.** Hear us, O God. **Your mercy is great.**

God of all life, bring us to you. We thank you for your free and abounding grace, and for those who, by that same grace, now rest eternally in you. Hear us, O God.

**Your mercy is great.**

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

**Amen.**

## The Sharing of the Peace

Special Music

**The Glory of These Forty Days**

St. Stephen Choir

WOV 657

## Meal

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.**

## Preface

It is indeed right, our duty and our joy, that we should at all times and in all places give thanks and praise to you, almighty and merciful God, through our Savior Jesus Christ; who on this day overcomes death and the grave, and by his glorious resurrection opens to us the way of everlasting life. And so, with all the choirs of angels, with the church on earth and the hosts of heaven, we praise your name and join their unending hymn:



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 to me the joy of

your sal - va - tion, and up-hold me with your free Spir - it.

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 to me the joy of

your sal - va - tion, and up-hold me with your free Spir - it.

## The Words of Institution

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.

For as often as we eat of this bread and drink from this cup, we proclaim the Lord's death until he comes. **Christ has died. Christ is risen. Christ will come again.**

## 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.**

## Communion

*All baptized Christians are welcome to participate in Holy Communion. We ask children who have not had First Communion instruction, or adults who do not wish to receive communion, to keep their hands folded and they will receive a blessing.*

*\*Gluten free and apple juice options are available.*



- 1 O Lamb of God, you bear the sin of all the world a - way;
- 2 O Lamb of God, you bear the sin of all the world a - way;
- 3 O Lamb of God, you bear the sin of all the world a - way;



you suf-fered death our lives to save: have mer-cy now, we pray.  
you set us free from guilt and grave: have mer-cy now, we pray.  
e - ter-nal peace with God you made: give us your peace, we pray.

## Post-Communion Prayer

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.**

# When I Survey the Wondrous Cross

ELW 803



1 When I sur - vey the won - drous cross on which the  
2 For - bid it, Lord, that I should boast save in the  
3 See, from his head, his hands, his feet, sor - row and  
4 Were the whole realm of na - ture mine, that were a



prince of glo - ry died, my rich - est gain I  
death of Christ, my God; all the vain things that  
love flow min - gled down. Did e'er such love and  
pres - ent far too small; love so a - maz - ing,



count but loss and pour con - tempt on all my pride.  
charm me most, I sac - ri - fice them to his blood.  
sor - row meet, or thorns com - pose so rich a crown?  
so di - vine, de - mands my soul, my life, my all.

In holy baptism, you and I are called to “[bear] God’s creative and redeeming word to all the world” (ELW, p. 231).

In Isaiah it is written: Is not this the fast that I choose: to loose the bonds of injustice, to undo the straps of the yoke, to let the oppressed go free, and to break every yoke? Is it not to share your bread with the hungry and bring the homeless poor into your house; when you see the naked, to cover them and not to hide yourself from your own kin? Then your light shall break forth like the dawn, and your healing shall spring up quickly; your vindicator shall go before you; the glory of the LORD shall be your rear guard. Then you shall call, and the LORD will answer; you shall cry for help, and he will say, “Here I am.” (Isa. 58:6-9a)

Let us pray:

Blessed are you, O Holy One, for you formed us in love, claimed us in baptism, and set us free for lives of service and witness. Strengthen us to fulfill the promises of baptism— to proclaim Christ through word and deed, to care for others and the world you made, and to work for justice and peace.

Bless those who accompany others with compassion. Let their steadying presence be a shelter in weary places, and their faithful witness be a sign of your solidarity with all who suffer.

### 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. **Thanks be to God.**

### Dismissal

Go in peace. Do justice. Love mercy.

**Thanks be to God.**

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