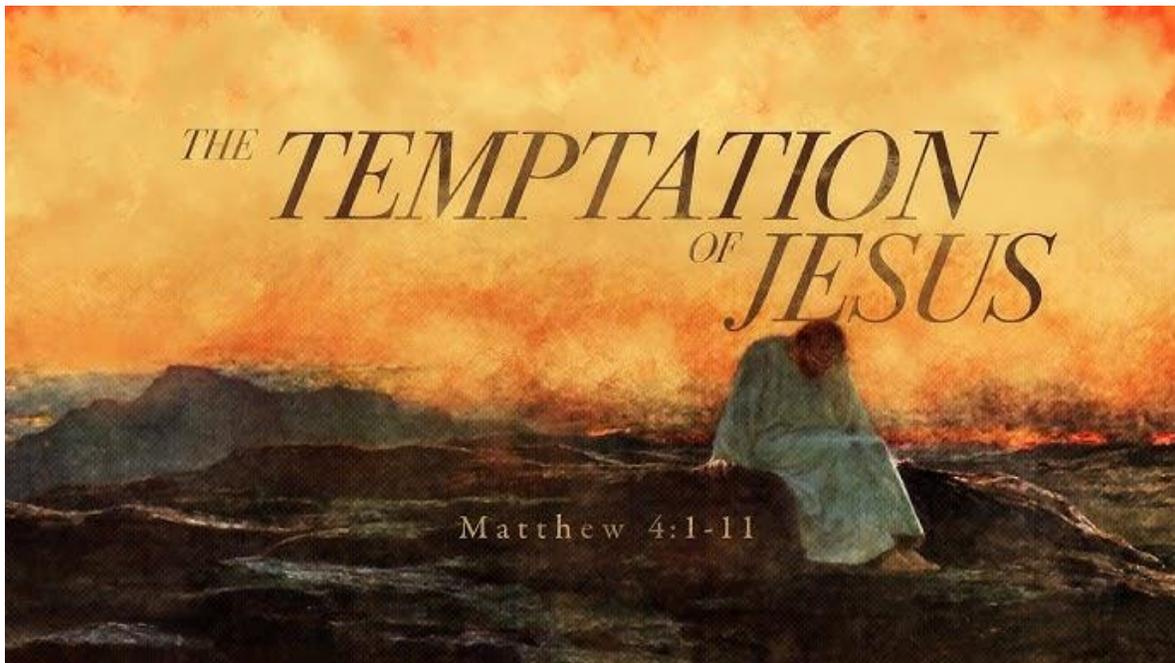


FIRST SUNDAY OF LENT

+February 22, 2026 +
10:00 am



Redeemer Lutheran Church

*300 O'Neal Road
Greer, South Carolina
Office (864) 877-5876*

The Devil Doesn't Wear Tights

No one believes in the existence of the devil these days, do they? Do you? Perhaps we can thank Hollywood and Halloween's marketing blitz for our casual if not incredulous approach to the devil's existence. Pointy horns, pitch forks, red costumes, and box office ticket sales continue to shape our culture's collective consciousness of the devil. Though red tights and long tails may be a frightening thought as you consider a costume for a Halloween party, they do nothing to communicate the true terror of an honest-to-God encounter with the devil's power.

This Lent we are called to expunge the fantastical images of the devil from our minds and think seriously about the real presence of evil in our world. We know firsthand about the sin that caused, causes, and will cause suffering to us, our loved ones, our neighbors, our global communities, and creation itself. Sin is real; suffering is real; evil is real; indeed, the devil is real. This oppressive, tangible reality is as real as the air we breathe — felt but not always seen. Greed, envy, rage, hatred, war, discrimination, and apathy are just some of the ways the devil's forces wreak havoc upon us. These forces have one goal and one goal only: to turn us away from the will of God.

Matthew's gospel reorients us to the truth of the devil's power, and calls us to name Satan's presence in the world. In the wilderness Jesus encounters an evil as real as its opposite, resurrection. The great tempter seeks to undermine Jesus' mission before he even begins; testimony that evil has much to fear of our Jesus! Nonetheless, Jesus will not be dissuaded. "Away with you, Satan!" proclaims the redeemer of the cosmos. Thus, the Lenten journey begins — a journey that takes us to the cross, where the devil is named and crushed underfoot.



Ministers
Pastor
Parish Administrator
Director of Music Ministries

The People of Redeemer
The Rev. Elise T. Stringer
Mrs. Jackie Pitts
Mrs. Donna Cotter

Welcome to Redeemer Lutheran Church in the name of Christ our Lord.

WE WARMLY WELCOME ALL WHO WORSHIP WITH US this First Sunday of Lent. It is our hope and prayer that the God who destroyed death and made new life possible on this day will touch and transform your life for all the days to come. If you are a guest, please sign the Guest Register in the Narthex. If you have any questions, our ushers will be happy to help you.

IF YOU ARE SEEKING A CHURCH HOME, we invite you to consider making Redeemer that home. For more information about Redeemer Lutheran Church, becoming a member, and sharing your gifts in ministry, please speak with Pastor Elise or contact Jackie Pitts at (864) 877-5876. **We will receive new members again on Easter Sunday, and we invite you to join us! By the grace and love of God, this commitment will change your life and ours.**

TODAY'S GOSPEL TELLS OF JESUS' TEMPTATION IN THE DESERT. His forty-day fast becomes the basis of our Lenten pilgrimage. In the early church Lent was a time of intense preparation for those to be baptized at the Easter Vigil. This catechetical focus on the meaning of faith is at the heart of our Lenten journey to the baptismal waters of Easter. Hungry for God's mercy, we receive the bread of life to nourish us for the days ahead.

**WE ENTER THIS SANCTUARY WITH REVERENCE FOR GOD
AND RESPECT FOR THOSE WHO MAY BE IN PRAYER.
PLEASE SILENCE ALL ELECTRONIC DEVICES.**

The prelude is a time for QUIET reflection and prayer.

ANNOUNCEMENTS OF THE DAY

GATHERING

The Holy Spirit calls us together as the People of God.

CONFESSION AND FORGIVENESS

The assembly stands. All may make the sign of the cross, the sign that is marked at baptism.

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 *GATHERING A MIGHTY FORTRESS IS OUR GOD* ELW #504



1 A might - y for - tress is our God, a sword and shield vic -
 2 No strength of ours can match his might! We would be lost, re -
 3 Though hordes of dev - ils fill the land all threat -'ning to de -
 4 God's Word for - ev - er shall a - bide, no thanks to foes, who



to - rious; he breaks the cruel op - pres - sor's rod and
 ject - ed. But now a cham - pion comes to fight, whom
 vour us, we trem - ble not, un - moved we stand; they
 fear it; for God him - self fights by our side with



wins sal - va - tion glo - rious. The old sa - tan - ic foe
 God him - self e - lect - ed. You ask who this may be?
 can - not o - ver - pow'r us. Let this world's ty - rant rage;
 weap - ons of the Spir - it. Were they to take our house,



has sworn to work us woe! With craft and dread - ful might
 The Lord of hosts is he! Christ Je - sus, might - y Lord,
 in bat - tle we'll en - gage! His might is doomed to fail;
 goods, hon - or, child, or spouse, though life be wrenched a - way,



he arms him - self to fight. On earth he has no e - qual.
 God's on - ly Son, a - dored. He holds the field vic - to - rious.
 God's judg - ment must pre - vail! One lit - tle word sub - dues him.
 they can - not win the day. The king - dom's ours for - ev - er!



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: Lord God, our strength, the struggle between good and evil rages within and around us, and the devil and all the forces that defy you tempt us with empty promises. Keep us steadfast in your word, and when we fall, raise us again and restore us 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.**

We Sit

CHILDREN'S SERMON

Pastor Elise Stringer

WORD

God speaks to us in Scripture reading, preaching, and song.

FIRST READING: Genesis 2:15-17; 3:1-7

Human beings were formed with great care, to be in relationship with the creator, creation, and one another. The serpent's promise to the first couple that their eyes would be opened led, ironically, to the discovery only that they were naked.

A reading from Genesis Chapter 2:

¹⁵ The LORD God took the man and put him in the garden of Eden to till it and keep it. ¹⁶ And the LORD God commanded the man, "You may freely eat of every tree of the garden, ¹⁷ but of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil you shall not eat, for in the day that you eat of it you shall die."

^{3:1} Now the serpent was more crafty than any other wild animal that the LORD God had made. He said to the woman, "Did God say, 'You shall not eat from any tree in the garden'?" ² The woman said to the serpent, "We may eat of the fruit of the trees in the garden, ³ but God said, 'You shall not eat of the fruit of the tree that is in the middle of the garden, nor shall you touch it, or you shall die.' " ⁴ But the serpent said to the woman, "You will not die, ⁵ for God knows that when you eat of it your eyes will be opened, and you will be like God, knowing good and evil." ⁶ So when the woman saw that the tree was good for food and that it was a delight to the eyes and that the tree was to be desired to make one wise, she took of its fruit and ate, and she also gave some to her husband, who was with her, and he ate. ⁷ Then the eyes of both were opened, and they knew that they were naked, and they sewed fig leaves together and made loincloths for themselves.

The Word of the Lord. **Thanks be to God.**

PSALM: Psalm 32

Mercy embraces those who trust in the Lord. (Ps. 32:10)

¹ Happy are they whose transgressions | are forgiven,
and whose sin is | put away!

² **Happy are they to whom the LORD im- | putes no guilt,
and in whose spirit there | is no guile!**

³ While I held my tongue, my bones with- | ered away,
because of my groaning | all day long.

⁴ **For your hand was heavy upon me | day and night;
my moisture was dried up as in the | heat of summer.**

⁵ Then I acknowledged my sin to you, and did not con- | ceal my guilt.
I said, "I will confess my transgressions to the LORD." Then you forgave me the
guilt | of my sin.

⁶ **Therefore all the faithful will make their prayers to you in | time of trouble;
when the great waters overflow, they | shall not reach them.**

⁷ You are my hiding-place; you preserve | me from trouble;
you surround me with shouts | of deliverance.

⁸ **"I will instruct you and teach you in the way that | you should go;
I will guide you | with my eye.**

⁹ Do not be like horse or mule, which have no | understanding;
who must be fitted with bit and bridle, or else they will | not stay near you."

¹⁰ **Great are the tribulations | of the wicked;
but mercy embraces those who trust | in the LORD.**

¹¹ Be glad, you righteous, and rejoice | in the LORD;
shout for joy, all who are | true of heart.

SECOND READING: Romans 5:12-19

Through Adam's disobedience, humanity came under bondage to sin and death, from which we cannot free ourselves. In Christ's obedient death, God graciously showers on us the free gift of liberation and life.

A reading from Romans Chapter 5:

¹² Just as sin came into the world through one man, and death came through sin, and so death spread to all because all have sinned ¹³ for sin was indeed in the world before the law, but sin is not reckoned when there is no law. ¹⁴ Yet death reigned from Adam to Moses, even over those who did not sin in the likeness of Adam, who is a pattern of the one who was to come.

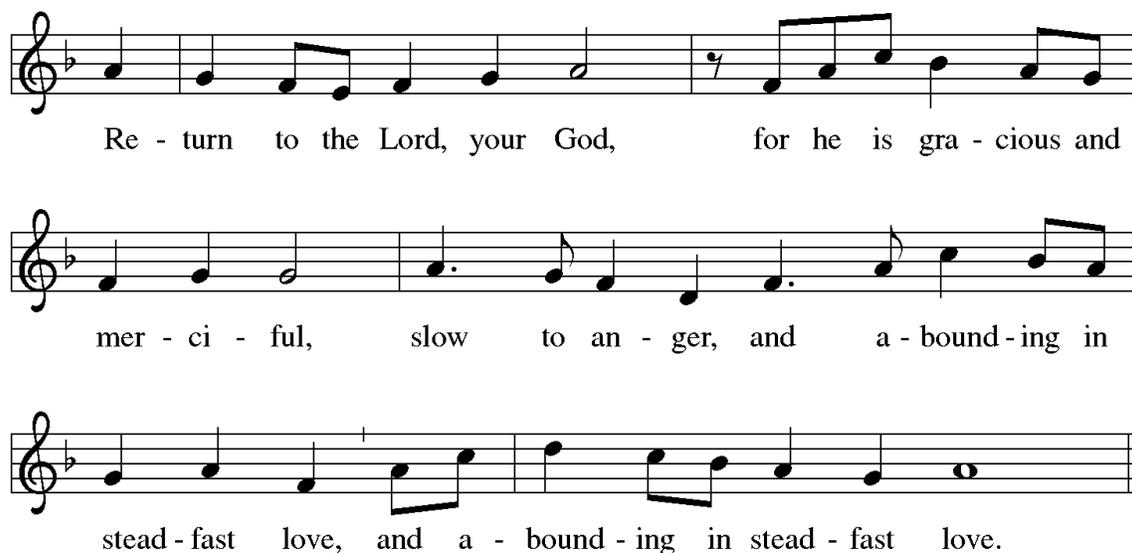
¹⁵ But the free gift is not like the trespass. For if the many died through the one man's trespass, much more surely have the grace of God and the gift in the grace of the one man, Jesus Christ, abounded for the many. ¹⁶ And the gift is not like the effect of the one man's sin. For the judgment following one trespass brought condemnation, but the gift following many trespasses brings justification.

¹⁷ If, because of the one man's trespass, death reigned through that one, much more surely will those who receive the abundance of grace and the gift of righteousness reign in life through the one man, Jesus Christ. ¹⁸ Therefore just as one man's trespass led to condemnation for all, so one man's act of righteousness leads to justification and life for all. ¹⁹ For just as through the one man's disobedience the many were made sinners, so through the one man's obedience the many will be made righteous.

The Word of the Lord. **Thanks be to God.**

GOSPEL ACCLAMATION

ELW #142



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.

GOSPEL: Matthew 4:1-11

Jesus experiences anew the temptations that Israel faced in the wilderness. As the Son of God, he endures the testing of the evil one.

The Holy Gospel according to St. Matthew the 4th Chapter. **Glory to you, O Lord.**

¹ Jesus was led up by the Spirit into the wilderness to be tested by the devil. ² He fasted forty days and forty nights, and afterward he was famished. ³ The tempter came and said to him, "If you are the Son of God, command these stones to become loaves of bread." ⁴ But he answered, "It is written, 'One does not live by bread alone, but by every word that comes from the mouth of God.' "

⁵ Then the devil took him to the holy city and placed him on the pinnacle of the temple, ⁶ saying to him, "If you are the Son of God, throw yourself down, for it is written, 'He will command his angels concerning you,' and 'On their hands they will bear you up, so that you will not dash your foot against a stone.' " ⁷ Jesus said to him, "Again it is written, 'Do not put the Lord your God to the test.' "

⁸ Again, the devil took him to a very high mountain and showed him all the kingdoms of the world and their glory, ⁹ and he said to him, "All these I will give you, if you will fall down and worship me."

¹⁰ Then Jesus said to him, "Away with you, Satan! for it is written, 'Worship the Lord your God, and serve only him.'" ¹¹ Then the devil left him, and suddenly angels came and waited on him.

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

THE SERMON

Pastor Elise Stringer

HYMN OF THE DAY

JESUS, STILL LEAD ON

ELW# 624



1 Je - sus, still lead on, till our rest be won; and, al-though the
 2 If the way be drear, if the foe be near, let no faith - less
 3 When we seek re - lief from a long-felt grief, when temp-ta - tions
 4 Je - sus, still lead on, till our rest be won; heav'n-ly lead - er,



way be cheer - less, we will fol - low, calm and fear - less;
 fears o'er - take us, let not faith and hope for - sake us;
 come al - lur - ing make us pa - tient and en - dur - ing;
 still di - rect us, still sup - port, con - sole, pro - tect us,



guide us by your hand to the prom - ised land.
 safe - ly past the foe to our home we go.
 show us that bright shore where we weep no more.
 till we safe - ly stand in the prom - ised land.

NICENE CREED

Let us confess our faith with the words of the Nicene Creed:

**We believe in one God,
the Father, the Almighty,
maker of heaven and earth,
of all that is, seen and unseen.**

**We believe in one Lord, Jesus Christ,
the only Son of God,
eternally begotten of the Father,
God from God, Light from Light,
true God from true God,
begotten, not made,
of one Being with the Father;
through him all things were made.**

**For us and for our salvation
he came down from heaven,
was incarnate of the Holy Spirit and the Virgin Mary
and became truly human.
For our sake he was crucified under Pontius Pilate;
he suffered death and was buried.
On the third day he rose again
in accordance with the Scriptures.
he ascended into heaven
and is seated at the right hand of the Father.
He will come again in glory to judge the living and the dead,
and his kingdom will have no end.**

**We believe in the Holy Spirit, the Lord, the giver of life,
who proceeds from the Father and the Son,
who with the Father and the Son is worshiped and glorified,
who has spoken through the prophets.
We believe in one holy catholic and apostolic church.
We acknowledge one baptism for the forgiveness of sins.
We look for the resurrection of the dead,
and the life of the world to come. Amen.**

PRAYERS OF INTERCESSION

Offered by the Assisting Minister

Reconciled by God's mercy and sustained by God's presence, let us pray for the world and its needs.

A brief silence.

God of all grace, grant faith to your church. Give to all the baptized the will to resist temptation and to worship and serve you alone. Hear us, O God. **Your mercy is great.**

God of all creation, tend this earth. When human greed and disobedience threaten this planet and the life it contains, lead us by your Spirit into ways of reverence, awe, and gentleness. Hear us, O God. **Your mercy is great.**

God of all nations, preserve us from trouble. Surround all living in places of violence with your steadfast love and give resilience to all who work for peace. Hear us, O God. **Your mercy is great.**

God of all healing, mend our wounds. Bring wholeness to all who are sick, give peace to all who groan in grief, and send companions to all who are lonely or isolated. We especially pray for those on our prayer board and those we name before you now. Hear us, O God. **Your mercy is great.**

God of all people, provide for our community. For any among us who hunger for bread, bring nourishment. For any among us who hunger for truth, speak your life-giving word. Hear us, O God. **Your mercy is great.**

God of all life, bring us to you. We thank you for your free and abounding grace, and for those who, by that same grace, now rest eternally in you. Hear us, O God. **Your mercy is great.**

Receive our prayers, O God, through Jesus Christ, our strength and salvation.
Amen.

PEACE

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

We share a sign of peace with others as we are comfortable. We sit.

MEAL

God feeds us with the presence of Jesus Christ.

MUSICAL OFFERING *I HEARD THE VOICE OF JESUS SAY* **Redeemer Choir**

OFFERING HYMN

Create in Me a Clean Heart *Offering Song*



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

Offered by the Assisting minister and congregation.

Let us pray: O God, maker of heaven and earth, your steadfast love embraces all creation. You send rain and sunshine to nourish the earth and bring forth its bounty. Through these gifts of bread and wine, draw us into the death and life of your Son, who calls us to bear witness to his saving work. We ask this in Jesus' name. Amen.

GREAT THANKSGIVING

The Presiding Minister greets the congregation and invites all present to give thanks.

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.

PREFACE

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.

You call your people to cleanse their hearts
and prepare with joy for the paschal feast,
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:

HOLY, HOLY, HOLY

ELW#144

Ho - ly, ho - ly, ho - ly Lord, God of pow'r and might,
heav-en and earth are full of your glo - ry. Ho - san - na. Ho -
san-na. 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.

THANKSGIVING AT THE TABLE

Blessed are you, O God of the universe.

Your mercy is everlasting and your faithfulness endures from age to age.

Praise to you for creating the heavens and the earth.

Praise to you for saving the earth from the waters of the flood.

Praise to you for bringing the Israelites safely through the sea.

Praise to you for leading your people through the wilderness
to the land of milk and honey.

Praise to you for the words and deeds of Jesus, your anointed one.

Praise to you for the death and resurrection of Christ.

Praise to you for your Spirit poured out on all nations.

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.

With this bread and cup we remember our Lord's Passover
from death to life, as we proclaim the mystery of faith:
Christ has died. Christ is risen. Christ will come again.

O God of resurrection and new life:
Pour out your Holy Spirit on us
and on these gifts of bread and wine.
Bless this feast. Grace our table with your presence. **Come, Holy Spirit.**

Reveal yourself to us in the breaking of the bread.
Raise us up as the body of Christ for the world.
Breathe new life into us.
Send us forth, burning with justice, peace, and love. **Come, Holy Spirit.**

With the holy ones of all times and places,
with the earth and all its creatures,
with sun and moon and stars,
we praise you, O God,
blessed and holy Trinity,
now and forever. **Amen**

LORD'S PRAYER

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

Our Father, who art in heaven,
hallowed be 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,
forever and ever. Amen.

INVITATION TO COMMUNION

Come to the table. Feast on God's goodness and mercy. . Amen.

COMMUNION HYMN:

LAMB OF GOD

ELW p. 146

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.

HYMNS DURING COMMUNION

Congregation is encouraged to sing.

ROCK OF AGES

ELW #623

WHAT WONDROUS LOVE IS THIS

ELW #666

PRAYER AFTER COMMUNION

Offered by Assisting Minister.

Let us pray: God of our salvation, we give you thanks for this meal that restores our souls, reconciles us to you, and strengthens us for the journey. Through the body and blood of your Son, may we become Christ's body in the world, bearing witness to your love for all creation, through Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord. **Amen.**

SENDING

God blesses us and sends us in mission to the world.

BLESSING

Receive the blessing of the holy Trinity: God, who calls all things into existence, Jesus Christ, who redeems us, and the Holy Spirit, whose breath sustains creation, **✝** bless you now and always. **Amen.**

REDEEMER'S MISSION

Redeemers Mission is: **A lifelong family ministry of God's love!**

SENDING HYMN: *WHEN I SURVEY THE WONROUS CROSS*

ELW #803

(printed on next page)

DISMISSAL

Offered by Assisting Minister.

Go in peace. Believe the good news. **Thanks be to God, Amen.**

POSTLUDE

Donna Cotter, Organ

When I Survey the Wondrous Cross

1 When I sur - vey the won - drous cross on which the
2 For - bid it, Lord, that I should boast save in the
3 See, from his head, his hands, his feet, sor - row and
4 Were the whole realm of na - ture mine, that were a

prince of glo - ry died, my rich - est gain I
death of Christ, my God; all the vain things that
love flow min - gled down. Did e'er such love and
pres - ent far too small; love so a - maz - ing,

count but loss and pour con - tempt on all my pride.
charm me most, I sac - ri - fice them to his blood.
sor - row meet, or thorns com - pose so rich a crown?
so di - vine, de - mands my soul, my life, my all.

Text: Isaac Watts, 1674–1748
Music: HAMBURG, Lowell Mason, 1792–1872

Serving Today

Ushers:	John and Sharon Fouke
Greeters:	Sonny Lybrand and Tom Lewis
Assisting Minister:	Chuck Pegram
Lector 1:	Harold Neel
Lector 2:	David Henderson
Acolyte:	NEED A SUB
Crucifer:	Logan Childers
Cantor:	Nancy Stires
Counters:	Sonny Lybrand, Brenda Van Putten, and Aaron Cornwell
Altar Guild:	Paula Ludwigson
Flowers:	No Flowers During Lent
Sheepdog:	Mike Miller, Beto Damian, and Aaron Cornwell 2-4 Brian Ginsberg 4-6 Mike Miller
Nursery:	Kaci Cotter and Harper Meloon

Serving Next Week – March 1, 2026

Ushers:	Brad Van Putten and Tom Stires
Greeters:	Wade and Barbara Tate
Assisting Minister:	Phil Rhoads
Lector 1:	Joyce Frid
Lector 2:	Cindy Martin
Acolyte:	Ava Johnson
Crucifer:	Ari Damian
Cantor:	Jeffrey Stringer
Counters:	Sonny Lybrand, Brenda Van Putten, and Aaron Cornwell
Altar Guild:	Donna Norman
Flowers:	Lent, No Flowers
Sheepdog:	BJ King, Sonny Lybrand, and Michael Lybrand 4-6pm JJ Johnson
Nursery:	Chrissy Bristow and Rose Lanning

NOTES