

“Faithfully Reporting GOD’S Word”



“Your word is a lamp to my feet and a light to my path.”  
– Psalm 119:105

**ST PAUL & ZION LUTHERAN CHURCH  
NEWSLETTER**

March 15, 2026

# THE PATHLIGHT (A NOTE FROM OUR PASTOR)

March 15, 2026

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## *The Pathlight*

*Your Word Is A Lamp To My Feet  
and a Light To My Path.  
PS 119:105*

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### Where Your Treasure is.....

**“As he said these things, a woman in the crowd raised her voice and said to him, ‘Blessed is the womb that bore you, and the breasts at which you nursed!’ But he said, ‘Blessed rather are those who hear the word of God and keep it!’” Luke 11:27-28**

What does it mean to “keep” God’s Word?.... Hmm..... Well, there is the element of observing or obeying it. God knows what is good and bad for us, so when we follow God’s Word, things go better for us and rightly so. We know from experience that things usually went better when we obeyed our parents rather than when we disobey them. If you don’t steal, you won’t have trouble with the law. If you lead a faithful and decent life, your marriage is going to be smoother. If you can go without coveting, you’ll be happier being content with what God has given you!

However, that’s not all there is to “keep” God’s Word. Keeping it also involves treasuring it. We guard and treasure things that are important to us. You don’t want to lose your house keys or your wallet, so you keep them in a spot where you won’t forget them (easily). You don’t want to lose your passwords, so you choose something you can remember. You only have a certain number of hours in a day, so you guard your time so you can accomplish what you would like to get done.

Likewise, Jesus instructs us to guard God’s Word. We should treasure it. We should make use of it every day, so we won’t forget it. We should reserve certain times of the day and week for it, such as Sunday mornings and a weekly time for Bible Study, and a daily time for devotions.

God’s promise (of many): Blessed rather are those who hear the word of God and keep it!

Pastor Christensen

*For now we see in a mirror dimly but then face to face. Now I know in part; then I shall know fully, even as I have been fully known. 1 Cor. 13:12*

# The Worship Hour

## *Lutheran Service Book Order of Worship*

**HYMN # 849** “Praise the One Who Breaks the Darkness”

**LITURGY** pg. 151 Divine Service (setting one) with Communion

**CONFESSION AND ABSOLUTION**

**INTROIT** (insert)

**KYRIE** pg. 152

**SALUTATION and COLLECT**

**OLD TESTAMENT READING:** Isaiah 42:14-21

**EPISTLE:** Ephesians 5:8-14

**HOLY GOSPEL:** John 9:1-41

**NICENE CREED** pg.158

**HYMN OF THE DAY # 744** “Amazing Grace”

**OFFERING**

**OFFERTORY** pg.159

**PRAYER OF THE CHURCH**

**SERVICE OF THE SACRAMENT** pg.160

**HYMN # 623** “Lord Jesus Christ, We Humbly Pray”

**HYMN # 873** “Christ, Whose Glory Fills the Skies”

**LORD’S PRAYER** pg.162

**NUMC DIMITTIS** pg. 165

**COLLECT**

**BENEDCTION**

**HYMN # 411** “I Want to Walk as a Child of the Light“

**SILENT PRAYER**

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### Servants for Today

#### **St. Paul**

Greeters and Ushers -Jeff Larsen/Craig Nicolaus, Organist –Gail Nicolaus

#### **Zion**

Usher/Greeter-Dayton& Jodi, Altar Guild-Tonia, Jodi, Shelle,

Organist-Gail Nicolaus



**St. Paul**

**March 16**-9:00AM-Bible Study

7:00PM-Council Meeting

**March 18**-5:00PM-Catechism

6:00PM-Lenten Supper-St. Paul

7:00PM-Lenten Midweek Service-St. Paul

**Servants for Lenten**-Jeanie Boehm/David Orth

**March 22**-8:00AM-Bible Study

9:00AM-Worship Service

**Servants for Worship Service**-Jeanie Boehm/Brian Lanckriet/Gerry Priest

**Zion**

**March 18**- 3:30PM-Midweek

6:00PM-Lenten Supper-St. Paul

7:00PM-Lenten Midweek Service-St. Paul

**March 22**-10:00AM-Sunday School

11:00AM-Worship Service

**Servants for Worship Service**- Jeanie Boehm/Dayton & Jodi/Tonia, Jodi, Shelle



- **March 17**-Aylssa Christensen
- **March 18**-Julie Ingram, Emmalyn Kotch
- **March 21**-Brody Miller, Brain Lanckriet



## Fourth Sunday in Lent Bible Challenge

All the clues below point to different people, objects, or stories in Scripture. Each one has something in common with the message we hear on the Fourth Sunday in Lent: **repentance, forgiveness, and the joy of being welcomed home.**

See if you can identify each answer before checking the key below.

### Part 1 – Guess the Bible Character

#### 1. Who am I?

- I ran away from the mission God gave me.
- A violent storm and a great fish changed my course.
- When I finally obeyed, an entire city repented.

#### 2. Who am I?

- I denied knowing Jesus three times in one night.
- A rooster's crow reminded me of His warning.
- Later, Jesus restored me and told me to feed His sheep.

#### 3. Who am I?

- I persecuted followers of Jesus.
- A blinding light stopped me on the road to Damascus.
- I later became one of the greatest missionaries of the early church.

#### 4. Who am I?

- I climbed a tree just to catch a glimpse of Jesus.
- Many people disliked me because of my work.
- After meeting Jesus, I promised to repay those I had cheated.

### Part 2 – Bible Riddles

#### 5. What am I?

I fell from heaven each morning,  
Fed a wandering nation in the wilderness,  
And could not be saved for tomorrow.

#### 6. What am I?

I began as a symbol of judgment,  
Yet when people looked at me, they lived.  
Many years later, Jesus compared Himself to me being lifted up.

### 7. Who am I?

I left home with confidence,  
Returned with nothing but regret,  
And was welcomed with a feast and celebration.

### 8. What celebration am I?

I remember the night when God rescued His people from slavery in Egypt.  
A lamb, unleavened bread, and a shared meal are central to me.  
Jesus celebrated me with His disciples before His crucifixion.

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### ✦ Hidden Connection:

Every answer points to a moment when **God calls people back, forgives, restores, or provides new life**—the same message at the heart of the Parable of the Prodigal Son and the hope we celebrate on the Fourth Sunday in Lent.

#### Answer Key

1. Jonah (see the Book of Jonah)
2. Peter the Apostle (recorded in the Gospel of Luke 22)
3. Paul the Apostle (conversion in the Acts of the Apostles 9)
4. Zacchaeus (story in the Gospel of Luke 19)
5. Manna from heaven (in the Book of Exodus 16)

6. The bronze serpent lifted by Moses in the wilderness (see the Book of Numbers 21)
  7. The **Prodigal Son**, from the parable told by Jesus Christ in the Gospel of Luke 15
  8. The **Passover** celebration described in the Book of Exodus 12
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### A Little Faith

A pastor noticed a young boy standing in the church foyer staring up at a large plaque filled with names.

Curious, the pastor walked over and asked, “Do you know what those names are?”

The boy shook his head.

The pastor said, “Those are the names of people from our church who died in the service.”

The boy’s eyes grew wide. After a moment he quietly asked,

“Was it the **9:00 service or the 10:30 service?**”



## **+** Devotion – Fourth Sunday in Lent

### *The Joy of Coming Home*

One of the most beloved stories Jesus tells is found in the Gospel of Luke 15:11–32, often called the Parable of the Prodigal Son. In this story, Jesus Christ describes a younger son who asks for his inheritance early, leaves home, and wastes everything in reckless living. Eventually he finds himself hungry, alone, and feeding pigs. In his desperation he decides to return home—not expecting forgiveness but hoping simply to be treated as a servant.

**Scripture says:**

**“But while he was still a long way off, his father saw him and was filled with compassion for him; he ran to his son, threw his arms around him and kissed him.” (Luke 15:20)**

This moment is the heart of the story. The son prepares a speech of repentance, but the father interrupts it with grace. Instead of punishment, he gives him a robe, a ring, and a feast. The father’s love is greater than the son’s failure. This parable reminds us of the kind of God we have. Our heavenly Father does not wait for us to become perfect before welcoming us back. Instead, God’s grace meets us in our brokenness. As we are reminded elsewhere in Scripture:

**“But God demonstrates his own love for us in this: While we were still sinners, Christ died for us.” (Epistle to the Romans 5:8)**

### **A Story About Grace**

A pastor once told the story of a young man who left home after a bitter argument with his parents. Months passed with no contact. Eventually, after many hardships and regrets, he decided he wanted to return—but he wasn’t sure he would be welcomed.

Before traveling home, he wrote a short letter to his parents. In it he said:

“If you can forgive me and want me to come home, please tie a white cloth on the apple tree by the railroad tracks behind the house. If I see the cloth from the train, I will get off. If not, I will keep going.”

On the day he traveled back, the young man was too nervous to even look out the train window as they passed his home. So he asked a fellow passenger to watch for the tree.

As they approached the house, the passenger gasped and said, “You need to look.”

The young man looked out and saw not just one cloth—but **dozens of white cloths tied all over the tree**, waving in the wind.

His parents wanted to make absolutely certain he knew he was welcome home.

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## The Meaning for Us

That story echoes the message Jesus tells in Luke’s Gospel. The father in the parable watches and waits for his son. When he sees him “a long way off,” he runs to meet him. In the culture of that time, dignified men did not run—but this father does. His joy at the son’s return is greater than his disappointment in the son’s failure.

The apostle Paul the Apostle describes this same truth in the Second Epistle to the Corinthians:

“If anyone is in Christ, the new creation has come: The old has gone, the new is here!” (2 Corinthians 5:17)

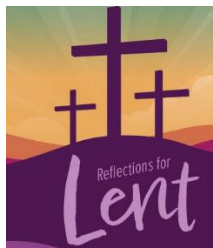
Lent is a season of reflection and repentance, but it is also a season of hope. The Fourth Sunday in Lent is sometimes called **Laetare Sunday**, meaning “Rejoice.” Even in the middle of a penitential season, the Church pauses to remember that God’s grace is greater than our sin.

No matter how far we have wandered, our heavenly Father is watching the road, ready to welcome us home.

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## Prayer

Merciful Father, thank You for Your endless grace. When we wander away or lose our way, remind us that Your love never leaves us. Give us humble hearts that return to You in repentance, trusting in the forgiveness we have through Jesus Christ. Help us also to extend that same grace to others. Amen.



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