

FIFTH SUNDAY IN LENT

MARCH 17, 2024

9:00 AM



Swamp Evangelical Lutheran Church
Reinholds, Pennsylvania

WELCOME TO WORSHIP AT SWAMP LUTHERAN CHURCH

Visitors are welcome and invited to make themselves at home. If you're interested in learning more about Swamp Lutheran, have questions, or are looking for a church home, speak with Pastor Scott or church members. Please complete a visitor card and place it in an offering drop box or sign guest register in narthex.

Restrooms are located off the narthex (lobby) by the coat rack.

The worship service is printed in this bulletin. **Hymns** are found in the red hymnal Evangelical Lutheran Worship. **Children's** active presence is welcomed in our worship. There are special kids bulletins available in the narthex and at the side entrance.

Offering plates are passed. Additionally, there is an offering drop box in the narthex. Online giving via cell phone is easy and secure. Just use this QR code from your phone's camera app.



Our worship is rooted in the ancient pattern of the church—gathering, word, meal, sending. The shape of this liturgy and much of the actual words/prayers come directly from scripture. Though we make seasonal shifts, the constancy of our worship reflects God's constant love and promises through forgiveness, scripture, and the sacraments of baptism and communion. Following this liturgical pattern, as well as the Revised Common Lectionary, a three-year cycle of scripture readings, connects us through our worship with Christians around the world and throughout time.

All baptized Christians are welcome to receive **Holy Communion**. We believe "Holy Communion is the body and blood of our Lord Jesus Christ given with bread and wine, instituted by Christ himself for us to eat and drink." (Small Catechism, Martin Luther) Children who do not yet receive Holy Communion are welcome to come forward for a blessing.

Website – Be sure and check our website www.swamplutheran.org regularly for updates and schedules of ongoing activities of the church. Full prayer list is in the newsletter each month

GATHERING

The Holy Spirit calls us together as the people of God

God promises Jeremiah that a “new covenant” will be made in the future: a covenant that will allow all the people to know God by heart. The church sees this promise fulfilled in Christ, who draws all people to himself when he is lifted up on the cross. Our baptismal covenant draws us to God’s heart through Christ and draws God’s love and truth into our hearts. We join together in worship, sharing in word, song, and meal, and leave strengthened to share God’s love with all the world.

WELCOME AND ANNOUNCEMENTS

PRELUDE O LAMB OF GOD MOST HOLY ROBERT LAU

congregational responses are in bold type.

stand

CONFESSION AND FORGIVENESS

Blessed be the holy Trinity, † one God,
who writes the law on our hearts,
who draws all people together through Jesus. **Amen.**

Held in God’s mercy, let us confess our sin
in the presence of God and of one another.

Silence is kept for reflection.

Holy God,
**we confess that we are caught in snares of sin
and cannot break free.
We hoard resources while our neighbors
are hungry and cold.
We speak in ways that silence others.
We are silent when we should speak up.
We keep score in our hearts. We let hurts grow into hatred.
For all these things and for sins only you know, forgive us, Lord. Amen.**

Here is a flood of grace:
Out of love for the whole world,
God draws near to us,
breaks every snare of sin,
washes away our wrongs,
and restores the promise of life through † Jesus Christ. **Amen.**

GATHERING HYMN NOW THE GREEN BLADE RISES ELW 379

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.

PRAYER OF THE DAY

Let us pray.

O God, rich in mercy, by the humiliation of your Son you lifted up this fallen world and rescued us from the hopelessness of death. Lead us into your light, that all our deeds may reflect your love, through Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever.
Amen.

Sit

ANTHEM SEED THAT IN EARTH IS DYING HARALD HERRESTHAL

WORD

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

FIRST READING **Jeremiah 31:31-34**

The Judeans in Babylon blamed their exile on their ancestors, who had broken the covenant established at Sinai. Here the prophet looks to a day when God will make a new covenant with the people. There will be no need to teach the law, because God will write it on their hearts.

³¹The days are surely coming, says the LORD, when I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel and the house of Judah. ³²It will not be like the covenant that I made with their ancestors when I took them by the hand to bring them out of the land of Egypt—a covenant that they broke, though I was their husband, says the LORD. ³³But this is the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel after those days, says the LORD: I will put my law within them, and I will write it on their hearts; and I will be their God, and they shall be my people. ³⁴No longer shall they teach one another, or say to each other, “Know the LORD,” for they shall all know me, from the least of them to the greatest, says the LORD; for I will forgive their iniquity, and remember their sin no more.

The Word of the Lord.

Thanks be to God.

PSALM 51: 1-4, 9-12

intoned



Psalm tone reproduced from *Psalter for Worship Year C* © 2006 Augsburg Fortress.
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- ¹Have mercy on me, O God, according to your | steadfast love;
in your great compassion blot out | my offenses.
- ²**Wash me through and through | from my wickedness,
and cleanse me | from my sin.**
- ³For I know | my offenses,
and my sin is ev- | er before me.
- ⁴**Against you only have I sinned and done what is evil | in your sight;
so you are justified when you speak and right | in your judgment.**
- ⁹Hide your face | from my sins,
and blot out | all my wickedness.
- ¹⁰**Create in me a clean | heart, O God,
and renew a right spir- | it within me.**
- ¹¹Cast me not away | from your presence,
and take not your Holy Spir- | it from me.
- ¹²**Restore to me the joy of | your salvation
and sustain me with your boun- | tiful Spirit.**

SECOND READING **Hebrews 5:5-10**

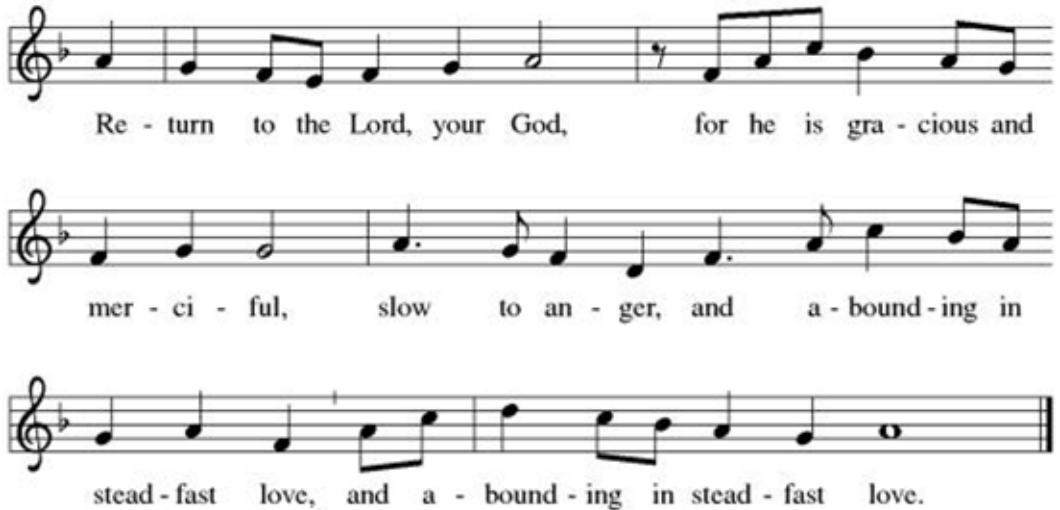
Using priestly imagery and references to the Old Testament, the author explains how Christ lived in trusting obedience to God, and so God has made Christ the source of our eternal salvation.

- ⁵Christ did not glorify himself in becoming a high priest, but was appointed by the one who said to him,
“You are my Son,
today I have begotten you”;
- ⁶as he says also in another place,
“You are a priest forever,
according to the order of Melchizedek.”

⁷In the days of his flesh, Jesus offered up prayers and supplications, with loud cries and tears, to the one who was able to save him from death, and he was heard because of his reverent submission. ⁸Although he was a Son, he learned obedience through what he suffered; ⁹and having been made perfect, he became the source of eternal salvation for all who obey him, ¹⁰having been designated by God a high priest according to the order of Melchizedek.

The Word of the Lord.
Thanks be to God.

GOSPEL ACCLAMATION



Re - turn to the Lord, your God, for he is gra - cious and
mer - ci - ful, slow to an - ger, and a - bound - ing in
stead - fast love, and a - bound - ing in stead - fast love.

HOLY GOSPEL **John 12:20-33**

The Holy Gospel according to John.
Glory to you, O Lord.

Jesus entered Jerusalem for the last time to celebrate the Passover festival. Here Jesus' words about seeds planted in the ground turn the disaster of his death into the promise of a harvest in which everyone will be gathered.

²⁰Now among those who went up to worship at the festival were some Greeks. ²¹They came to Philip, who was from Bethsaida in Galilee, and said to him, "Sir, we wish to see Jesus." ²²Philip went and told Andrew; then Andrew and Philip went and told Jesus. ²³Jesus answered them, "The hour has come for the Son of Man to be glorified. ²⁴Very truly, I tell you, unless a grain of wheat falls into the earth and dies, it remains just a single grain; but if it dies, it bears much fruit. ²⁵Those who love their life lose it, and those who hate their life in this world will keep it for eternal life. ²⁶Whoever serves me must follow me, and where I am, there will my servant be also. Whoever serves me, the Father will honor.

²⁷"Now my soul is troubled. And what should I say—'Father, save me from this hour'? No, it is for this reason that I have come to this hour. ²⁸Father, glorify your name." Then a voice came from heaven, "I have glorified it, and I will glorify it again." ²⁹The crowd standing there heard it and said that it was thunder. Others said, "An angel has spoken to him." ³⁰Jesus answered, "This voice has come for your sake, not for mine. ³¹Now is the judgment of this world; now the ruler of this world will be driven out. ³²And I, when I am lifted up from the earth, will draw all people to myself." ³³He said this to indicate the kind of death he was to die.

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

Sit

SERMON

CHILDREN'S SERMON

Stand

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

After each petition:

Lord, in your mercy,

hear our prayer.

PEACE

The peace of the Lord be with you always.

And also with you.

You may share the peace safely. A simple nod to those next to you, with the words "peace be with you" exchanged is always sufficient.

Sit

MEAL

God feeds us with the presence of Jesus Christ

OFFERTORY ETERNAL LORD OF LOVE BEHOLD YOUR CHURCH J. WAYNE KERR

OFFERING *In addition to the plate, online giving via cell phone is safe and secure. See QR code on the inside cover of this bulletin.*

As the offering is brought to the table, the congregation stands and sings.

CREATE IN ME A CLEAN HEART

ELW 186

The musical score is written on four staves in G major (one flat) and 7/8 time. The melody is simple and hymn-like, with lyrics printed below each staff. The piece concludes with a double bar line.

Cre-ate in me a clean heart, O God, and re-new a right
spir-it with-in me. Cast me not a-way from your pres-ence, and take
not your Ho-ly Spir-it from me. Re-store to me the joy of
your sal-va-tion, and up-hold me with your free Spir-it.

OFFERING PRAYER

Jesus, you are the bread of life
and the host of this meal.

**Bless these gifts that we have gathered
that all people may know your goodness.
Feed us not only with this holy food
but with hunger for justice and peace.
We pray this in your 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, that we should at all times and in all places give thanks and praise to you, almighty and merciful God, through our Savior Jesus Christ; who on this day overcame death and the grave, and by his glorious resurrection opened to us the way of everlasting life.

Holy, mighty, and merciful Father, heaven and earth are full of your glory. In great love you sent to us Jesus, your Son, who reached out to heal the sick and suffering, who preached good news to the poor, and who, on the cross, opened his arms to all.

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.

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 you, O God, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, be all honor and glory in your holy church, now and forever. **Amen.**

LORD'S PRAYER

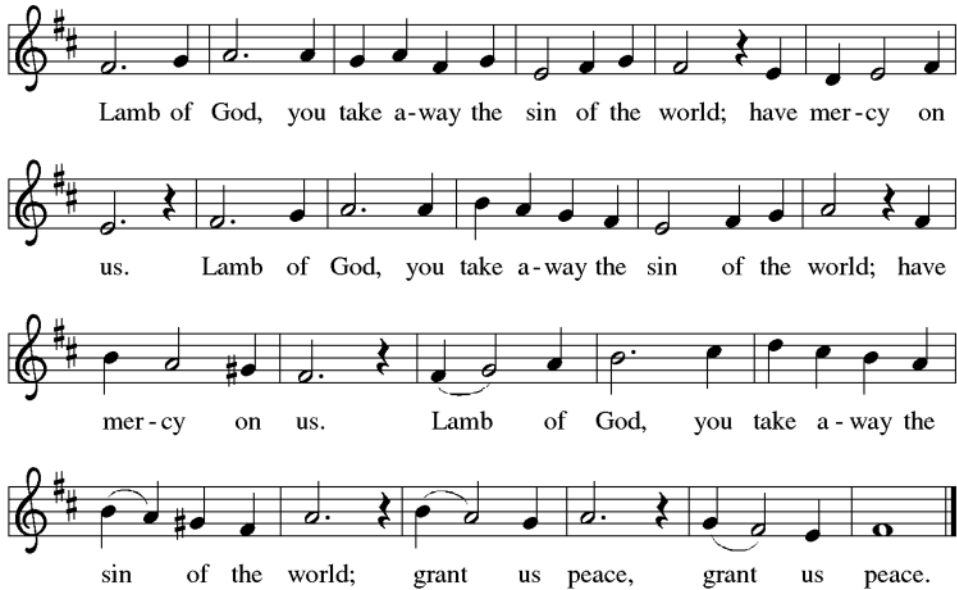
Gathered into one by the Holy Spirit, let us pray as Jesus taught us.

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

INVITATION TO COMMUNION

Jesus invites you to this table.
Come, eat and live.
Thanks be to God.

LAMB OF GOD *remain standing*



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.

Sit

THE DISTRIBUTION OF HOLY COMMUNION

Following the direction of the ushers, approach by the center aisle and return to your pew by the side aisles. Please get a cup from the stack by the first pew before receiving bread.

HYMN DURING COMMUNION (Congregation Encouraged to Sing)

AS THE GRAINS OF WHEAT

ELW 465

After all have communed, stand

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

Let us pray.

Generous God,
at this table we have tasted your immeasurable grace.
As grains of wheat are gathered into one bread,
now make us one loaf to feed the world;
in the name of Jesus, the Bread of life.
Amen.

SENDING

God blesses us and sends us in mission to the world

BLESSING

Beloved,
we are God's own people,
holy, washed, renewed.
God bless you and keep you,
shower you with mercy,
fill you with courage,
and ✠ give you peace. **Amen.**

SENDING HYMN RESTORE IN US, O GOD ELW 328

DISMISSAL

Go in Peace. Share Your Bread.
Thanks be to God.

POSTLUDE LORD, BE GLORIFIED ARR. DAVID LASKY

ANNOUNCEMENTS

CIRCLE OF PRAYER - Hunter Leisey, John Frantz, Ed Miller, John Wesner, Michael Wargo, Jan Lorah, Sandi Clemens, Nettie Kriener, Clair Sweigart, Faith Moyer, Michael A. Crowther, Reba Ranck, Grace Ranck, Ray Fox, Gene Miller, Kelly Martin, , Jean Wolf, Bruce Wagner, Honey Notobartolo, Charles Moyer, Anna Habecker, Bobby Hershey, Anna Hershey, Marilyn Gelsinger, Edith Snyder, Jackson Sensenig, Sharon Levan, JJ Johnson, Robert Bachman, Teresa Sweigart, Mel and Troy Ulrich, Earl Myers, Elizabeth Sherman, Katie Krater, Judy Habecker, Anna Rose Schannauer, Betty Kramer, Tyler Leed, Robyn Reihner, Henry, Dennis Troutman, family of Shirley Hoppman.

ALTAR FLOWERS are in memory of her mother Mary Derr by Jane Leshner.

SANCTUARY CANDLE is in memory of Marie Jenkins by her family.

ALTAR FLOWERS – A 2024 altar flower calendar is in the Narthex. Flower & Candle costs remain at \$40.00 & \$5.00, respectively. Standing orders remain on the calendar from year to year. Please support the church by signing up for the weeks that do not have sponsors. Sue Kreitz, 717-283-9444 and John Frantz, 717-606-8994 are now taking care of the flower and candle sign-up if you have questions or want to schedule. Several opportunities for candles are available.

OFFERING ENVELOPES – If you give via the online option, let us know by email (secretary@swamplutheran.org) or by phone to the office so that you will no longer receive offering envelopes for 2023.



To our **knitters and crocheters**, please focus on prayer shawls. When you finish, please bring it to church and leave it in the library. *THANK YOU* for supporting this church ministry.

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 17, 2024, 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 it on the list, please speak to Missy Ragan to check availability. (717) 314-5658

FOOD BANK – Needs of the food bank are ongoing and need replenished monthly. There is an urgent need for cereal and condiments and there is always a need for canned vegetables, canned fruit, canned soup, canned meat and tuna, pasta, rice and mac & cheese. Thank you for helping as you are able. We distribute on the 2nd Wednesday each month. Please check for a current expiration date.

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 or call 717-203-8551



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 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

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

SLY FLASHLIGHT EGG HUNT & SLEEPOVER

MARCH 22 – 23



Ages: 6th to 12th grade. Friday 6 pm to Saturday 9 am

The Swamp Lutheran Youth Group (SLY) invites you to join us in our annual Flashlight Easter Egg Hunt. Weather permitting, hunt eggs by flashlight, make s’mores at the bonfire. Then come inside to watch a movie. Friday dinner and Saturday breakfast included. Bring a friend!

RSVP by March 18 to Pastor Scott - pastor@swamplutheran.org or 717-336-2849

LUTHERAN WORLD RELIEF PERSONAL CARE KIT PROJECT

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

We appreciate everyone following the guidelines below, as Lutheran World Relief will not send anything that does not adhere to their specified guidelines. Each kit will contain:

- One bath-size towel (approximately 52" x 27") dark color recommended.
- Two bath-size (4 or 5 oz) of soap, in it's original wrapping.
- One adult-size toothbrush in it's original packaging.
- One sturdy comb, (wide tooth preferred), remove packaging.
- One metal nail clipper, remove packaging.

Wrap all items in the towel and tie with ribbon or yarn. Please 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: Last year we bought these exact towels at Big Lots for \$4.00 each!*

As always, thank you for making this project a success!

PACK 95 is looking for more **Cubs** and a **Cubmaster** and **Treasurer**. To learn more, talk to Pastor Scott or Cubmaster Travis Leed: 717-381-1608 or email at pack95reinholds@gmail.com

Orders are being taken for **red geraniums for Pentecost**, Sunday May 19th, 2024. Price is not yet known and the deadline for ordering is Sunday April 21st. Please give the following information to the church office or to Jodi Showalter (717) 413-7149

Name _____ Phone Number _____

Red Geraniums _____

In memory of _____

In honor of _____

2024 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 operating in or through our church.

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. Giving via online option too. Giving to multiple options each week is encouraged.



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



Swamp Lutheran Property Fund: Help with needed property improvements such as paying off the new sound system, replacing windows in sacristy and robing rooms, sealing and painting the parking lot, among many other needs.



Syrian Family Fund: Help the Syrian family we are co-sponsoring to get a firm start on their new life in the US.



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



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 US and around the world.



EPHRAATA AREA SOCIAL SERVICES
SERVING 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 US and throughout the world.



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.

HOMES



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

LIFT UP YOUR VOICES
SOUND SYSTEM CAMPAIGN
\$20,000 GOAL



SANCTUARY SOUND SYSTEM UPGRADE

LIFT UP YOUR VOICES PLEDGE

We continue to stretch towards our goal of \$20,000. Pledge Cards are available at each entrance to the Sanctuary. A one-time gift or a weekly, monthly, quarterly pledge is welcome. Feel free to call or email the office if you want a pledge card mailed to you.

Give via QR code now



LIVESTREAM TECHNICIAN

We need volunteers to learn and share in the livestreaming and sound control for Sunday worship. We need additional helpers so that we can create a rotation schedule. If interested or to learn more, contact Pastor Scott.

2024 CLUSTER LENTEN SERVICES – 7PM

Date	Location	Preacher
Wed. March 20	St. John Center, East Earl	Rev. Peter Schwabe-Fry
Thurs. May 9 Ascension Day	Swamp, Reinholds	Rev. Tim Craven

This Week in the Parish (March 18- 24)

March 18	6PM 7PM	Church Council Handbell Choir
March 19	6PM 7PM	ZOOM Bible Study Choir
March 20	7PM	Lenten Service St. John Center, East Earl
March 22-23	6PM	SLY Flashlight Egg Hunt Sleepover
March 24	8AM 9AM 10:15	Worship Worship Sunday School

UPCOMING EVENTS

March 28	6AM 7:30PM	Breakfast Maundy Thursday Worship
March 29	6AM 8PM	Breakfast Good Friday Worship
March 30	10AM	Easter Egg Hunt
March 31	6AM 7AM 8:30AM	Easter Dawn Worship Breakfast Easter Worship

DAILY READINGS FOR THE COMING WEEK

Monday Psalm 119:9-16 Isaiah 43:8-13 2 Corinthians 3:4-11
Tuesday Psalm 119:9-16 Isaiah 44:1-8 Acts 2:14-24
Wednesday Psalm 119:9-16 Haggai 2:1-9, 20-23 John 12:34-50
Thursday Psalm 118:1-2, 19-29 Deuteronomy 16:1-8 Philippians 2:1-11
Friday Psalm 118:1-2, 19-29 Jeremiah 33:1-9 Philippians 2:12-18
Saturday Psalm 118:1-2, 19-29 Jeremiah 33:10-16 Mark 10:32-34, 46-52

UPCOMING SUNDAY READINGS

Sunday of the Passion March 24, 2024

Mark 11:1-11 *or* John 12:12-16

Isaiah 50:4-9a

Psalms 31:9-16

Philippians 2:5-11

Mark 14:1—15:47 *or* Mark 15:1-39 [40-47]

HOLY WEEK BREAKFAST MENU 2024

MAUNDY THURSDAY, MARCH 28, 6AM

- Waffles/Ice Cream with toppings
- Casserole

GOOD FRIDAY, MARCH 29, 6AM

- Ham
- Home Fries w/wo onions
- Sausage
- Toast
- Creamed dry beef
- Fruit salad

EASTER SUNDAY, MARCH 31, AFTER 6AM SERVICE

- Scrambled eggs
- Dutch Fry with sausage
- French toast
- Bacon
- Sausage
- Toast
- Cobblers

The poster features a light blue background decorated with various Easter-themed illustrations. At the top and bottom, there are white bunny heads with pink inner ears. Scattered around are several Easter eggs: a green egg with white flowers, a pink egg with blue polka dots, and a yellow and white striped egg. The text is centered in the middle of the page.

SWAMP LUTHERAN CHURCH

EASTER EGG HUNT

MARCH 30, 2024 | 10AM - 12PM

Join us for our Annual Easter Egg Hunt!
There will be plenty of crafts, snacks and
prizes for children ages Pre K - 5th Grade!

275 SWAMP CHURCH ROAD, REINHOLDS, PA 17569
QUESTIONS: 717 336 2849

GOSPEL MESSAGE

March 17, 2024

FIFTH SUNDAY IN LENT

Called Where Jesus Goes

It isn't only the first disciples who become uncomfortable when Jesus talked about his approaching death. We often do as well. Perhaps focusing on the crucifixion seems gruesome. Perhaps it conjures in us the (false) story of a divine parent who cannot forgive without punishing someone, with Jesus standing in as that one. Maybe it feels like a morbid emphasis on sin.

Jesus did not understand himself as the victim of divine punishment. He entered into suffering as a part of his glorification, working with—not against—his Father. He knows that human life has become twisted under the powers of sin and death so that if we grasp onto our “life in this world,” we will miss God’s gracious intention for us. Christ’s judgment of sin is not for our exclusion. Jesus never seeks to shame us, but condemns sin in order to deliver us from its power.

Perhaps, however, we shy away from talk of Christ’s death because we sense, on some level, that if our Lord must go to the cross, then so too must we. Jesus declares, “Whoever serves me must follow me.” Discipleship is a summons to die to ourselves and lose our life on this world’s terms. Paradoxically, this cruciform journey is the road to true fruitfulness and flourishing. It begins in our baptism and is nourished at the Lord’s table. It is sustained by the fellowship of faith, where together we hear the life-giving word of Jesus. It will find completion on the day of resurrection.

Our souls long for this way of salvation. Deep within us all, a voice whispers, “We wish to see Jesus.” God knows this need, so Jesus is lifted up to drive out the powers of sin and death. God’s unending mercy is displayed. For the same reason, we come together so that in hearing the word and sharing the eucharistic meal, and in our prayers, laments, and praises, Jesus may be lifted up to draw us, and all people, to salvation.

Swamp Evangelical Lutheran Church

717-336-2849

www.swamplutheran.org

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

Terri Renninger, Church Secretary – 717-336-2849

Jonathan Gyorke, Sexton – 717-435-3091

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

Grady Daub, Assistant Organist – 717-917-2430

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

Lori Gockley, Council President – 717-733-1095

SUNDAY WORSHIP 8:00AM & 9:00AM

SUNDAY SCHOOL 10:15AM

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