

# Welcome to St. Peter's Lutheran Church



I lift up my eyes to the hills;  
from where is my help to come?  
My help comes from the Lord,  
the maker of heaven and earth.

*Second Sunday in Lent*

*March 1, 2026*

*10:15 Worship Service*

*Pastor Brandon Johns*

**BELL RINGING**

*The Lenten Cross Garden will grow each week as a different symbol of Christ is added at the foot of the cross. Its stark beauty prepares us for the extravagant beauty of the Resurrection Garden on Easter Morning.*

**THORNS** *Twisting together a crown of thorns, they put it on his head.*  
– Matthew 27:29

Thorns are an adaptation by plants for defense, and their protection is used by vulnerable animals to survive. Jesus's thorns were meant to mock his royalty, but instead, God uses them as a part of the sovereign plan of salvation. In Jesus' blood freely given, Jesus protects us, the weak and vulnerable, from the eternal effects of our sin and brokenness.

*We pause to reflect as the crown of thorns is added to the cross garden.*

**GATHERING LITANY**

***Mercy, Passion, and Joy: The Purpose of His Passion***

In days before your death, O Lord, you told your disciples:

**The Son of Man must undergo great suffering and be rejected by the elders, the chief priests and the scribes and be killed and after three days rise again.**

And in these 40 days of Lent leading up to Good Friday and Easter, **we remember your words about your passion and death, and take them to heart.**

For we grieve that you had to go to the cross for our sake, **yet we know the purpose of your passion is to save us from our sins and grant us new life.**

So we watch you purposefully praying in the Garden of Gethsemane, **accepting that God's will be done.**

We see you arrested by those carrying clubs and swords, **allowing yourself to be carried away to trial.**

We witness you being falsely charged with blasphemy and sentenced to death,  
**though you have led a sinless life for us.**

We see you whipped and beaten with cords,  
**stoically taking on the punishment we deserve.**

We watch you being nailed to the cross.  
**You endured the pain of it all so that we would not have to. By your wounds, we are healed.**

*(We sing the indented lines together. For the first verse we begin after it is played through once.)*

***My Lord of light who made the worlds,  
in wisdom you have spoken;  
but those who heard your wise commands  
your holy law have broken.***

***My Lord of love who knew no sin,  
a sinner's death enduring:  
for us you wore a crown of thorns.  
a crown of life securing.***

## **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, our leader and guide, in the waters of baptism you bring us to new birth to live as your children. Strengthen our faith in your promises, that by your Spirit we may lift up your life to all the world 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.**

## **SENIOR CHOIR**

*His Cross Medley*

Tom Fettke

## **CHILDREN'S MESSAGE**

**FIRST READING: Genesis 12:1-4a**

<sup>1</sup>The Lord said to Abram, “Go from your country and your kindred and your father’s house to the land that I will show you. <sup>2</sup>I will make of you a great nation, and I will bless you, and make your name great, so that you will be a blessing. <sup>3</sup>I will bless those who bless you, and the one who curses you I will curse; and in you all the families of the earth shall be blessed.”

<sup>4a</sup>So Abram went, as the Lord had told him; and Lot went with him.  
*This is the Word of the Lord. Thanks be to God!*

**PSALM 121 (Read Responsively)**

<sup>1</sup>I lift up my eyes to the hills;  
from where is my help to come?

<sup>2</sup>**My help comes from the LORD,  
the maker of heaven and earth.**

<sup>3</sup>The LORD will not let your foot be moved  
nor will the one who watches over you fall asleep.

<sup>4</sup>**Behold, the keeper of Israel  
will neither slumber nor sleep;**

<sup>5</sup>the LORD watches over you;  
the LORD is your shade at your right hand;

<sup>6</sup>**the sun will not strike you by day,  
nor the moon by night.**

<sup>7</sup>The LORD will preserve you from all evil and will keep your life.

<sup>8</sup>**The LORD will watch over your going out and your coming in,  
from this time forth forevermore.**

**SECOND READING: Romans 4:1-5, 13-17**

<sup>1</sup>What then are we to say was gained by Abraham, our ancestor according to the flesh? <sup>2</sup>For if Abraham was justified by works, he has something to boast about, but not before God. <sup>3</sup>For what does the scripture say? “Abraham believed God, and it was reckoned to him as righteousness.” <sup>4</sup>Now to one who works, wages are not reckoned as a gift but as something due. <sup>5</sup>But to one who without works trusts him who justifies the ungodly, such faith is reckoned as righteousness.

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

<sup>16</sup>For 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, <sup>17</sup>as 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.

*This is the Word of the Lord. Thanks be to God!*

### GOSPEL ACCLAMATION

*(The assembly stands, if able, to welcome the gospel.)*



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.

### GOSPEL: John 3:1-17

The holy gospel according to John, the third chapter.

#### Glory to you, O Lord.

<sup>1</sup>Now there was a Pharisee named Nicodemus, a leader of the Jews.

<sup>2</sup>He came to Jesus by night and said to him, "Rabbi, we know that you are a teacher who has come from God; for no one can do these signs that you do apart from the presence of God." <sup>3</sup>Jesus answered him, "Very truly, I tell you, no one can see the kingdom of God

without being born from above." <sup>4</sup>Nicodemus said to him, "How can anyone be born after having grown old? Can one enter a second time into the mother's womb and be born?"

<sup>5</sup>Jesus answered, “Very truly, I tell you, no one can enter the kingdom of God without being born of water and Spirit. <sup>6</sup>What is born of the flesh is flesh, and what is born of the Spirit is spirit. <sup>7</sup>Do not be astonished that I said to you, ‘You must be born from above.’ <sup>8</sup>The wind blows where it chooses, and you hear the sound of it, but you do not know where it comes from or where it goes. So it is with everyone who is born of the Spirit.” <sup>9</sup>Nicodemus said to him, “How can these things be?” <sup>10</sup>Jesus answered him, “Are you a teacher of Israel, and yet you do not understand these things?

<sup>11</sup>“Very truly, I tell you, we speak of what we know and testify to what we have seen; yet you do not receive our testimony. <sup>12</sup>If I have told you about earthly things and you do not believe, how can you believe if I tell you about heavenly things? <sup>13</sup>No one has ascended into heaven except the one who descended from heaven, the Son of Man. <sup>14</sup>And just as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, so must the Son of Man be lifted up, <sup>15</sup>that whoever believes in him may have eternal life.

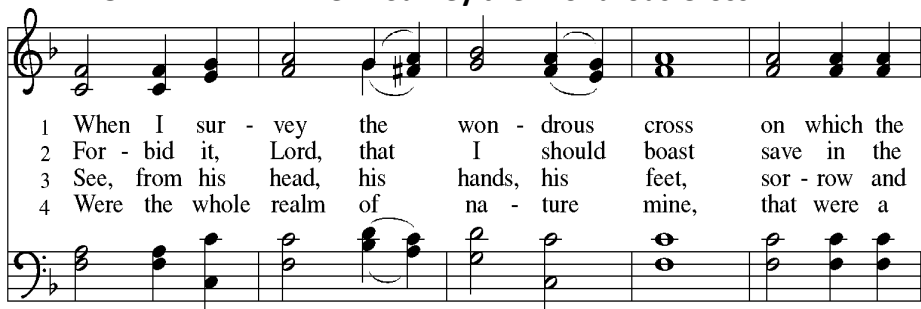
<sup>16</sup>“For God so loved the world that he gave his only Son, so that everyone who believes in him may not perish but may have eternal life.

<sup>17</sup>“Indeed, God did not send the Son into the world to condemn the world, but in order that the world might be saved through him.”  
*This is the Holy Gospel of the Lord. Praise to you, O Christ.*

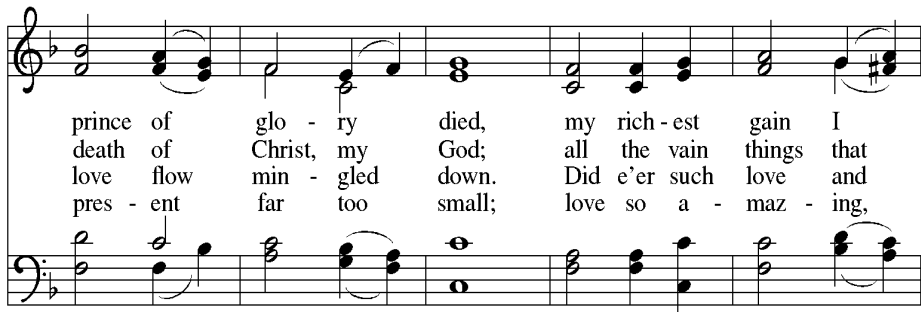
## SERMON



## HYMN OF THE DAY: 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



## **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

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

*A brief silence.*

Faithful One, you renew us by grace. As you have inspired faith through the work of church artists and hymnwriters throughout the ages, give your church the means to praise your beauty today.

**The response for each petition is:**

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 the Lord be with you always. **And also with you.**

## OFFERING

*Our offerings are made processionaly, which means dropped into the plates located near the entrances to the nave.*

## CANTICLE OF THANKSGIVING



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.

## OFFERTORY PRAYER

Let us pray. Merciful God, **receive the sacrifice of our praise and thanksgiving and the offering of our lives, that following in the way of the cross, we may know the joy of the resurrection; through Christ our Lord. Amen.**

## DIALOGUE

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.**

**THE PROPER PREFACE** *(It is indeed right... join their unending hymn)*

## HOLY, HOLY, HOLY



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.



## **EUCCHARISTIC PRAYER**

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.

With your holy ones of all times and places,

we praise you, O God, blessed and holy Trinity, now and forever.

**Amen.**

## LORD'S PRAYER

Lord, remember us in your kingdom and help 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 Christ, broken and poured out for you.

## LAMB OF GOD (sung as the distribution of the sacrament begins)



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.

## COMMUNION

**The Sacrament will be offered with these words:**

The body of Christ, given for you.

*And* The blood of Christ, shed for you.

*Optional responses* **Amen or Thanks be to God or Renew us, Lord**

## BLESSING

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

## PRAYER AFTER COMMUNION

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.**

## BENEDICTION

The Lord bless you and keep you.

The Lord's face shine on you with grace and mercy.

The Lord look upon you with favor and ✠ give you peace. **Amen.**

## SENDING HYMN: Bless Now, O God, the Journey



1 Bless now, O God, the jour - ney that all your peo - ple make,  
2 Bless so - journ-ers and pil - grims who share this wind-ing way;  
3 Di - vine e - ter - nal lov - er, you meet us on the road.



the path through noise and si - lence, the way of give and take.  
your hope burns through the ter - rors, your love sus-tains the day.  
We wait for lands of prom - ise where milk and hon - ey flow,



The trail is found in des - ert and winds the moun-tain round,  
We yearn for ho - ly free - dom while of - ten we are bound;  
but wait-ing not for plac - es, you meet us all a - round.



then leads be-side still wa - ters, the road where faith is found.  
to - geth-er we are seek - ing the road where faith is found.  
Our cov - e - nant is writ - ten on roads, as faith is found.

Text: Sylvia G. Dunstan, 1955–1993

Music: LLANGLOFFAN, Welsh tune, 19th cent.

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**SHARING FOR SERVING: Mission Notices and Birthdays**

**DISMISSAL**

Go in peace. Live that others might praise the Lord.

**Thanks be to God.**

**POSTLUDE**

*March Brillante*

Elizabeth T Van Woert

**Our Monthly Benevolent Cause for March: Camp Lutherlyn**

If you would like to support this cause, please mark the "Other" line on your contribution envelope Lutherlyn.

**Prayers Have Been Requested Recently for the Following:**

Cole Barkley	Luke Clawson	Mary Fulghum
Stephanie Hogan	Berty McMillen	Rick Reifenstein
Annastyn Hogan	Pat Wolfe	Jim Bucci
David English	Carl Riddle	Bill Wack
Diane M	Jacque Lawson	Tammi Ross
Marshall White	Noel Critchlow	David Green

The families of Jason Sarver, Reed Caldwell, Debbie Ridgely, Deacon Carol Marburger, & The O'hidnicki Family

*Today's Altar Flowers are given in celebration of Colt Ayres Mulbauer's first birthday. He is the great-grandson of Tom & Cindy Ayres*



*Today's Eternal Candle is presented by Teresa O'Malley in loving memory of Jerome O'Malley*

**Featured Food Cupboard Donations** – The featured item for our congregation in March is condiments.

**Fish Fry** – Friday, March 20<sup>th</sup> from 4 - 6:30 pm. We will be collecting donations of ingredients and funds to help defray the cost of putting on this meal. Volunteers for helping to cook, serve, and clean up are welcomed as well.

**Meager Meals** – On Thursday evenings at 6 pm, we gather before worship to eat soup and bread together. If you would like to provide soup and/or bread for these meals, there will be a sign-up in Luther Hall. Worship is at 7pm.

**Lent Special Offering** – Our offerings made during Meager Meals and in the Lent Special Offering envelopes will go to Priority Projects.

**Fasting for Change** – As part of your Lenten journey, you are invited to donate the money you would have spent on what you have given up to support Lutheran Service Society. Coin boxes will be available or you are welcome to mark the Other line on your contribution envelope. You may choose to donate weekly, or give the sum of your savings at the end of Lent.



**ST. PETER'S EVANGELICAL LUTHERAN CHURCH**  
*is a congregation of the Southwestern Pennsylvania Synod  
of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America (ELCA).*

Pastor	The Rev. Brandon Johns
Organist & Music Director	Marlene Domhoff
Sexton	Joe Ludwik
Acolyte	Rylee Taylor
Asst. Minister	Glenn Fulghum
Bell Ringer	Joe Ludwik
Greeters	Staci & Michael Bettencourt
Lector	Deb Mort
Ushers	Cindy & Tom Ayres
Nursery	Colleen Prenovitz
Tech Support	Adam Price

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**St. Peter's Upcoming Events:**

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Mon. – Fri.	4:00 – 6:00 pm	After School
Mon. March 2	6:30 pm	Fellowship Mtg.
Tues. March 3	7:00 pm	Property Mtg.
Wed. March 4	10:00 am	Community Quilters
	5:30 pm	Manna Night
	7:00 pm	Choir Practice
Thur. March 5	10:00 am	Quilters Group
	6:00 pm	Meager Meal
	7:00 pm	Lenten Service
	8:00 pm	Bible Study
Fri. March 6	12:00 pm	500 Club

## **Welcome to St. Peter's**

We are thankful that you are here to worship with other Christians today. In the name of Jesus Christ, we pray that your worship experience will fill you with the grace and mercy of Almighty God through his Holy Spirit.



## **Newcomers and Guests**

New to St. Peter's? Please sign the GUEST REGISTER behind the last pew. You are welcome to commune with us if that is your practice. A handicapped accessible RESTROOM is located near the Van Buren Street entrance (through Luther Hall, past the kitchen, restroom is on the left in the foyer).

**Nursery** – is staffed by a volunteer and available for children and caregivers. Exit the rear of the nave and follow the steps to the basement, the nursery is on the left. The service can be heard through an intercom in the nursery. There are activity bags in the back of the sanctuary and children's bulletins geared for children ages 5 and up are at the nave entrances.

**Offering** – Thank you for supporting our ministries! Plates are available at the front and rear of the nave to receive offering, or you if you prefer, we have Venmo as an option. If you choose to use Venmo, please note how you would like the funds to be designated, like for Current Fund, etc.



## **Staying in Touch:**

Office hours are Monday through Friday from 9 am until noon.

Please feel free to contact us by phone or internet:

Church Office: 724.538.5810

Church Email: [stpeterslcec@zoominternet.net](mailto:stpeterslcec@zoominternet.net)

Pastor Email: [rev.brandonjohns@gmail.com](mailto:rev.brandonjohns@gmail.com)

Church Website: [www.stpeterslutheranevanscity.org](http://www.stpeterslutheranevanscity.org)

## **RECOGNITION OF ARTISTS:**

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