

SECOND SUNDAY IN LENT  
March 5, 2023



During Lent we journey with all those around the world who will be baptized at the Easter Vigil. In today's gospel Jesus tells Nicodemus that he must be born of water and Spirit. At the font we are given a new birth as children of God. As God made a covenant with Abraham, in baptism God promises to raise us up with Christ to new life. From worship we are sent forth to proclaim God's love for all the world.

GATHERING HYMN

HOW FIRM A FOUNDATION

ELW 796

- 1 How firm a foundation, O saints of the Lord,  
is laid for your faith in Christ Jesus, the Word!  
What more can he say than to you he has said  
who unto the Savior for refuge have fled?
  
- 4 "Throughout all their lifetime my people shall prove  
my sov'reign, eternal, unchangeable love;  
and then, when gray hairs shall their temples adorn,  
like lambs they shall still in my bosom be borne."

**The Apostolic Greeting and Prayer of the Day**

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.**

**Let us pray:**

O God, our leader and guide, in the waters of baptism you bring us to new birth to live as your children. Strengthen our faith in your promises, that by your Spirit we may lift up your life to all the world 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.**

FIRST READING

**Genesis 12:1-4a**

*God's call of Abram and Sarai has a clear purpose—that through them all the families of the earth would gain a blessing. As they set out on their journey, they are accompanied by promises of land, nation, and a great reputation.*

<sup>1</sup>The LORD said to Abram, "Go from your country and your kindred and your father's house to the land that I will show you. <sup>2</sup>I will make of you a great nation, and I will bless you, and make your name great, so that you will be a blessing. <sup>3</sup>I will bless those who bless you, and the one who curses you I will curse; and in you all the families of the earth shall be blessed."

<sup>4a</sup>So Abram went, as the LORD had told him; and Lot went with him.

The Word of the Lord.

**Thanks be to God.**

SECOND READING **Romans 4:1-5, 13-17**

*In the person and example of Abraham we discover that a right relationship with God does not involve earning a reward from God but entails trusting God's promises. Abraham is the forebear and model for both Jews and Gentiles, because we too trust that ours is a God who gives life to the dead.*

<sup>1</sup>What then are we to say was gained by Abraham, our ancestor according to the flesh? <sup>2</sup>For if Abraham was justified by works, he has something to boast about, but not before God. <sup>3</sup>For what does the scripture say? "Abraham believed God, and it was reckoned to him as righteousness." <sup>4</sup>Now to one who works, wages are not reckoned as a gift but as something due. <sup>5</sup>But to one who without works trusts him who justifies the ungodly, such faith is reckoned as righteousness.

<sup>13</sup>For the promise that he would inherit the world did not come to Abraham or to his descendants through the law but through the righteousness of faith. <sup>14</sup>If it is the adherents of the law who are to be the heirs, faith is null and the promise is void. <sup>15</sup>For the law brings wrath; but where there is no law, neither is there violation.

<sup>16</sup>For this reason it depends on faith, in order that the promise may rest on grace and be guaranteed to all his descendants, not only to the adherents of the law but also to those who share the faith of Abraham (for he is the father of all of us, <sup>17</sup>as it is written, "I have made you the father of many nations")—in the presence of the God in whom he believed, who gives life to the dead and calls into existence the things that do not exist.

The Word of the Lord.

**Thanks be to God.**

**GOSPEL: JOHN 3:1-17**

The Holy Gospel according to John

**Glory to you, O Lord**

*A curious Pharisee visits Jesus by night to learn from the teacher his friends reject. Jesus speaks to him about life in the Spirit and the kingdom of God.*

<sup>1</sup>Now there was a Pharisee named Nicodemus, a leader of the Jews. <sup>2</sup>He came to Jesus by night and said to him, "Rabbi, we know that you are a teacher who has come from God; for no one can do these signs that you do apart from the presence of God." <sup>3</sup>Jesus answered him, "Very truly, I tell you, no one can see the kingdom of God without being born from above." <sup>4</sup>Nicodemus said to him, "How can anyone be born after having grown old? Can one enter a second time into the mother's womb and be born?" <sup>5</sup>Jesus answered, "Very truly, I tell you, no one can enter the kingdom of God without being born of water and Spirit. <sup>6</sup>What is born of the flesh is flesh, and what is born of the Spirit is spirit. <sup>7</sup>Do not be astonished that I said to you, 'You must be born from above.' <sup>8</sup>The wind blows where it chooses, and you hear the sound of it, but you do not know where it comes from or where it goes. So it is with everyone who is born of the Spirit." <sup>9</sup>Nicodemus said to him, "How can these things be?" <sup>10</sup>Jesus answered him, "Are you a teacher of Israel, and yet you do not understand these things?

<sup>11</sup>"Very truly, I tell you, we speak of what we know and testify to what we have seen; yet you do not receive our testimony. <sup>12</sup>If I have told you about earthly things and you do not believe, how can you believe if I tell you about heavenly things? <sup>13</sup>No one has ascended into heaven except the one who descended from heaven, the Son of Man. <sup>14</sup>And just as Moses lifted up the

serpent in the wilderness, so must the Son of Man be lifted up, <sup>15</sup>that whoever believes in him may have eternal life.

<sup>16</sup>“For God so loved the world that he gave his only Son, so that everyone who believes in him may not perish but may have eternal life.

<sup>17</sup>“Indeed, God did not send the Son into the world to condemn the world, but in order that the world might be saved through him.”

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

## **Sermon**

### **Prayers of Intercession**

Each petition ends “Lord, in your mercy,” and the response is “**Hear our prayer.**”

### **Lord’s Prayer**

Let us pray together

**Our Father in heaven,**

**hallowed be your name,  
your kingdom come,  
your will be done,  
on earth as is in heaven.**

**Give us today our daily bread.**

**Forgive us our sins**

**as we forgive those who sin against us.**

**Save us from the time of trial**

**and deliver us from evil.**

**For the kingdom, the power, and the glory are yours  
now and forever. Amen.**

### **BLESSING**

God, the giver of love,  
✠ Christ, the resurrection and the life,  
and the Holy Spirit of rebirth  
bless you in this Lenten journey.

**Amen.**

### **SENDING HYMN**

**LIFT HIGH THE CROSS**

ELW 660

#### *Refrain*

Lift high the cross, the love of Christ proclaim  
till all the world adore his sacred name.

1 Come, Christians, follow where our captain trod,  
our king victorious, Christ, the Son of God. *Refrain*

4 So shall our song of triumph ever be:  
praise to the Crucified for victory! *Refrain*

## DISMISSAL

Go in peace. Serve in love.  
**Thanks be to God.**

POSTLUDE

ETERNAL LORD OF LOVE, BEHOLD YOUR CHURCH

J. WAYNE KERR

## ANNOUNCEMENTS

**CIRCLE OF PRAYER** - Hunter Leisey, John Frantz, Nancy Kulp, Ed Miller, Charles Hoppman, Melissa Gress Swift, John Wesner, John Bergman, Michael Wargo, Nancy Leffler, Jan Lorah, Sandi Clemens, Nettie Kriener, Clair Sweigart, Faith Moyer, Michael A. Crowther, Reba Ranck, Grace Ranck, Dennis Goshert, Ray Fox, Deb Lorah, Jean Wolf, Karen Gardner, Kent Weinhold, Muffy Reinecker, Gene Miller, Kelly Martin, Pastor Jim Miller, Melody Ulrich, Jean Wolf, Kenny Rauch, Casey and Connor, family of Ella Shirk.

**ALTAR FLOWERS** are in memory of her sister, Cindy Crouse by Larry and Sally Hagy.

**SANCTUARY CANDLE** is given in memory of her parents, Clair and Minerva Showalter by Joyce and Ron Stoner.

**TAKE NOTE** – Please contact Joyce Stoner (717) 336-7077 or mark Flower Calendar in Narthex if you would like flowers or the candle to be given in honor or memory of someone. Upcoming Sundays open.

**MOST CURRENT INFORMATION** – Be sure and check our website regularly for updates and schedules of ongoing activities of the church. [www.swamplutheran.org](http://www.swamplutheran.org). Church office is open from 8:30AM-12PM daily.

**ACTION FUND** – Donations are sought for Swamp’s Action Fund to help the needy in our community. Write “Action Fund” in the comment line of your check payable to Swamp Lutheran Church.

**OFFERING ENVELOPES** – If you give via the online option, let us know by email ([secretary@swamplutheran.org](mailto:secretary@swamplutheran.org)) or by phone to the office so that you will no longer receive offering envelopes for 2022.

**FOOD BANK** – Needs of the EASS food bank supported by the church are ongoing and need replenished monthly. Currently, there is a shortage of canned fruit, ketchup and mustard.. Thank you for helping as you are able. We distribute on the 2<sup>nd</sup> Wednesday each month.

**LUTHERAN DISASTER RESPONSE** shares God's hope, healing and renewal with people whose lives have been disrupted by disasters in the United States and around the world. When the dust settles and the headlines change, we stay to provide ongoing assistance to those in need. Please write your check to Swamp Lutheran and place it in the Disaster Response box in the Narthex. Thank you for giving generously.

**ATTENTION THRIVENT FINANCIAL MEMBERS.** The Thrivent “Action Teams” program is an opportunity for Thrivent members to lead projects that provide service and outreach to the community. Thrivent Financial will provide funds of \$250 for each project to get

started and pay for associated expenses. You may request two grants per year. Swamp Lutheran has many needs that qualify under this program. If you wish to direct your grant request to help with Swamp Lutheran's activities, please reach out to Lori Gockley who will assist you with the process. Email: [lgockley2@gmail.com](mailto:lgockley2@gmail.com) or call 717-203-8551.

**US FLAGS** – When a US flag becomes worn, faded, torn or soiled, it should be retired and replaced with a new flag. For those of you interested in retiring your worn US flags, please bring them to the church. We will collect them in the church library and deliver them to the Reinholds VFW who will arrange for them to be retired in proper fashion. Thank you.

**LAP ROBES** – Thank you to those who are knitting and/or crocheting lap robes for the ongoing need of the VA Hospital. Please be aware that the church has received a donation of yarn that is available for your use. Please contact Brenda in the office.



**Gently Used Sneakers Needed.** Cub Pack 95 is collecting sneakers as a fundraiser. Used sneakers (pairs only; athletic shoes only) may be deposited in the bins located in the Narthex and the social hall lobby. The sneakers will be purchased from the Cubs by an organization that resells or recycles them, saving landfill space and natural resources while helping the Scouts raise money to fund their activities. Time to clean out your closets! The Cubs are **not** able to accept any non-athletic footwear including but not limited to dress shoes, heels, rain boots, sandals, slip-ons, water socks, wedges, and work boots of any kind. Questions may be addressed to Cubmaster Travis Leed at 717-381-1608 or email at [pack95reinholds@gmail.com](mailto:pack95reinholds@gmail.com)



We are currently accepting donations dedicated to the **Lutheran World Relief Personal Care Kit Project**. We will be collecting items through the end of April. Donations may be given to **Jane Lesher, Denise Null, Connie Taylor and Debbie Carvell**. Questions to Debbie Carvell 717-336-5638.

We appreciate everyone following the guidelines listed below, as Lutheran World Relief will not send anything that doesn't adhere to these guidelines. Each kit will contain:

- One bath-size towel, (approximately 52"x27"), dark color recommended
- Two bath-size bars (4 or 5 oz) of soap, in it's original wrapping
- One adult-size toothbrush in it's original packaging
- One sturdy comb, (wide-toothed preferred), remove packaging
- One metal nail clipper, remove packaging

Wrap all items in the towel and tie with ribbons or yarn. Do not add other items or leave out any of the items listed. **If you don't feel comfortable wrapping an entire kit, we will accept donations of any of the items and gladly assemble the kits!** *Hint for buying towels: Big Lots carries really nice towels that are the exact size needed for the kit. We bought some last year for a price of \$5.00 each!*

**GIFT CARDS FOR EASTER** -Gift cards are available for purchase and the list of available gift cards is in the Narthex on the table. Deadline for ordering is March 26, 2023 and the cards will be delivered in time for Easter. If there is a specific place that you are interested in and do not find on the list please speak to Missy Ragan to check availability. (717) 314-5658

# Pick Six Lenten Offering

This year, Swamp Lutheran will again offer a special giving opportunity for Lent: Pick Six. For the six weeks of Lent, we are encouraging you to give a special, weekly offering in addition to your regular giving. The benevolence giving options listed below are opportunities to give to ministries benefitting those in need—sharing God’s love outside the walls of Swamp.

Envelopes with these options listed on them are available on the table in the narthex. Please grab a pack of six envelopes (one for each week of Lent). Call the office if you need them mailed to you.



**Swamp Action Fund:** Help those in dire need of support for rent, bill payment, etc.



**Community Meal:** Contributions to this ministry support the purchase of food and supplies for the monthly community meal Swamp supports in the community.



**Confirmation Camp:** Help subsidize the cost of Confirmation Camp held at Camp Kirchenwald in June.



**Lutheran Disaster Response**  
Evangelical Lutheran Church in America  
God's work. Our hands.

Help bring God's hope, healing and renewal to people whose lives have been disrupted by disasters in the United States and around the world.



**EPHRATA AREA  
SOCIAL  
SERVICES**  
CELEBRATING 50 YEARS  
OF SERVICE TO THE COMMUNITY

Contributions help provide services to people in our community in the areas of food, clothing, fuel, transportation, and meals on wheels.



**Swamp Food Pantry:** Contributions support Swamp’s ministry of food to those challenged by food insecurity.



**ELCA World Hunger**  
Evangelical Lutheran Church in America  
God's work. Our hands.

Contributions to this ministry support the work to eradicate hunger in the United States and throughout the world financially.



**Jan's  
CIRCLE of  
FRIENDS**

**Jan’s Circle of Friends:** Contributions to this organization fund efforts to assist children coping with domestic violence and parental loss.



**2024 ELCA  
Youth Gathering**  
including  
**MYLE the Table**  
Young Adult Gathering

Contributions help cover the cost to send Swamp Youth and Advisors to the 2024 Youth Gathering in New Orleans, LA.



**HOMES  
OF HOPE**

Contributions support the Cocalico Area Homes of Hope transitional housing home in Adamstown and provides housing, mentoring, and budget coaching to participants.

## Week in the Parish (March 6 - March 12)

March 6	7:00PM	Handbell Choir
March 7	6:00PM 7:00PM	Zoom Bible Study Welcome Committee
March 8	7:00PM	Lenten Series, St. Paul's Adamstown
March 9	6:30PM 7:00PM	Learning Committee Choir
March 12	DAYLIGHT SAVINGS TIME	

### *UPCOMING EVENTS*

March 18	9:00AM	New Members Class
March 25	3:00PM	CUBS Blue & Gold Banquet
March 31	6:00PM	SLY Flashlight Egg Hunt

### *DAILY READINGS FOR THE COMING WEEK*

<i>Monday, March 6</i>	Psalm 128; Numbers 21:4-9; Hebrews 3:1-6
<i>Tuesday, March 7</i>	Psalm 128; Isaiah 65:17-25; Romans 4:6-13
<i>Wednesday, March 8</i>	Psalm 128; Ezekiel 36:22-32; John 7:53—8:11
<i>Thursday, March 9</i>	Psalm 95; Exodus 16:1-8; Colossians 1:15-23
<i>Friday, March 10</i>	Psalm 95; Exodus 16:9-21; Ephesians 2:11-22
<i>Saturday March 11</i>	Psalm 95; Exodus 16:27-35; John 4:1-6

### **UPCOMING SUNDAY READINGS**

*Sunday, March 12, Third Sunday in Lent*  
Exodus 17:1-7; Psalm 95; Romans 5:1-11; John 4:5-42

## **GOSPEL MESSAGE**

**March 5, 2023**

**SECOND SUNDAY IN LENT**

### **Windy People**

What does it mean to be born of the Spirit? Jesus tells Nicodemus those who are born of the Spirit are like the wind: you can hear it but cannot tell where it comes from or where it is going. What does it mean to be people of the wind? Are we to be heard, but unpredictable in our actions? Maybe.

Nicodemus is curious, working hard to reason out who Jesus is and what Jesus is saying. The trouble is that the eternal life Jesus is bringing into the world is not logical. Rebirth in the Spirit does not fit our framework of experience. The resurrection that follows the cross is not a scientific principle but a new work of God, received by faith rather than reason. The work of God is unpredictable.

Generally, we as people prefer predictability and order to uncertainty and chaos. There are reasons for this: people can be unpredictable in ways that bring pain and trauma into our lives. But there is a difference between this sort of volatility and the unpredictable ways God's grace lands in the world. God's grace always brings new life.

To be good stewards of our resources, congregations should have orderly financial processes, clear policies, and well-thought-out mission and ministry. At the same time, we can plan the Spirit right out of our work if we are more dedicated to order than we are to discernment. The Spirit blows as she will. Is there room in our worship for some improvisation when the Spirit shows up in a new way? Is there flexibility in our ministry to pivot to a new opportunity as the Spirit blows by?

Born of the Spirit, may we windy people be surprised by God's grace and be blessed to carry that gift to a world that is not expecting it.



**Swamp Evangelical Lutheran Church**

275 Swamp Church Road, Reinholds, PA 17569

717-336-2849

[www.swamplutheran.org](http://www.swamplutheran.org)

[secretary@swamplutheran.org](mailto:secretary@swamplutheran.org)

Office Hours: Monday – Friday 8:30AM – 12:00 noon

The Rev. Scott V. Brubaker, Pastor

Cell: 717-598-4663 Email: [pastor@swamplutheran.org](mailto:pastor@swamplutheran.org)

Sue Kreitz, Organist/Choir Director – 717-336-3272

Grady Daub, Assistant Organist – 717-917-2430

Doug Kulp, Bell Choir Director – 717-336-7798

John Frantz, Sexton – 717-606-8994

Lori Gockley, Council President – 717-733-1095

SUNDAY WORSHIP 8:00AM & 9:00AM

SUNDAY SCHOOL 10:15AM

SWAMPLUTHERAN CHURCH  
275 Swamp Church Road  
Reinholds, PA 17569