

The Lutheran Church of the Covenant
“Reaching Out, Reflecting Christ, Renewing Lives”



Joseph, Guardian of Jesus
March 19, 2023



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



We welcome you to worship here at the Lutheran Church of the Covenant! Here are a few notes to make you feel more at home as we praise this God of new life together!

- Bulletins and Communion (wheat or gluten-free wafers, wine or grape juice options) are available to be picked up at the back of the sanctuary.
- Portions marked with * are when we invite you to stand as you are able to do so.
- We encourage you to participate throughout the worship by speaking the **bold** print and singing along with the hymns!
- There will not be a separate time for an offering, so a basket is placed in the back for those who wish to support our local ministry as well as the wider church.
- We will commune from our respective seats, where the presiding minister will invite you to open your respective cups with the Communion elements. We believe this meal is for everyone who wishes to partake, regardless of church affiliation or lack thereof. This tangible gift of God's love is meant for the world to enjoy!

Our Worship Leaders & Staff

Ministers
Presiding Minister
Organist
Instrumentalists
Lector
Parish Administrator
Custodian

All People
The Rev. Bradley Ross
Aaron Carter-Enyi, CAGO
United Handbell Choir

Jennifer Lasher-Dobush
Vince Besednjak

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Joseph, Guardian of Jesus

Father figures abound in the appointed texts for the commemoration of Joseph, the guardian of Jesus. God promises to be a father to David's offspring. The letter to the Romans celebrates Abraham as "the father of all of us." The angel invites Joseph, son of David, to be like a father to Mary's child, Jesus. As we remember Joseph's doing as the angel of the Lord directed him, we pray for a similar measure of faith and devotion.

Prelude

Welcome & Greetings

*Confession and Forgiveness

As we take time to recognize our shortcomings before God, we forever cling to the grace and mercy that will always triumph in blessing us with hope and new life.

Blessed be the holy Trinity, † one God,
who journeys with us these forty days,
and sustains us with the gift of grace.

Amen!

Let us acknowledge before God and one another
our dependence on God's mercy.

Silence is kept for reflection.

Holy God,

we confess to you our faults.

Too often we neglect and do not trust your loving word;

we take for ourselves instead of giving to others;

we spoil rather than steward your creation;

we cause hurt though you call us to heal;

we choose fear over compassion.

Forgive us, renew us, and lead us,

as we seek to follow in your way of new life. Amen.

Hear the good news:

God so loved the world that God gave the only Son,
so that all may receive life.
This promise is for you!
God embraces you with divine mercy,
✠ forgives you in Christ's name,
and revives you in the power of the Holy Spirit! **Amen!**

*Gathering Hymn *Sing with All the Saints in Glory*

ELW #426

*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

O God, from the family of your servant David, you raised up Joseph to be the guardian of your Son, and the husband of his blessed mother. Give us grace to imitate his dedication and humility, through Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. **Amen!**

First Lesson

2 Samuel 7:4, 8-16

The LORD will make a house for David, an everlasting kingdom.

⁴That same night the word of the LORD came to Nathan: ⁸Now therefore thus you shall say to my servant David: Thus says the LORD of hosts: I took you from the pasture, from following the sheep to be prince over my people Israel; ⁹and I have been with you wherever you went, and have cut off all your enemies from before you; and I will make for you a great name, like the name of the great ones of the earth. ¹⁰And I will appoint a place for my people Israel and will plant them, so that they may live in their own place, and be disturbed no more; and evildoers shall afflict them no more, as formerly, ¹¹from the time that I appointed judges over my people Israel; and I will give you rest from all your enemies. Moreover the LORD declares to you that the LORD will make you a house.

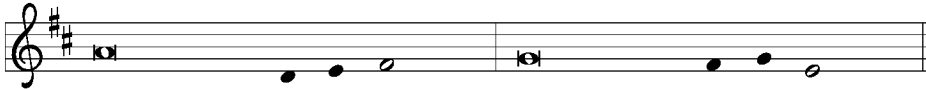
¹²When your days are fulfilled and you lie down with your ancestors, I will raise up your offspring after you, who shall come forth from your body, and I will establish his kingdom. ¹³He shall build a house for my name, and I will establish the throne of his kingdom forever. ¹⁴I will be a father to him, and he shall be a son to me. When he commits iniquity, I will punish him with a rod such as mortals use, with blows inflicted by human beings. ¹⁵But I will not take my steadfast love from him, as I took it from Saul, whom I put away from before you. ¹⁶Your house and your kingdom shall be made sure forever before me; your throne shall be established forever.

Word of God, word of life! **Thanks be to God!**

Psalm

Psalm 89:1-8

The bold verses are sung by the congregation using the tone below:



Antiphon: *Your steadfast love, O LORD, is established forever.* (Ps. 89:2)

- ¹Your love, O LORD, forever | will I sing;
from age to age my mouth will pro- | claim your faithfulness.
- ²**For I am persuaded that your steadfast love is estab- | lished forever;
you have set your faithfulness firmly | in the heavens.**
- ³⁴I have made a covenant with my | chosen one;
I have sworn an oath to Da- | vid my servant:
- ⁴**I will establish your | line forever,
and preserve your throne for all | generations.”** *Antiphon*
- ⁵The heavens praise your won- | ders, O LORD,
and your faithfulness in the assembly of the | holy ones;
- ⁶**for who in the skies can be compared | to the LORD?
Who is like the LORD a- | mong the gods?—**
- ⁷a God who is feared in the council of the | holy ones,
great and awesome to those | all around.
- ⁸**Who is like you, LORD! God of hosts?
O mighty LORD, your faithfulness is | all around you.** *Antiphon*

Second Lesson

Romans 4:13-18

The descendants of Abraham inherit not through the law, but through faith.

¹³For 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. ¹⁴If it is the adherents of the law who are to be the heirs, faith is null and the promise is void. ¹⁵For the law brings wrath; but where there is no law, neither is there violation.

¹⁶For 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, ¹⁷as 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. ¹⁸Hoping against hope, he believed that he would become “the father of many nations,” according to what was said, “So numerous shall your descendants be.”

Word of God, word of life! **Thanks be to God!**

*Gospel Acclamation *Tree of Life and Awesome Mystery*

ELW# 334

1 Tree of Life and awe - some mys - t'ry, in your
death we are re - born; though you die in all of
his - t'ry, still you rise with ev - 'ry morn, still you
rise with ev - 'ry morn.

The musical score is written on four staves in G major (one sharp) and 4/4 time. The melody is simple and hymn-like, with lyrics written below the notes. The first line of music corresponds to the first line of lyrics, and so on. The final line of music ends with a double bar line and repeat signs.

(last line sung twice)

Lent 4

Give us eyes to see you clearly;
make us children of your light.
Give us hearts to live more nearly
as your gospel shining bright.

*Gospel

Matthew 1:16, 18-21, 24a

An angel tells Joseph that Mary's child will be the Savior.

The Holy Gospel according to Matthew, the 1st chapter. **Glory to you, O Lord!**

¹⁶Jacob [was] the father of Joseph the husband of Mary, of whom Jesus was born, who is called the Messiah.

¹⁸Now the birth of Jesus the Messiah took place in this way. When his mother Mary had been engaged to Joseph, but before they lived together, she was found to be with child from the Holy Spirit. ¹⁹Her husband Joseph, being a righteous man and unwilling to expose her to public disgrace, planned to dismiss her quietly. ²⁰But just when he had resolved to do this, an angel of the Lord appeared to him in a dream and said, "Joseph, son of David, do not be afraid to take Mary as your wife, for the child conceived in her is from the Holy Spirit. ²¹She will bear a son, and you are to name him Jesus, for he will save his people from their sins." ^{24a}When Joseph awoke from sleep, he did as the angel of the Lord commanded him.

This is the holy Gospel of our Lord! **Praise to you, O Christ!**

Sermon

Hymn of the Day *By All Your Saints*

ELW# 421



- 1 By all your saints still striv - ing, for all your saints at rest,
- 2 We sing our praise for Jo - seph, your guard - ian, dear - est Lord,
- 3 Give praise to God Al - mighty - y, and wor - ship God the Son,



your ho - ly name, O Je - sus, for - ev - er - more be blessed!
who, list'n - ing to the an - gel, once saved you from the sword.
and sing to God the Spir - it, e - ter - nal Three in One,



For you a - rose vic - to - rious that they might wear the crown
In tem - ple, home, and work - shop, he led you, honed your skill.
till all the ran-somed num - ber fall down be - fore the throne,



and share the light of glo - ry re - flect - ed from your throne.
So teach us, Christ our broth - er, to do our Fa - ther's will.
and hon - or, pow'r, and glo - ry as - cribe to God a - lone.

Text: Horatio Bolton Nelson, 1823–1913, alt.; hymnal version, st. 2

Music: KUORTANE, Finnish folk tune

Text st. 2 © 2006 Augsburg Fortress

*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.**

*Prayers of Intercession

United with the great cloud of witnesses throughout the ages, we pray for the church, the world, and all who are in need.

A brief silence.

Universal God, assure us the promise of your grace for all. Establish your steadfast love in the hearts of all in our Covenant family, and give us courage to live for the good of others. Bless those whose handiwork builds up the ministry of the church near and far away. Hear us, O God. **Your mercy is great.**

God of the raging sea and surging waves, heaven and earth praise your wonders. Continue to look upon creation with tenderness and mercy. Provide clean water and fertile soil. Replenish forests and repair damaged ecosystems. Set us as faithful caretakers of the earth. Hear us, O God. **Your mercy is great.**

You reign over all the rulers of the earth. Give nations rest from their enemies and direct leaders in pathways of love and truth. Overcome the desire for greed or vengeance. Make justice and righteousness the foundation of our common life. Watch over those serving in the military and as first responders. Hear us, O God. **Your mercy is great.**

Give hope and healing to all who face uncertainty. Enfold with your love those who lie awake at night because of unresolved pain, persistent anxiety, or care for the needs of others. Give hope to the sick with your mercy. Hear us, O God. **Your mercy is great.**

Like Joseph, David, and Abraham before us, bless those called to serve as parents and father figures. Strengthen relationships between children and trusted adults. Console those who hope for the birth of children, for meaningful relationships, or for unconditional love. Hear us, O God. **Your mercy is great.**

You give life to the dead and call into existence things that do not exist. Praise to you for your saints who are now at rest. Assemble your holy ones around your throne, to rejoice forever in your name. Hear us, O God. **Your mercy is great.**

In the company of your saints we commend all for whom we pray, trusting in your eternal mercy and love; through Jesus Christ our Savior and Lord. **Amen!**

*Sharing of the Peace

The peace of Christ be with you always!
And also with you.

Music Interlude *Come and Find a Quiet Center* (Coffey)

*Come and find the quiet center in the crowded life we lead,
Find the room for hope to enter, find the frame where we are freed:
Clear the chaos and the clutter, clear our eyes, that we can see
All the things that really matter, be at peace, and simply be.*

*Silence is a friend who claims us, cools the heat and slows the pace,
God it is who speaks and names us, knows our being, touches base,
Making space within our thinking, lifting shades to show the sun,
Raising courage when we're shrinking, finding scope for faith begun.*

*In the Spirit let us travel, open to each other's pain,
Let our loves and fears unravel, celebrate the space we gain:
There's a place for deepest dreaming, there's a time for heart to care,
In the Spirit's lively scheming there is always room to spare.*

*Great Thanksgiving

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.

Ho - ly, ho - ly, ho - ly Lord, Lord God of pow'r 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.

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, loving and merciful God,
 through our Savior Jesus Christ.
 You call your people to renew their hearts
 and prepare with joy for the victory of the tomb,
 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:

*Thanksgiving at the Table

Holy God, our living Water and our merciful Guide,
together with rivers and seas, wells and springs
we bless and magnify you!

You led your people Israel through the desert,
and provided them water from the rock.
We praise you for Christ, our Rock and our Water,
who joined us in our desert,
pouring out his life for the world.

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 life, death, and resurrection,
we await your fulfilled salvation for all this thirsty world.

Holy Spirit, pour out your strength on this holy food,
and on all gathered for this feast throughout the world:
wash away our sin,
that we may be revived for our journey by the love of Christ.

Through him all glory and honor is yours,
Almighty Father, with the Holy Spirit,
both now and forever. **Amen!**

**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

Receive the gift of Christ for us all: life in abundance!
Thanks be to God!

Communion

Music Interlude

Prayer after Communion

Embodied God,
at your table, we have tasted the goodness of Jesus.
With the eyes of our hearts open to your promise,
empower us to hear the needs of our neighbors
and respond in the world with your boundless love.
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 and forevermore!
Amen!

*Sending Hymn *Give Thanks for Saints*

ELW #428

*Dismissal

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

Postlude

Praying Together

... for those who are homebound, ill, hospitalized or recuperating: Gayle Agg, Sheena Cameron, Joan Clarke, Christina Copeland, Barbara Fossa, Carolyn Frajter, Ken Frajter, Donna Franz, Barb Gaglione, Michelle Garnett, Rosa Garnett, Jane Gradert, Dylan King, Elaine Knerem, Jason Lanese, Sara Mendes, Debbie Morris, Phyllis Nemeth, Gary Smith, Arlene Stoltz, Marie Storms, Tom Susaneck, Phyllis Welker, Maud Wright, Wilma Dancy, Bill Helmick, Nancy Helmick, Robert Lambrecht, Kim (Novak) Leonhardt, Laura Mele, Judy Morgan, Kris Sandor, Bill Wilkens, Eugene Winfrey, the Copeland/Lane Family.

General Fund receipts for week ending 3/12/2023: \$1802.50

To the glory of God and in loving memory of Alex Hohenstein, memorials were given by Altar Guild, Joan Cupec, Pamela Cupec, Linda Motuza, Jean Rusher, and Gwen Susaneck



For all Wednesdays in March, at 6pm, you are invited to join us for soup suppers concluding with a short service, both downstairs in our fellowship hall. The worship will be based on a midweek Lent series of “Making Change,” as a reminder of all the changes made in our lives (some beyond our control), the constant not only remains God, but God’s steadfast love and grace. So, you are invited to join us for soup as well as the ultimate soul-soothing Gospel!

Joseph: A Model of Faith, Character, and Fatherhood

“We don't hear a single word from him, and he only shows up in 16 verses in the New Testament,” the Rev. Adam Hamilton says of Joseph, the earthly father of Jesus. “Yet his impact on our faith, on Christ, is profound.” Hamilton, pastor of the United Methodist Church of the Resurrection in Leawood, Kansas, is the author of *Faithful: Christmas through the Eyes of Joseph*.

“His is a beautiful and moving story,” Hamilton continues in a recorded conversation for United Methodist Communications' *Get Your Spirit in Shape*. “Often we go right to Mary, we go right to the Christ child, but we miss out on this man who likely formed and shaped much of Jesus' self-understanding, his understanding of God and what God is like.”

What we know

The Bible gives little information about this important figure in Jesus’ early life.

Matthew tells us Joseph's father's name was Jacob (1:16), a detail the gospel writer may include to call to mind another Joseph, the dream-interpreting son of Jacob we read about in Genesis. God used that Joseph to save the people of Israel during a famine (see Genesis 37-50), and Mary's betrothed to parent the one who saves us all.

The only other thing we know is that Joseph was a carpenter (see Matthew 13:54-56). Carpenters “probably weren’t building houses,” Hamilton explains. “They were built primarily of stone or mud brick.” Instead, Joseph likely made yokes for oxen, household and farming tools, doors for homes, and furniture.

Joseph probably taught Jesus the craft (see Mark 6:3). His family may have passed the skills of the trade from father to son for generations. In many ways, Joseph was ordinary, like many of the men of his day. “At the same time,” Hamilton clarifies, “he represents some of the highest ideals.”

Character

When Mary informs Joseph that she will give birth to a son, Joseph has a challenging decision to make. “In this part of the story,” Hamilton teaches, “this isn’t good news for him. He feels disappointed, hurt, angry.” Joseph chooses, however, not to act on those emotions.

“Even while he’s stewing on this,” Hamilton continues, “he has compassionate empathy for her and tries to find a way to call off the engagement and take the blame himself.” His decision “to call off their engagement quietly” (Matthew 1:19 CEB), is an act of sacrificial love.

Then, like his ancestral namesake, Joseph has a dream. An angel tells him to marry Mary and to raise the child as his own. “When Joseph woke up,” the Bible tells us, “he did just as an angel from God commanded” (Matthew 1:24 CEB).

Faith

After this vision, things don’t suddenly fall into place. There are several difficult journeys ahead. Due to a census, Joseph and Mary travel to Bethlehem during the ninth month of her pregnancy. The trip may have been as long as ten days by foot, with possible assistance from a donkey for Mary.

After Jesus’ birth, when King Herod decrees to have every child Jesus’ age killed, another journey is necessary. In a second dream, an angel instructs Joseph to escape with Mary

and Jesus to Egypt. The young family flees a tyrannical ruler to live as refugees, similar to many today.

After living in Egypt for as long as three years, Joseph receives two more dreams. One tells him when it is safe to return, and the other directs him to settle in Nazareth, Mary's hometown. There they will raise and help shape the young Jesus.

Fatherhood

The Bible doesn't offer details about Joseph's relationship with Jesus, but it is easy to imagine Joseph having a profound affect upon him. Whether great or flawed, our dads help form us into the people we become.

In *Faithful*, Adam Hamilton ponders how Joseph's character may have shaped Jesus. When Jesus tells the story of the prodigal son and forgiving father (Luke 15:11-32), "had Jesus seen this kind of love and forgiveness by Joseph?" he wonders. When he taught the disciples that humble service is true greatness, "might he have been describing what he had seen in his carpenter father every single day?" (*Faithful* 30-31).

Joseph's example of raising Jesus teaches us to care for the children in our lives. "Not every man is a father," Hamilton adds, "but every man has an opportunity to affect other children."

Look what God can do

In our telling of the Christmas story, Joseph often has a background role. He is a non-speaking character, the quiet, unassuming man standing by the manger in our nativity sets. Yet, his role is significant. In Joseph, we see some of the highest ideals of character, fatherhood, grace, love, mercy, and faith.

"It's a beautiful story that happens just exactly the right way," Hamilton explains, "but it was hard to see that at the time. I think that's true in our lives. We take journeys we don't want to take. Then, when we look back, we go, 'Wow! Look how God used that! Look what God did in the journey!'"

- Joe Lovino, Director of Member Communications of the United Methodist Church

An Angel Appears to Joseph

When Joseph woke up, he did what the angel of the Lord had commanded him and took Mary home as his wife. But he did not consummate their marriage until she gave birth to a son. And he gave him the name Jesus. Matthew 1:24-25 (NIV)



Find the hidden words. The words have been placed horizontally, vertically, or diagonally. When you locate a word, draw a circle around it.

E	H	U	S	B	A	N	D	R	P	N	G	Q	E	X
S	C	O	Z	B	D	T	X	P	A	M	C	K	R	M
P	L	Q	I	N	I	H	C	H	R	I	S	T	Y	F
S	M	H	C	H	I	L	D	D	X	P	F	Z	S	I
J	E	S	U	S	V	I	R	G	I	N	B	H	O	S
J	D	I	Z	X	W	W	Y	O	G	B	Q	M	N	E
A	B	P	H	Q	J	P	L	A	E	I	I	G	P	W
P	Z	A	U	M	O	U	A	F	I	R	K	U	F	I
I	I	P	L	D	S	K	N	R	Z	T	R	M	W	U
Z	X	O	P	R	E	S	G	A	S	H	N	A	M	E
L	M	W	O	E	P	A	E	I	W	S	D	I	X	W
E	A	C	L	A	H	H	L	D	C	M	K	U	T	H
Z	R	I	M	M	A	N	U	E	L	A	A	E	A	E
R	R	U	S	B	Q	B	L	E	U	R	C	X	N	F
E	Y	L	P	F	H	O	O	U	P	Y	A	O	S	O

ANGEL
NAME
MARY

IMMANUEL
SON
JESUS

AFRAID
CHRIST
JOSEPH

DREAM
CHILD
VIRGIN

MARRY
BIRTH
HUSBAND