

Christ Lutheran Church
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Johnstown, PA 15905
(814) 255-1395



Moxham Lutheran Church
500 Park Avenue
Johnstown, PA 15902
(814) 539-8664

First Sunday in Lent

Christ Lutheran 9:00 a.m. + Moxham Lutheran 10:30 a.m.
February 22, 2026

If you missed receiving the ashes this past Wednesday, this First Sunday in Lent offers another opportunity, through the various lenses of today's readings, to stare at our sinfulness and finitude. That's the one great thing about the Bible – it refuses to leave us alone in our denial. No wonder so few open it.

Gathering

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

Prelude

Welcome

Confession and Forgiveness

This Lenten confession provides several periods of silence for listening, pondering, and self-reflection – all hallmarks of the Lenten Season.

In the name of the Father,
and of the + Son, and of the Holy Spirit.

Amen.

God of heaven and earth,
you have made us your own children.
Equip us by your Spirit to recognize and confess our sin,
to embrace your forgiveness fully,
and to seek the way you set before us in your Son,
Jesus Christ, our Lord.

Amen.

With honesty of heart, we confess our sin.

Merciful God, forgive us.

Our will is captive to sin, and we cannot break free.

Silence

Merciful God,
we have spoken when we should have kept quiet.

Silence

Merciful God,
we were silent when we should have spoken up.

Silence

Merciful God,
we acted wrongly when we knew better.

Silence

For the wrong we have done, for the good we have failed to do,
have mercy on us, through Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord.

Amen.

People of God, look only to the **+** Son, the One given for your healing and freedom.
For God loved the world so much that he gave his only Son.

Take hold of this life – this eternal life!

Amen.

Greeting

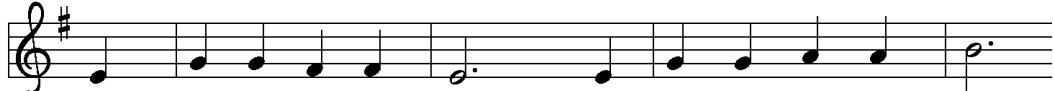
The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, the love of God,
and the communion of the Holy Spirit be with you all.

And also with you.

Gathering Song “What a Fellowship, What a Joy Divine”

No. 774

Kyrie



1 Have mer - cy on us, Lord, and hear our sol - emn prayer.
2 Have mer - cy on us, Christ, and wash a - way our sin.
3 Have mer - cy on us, Lord; make sin and shame de - part.



We come to hear your liv - ing word; it saves us from de - spair.

Pour out your grace and make us whole that new life may be - gin.

Re - new us with your sav - ing pow'r; cre - ate in us new hearts!

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.**

Word

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

First Reading: Genesis 2:15-17; 3:1-7

Human beings were formed with great care, to be in relationship with the creator, creation, and one another. The serpent's promise to the first couple that their eyes would be opened led, ironically, to the discovery only that they were naked.

¹⁵ The Lord God took the man and put him in the garden of Eden to till it and keep it. ¹⁶ And the Lord God commanded the man, "You may freely eat of every tree of the garden, ¹⁷ but of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil you shall not eat, for in the day that you eat of it you shall die."

^{3:1} Now the serpent was more crafty than any other wild animal that the Lord God had made. He said to the woman, "Did God say, 'You shall not eat from any tree in the garden'?" ² The woman said to the serpent, "We may eat of the fruit of the trees in the garden, ³ but God said, 'You shall not eat of the fruit of the tree that is in the middle of the garden, nor shall you touch it, or you shall die.' " ⁴ But the serpent said to the woman, "You will not die, ⁵ for God knows that when you eat of it your eyes will be opened, and you will be like God, knowing good and evil."

⁶ So when the woman saw that the tree was good for food and that it was a delight to the eyes and that the tree was to be desired to make one wise, she took of its fruit and ate, and she also gave some to her husband, who was with her, and he ate. ⁷ Then the eyes of both were opened, and they knew that they were naked, and they sewed fig leaves together and made loincloths for themselves.

The word of the Lord.

Thanks be to God.

Psalm: Psalm 32

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.**

⁷ You 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.**

⁹ Do 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: Romans 5:12-19

Through Adam’s disobedience, humanity came under bondage to sin and death, from which we cannot free ourselves. In Christ’s obedient death, God graciously showers on us the free gift of liberation and life.

¹² Just as sin came into the world through one man, and death came through sin, and so death spread to all because all have sinned ¹³ for sin was indeed in the world before the law, but sin is not reckoned when there is no law. ¹⁴ Yet death reigned from Adam to Moses, even over those who did not sin in the likeness of Adam, who is a pattern of the one who was to come.

¹⁵ But the free gift is not like the trespass. For if the many died through the one man’s trespass, much more surely have the grace of God and the gift in the grace of the one man, Jesus Christ, abounded for the many. ¹⁶ And the gift is not like the effect of the one man’s sin. For the judgment following one trespass brought condemnation, but the gift following many trespasses brings justification.

¹⁷ If, because of the one man’s trespass, death reigned through that one, much more surely will those who receive the abundance of grace and the gift of righteousness reign in life through the one man, Jesus Christ.

¹⁸ Therefore just as one man’s trespass led to condemnation for all, so one man’s act of righteousness leads to justification and life for all. ¹⁹ For just as through the one man’s disobedience the many were made sinners, so through the one man’s obedience the many will be made righteous.

The word of the Lord.

Thanks be to God.

Gospel Acclamation



We are turn - ing, Lord, to hear you; you are mer - ci - ful and kind -



slow to an - ger, rich in bless - ing, and with love to us in - clined.

Gospel: Matthew 4:1-11

Jesus experiences anew the temptations that Israel faced in the wilderness. As the Son of God, he endures the testing of the evil one.

The holy gospel according to Matthew.

Glory to you, O Lord.

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

‘One does not live by bread alone,
but by every word that comes from the mouth of God.’ ”

⁵ Then the devil took him to the holy city and placed him on the pinnacle of the temple, ⁶ 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.’ ”

⁷ Jesus said to him, “Again it is written, ‘Do not put the Lord your God to the test.’ ”

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

‘Worship the Lord your God,
and serve only him.’ ”

¹¹ Then the devil left him, and suddenly angels came and waited on him.

The gospel of the Lord.

Praise to you, O Christ.

Sermon

Hymn of the Day: "When We are Tested"

ACS No. 922



1 When we are test - ed and wres - tle a - lone,
2 When in the des - ert we cry for re - lief,
3 When we are tempt - ed to bar - ter our souls,
4 When we have strug - gled and searched through the night,



fam - ished for bread when the world of - fers stone,
plead - ing for paths marked by cer - tain be - lief,
trad - ing the truth for the pow'r to con - trol,
sort - ing and sift - ing the wrong from the right,



nour - ish us, God, by your word and your way,
lift us to love you be - yond sign and test,
teach us to wor - ship and praise on - ly you,
Sav - ior, sur - round us with cir - cles of care,



food that sus - tains us by night and by day.
trust - ing your pres - ence, our on - ly true rest.
seek - ing your will in the work that we do.
an - gels of heal - ing, of hope, and of prayer.

The Creed – The Small Catechism of Martin Luther (Abbreviated)

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

I believe that God has created me together with all that exists. God has given me and still preserves my body and soul: eyes, ears, and all limbs and senses; reason and all mental faculties.

And all this is done out of pure, fatherly, and divine goodness and mercy, without any merit or worthiness of mine at all! For all of this, I owe it to God 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, begotten of the Father in eternity, and also a true human being, born of the virgin Mary, is my Lord.

He has redeemed me, a lost and condemned human being. He has purchased and freed me from all sins, from death, and from the power of the devil, not with gold or silver but with his holy, precious blood and with his innocent suffering and death.

He has done all this that I may belong to him, live under him in his kingdom, and serve him in eternal 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 by my own understanding or strength I cannot believe in Jesus Christ my Lord or come to him. Instead, the Holy Spirit has called me through the gospel, enlightened me with his gifts, made me holy and kept me in the true faith – just as he calls, gathers, enlightens, and makes holy the whole Christian church on earth and keeps it with Jesus Christ in the one common, true faith.

On the last day, the Holy Spirit will raise me and all the dead and will give me and all believers in Christ eternal life. This is most certainly true.

Prayers of Intercession

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, awe, 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.
(*Especially we pray for . . .*) 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.

Peace

The peace of Christ be with you always.

And also with you.

Meal

God feeds us with the presence of Jesus Christ.

Presentation Song “When I Survey the Wondrous Cross”

No. 803

- 1 When I survey the wondrous cross
on which the prince of glory died,
my richest gain I count but loss
and pour contempt on all my pride.**

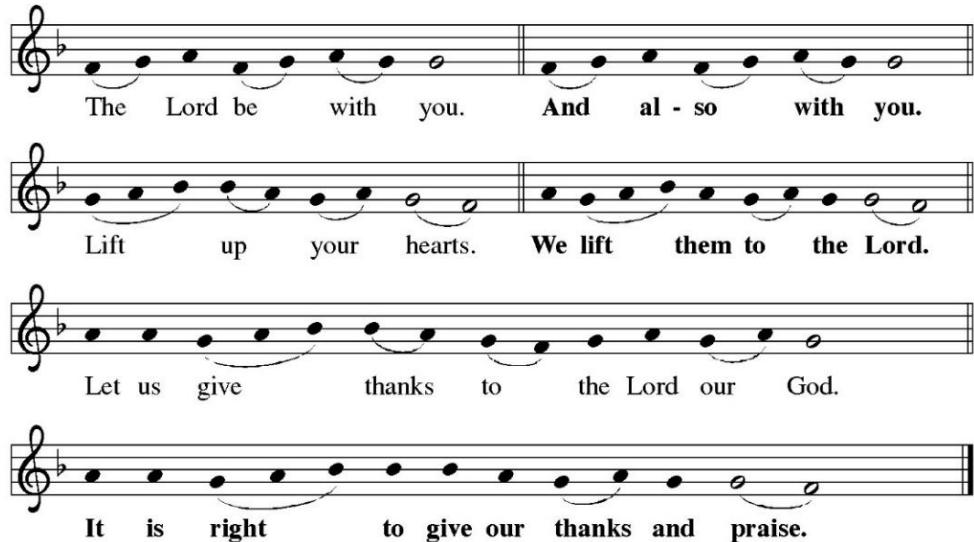
- 4 Were the whole realm of nature mine,
that were a present far too small;
love so amazing, so divine,
demands my soul, my life, my all.**

Offering Prayer

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

Amen.

The Great Thanksgiving



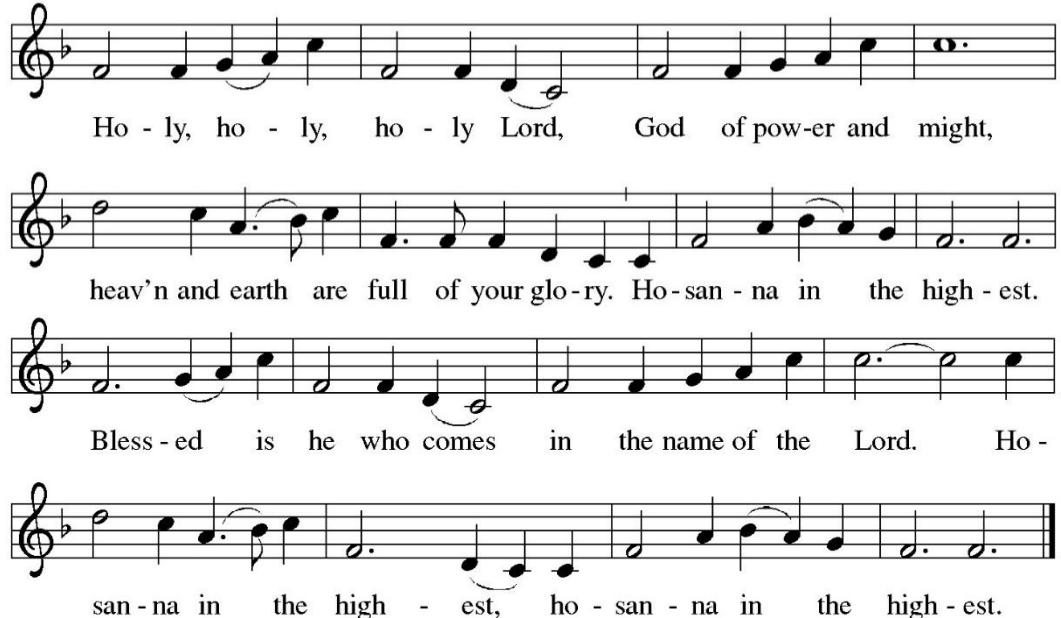
The Lord be with you. And also with you.

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.

It is indeed right, our duty and our joy . . . You call your people to cleanse their hearts and prepare with joy for the paschal feast, that, renewed in the gift of baptism, we may come to the fullness of your grace. 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:



Ho - ly, ho - ly, ho - ly Lord, God of pow-er and might,

heav'n and earth are full of your glo-ry. Ho - san - na in the high - est.

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

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

Thanksgiving at the Table

It is you who created the world,
abundant and fertile, and which you have entrusted it to us.
With every word that comes from your mouth, you feed us with the fruit of life,
and show us how to avoid the fruit of death.
When sin entered the world through one man's deceit,
we were all left, poisoned by shame,
our strength withering as in a summer drought.
But then, in your mercy, you sent your only dear Son, Jesus,
to rescue us from the devil's deceit.

Words of Institution

We remember how he was tested in the wilderness
but refused to compromise with evil,
even when it came disguised as compassion, knowledge and reason.
In him we have received the abundance of grace
that we might stand before you cleansed of all evil and deceit.
All honor and glory are yours, Almighty Father,
with the Holy Spirit, in your holy Church, both now and forever. **Amen.**

Lord's Prayer

Invitation to Communion

Here is the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world!

Come to the table; taste and see.

Thanks be to God.

Lamb of God



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.

Prayer after Communion

God of our salvation, we give you thanks for this meal that restores our souls, reconciles us to you, and strengthens us for the journey. Through the body and blood of your Son, may we become Christ's body in the world, bearing witness to your love for all creation, through Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord. **Amen.**

Sending

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

Blessing

Receive the blessing of the holy Trinity:
God, who calls all things into existence,
Jesus Christ, who redeems us,
and the Holy Spirit, whose breath sustains creation,
☩ bless you now and always. **Amen.**

Sending Song: “O, Lord throughout these Forty Days”

No. 319

Dismissal

Go in peace. Do justice. Love mercy.

Thanks be to God.

Living Waters Lutheran Parish Serving in Worship Today

The Rev. James N. West, Interim Pastor
Cindy Doherty, Assisting Minister

At Christ, Westmont

Director of Music and Live Streaming: Mike Thomas

Communion Assistants: Mike Crum and Judy Heinze

Lector: Denise Greco

At Moxham, Johnstown

Organist: Dan Gresh

Lector: Diane Rugh

Council Reps: Mark Koch and Nick O'nofrio

Communion Assistants: Susan Bullock and Kim Williams

Greeter: Kathie McCreary