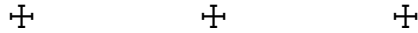




ST. MARK'S LUTHERAN CHURCH

Our Mission

*Growing Disciples - Making Christ Known*



MARCH 15, 2026

THE FOURTH SUNDAY IN LENT

10:30 AM SERVICE OF HOLY COMMUNION

*Today's gospel contains the story of a man born blind who was healed by Jesus. He said, "One thing I do know, that though I was blind, now I see." Jesus declares about himself, "I am the light of the world," opening us to light in the world's darkest valleys, light that no darkness can ever overcome. Today Paul also witnesses to us from Ephesians, "Walk as children of light." To be in Christ Jesus is to become light in the darkness for others.*

GATHERING

*The congregation is invited to join in the **Bold** responses.*

**Prelude**

"Lento" from *Five Pieces for Cello*

Robert Schumann  
Allison Drenkow, cellist

*The congregation stands as the cross is carried into the sanctuary.*

**Processional Hymn**

"Dearest Jesus, at Your Word" ELW 520

LIEBSTER JESU, WIR SIND HIER

Text: Tobias Clausnitzer, 1619-1684, sts. 1-3; *Gesangbuch*, Berlin, 1707, st. 4; tr. Catherine Winkworth, 1827-1878, adapt.; Music: Johann R. Ahle, 1625-1673

1. Dearest Jesus, at your word we have come again to hear you;  
let our thoughts and hearts be stirred and in glowing faith be near you  
as the promises here given draw us wholly up to heaven.
2. All our knowledge, sense, and sight lie in deepest darkness shrouded  
till your Spirit breaks the night, filling us with light unclouded.  
All good thoughts and all good living come but by your gracious giving.
3. Radiance of God's glory bright, Light of Light from God proceeding,  
Jesus, send your blessed light; help our hearing, speaking, heeding,  
that our prayers and songs may please you, as with grateful hearts we praise you.
4. Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, praise to you and adoration!  
Grant us what we need the most: all your gospel's consolation  
while we here on earth await you, till in heav'n with praise we greet you.

*Please be seated.*

**Welcome**

Pastor Timothy McKenzie

**Confession and Forgiveness**

*All may make the sign of the cross, the sign that is  
marked at baptism, as the presiding minister begins.*

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

**Amen.**

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

*Silence is kept for reflection.*

Most merciful God,

**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.**

God, who is rich in mercy, loved us  
even when we were dead in sin,  
and made us alive together in Christ.

By grace you have been saved.

In the name of † Jesus Christ, your sins are forgiven.

Almighty God strengthen you with power  
through the Holy Spirit, that Christ may  
live in your hearts through faith.

**Amen.**

**Kyrie**

“As the Deer”

AS THE DEER

Text and music by Martin J. Nystrom



As the deer pants for the wa-ter, so my soul longs af - ter you.

You a - lone are my heart's de - sire and I long to wor - ship you.

You a - lone are my strength, my shield, to you a - lone may my spir-it yield;

you a - lone are my heart's de - sire, and I long to wor-ship you.

## 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.**

*Please stand as able.*

## Prayer of the Day

Let us pray. 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.**

*Please be seated.*

## WORD

### First Reading

### 1 Samuel 16:1-13

Andrea Long, lector

The LORD said to Samuel, “How long will you grieve over Saul? I have rejected him from being king over Israel. Fill your horn with oil and set out; I will send you to Jesse the Bethlehemite, for I have provided for myself a king among his sons.”<sup>2</sup> Samuel said, “How can I go? If Saul hears of it, he will kill me.” And the LORD said, “Take a heifer with you and say, ‘I have come to sacrifice to the LORD.’”<sup>3</sup> Invite Jesse to the sacrifice, and I will show you what you shall do, and you shall anoint for me the one whom I name to you.”<sup>4</sup> Samuel did what the LORD commanded and came to Bethlehem. The elders of the city came to meet him trembling and said, “Do you come peaceably?”<sup>5</sup> He said, “Peaceably. I have come to sacrifice to the LORD; sanctify yourselves and come with me to the sacrifice.” And he sanctified Jesse and his sons and invited them to the sacrifice.<sup>6</sup> When they came, he looked on Eliab and thought, “Surely his anointed is now before the LORD.”<sup>7</sup> But the LORD said to Samuel, “Do not look on his appearance or on the height of his stature, because I have rejected him, for the LORD does not see as mortals see; they look on the outward appearance, but the LORD looks on the heart.”<sup>8</sup> Then Jesse called Abinadab and made him pass before Samuel. He said, “Neither has the LORD chosen this one.”<sup>9</sup> Then Jesse made Shammah pass by. And he said, “Neither has the LORD chosen this one.”<sup>10</sup> Jesse made seven of his sons pass before Samuel, and Samuel said to Jesse, “The LORD has not chosen any of these.”<sup>11</sup> Samuel said to Jesse, “Are all your sons here?” And he said, “There remains yet the youngest, but he is keeping the sheep.” And Samuel said to Jesse, “Send and bring him, for we will not sit down until he comes here.”<sup>12</sup> He sent and brought him in. Now he was ruddy and had beautiful eyes and was handsome. The LORD said, “Rise and anoint him, for this is the one.”<sup>13</sup> Then Samuel took the horn of oil and anointed him in the presence of his brothers, and the spirit of the LORD came mightily upon David from that day forward. Samuel then set out and went to Ramah.

*The Word of the Lord*

**Thanks be to God**

### Psalm 23

Jack Richardson, Taylor McNamara, cantors

Psalm 23:5 (May Schwartz) from *Psalter for Worship Year A*; © 2007 Augsburg Fortress



You have a - noint - ed my head with oil.

*The LORD | is my shepherd; I shall not | be in want. <sup>2</sup>The LORD makes me lie down | in green pastures and leads me be-  
| side still waters. <sup>3</sup>You restore my | soul, O LORD, and guide me along right pathways | for your name's sake. <sup>4</sup>Though I*



the parents of the man who had received his sight <sup>19</sup> and asked them, “Is this your son, who you say was born blind? How then does he now see?” <sup>20</sup> His parents answered, “We know that this is our son and that he was born blind, <sup>21</sup> 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.” <sup>22</sup> 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. <sup>23</sup> Therefore his parents said, “He is of age; ask him.” <sup>24</sup> 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.” <sup>25</sup> He answered, “I do not know whether he is a sinner. One thing I do know, that though I was blind, now I see.” <sup>26</sup> They said to him, “What did he do to you? How did he open your eyes?” <sup>27</sup> 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?” <sup>28</sup> Then they reviled him, saying, “You are his disciple, but we are disciples of Moses. <sup>29</sup> We know that God has spoken to Moses, but as for this man, we do not know where he comes from.” <sup>30</sup> The man answered, “Here is an astonishing thing! You do not know where he comes from, yet he opened my eyes. <sup>31</sup> We know that God does not listen to sinners, but he does listen to one who worships him and obeys his will. <sup>32</sup> Never since the world began has it been heard that anyone opened the eyes of a person born blind. <sup>33</sup> If this man were not from God, he could do nothing.” <sup>34</sup> They answered him, “You were born entirely in sins, and are you trying to teach us?” And they drove him out. <sup>35</sup> Jesus heard that they had driven him out, and when he found him he said, “Do you believe in the Son of Man?” <sup>36</sup> He answered, “And who is he, sir? Tell me, so that I may believe in him.” <sup>37</sup> Jesus said to him, “You have seen him, and the one speaking with you is he.” <sup>38</sup> He said, “Lord, I believe.” And he worshiped him. <sup>39</sup> 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.” <sup>40</sup> Some of the Pharisees who were with him heard this and said to him, “Surely we are not blind, are we?” <sup>41</sup> Jesus said to them, “If you were blind, you would not have sin. But now that you say, ‘We see,’ your sin remains.

*The Gospel of the Lord.*

**Praise to you, O Christ.**

*Please be seated.*

**Sermon**

*“Walk as children of light”*

Pastor Timothy McKenzie

*Please stand as able.*

**Hymn of the Day**

“Amazing Grace, How Sweet the Sound” ELW 779

NEW BRITAIN

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

1 A - maz - ing grace!— how sweet the sound— that  
 2 'Twas grace that taught my heart to fear, and  
 3 Through man - y dan - gers, toils, and snares I  
 4 The Lord has prom - ised good to me; his  
 5 When we've been there ten thou - sand years, bright  
 saved a wretch like me! I once was lost, but  
 grace my fears re - lieved; how pre - cious did that  
 have al - read - y come; 'tis grace has brought me  
 word my hope se - cures; he will my shield and  
 shin - ing as the sun, we've no less days to

now am found; was blind, but now I see.  
 grace ap - pear the hour I first be - lieved!  
 safe thus far, and grace will lead me home.  
 por - tion be as long as life en - dures.  
 sing God's praise than when we'd first be - gun.

**The Apostles' Creed**

Together, let us confess our faith in the words of the Apostles' Creed.

**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.**

*Please be seated.*

**Prayers of Intercession**

Pastor McKenzie, prayers

*The congregation may kneel or sit for the prayers.*

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

God, our shepherd, we pray that you guide the church here and around the world. Lead this congregation, St. Mark's in the community of Charlotte, and lead all expressions of your church across the globe, in right paths for your name's sake so that all people might be restored by your life-giving grace. Hear us, O God.

**Your mercy is great.**

God, our creator, we pray for this planet and the promise of life that it holds. Lead environmental organizations, governments, and industry to cooperate together in the preservation of threatened ecosystems on land and sea, and help us in all that we do to tread reverently on the earth for your creation is holy ground. Hear us, O God.

**Your mercy is great.**

God, our sovereign, we pray for peace on earth, and we pray that your peace might reign in our hearts. Shepherd governments and leaders of all nations to work for peace and an end to war and combat in all its forms. And in our own nation, help local communities to welcome and care for all who hunger and thirst so that no one goes hungry. Hear us, O God.

**Your mercy is great.**

God, our healer, we pray in our weakness and need. Accompany all who walk through darkest valleys, who are in the presence of enemies, who suffer illness and addiction, and who face death. May we know goodness and mercy all the days of our lives. Accompany with healing and hope all our loved ones, especially, James Watson, Sarah East, Phaedra & Scott Snow, Bill Bowden, Harry Kendrick, Kendal Turner, Rochelle Dagenhart, Janice Darnell, Pastor Glen Sea, Mark Barbee, Polly Needham, Mark Thornton, Tom Tolbert, Samuel Davis, Bob Roach, Payton McAdams, Dale Hopp, Bill Coppedge, Marcia Newlin, Silvia Puky, Ashlyn Bordelon, Betsy League, Carmelita Harris, Lucille Johnson, Marilyn Stevens, Satoko Yamada, Judy Cox, Ross

Boheler, Charlene Oppermann, Elaine Ketner Sherman, Gene Ellington, Tanner & Christopher Shirley, Eileen Dunlap, Danyne Olin Bragdon, Mindy Curley, Louisa & Oakley Coburn, Roxi Tolbert, Bill Schwartz, Arlene Fielding, David Kutscher, Danielle Clausen, Joseph Tolbert, and Jay Harbinson. Hear us, O God.

**Your mercy is great.**

God, our friend, we praise you that we have a friend in Jesus who welcomes all people in their diversity with grace and love. Continue to reawaken us to your mission of love for the world and its peoples, and help us as a congregation to open our church doors widely, creating circles of friendship and safe spaces for all people. Hear us, O God.

**Your mercy is great.**

God, our shepherd, we offer thanks and praise to you that we have a home in the house of the Lord that we know and anticipate through faith. Like the saints of old, grant us strength and hope to follow Jesus all our lives until we too dwell in your house forever. Hear us, O God

**Your mercy is great.**

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

**Amen.**

**Peace**

*(Please stand as able, sharing the peace of the risen Christ.)*

The peace of Christ be with you always.

**And also with you.**

*Please be seated.*

## MEAL

**OFFERING**

*(Offerings for the mission of the church are gathered by the ushers.)*

**Anthem**

“Beneath the Cross of Jesus”

Tune ST. CHRISTOPHER by Frederick C. Maker

Setting for choir, cello and organ by Albert L. Travis

*Beneath the cross of Jesus I fain would take my stand; the shadow of a mighty rock within a weary land, a home within the wilderness, a rest upon the way, from the burning of the noontide heat, and the burden of the day. Upon the cross of Jesus, mine eye at times can see the very dying form of one who suffered there for me. And from my smitten heart, with tears, two wonders I confess; the wonder of his glorious love and my unworthiness. I take, O cross, thy shadow for my abiding place; I ask no other sunshine than the sunshine of his face; content to let the world go by, to know no gain nor loss, my sinful self my only shame, my glory all the cross!*

*Please stand as able.*

**Offertory**

*(The offering is brought forward by the ushers)*

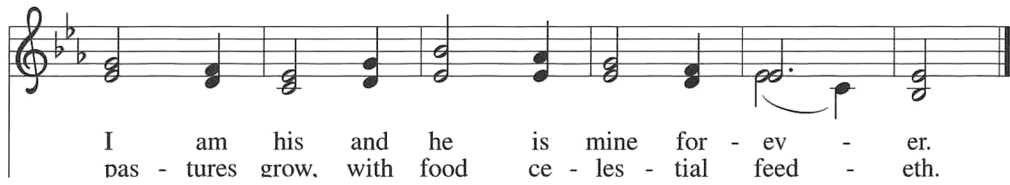
“The King of Love My Shepherd Is” ELW 502 stanza 1 & 2

ST. COLUMBA

Text: Henry W. Baker, 1821-1877; Music: Irish tune

The musical score is written on two staves in G major (one sharp) and 4/4 time. The melody is simple and hymn-like. The lyrics are printed below the notes, with some words hyphenated across lines. A triplet of eighth notes is marked above the third measure of the second staff.

1 The King of love my shep - herd is, whose good - ness  
2 Where streams of liv - ing wa - ter flow. my ran - somed  
fail - eth nev - er; I noth - ing lack if  
soul he lead - eth and. where the ver - dant



I am his and he is mine for - ev - er.  
pas - tures grow, with food ce - les - tial feed - eth.

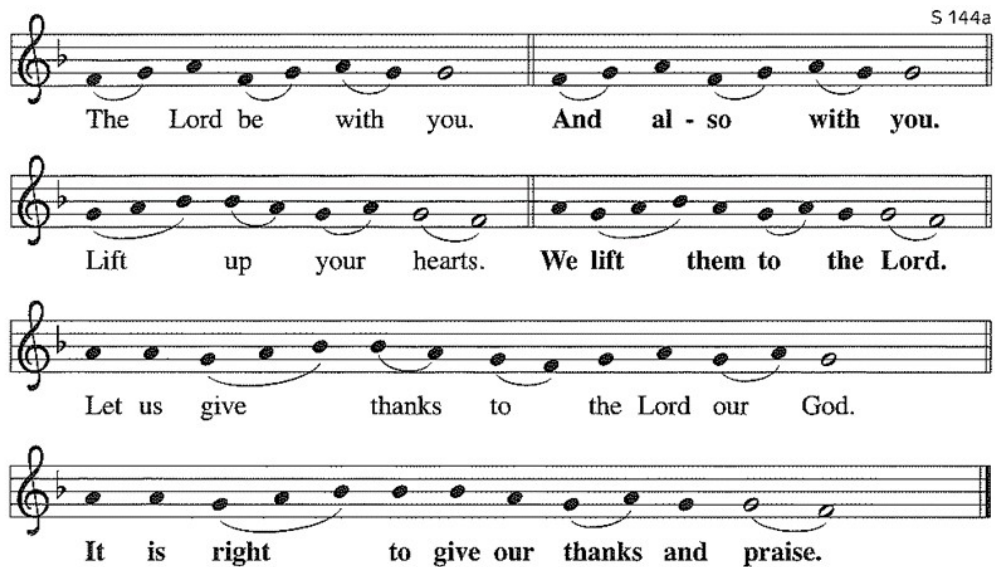
**Offering Prayer**

Let us pray. 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.**

**Holy Communion**

**The Great Thanksgiving**



S 144a

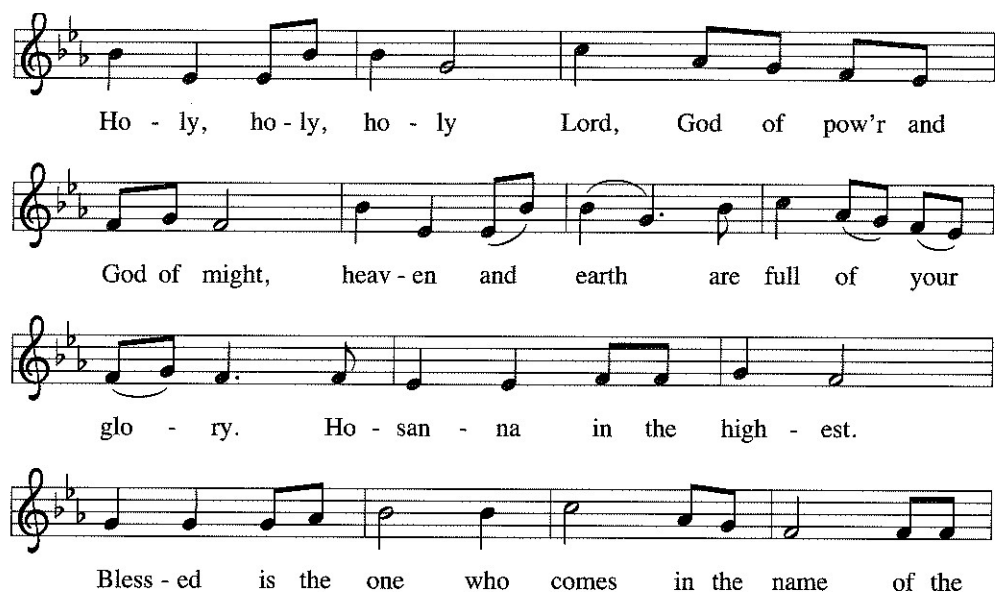
The Lord be with you. And al - so with you.  
Lift up your hearts. We lift them to the Lord.  
Let us give thanks to the Lord our God.  
It is right to give our thanks and praise.

**Proper Preface**

**Sanctus**

“Holy, Holy, Holy” from *All Creation Sings*

*Holy Communion Setting Twelve*



Ho - ly, ho - ly, ho - ly Lord, God of pow'r and  
God of might, heav - en and earth are full of your  
glo - ry. Ho - san - na in the high - est.  
Bless - ed is the one who comes in the name of the

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

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

**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.

**The Lord’s Prayer**

Lord, remember us in your kingdom and teach us to pray.

**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**

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

*Please be seated.*

**Distribution of Holy Communion**

*Holy Communion is offered continuously at the Lord’s table and at the high altar. Please follow the ushers’ prompts, walking forward to the desired communion station and returning via the side aisles. On the 1st and 3rd Sundays of the month, distribution is by wafers and small cups, and on the 2nd, 4th, and 5th Sundays of the month distribution is by intinction. Gluten free wafers and grape juice are always available.*

**Communion Music** “Lamb of God” from *Holy Communion Setting Twelve*

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

us. Lamb of God, you take a-way the sin of the world; have

mer-cy on us. Lamb of God, you take a-way the sin of the

world; grant us peace, grant us peace.

“Abide with Me”

Tune EVENTIDE by William H. Monk  
 Setting for cello and organ by Mark Newman

**Communion Hymn**

“There Is a Balm in Gilead” ELW 614

**BALM IN GILEAD**  
Text & Music: African American spiritual

*Refrain*

There is a balm in Gil-e-ad to make the wound-ed whole;  
 there is a balm in Gil-e-ad to heal the sin-sick soul.

1 Some - times I feel dis - cour - aged and think my work's in vain,  
 2 If you can - not preach like Pe - ter, if you can - not pray like Paul,  
 3 Don't ev - er be dis - cour - aged, for Je - sus is your friend;

*Refrain*

but then the Ho - ly Spir - it re - vives my soul a - gain.  
 you can tell the love of Je - sus and say, “He died for all.”  
 and if you lack for knowl - edge, he'll ne'er re - fuse to lend.

**Post-Communion Blessing**

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

**Amen.**

**Post-Communion Prayer**

Let us pray. 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

**Sending Blessing**

The Lord bless you and keep you.

The Lord make his face shine on you and be gracious to you.

The Lord look upon you with favor and ✠ grant you peace.

**Amen.**

**Recessional Hymn**

“In the Cross of Christ I Glory” ELW 324

**RATHBUN**  
Text: John Bowring, 1792-1872; Music: Ithamar Conkey, 1815-1867

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'er-take 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.

## **DISMISSAL**

Go in peace. Share the good news.

**Thanks be to God.**

*Worship has ended. You are free to depart or you may remain for the postlude.*

## **Postlude**

“Toccata on ‘In the Cross of Christ I Glory’”

Tune RATHBUN by Ithamar Conkey  
Setting for organ by David Cherwien



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**Worship Leaders:** Pastor Timothy McKenzie; (prayers) Pastor Alexandra Joy Rode; crucifer/acolyte: Needed; lector: Andrea Long; live streaming camera: Charles Lakeman; soundboard: Bob Chernet; ushers: Doug Milheim, Marc & Susan Ginns, Eddie Goodall, Rod Stephens; greeters: Millie Cansler, Dave & Eileen Dunlap; communion assistants: Kevin & Karen Feezor, A.J. Pridgen, Chris Stevenson; communion helper: Karen Covington; tabulators : Karen Feezor, Meg Fielding; musicians: St. Mark's Choir; Allison Drenkow, cello; Taylor McNamara, Jack Richardson cantors; Lester Ackerman, Director of Music Ministry and Organist

**Next Sunday Leaders:** prayer assistant: Charles Lakeman; crucifer/acolyte: Needed; lector: Larry Lippert; live streaming camera: Charles Lakeman; soundboard: Neil Dixon; ushers: Team B; greeters: Neil & Charlotte Dixon, Susan Lakeman; communion assistants: Lisa Barnette, Revecca Huang, Jay Jacob, Janice Miller; communion helper: Sandy Rach; tabulators : Karen Feezor, Dawn Schwartz

**From the Pastor -**

"If any want to become my followers, let them deny themselves and take up their cross and follow me." (Matthew 16:24)

Lent is the forty-day journey of renewal in discipleship to Jesus, who calls us daily to self-denial and the way of the cross. Jesus' words about self-denial invite us to examine ourselves in the most profound way. Who is this person I think I am? Who is this "self" I think I know well, yet remains elusive? The Lenten journey of forty days is an invitation to see and understand ourselves on the way of the cross that Jesus walks. To follow Jesus is not the work of a single day, or even forty days; it is the discipleship of a lifetime. Lent provides an opportunity to sharpen our focus upon Jesus and his suffering love, so that freed from self-centered desires, we might live more fully for Jesus in service to others. This Lent may you rediscover his renewing grace and may we serve him in our life together at St. Mark's.

In the fellowship of Christ,  
Senior Pastor Tim McKenzie  
pastortim@saintmarkscharlotte.org

*Coming Up at St. Mark's*

**Worship and Congregational Life**

**Lenten Schedule**

Lenten Wednesday Suppers, 6 pm-6:45 in the Fellowship Hall, through 3/25.

**3/18 meal** provided by Social Ministry Committee.

Lenten Midweek Prayer, 7 pm (in-person and online), beginning 2/25. Make Lent a time of prayerful renewal.

**Spring Work Day** Saturday 3/21, 8:30-11 am. Help get ready for spring and Easter! All are welcome!

**Peace Lily Orders, Sunburst Wreath and Lenten Box Donations** Printed forms are in the Gathering Place. Lily orders must be placed no later than March 29th.

**LENTEN BOX OFFERINGS:** Lenten boxes will be in the Gathering Place today along with a letter noting that our donations will help support NAMI Charlotte (National Alliance on Mental Illness). We no longer accept coins but still accept bills or simply a check made out to St. Mark's. Donations can also be made online. Please return your boxes by Easter.

**St Mark's Ethnic Restaurant Group** will sample traditional Spanish cuisine at Miro Spanish Grill on

March 17th at 6:00 PM. RSVP to Tom and Judy Tolbert by midnight on March 12.

**Theology on Tap March 19** at 7pm. We'll meet at the Rusty Onion, 6654 Carmel Road. Everyone is welcome!

**Carolina Pro Musica "Celebrating America's 250!"** 3/20/26 at 7:30 pm. Half price tickets for SMLC: enter StMarksHO on the CPM website.

**Charlotte Flute Association Members' Recital** 3./22 at 2:30 pm. Free admission. All are welcome!

**The St. Mark's Book Group** will meet on Thursday, March 26, at 10 am in the large conference room and via Zoom. This month's selection is Theo of Golden by Allen Levi. All are welcome to join us for this discussion. Please contact Kay Sehorn or Judy Tolbert for more information.



**Japanese Association in Charlotte Spring Festival** 3/28/26 from 3-5pm in the Fellowship Hall. Please register.

**Senior Voice Recital 3/29/26** at 5:30 pm for UNCC senior Jack Richardson.



**Aid for Hurricane Helene Victims** If you would like to help, please hover your phone camera over the QR code to connect to the NC Synod's website.

**Thinking of joining St. Mark's?** Please see Pastor Tim to set up a time to talk. All people are welcome at St. Mark's!

**The Christian Education Hour** is at 9:30 am on Sundays. You are invited to join the Faith Forum for lively discussions. The class meets in the Large Conference room. New members are always welcome.

**St. Mark's email list** If you are not receiving emails from St. Mark's, we may not have your correct email address. Please contact the church to let us know. We send at least 2 emails every week.

**Family Ministry**

**Nursery:** A fun-filled nursery, staffed by volunteers, is located downstairs. An usher is available to show you the way. Our safety protocols offer peace of mind so you can worship without worry.

**Confirmation Class** meets every other Sunday at 9:30.

**Stewardship**

Your pledge helps St. Mark's ministries of worship, service and fellowship continue over the year. **2026** Pledge cards are in the Gathering Place. Thank you for your faithful gifts to St. Mark's ministries. An online

pledge option is also available from our website, or you may use the QR code.

**You may use the QR code at left** (hover your phone camera to connect) for immediate access to St. Mark's website donation page. Pledges and donations for Altar Flowers may also be made using this code.



**2026 Altar Flower Sponsorship** If you would like to sponsor live flowers for our Sunday worship service, please sign up on the calendar by the mailbox room or contact the church office.

### **Social Ministry**

**NOURISH UP** March Mayhem: This month, let's fill the shelves with foods that start with the letter M! Think: mustard, mayo, mac & cheese, canned mushrooms, and canned "maters" (tomatoes). Every "M" makes a difference!

**Soup Kitchen** St. Mark's Soup Kitchen is serving lunch in the Fellowship Hall every Thursday for our neighbors. If you would like to serve, please contact us. You may also support the Soup Kitchen through financial donations sent to the church, or through St. Mark's online giving portal. Help us share God's love!

### **Announcements**

AA meets in the Fellowship Hall: Monday nights "Third Tradition", 7 pm; Wednesday nights "Just the Basics", 7:30 pm; & Thursday nights "Not a Glum Lot", 6:30 pm; "SLAA" meets in Room 106: Thursdays at 6:30 pm; Fridays women only at 6 pm & Saturday mornings 10:30 am.

## *Music Notes*

**"There Is a Balm in Gilead"** ELW 614 "Balm of Gilead" was an aromatic medicinal ointment. In Jeremiah 8:22 the question is asked, "Is there no balm in Gilead? Is there no physician there?" and the expected answer in "No." But this spiritual turns the negative into affirmation, and hopelessness into hope. It is the Holy Spirit who "revives my soul," and it is Jesus who "is your friend" and "died for all." The balm is in Gilead and in every other place in this world. The African American tune **BALM IN GILEAD** comes anonymously from an oral tradition of the nineteenth century, where a vocal soloist sings the stanzas, with the refrain as a response by the congregation. This hymn and its tune had its first appearance in print in the collection *Folk Songs of the American Negro* (1907).

**"In the Cross of Christ I Glory"** ELW 324 comes to us from the pen of John Bowring (1792-1872) first published in his book *Hymns: As Sequel to the Matins* (London, 1825). Like the famous hymn by Isaac Watts "When I Survey the Wondrous Cross" ELW 803, the text is based on a verse from Galatians 6:14 "May I never boast of anything except the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ". Kenneth Osbeck writes in his collection *101 Hymn Stories* "It is claimed by some writers that Sir John Bowring had visited Macao, on the South Chinese coast, and was much impressed by the sight of a bronze cross towering on the summit of the massive wall of what had formerly been a great cathedral. This cathedral, originally built by the early Portuguese colonists, overlooked the harbor and had been destroyed by a typhoon and left crumbled in its wake--except for one wall topped by the huge metal cross. The scene is said to have so impressed Bowring that it eventually served as inspiration for this beloved hymn". The tune **RATHBUN** was composed by Ithamer Conkey (1815-1867) in 1849, and was named for Mrs. Beriah S. Rathbun, a soprano soloist in his church in Norwich, Connecticut where he served as Organist and Choirmaster.

**"Dearest Jesus, at Your Word"** ELW 520 Swedish pastor Tobias Clausnitzer's (1619-1684) text was written for use before the sermon, and to reinforce one of the reasons we gather for worship is to hear the Word of God through the reading of scripture. Clausnitzer wrote the first three stanzas, with the third stanza's "Light of Light" hinting at the Nicene Creed. The fourth stanza is a doxology, by an unknown author. **LIEBSTER JESU, WIR SIND**

**HIER** was composed by Johann Rudolph Ahle (1625-1673) a German church organist and musician, as well as for twelve years the mayor of the city of Muhlhausen. This tune is a perfect example of "bar form", a tune in three parts, (AAB form) with the first part repeating.

**"Amazing Grace, How Sweet the Sound"** ELW 779 is from the pen of John Newton (1725-1807), and was first published in 1779. This text is a personal testimony of Newton's conversion experience, of a man whose early life on a slave ship was turned around by an "amazing grace" that "saved a wretch like me." Newton wrote six stanzas, the first four printed in our hymnal. Our fifth stanza, though joined to this hymn, is not by Newton, the writer unknown. Here is one of the additional verses, not often included in modern hymnbooks: "The earth shall soon dissolve like snow, the sun forbear to shine; But God, who called me here below, will be forever mine." The tune **NEW BRITAIN** is another example of a fine Southern Harmony shape-note tune. It is also a pentatonic tune, meaning the melody has only five tones, plus it's octave. The tune was first joined to "Amazing Grace" in William Walker's *The Southern Harmony* (New Haven, 1835), a collection of southern Appalachian folk tunes that came from English, Scotch, Irish, and Welsh sources

### *This Week: From the Lutheran Church Calendar*

#### **March 17, Patrick, bishop and missionary to Ireland (c.390-461)**

Born in Roman Britain, the son of a local town council member, Patrick was kidnapped at age sixteen by Irish pirates and sold into slavery in Ireland. During this captivity, he turned earnestly to God, escaping after six years, and returned to his family in Britain. He began to prepare for ordained ministry, acquiring an intimate knowledge of Latin. He later returned to Ireland as a bishop and missionary. Working from the north of Ireland, he made many missionary journeys with much success. In his autobiography he denounced the slave trade. Patrick's well-known baptismal hymn to the Trinity, "I bind unto myself today" (ELW 450), is appropriate during Lent as a call to return to our baptism.

#### **March 19, Joseph, Guardian of Jesus**

Joseph was the spouse of Mary, the mother of Jesus. Though the gospels are silent about much of Joseph's life, we know he was a carpenter by trade. Luke's gospel full shows him acting in accordance to civil and religious law by returning to Bethlehem for the census and by presenting Jesus in the temple on the fortieth day after his birth. Matthew's gospel tells of Joseph's trust in God, who led him through visionary dreams. Joseph is mentioned again at the start of Jesus' ministry in Luke (4:22), "Is not this Joseph's son?" The veneration of Joseph seems to have originated in the East, where the apocryphal 'History of Joseph the Carpenter' enjoyed considerable popularity.

#### **March 21, Thomas Cramner, Archbishop of Canterbury, martyr (1489-1555)**

Cramer was educated at Jesus College, Cambridge, and ordained in 1523. He served as bishop to Taunton in England, and was chosen by King Henry VIII as archbishop of Canterbury, largely because he agreed to the king's divorce from Catherine of Aragon. His lasting achievement is contributing to and overseeing the creation of the Book of Common Prayer, which in its revised form remains the worship book of the Anglican Communion. He was eventually tried and executed for his support of the Protestant Reformation during the reign of Queen Mary.

## St. Mark's Prayer List

James Watson, Sarah East, Phaedra & Scott Snow, Bill Bowden, Harry Kendrick, Kendal Turner, Rochelle Dagenhart, Janice Darnell, Pastor Glen Sea, Mark Barbee, Mark Thornton, Polly Needham, Tom Tolbert, Samuel Davis, Bob Roach, Payton McAdams, Dale Hopp, Bill Coppedge, Marcia Newlin, Silvia Puky, Ashlyn Bordelon, Betsy League, Carmelita Harris, Lucille Johnson, Marilyn Stevens, Satoko Yamada, Judy Cox, Ross Boheler, Charlene Oppermann, Elaine Ketner Sherman, Gene Ellington, Tanner & Christopher Shirley, Eileen Dunlap, Danye Olin Bragdon, Mindy Curley, Louisa & Oakley Coburn, Roxi Tolbert, Bill Schwartz, Arlene Fielding, David Kutscher, Danielle Clausen, Joseph Tolbert, and Jay Harbinson.

Please email Pastor McKenzie with Prayer List and other prayer requests ([pastortim@saintmarkscharlotte.org](mailto:pastortim@saintmarkscharlotte.org))

### Readings for 3/22/2026

#### Fifth Sunday in Lent

Ezekiel 37:1-14

Psalms 130

Romans 8:6-11

John 11:1-45

### Birthdays

3/18 Neil Dixon

3/18 Rodney Stephens



Do you feel like you are in crisis? In Isaiah it is written, "Fear not, for I am with you; do not be dismayed for I am your God." Stephen ministers are here to show the Lord's love and comfort for you in times of trial. If you would like to confidentially speak to a Stephen Minister, please contact Pastor Tim ([pastortim@saintmarkscharlotte.org](mailto:pastortim@saintmarkscharlotte.org))

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## *Our Ministers*

All the people of God at St. Mark's

**Rev. Dr. Timothy McKenzie, Senior Pastor**

[pastortim@saintmarkscharlotte.org](mailto:pastortim@saintmarkscharlotte.org)

**Rev. Alexandra Joy Rode, Associate Pastor  
for Family Ministry**

[pastorali@saintmarkscharlotte.org](mailto:pastorali@saintmarkscharlotte.org)

**Lester Ackerman,  
Director of Music Ministry, Organist**

[les@saintmarkscharlotte.org](mailto:les@saintmarkscharlotte.org)

**Sue Wadgymer, Parish Administrator**

[admin@saintmarkscharlotte.org](mailto:admin@saintmarkscharlotte.org)

**Elaine Johnson, Finance Administrator**

[finance@saintmarkscharlotte.org](mailto:finance@saintmarkscharlotte.org)

St. Mark's Lutheran Church  
1001 Queens Road, Charlotte, NC 28207 | [saintmarkscharlotte.org](http://saintmarkscharlotte.org) | 704.375.9185