



**St. John's of Hatboro**

Evangelical Lutheran Church in America

Faith - Service - Community



## Fourth Sunday in Lent

March 15, 2026

*The Good News for Today: Jesus gives us the courage to persevere when we're able to see what others don't want us to see.*

*Thank you for worshiping with us at St. John's. Please fill out your yellow attendance card and place it in the offering plate when we collect the offering later in the service.*

*Baptism is sometimes called enlightenment. The gospel for this Sunday is the story of the man born blind healed by Christ. "I was blind, now I see," declares the man. In baptism God opens our eyes to see the truth of who we are: God's beloved children. As David was anointed king of Israel, in baptism God anoints our head with oil, and calls us to bear witness to the light of Christ in our daily lives.*

### Gathering Music

*STAND*

**Hymn: Amazing Grace, How Sweet the Sound – ELW 779 (Red Book)**

- |   |  |
|---|--|
| <p>1 Amazing grace! how sweet the sound<br/>that saved a wretch like me!<br/>I once was lost, but now am found;<br/>was blind, but now I see.</p> <p>2 'Twas grace that taught my heart to<br/>fear,<br/>and grace my fears relieved;<br/>how precious did that grace appear<br/>the hour I first believed!</p> <p>3 Through many dangers, toils, and<br/>snares<br/>I have already come;<br/>'tis grace has brought me safe thus<br/>far,<br/>and grace will lead me home.</p> | <p>4 The Lord has promised good to me;<br/>his word my hope secures;<br/>he will my shield and portion be<br/>as long as life endures.</p> <p>5 When we've been there ten thousand<br/>years,<br/>bright shining as the sun,<br/>we've no less days to sing God's<br/>praise<br/>than when we'd first begun.</p> |
|---|--|

Text: John Newton, 1725-1807, alt., sts. 1-4; anonymous, st. 5

## 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 disdain 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.**

## Welcome & Greeting

Welcome to St. John's, where we are building a loving, accepting community centered on growing in Christ, and giving people a place to belong at any stage of their journey with God.

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.**

## Opening: Return to God *(Call and Response)* — ACS 921

- |  |  |
|--|--|
| 1 (In all affliction) In all affliction<br>(return, return to God.) Return,<br>return to God.          | 5 (By speech that's truthful) By speech<br>that's truthful<br>(return, return to God.) Return,<br>return to God. |
| 2 (With great endurance) With great<br>endurance<br>(return, return to God.) Return,<br>return to God. | 6 (To cease oppression) To cease<br>oppression<br>(return, return to God.) Return,<br>return to God.             |
| 3 (In ev'ry hardship) In ev'ry hardship<br>(return, return to God.) Return,<br>return to God.          | 7 (By loving justice) By loving justice<br>(return, return to God.) Return,<br>return to God.                    |
| 4 (With humble spirit) With humble<br>spirit<br>(return, return to God.) Return,<br>return to God.     | 8 (With gentle kindness) With gentle<br>kindness<br>(return, return to God.) Return,<br>return to God.           |

Text: Marilyn Haskel, b. 1945  
Text © 2009 Augsburg Fortress

## 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.**

*SIT*

## The Readings

### 1 Samuel 16:1-13

*Samuel anointed David even though he was the eighth-oldest son of Jesse and did not match his brothers in height or other physical characteristics. With the anointing came endowment with the Spirit of the Lord, designating David as the Lord's chosen successor to Saul.*

The first reading is from the sixteenth chapter of First Samuel:

<sup>1</sup>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

We will now read Psalm 23 responsively:

<sup>1</sup>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 beside 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 walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I shall fear no  
evil;  
for you are with me; your rod and your staff, they comfort me.**

<sup>5</sup>You prepare a table before me in the presence of my enemies;  
you anoint my head with oil, and my cup is running over.

**<sup>6</sup> Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me all the days of my life,  
and I will dwell in the house of the Lord forever.**

## Ephesians 5:8-14

*Because we now live in the divine light which is Jesus Christ, we conduct our lives in ways that reflect the light of Christ, so that our activity is truly pleasing to God.*

The second reading is from the fifth chapter of Ephesians:

<sup>8</sup> [F]or once you were darkness, but now in the Lord you are light. Walk as children of light, <sup>9</sup> for the fruit of the light is found in all that is good and right and true. <sup>10</sup> Try to find out what is pleasing to the Lord. <sup>11</sup> Take no part in the unfruitful works of darkness; rather, expose them. <sup>12</sup> For it is shameful even to mention what such people do secretly, <sup>13</sup> but everything exposed by the light becomes visible, <sup>14</sup> for everything that becomes visible is light. Therefore it says,

“Sleeper, awake!

Rise from the dead,  
and Christ will shine on you.”

The Word of the Lord,

**Thanks be to God.**

STAND

## Gospel Acclamation

Let your stead-fast love come to us, O Lord.

Save us as you prom-ised; we will trust your word.

## John 9:1-41

*Jesus heals a man born blind, provoking a hostile reaction that he regards as spiritual blindness to the things of God.*

The Holy Gospel according to St. John, the ninth chapter:

**Glory to you, O Lord.**

<sup>1</sup> As he walked along, he saw a man blind from birth. <sup>2</sup> His disciples asked him, “Rabbi, who sinned, this man or his parents, that he was born blind?” <sup>3</sup> Jesus answered, “Neither this man nor his parents sinned; he was born blind so that God’s works might

be revealed in him. <sup>4</sup> We must work the works of him who sent me while it is day; night is coming, when no one can work. <sup>5</sup> As long as I am in the world, I am the light of the world.” <sup>6</sup> When he had said this, he spat on the ground and made mud with the saliva and spread the mud on the man’s eyes, <sup>7</sup> saying to him, “Go, wash in the pool of Siloam” (which means Sent). Then he went and washed and came back able to see. <sup>8</sup> The neighbors and those who had seen him before as a beggar began to ask, “Is this not the man who used to sit and beg?” <sup>9</sup> Some were saying, “It is he.” Others were saying, “No, but it is someone like him.” He kept saying, “I am he.” <sup>10</sup> But they kept asking him, “Then how were your eyes opened?” <sup>11</sup> He answered, “The man called Jesus made mud, spread it on my eyes, and said to me, ‘Go to Siloam and wash.’ Then I went and washed and received my sight.” <sup>12</sup> They said to him, “Where is he?” He said, “I do not know.”

<sup>13</sup> They brought to the Pharisees the man who had formerly been blind. <sup>14</sup> Now it was a Sabbath day when Jesus made the mud and opened his eyes. <sup>15</sup> Then the Pharisees also began to ask him how he had received his sight. He said to them, “He put mud on my eyes. Then I washed, and now I see.” <sup>16</sup> Some of the Pharisees said, “This man is not from God, for he does not observe the Sabbath.” Others said, “How can a man who is a sinner perform such signs?” And they were divided. <sup>17</sup> So they said again to the blind man, “What do you say about him? It was your eyes he opened.” He said, “He is a prophet.”

<sup>18</sup> The Jews did not believe that he had been blind and had received his sight until they called the parents of the man who had received his sight <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.” 40 Some of the Pharisees who were with him heard this and said to him, “Surely we are not blind, are we?” 41 Jesus said to them, “If you were blind, you would not have sin. But now that you say, ‘We see,’ your sin remains.

This is the Gospel of the Lord.

**Praise to you, O Christ.**

*SIT*

**Sermon – “Losing My Religion” – Pastor Bo Bannister**

*STAND*

**Hymn: Light Dawns on a Weary World – ELW 726 (Red Book)**

- 1 Light dawns on a weary world  
when eyes begin to see  
all people's dignity.  
Light dawns on a weary world:  
the promised day of justice comes.

*Refrain*

The trees shall clap their hands;  
the dry lands, gush with springs;  
the hills and mountains shall break forth with singing!  
We shall go out in joy,  
and be led forth in peace,  
as all the world in wonder echoes shalom.

- 2 Love grows in a weary world  
when hungry hearts find bread  
and children's dreams are fed.  
Love grows in a weary world:  
the promised feast of plenty comes. *Refrain*
- 3 Hope blooms in a weary world  
when creatures, once forlorn,  
find wilderness reborn.  
Hope blooms in a weary world:  
the promised green of Eden comes. *Refrain*

Text: Mary Louise Bringle, b. 1953

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**The Apostles' Creed**

With the whole church let us confess our faith.

**I believe in God, the Father almighty, creator of heaven and earth.**

**I believe in Jesus Christ, God's only Son, our Lord, who was conceived by the Holy Spirit, born of the virgin Mary, suffered under Pontius Pilate, was crucified, died, and was buried; he descended to the dead. On the third day he rose again; he ascended into heaven, he is seated at the right hand of the Father, and he will come to judge the living and the dead.**

**I believe in the Holy Spirit, the holy catholic Church, the communion of saints, the forgiveness of sins, the resurrection of the body, and the life everlasting. Amen.**

## Prayers 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, our shepherd, we pray that you guide the church. Lead Christians in our community and across the globe in right paths for your name's sake. Hear us, O God.

**Your mercy is great.**

God our provider, we cry out for this planet and the life it holds. Rescue endangered animals and plants, preserve threatened ecosystems, and save creatures from natural disasters. Hear us, O God.

**Your mercy is great.**

God our sovereign, we plead for your peace on earth. Bring an end to war and violence, and raise up leaders in governments, courts, businesses, schools, and community organizations who seek goodness and mercy. Hear us, O God.

**Your mercy is great.**

God our healer, we call to you in our need. Uplift all who are made to feel unimportant, and transform the hearts of all infected by bigotry and prejudice. Care for all in special need this day. Hear us, O God.

**Your mercy is great.**

God our friend, we praise you for the diversity of people among us. Awaken us to share and receive the gifts we each possess, and stir up a spirit of understanding, celebration, and welcome for all. Hear us, O God.

**Your mercy is great.**

God our home, we thank you for all who have died and completed their baptismal journeys. Grant us faith to live 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

The peace of Christ be with you always.

**And also with you.**

Please share a sign of peace with one another.

*SIT*

## Announcements

*Printed copies of our weekly announcements are available at the usher's stand in the Narthex, and monthly newsletters are on the Hospitality Table. Please include your email address on your yellow attendance card to receive announcements electronically.*

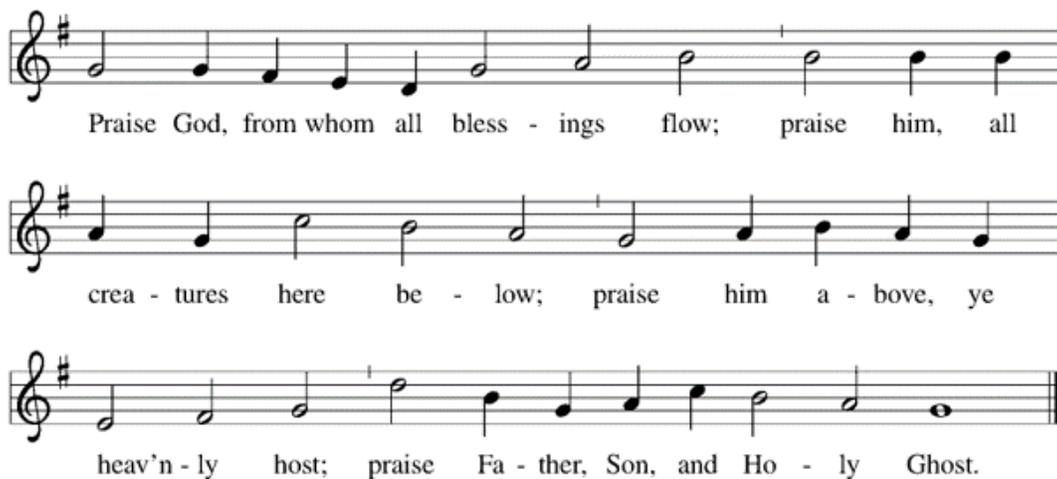
## Children's Message

## Offering

*STAND*

## Offertory Hymn: Praise God from Whom all Blessings Flow

– ELW 885 (Red Book)



The image shows three staves of musical notation in G major (one sharp) and 4/4 time. The melody is simple and hymn-like. The lyrics are printed below the notes.

Praise God, from whom all bless - ings flow; praise him, all  
crea - tures here be - low; praise him a - bove, ye  
heav'n - ly host; praise Fa - ther, Son, and Ho - ly Ghost.

## 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.**

## 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 salvation, always and everywhere to give you thanks, Father of mercies and faithful God, for you have given us Jesus Christ, your Son, as our Lord and Redeemer. He always showed compassion for children and the poor, for the sick and sinners, and he became a neighbor to the oppressed and the afflicted. By word and deed he announced to the world that you are our Father and that you care for all your children. And so, with all the angels and saints, we exalt and bless your name and sing the hymn of your glory, as without end we acclaim:

## Sanctus



## Eucharistic Prayer

Holy God, mighty Lord, gracious Father: Endless is your mercy and eternal your reign. You have filled all creation with light and life; heaven and earth are full of your glory.

We praise you for the grace shown to your people in every age: the promise to Israel, the rescue from Egypt, the gift of the promised land, the words of the prophets; and, at this end of all the ages, the gift of your Son, who proclaimed the good news in word and deed and was obedient to your will, even to giving his life.

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.

Let us proclaim the mystery of faith:

**Christ has died. Christ is risen. Christ will come again.**

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.

And now, as Christ our Savior has taught us, we are bold to pray:

## 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.**

*SIT*

## Invitation to Communion

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

## Distribution of the Elements

## Lamb of God

Lamb of God, you take away the sin of the world;  
have mercy on us.

Lamb of God, you take away the sin of the world;  
have mercy on us.

Lamb of God, you take away the sin of the world;  
grant us peace, grant us peace.

*STAND*

## Post-Communion Blessing

The Body and Blood of our Lord Jesus Christ strengthen you keep you in his Grace.

**Amen.**

## 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.**

## 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.**

## Hymn: In the Cross of Christ I Glory – ELW 324 (Red Book)

- |  |   |
|--|---|
| 1 In the cross of Christ I glory,<br>tow'ring o'er the wrecks of time.<br>All the light of sacred story<br>gathers round its head sublime.       | 3 When the sun of bliss is beaming<br>light and love upon my way,<br>from the cross the radiance<br>streaming<br>adds more luster to the day.               |
| 2 When the woes of life o'ertake me,<br>hopes deceive, and fears annoy,<br>never shall the cross forsake me;<br>lo, it glows with peace and joy. | 4 Bane and blessing, pain and<br>pleasure,<br>by the cross are sanctified;<br>peace is there that knows no<br>measure,<br>joys that through all time abide. |

Text: John Bowring, 1792-1872

# Dismissal

Go in peace. Believe the good news.

**Thanks be to God.**

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