

Mid-Week Lenten Worship - February 25, 2026

The Seven Churches: Christ Speaks to His Church

Smyrna: Faithful

The Lenten season is one that is somber and reflective as we gather to walk with Christ toward the cross. In these weeks, we hear the risen Lord speak to His Church in the opening chapters of Revelation. As suffering, fear, and uncertainty press upon the faithful, Christ calls His people to steadfastness and assures them of the crown of life.

Opening Litany

(L is Leader, C is Congregation's response)

L: We gather in the name of the Father, and of the Son +,
and of the Holy Spirit.

C: Amen.

Psalm 16:1-6

L: Protect me, O God, for I take refuge in you,

C: **I have said to the Lord, "You are my Lord, my good above all other."**

L: All my delight is upon the godly that are in the land,

C: **upon those who are noble among the people.**

L: But those who run after other gods,

C: **shall have their troubles multiplied.**

L: Their libations of blood I will not offer,

C: **nor take the names of their gods upon my lips.**

L: O Lord, you are my portion and my cup,

C: **it is You who uphold my lot.**

L: My boundaries enclose a pleasant land,

C: **indeed, I have a goodly heritage.**

Prayer of the Day

L: Let us pray.

C: **Lord God, You have gathered us together to observe this Lenten journey and to hear the voice of Your Son speaking to His Church. As fear rises in this world, and faith is tested, fix our hearts on Christ, who died and rose again. Assure us that nothing can separate us from the crown of life He has won, and keep us faithful in trial and steadfast in confession; through Jesus Christ, our Lord, who lives and reigns with You and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. Amen.**

Scripture Readings

- **Old Testament:** Isaiah 14:12-17

(The fall of the morning star – the pride and downfall of one who exalted himself.)

- **Epistle:** Revelation 2:8-11

(To the church in Smyrna – "Be faithful unto death, and I will give you the crown of life.")

- **Gospel:** Matthew 24:5-15

(Warnings of tribulation, persecution, and endurance in the last days.)

L: The Gospel of the Lord.

C: Praise to You, O Christ.

Message:

Ric Rabe

Hymn of the Day:

O Lord, throughout These Forty Days

LBW 99

* Lord's Prayer

L: Lord, remember us in your kingdom and teach us to pray,

C: Our Father, who art in heaven, hallowed by 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, for ever and ever. Amen.

Benediction & Sending

L: He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches. (Revelation 2:11)

C: He who overcomes will not be hurt at all by the second death.

L: Now may the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you all. In the name of the + Father, + Son, and Holy Spirit, bless you now and forever.

C: Amen.

First Lutheran Church 
Miles City, Montana



Smyrna

In the opening chapters of Revelation, the risen Christ speaks directly to His Church. His words are not distant history, but living proclamation. Tonight, He speaks to the church in Smyrna – a congregation facing poverty, slander, and persecution. Christ offers no rebuke, only promise. In suffering, He calls His people to faithfulness and promises the crown of life.

Isaiah 14:12-17

¹²How you are fallen from heaven,
O Day Star, son of Dawn!
How you are cut down to the ground,
you who laid the nations low!
¹³You said in your heart, 'I will ascend to heaven;
above the stars of God I will set my throne on high;
I will sit on the mount of assembly
in the far reaches of the north;
¹⁴I will ascend above the heights of the clouds;
I will make myself like the Most High.'
¹⁵But you are brought down to Sheol,
to the far reaches of the pit.
¹⁶Those who see you will stare at you and ponder over you:
'Is this the man who made the earth tremble,
who shook kingdoms,
¹⁷who made the world like a desert
and overthrew its cities,
who did not let his prisoners go home?'

Revelation 2:8-11

⁸"And to the angel of the church in Smyrna write: 'The words of the first and the last, who died and came to life.'⁹"I know your tribulation and your poverty (but you are rich) and the slander of those who say that they are Jews and are not, but are a synagogue of Satan. ¹⁰Do not fear what you are about to suffer. Behold, the devil is about to throw some of you into prison, that you may be tested, and for ten days you will have tribulation. Be faithful unto death, and I will give

you the crown of life. ¹¹He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches. The one who conquers will not be hurt by the second death.'

Matthew 24:5-15

⁵For many will come in my name, saying, 'I am the Christ,' and they will lead many astray. ⁶And you will hear of wars and rumors of wars. See that you are not alarmed, for this must take place, but the end is not yet. ⁷For nation will rise against nation, and kingdom against kingdom, and there will be famines and earthquakes in various places. ⁸All these are but the beginning of the birth pains.

⁹"Then they will deliver you up to tribulation and put you to death, and you will be hated by all nations for my name's sake. ¹⁰And then many will fall away and betray one another and hate one another. ¹¹And many false prophets will arise and lead many astray. ¹²And because lawlessness will be increased, the love of many will grow cold. ¹³But the one who endures to the end will be saved. ¹⁴And this gospel of the kingdom will be proclaimed throughout the whole world as a testimony to all nations, and then the end will come.¹⁵"So when you see the abomination of desolation spoken of by the prophet Daniel, standing in the holy place (let the reader understand).