

Grace Lutheran



Yoked parish of faith and service: *Bethel & Zion*

Love is spoken here! Be the living Eucharist!



Painting by Ioan Popi



The Third Sunday in Lent

March 8th, 2026

10:30 AM Bethel

All are welcome!

The altars of this parish belong to God, and not to us. All people are welcome to participate in every aspect of our worship, including our open table for the Eucharist. We are honored by your presence this day and hope you find peace and refreshment as we celebrate the extravagant love of God, as followers of the Way of Jesus.

We live into the ongoing revelation of Christ! There is a place for you, here!

We Gather

The Holy Spirit calls us in community as people of the Way.

PRELUDE

The congregation stands

GREETING

The Grace of our Lord and Savior, Jesus the Christ,
the Love of God and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit be with us always! **And also with you!**

PRAYER OF APPROACH

Let us pray: Merciful God, the fountain of living water, You quench our thirst and wash away our sin. Give us this water always. Bring us to drink from the well that flows with the beauty of Your Truth through Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord, who lives and reigns with You and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. **Amen.**

GATHERING HYMN

Come to Me, All Pilgrims Thirsty

ELW (red book) 777

The congregation is seated

We listen to God's Word

God speaks to us in poetry, creative writing, scripture, preaching & song.

A READING FROM HEBREW SCRIPTURE (*Tanakh*): Exodus 17:1-7 from *The Message**

Because the thirsty Israelites quarreled with Moses and put God to the test, Moses cried out in desperation to God. God commanded Moses to strike the rock to provide water for the people. The doubt-filled question—"Is the LORD among us or not?"—received a very positive answer.

¹⁻² Directed by GOD, the whole company of [Hebrew people] moved on by stages from the Wilderness of Sin. They set camp at Rephidim. And there wasn't a drop of water for the people to drink. The people took Moses to task: "Give us water to drink." But Moses said, "Why pester me? Why are you testing GOD?"

³ But the people were thirsty for water there. They complained to Moses, "Why did you take us from Egypt and drag us out here with our children and animals to die of thirst?"

⁴ Moses cried out in prayer to GOD, "What can I do with these people? Any minute now they'll kill me!"

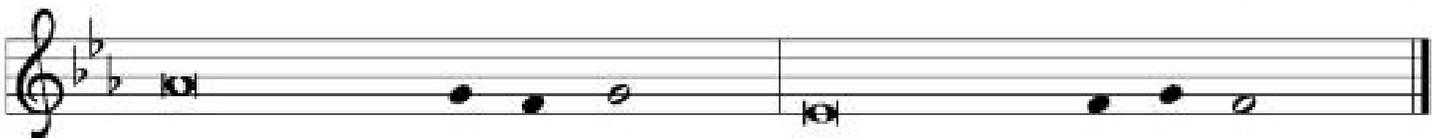
⁵⁻⁶ GOD said to Moses, "Go on out ahead of the people, taking with you some of the elders of Israel. Take the staff you used to strike the [Sea of Reeds]. And go. I'm going to be present before you there on the rock at Horeb. You are to strike the rock. Water will gush out of it and the people will drink."

⁶⁻⁷ Moses did what he said, with the elders of Israel right there watching. He named the place Massah (Testing-Place) and Meribah (Quarreling) because of the quarreling of the Israelites and because of their testing of GOD when they said, "Is GOD here with us, or not?"

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

PSALM 95:1-6

sung responsively



¹ Come, let us sing ¹ to the LORD; let us shout for joy to the rock of ¹ our salvation.

² **Let us come before God's presence ¹ with thanksgiving
and raise a loud shout to the ¹ LORD with psalms.**

³ For You, LORD, ¹ are a great God, and a great ruler a- ¹bove all gods.

⁴ ***In Your hand are the caverns | of the earth; the heights of the hills are | also Yours.***

⁵ The sea is Yours, | for You made it, and Your hands have molded | the dry land.

⁶ ***Come, let us worship | and bow down, let us kneel before the | LORD our maker.***

The assembly stands to welcome the resurrected Christ!

GOSPEL ACCLAMATION

ELW pg. 151

***Return to the Lord your God, who is Gracious and Merciful,
slow to anger, and abounding in steadfast Love.***

Preface Hear the gospel of our Lord Jesus the Christ! ***Glory to you, O Lord!***

A READING FROM THE GOSPELS: John 4:5-24 from the *Scholar's Edition*,

[Jesus] came to a Samaritan town called Sychar near the field Jacob had given to his son Joseph – that's where Jacob's well was. [He] was exhausted from traveling, so he sat down on the edge of the well. It was about noon. When a Samaritan woman comes to get water, Jesus asks her, "Give me a drink." (In fact, his disciples had already gone off to town to buy food and drink.)

The woman replies to him, "You are a Judean; how can you ask a Samaritan woman for a drink?" (You see, Judean's don't associate with Samaritans.)

Jesus answered her, "If you knew what God can give you, and who just said to you, 'Give me a drink,' you would ask him and he would give you lively, life-giving water."

"Mister, you don't have anything to draw water with,' she says, "and the well is deep, where will you get this 'lively, life-giving water'? Can you do better than our patriarch Jacob? He left us this well, which used to quench his thirst and that of his family and his livestock."

Jesus responded to her, "Whoever drinks this water will get thirsty again; but all who drink the water I'll provide them with will never get thirsty again; it will be a source of water within them, a fountain of real life."

The woman says to him, "Sir, give me some of this water, so I'll never be thirsty or have to keep coming back here for water."

Jesus says to her, "Go, call your husband and come back."

"I don't have a husband," she answered.

"You're right to say, that you don't have a husband" Jesus says. "In fact, you've had five husbands and the man you are now living with is not your husband; you've told a truth."

"Master," she exclaims, "I can tell you're a prophet. Our ancestors worshipped on this mountain; you people claim Jerusalem is the only place for worship."

Jesus says to her, "Woman, believe me, the time is coming when you won't worship [God] either on this mountain or in Jerusalem. You people worship God-knows-what; we worship what we know-'Judeans are the agents of salvation,' and all that. But the time is coming-in fact, it's already here-for true worshippers to worship the [Creator] as [the One] truly is, without regard to place. It's worshippers of this sort that [God] is looking for. God is not tied to place, and those who worship God must worship [God] as [God] truly is, without regard to place."

Response The gospel of our Lord! ***Praise to you, O Christ!***

COLLECT

Let us pray; Eternal God, give us insight to discern Your will for us, to give up what harms us, and to seek the perfection we are promised in Jesus Christ our Lord. ***Amen.***

The congregation is seated

MESSAGE

Pastor Andrew

The congregation stands

HYMN OF THE DAY

For All the Faithful Women

ELW 419

Verses 1, 8 and Last

The congregation is seated

PRAYERS OF THE PEOPLE

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

A brief silence.

O God, when suffering arises, preserve Your church. Give to pastors, deacons, bishops, and all servants of Your gospel the endurance that produces character and the hope that will never disappoint. Merciful God,

Holy One, receive our prayer.

When the waters run dry, sustain this earth. Send water to places languishing with drought, and bring relief to places damaged by floods. Merciful God,

Holy One, receive our prayer.

When quarrels ensue, soften our hearts. Quell hostilities between nations and peoples, especially at this time between this nation's leadership and the people of Iraq, and reconcile all humans across the lines of race, class, nationality, moral conviction, religion, and all else that divides or oppresses. Merciful God,

Holy One, receive our prayer.

When Your people thirst, satisfy their needs. Send water and food to all who need nourishment. Grant welcome to all who are excluded. Show Your Mercy to any in need (*especially*). Merciful God,

Holy One, receive our prayer.

When we gather to worship, send us Your Spirit. Renew our hearts through the joyful noise we make and bless the work of our church musicians (*especially Randy, Adam, plus the voice and bell choirs*). Merciful God,

Holy One, receive our prayer.

O God, when death draws near, we rejoice in the promise of life with You. We remember all who have entered eternal rest, and we pray that You bring us the hope of sharing in Your glory. Merciful God,

Holy One, receive our prayer.

Lord of the church:

hear our prayer, and make us one in heart and mind to serve You with joy for ever. Amen.

The congregation stands

CONFESSION & FORGIVENESS

Let us confess our sin before God, who removes our guilt and blots out all offenses.

Silence is kept for reflection.

Gracious God,

have Mercy on us according to Your steadfast Love.

For seeking worldly delights that deceive us and dishonor You:

Gracious God,

have Mercy on us according to Your steadfast Love.

For desiring self-reliance instead of hungering for Your Word:

Gracious God,

have Mercy on us according to Your steadfast Love.

For failing to recognize Your coming reign, and for hindering the work of the Spirit:

Gracious God,

have Mercy on us according to Your steadfast Love.

For drawing from the well of self-serving ambition, and for disdaining the living water Christ offers:

Gracious God,

have Mercy on us according to Your steadfast Love.

For disregarding voices from the margin, and for distrusting signs of Your healing and hope in the world:

Gracious God,

have Mercy on us according to Your steadfast Love.

For dwelling in tombs of self-pity and discontent, and for disregarding Christ's call to come forth to life:

Gracious God,

have Mercy on us according to Your steadfast Love.

God's steadfast Love, Grace, and forgiveness abound. Through faith, the free gift of God, we have been clothed in the righteousness of Christ.

In the name of † Jesus Christ, our sins are forgiven. The Spirit of the One who raised Christ from the dead dwells in us, pours God's love into our hearts, and gives us life and peace. ***Amen.***

THE PEACE

The peace of the Lord be with us always! ***And also with you!***

We share in God's Holy Communion

God feeds us with the risen Christ's presence!

GATHERING OF GIFTS

Choir

OFFERTORY

ELW 182

As the gifts of bread, wine, and currency are brought forward, the assembly stands.

Let the vine-yards be fruit-ful, Lord, and fill to the brim our cup of blessing.

Gath-er a har-vest from the seeds that were sown, that we may be fed with the bread of life.

Gath-er the hopes and dreams of all; u-nite them with the prayers we offer now.

Grace our ta-ble with Your Pres-ence, and give us a fore-taste of the feast to come.

PRAYER OF DEDICATION

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!

PREPARATION OF THE TABLE

There is a place for you at the table of God. Come, receive the food that does not perish, a taste of life eternal.

LITURGY OF THE SACRAMENT

The Lord be with you! ***And also with you!*** Open up your hearts! ***We open them up to the Lord!***

Let us give thanks to the Lord, our God! ***It is right to give God thanks and praise!***

SANCTUS

We hail thy Presence glorious, Offertorium

***We hail thy presence glorious, O Christ our great high priest,
o'er sin and death victorious, at thy thanksgiving feast;
as thou art interceding for us in heaven above,
thy church on earth is pleading thy perfect work of Love.***

***O living bread from heaven, Jesus, our Savior good,
Who thine own self hast given to be our soul's true food;
For us thy body broken hung on the cross of shame:
This bread is hallowed token, we break in thy dear name.***

***O stream of Love unending, poured from the one true vine,
With our weak nature blending the strength of life divine;
Our thankful faith confessing in thy life-blood outpoured,
We drink this cup of blessing and praise thy name, O Lord.***

We pray You, Gracious God, to send Your Holy Spirit upon these gifts that they may be the sacrament of the body of Christ and his blood of the new covenant. Unite us to Your Son in his sacrifice, that we may be acceptable in Your sight, being sanctified by the Holy Spirit.

In the night in which he was betrayed...

In the fullness of time, put all things in subjection under Your Christ, and bring us to that heavenly country where, with all Your saints, we may enter the everlasting heritage of Your daughters and sons; through Jesus Christ our Lord, the firstborn of all creation, the head of the church, and the author of our salvation.

By him, and with him, and in him, in the unity of the Holy Spirit, all honor and glory is Yours, Almighty Father, now and forever. ***Amen.***

THE LORD'S PRAYER

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

Here is life. God is with us. Come, receive what God has promised.

- 1) **Lamb of God, you take a-way the sin of the world; have mer-cy on us.**
- 2) **Lamb of God, you take a-way the sin of the world; have mer-cy on us.**
- 3) **Lamb of God, you take a-way the sin of the world; grant us peace, grant us peace.**

THE EUCHARIST

Bread is distributed to the hand by the pastor, individual pre-filled cups of grape juice or wine may be taken from the silver trays: the inner-most ring on each tray is the grape juice.

A gluten-free alternative is available from the Assisting Minister.

Believing in the real presence of Christ, Grace practices open-table, Eucharistic hospitality.

All people, baptized or not, are welcomed to The Meal.

Those who do not wish to commune may come forward for a blessing signified by crossed arms.

COMMUNION HYMN

ELW 480

POST EUCHARISTIC PRAYER

Let us pray; Merciful Lord, grant Your people grace to withstand the temptations of the world, the flesh and evil-intent, and with pure hearts and minds to follow You, the only God; through Jesus Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

We go out to serve God

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

ANNOUNCEMENTS

The congregation stands

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 us now and always. **Amen.**

SENDING HYMN

O Jesus, Joy of Loving Hearts

ELW 658

DISMISSAL

Go in peace! Believe the Good News! **Thanks be to God!**

POSTLUDE

From Sundays and Seasons.com, Copyright 2026 Augsburg Fortress. All rights reserved. Reprinted by permission under Augsburg Fortress Liturgies Annual License #28372. CCLI copyright/streaming license #11574665, Post Eucharistic Prayer per Worship, www.churchofengland.org,

*Scripture translations are in the public domain and sourced through <http://www.biblegateway.com>

IN OUR PRAYERS: Donald Tremblay, Rose Marie Faragoli, Donna Brunnell, Russ Terrien, Tom Toepfner, Sandy Staples, Jim Mooney, Karen Carlson, Judy Garneau, Paul Josephson, Edla Bloom, Steve Hynes, Dennis, Peter & Georgia Kosciusko, Tony Genga, Henry Lewis, Glenna Brownell, Roberta Briggs, Joan Bejune,, Billy Rogan, Don & Judy Leombruno, Mark Glandville, Jack Fenton, Mark Stevens, Jill Ducat, Jim Mahoney, Tami Briggs, Amy Runge, Heather Gregar, Kenneth Johnson, Lois Kane, Beth Johnson, Bill Withers, Pr. Judy L., Gary Kaufman, Betty Jane Weagle, Valerie Cotter, Kelly O'Brien Hartnett, Judy Sawicki, David and Madeline Nevard, Louise Young, Maria McCann

NOTE REGARDING SCRIPTURE USAGE: *Our denomination is an exegetical (Spirit-led) tradition in that we preach and teach according to the Revised Common Lectionary (RCL), a three-year cycle of recommended texts primarily used within main-line denominations as inspiration; Eastern and Western rites of Catholicism use a variant. As such, Church of England second and third service texts within the RCL are also valid. The Book of Q (Sayings Gospel), The Gospel of Thomas and The Gospel of Mary Magdaline may also be used when their material is found to be more historically accurate to what scholarship has uncovered as the way Jesus would have addressed his disciples and hearers against what the canonical writers adjusted/appended at times for the teaching of their ancient congregations.*

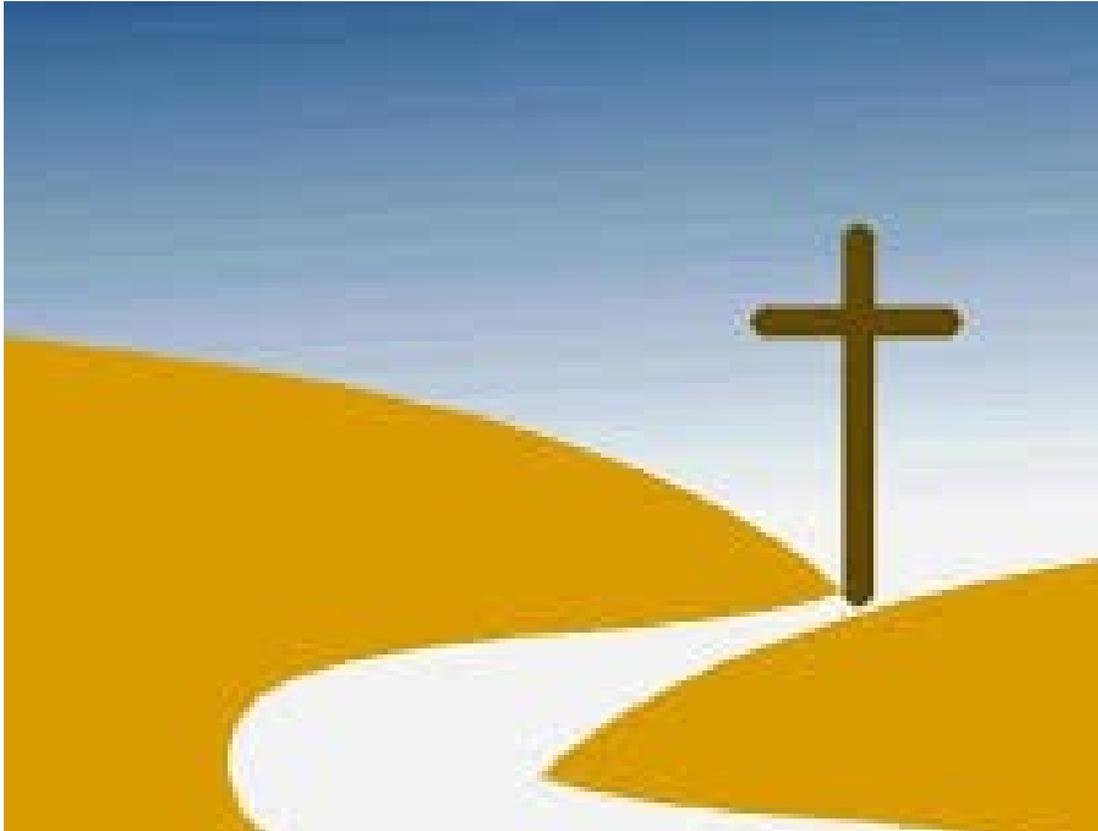
Music for March 8, 2026

Prelude: "The Cross of Jesus" by Melchior Vulpius (1570-1615)

Postlude: "Moderato in C" by Alexander Scheiner (1901-1987)

Anthem: "What Wondrous Love Is This" Southern Folk Hymn

Today's Music: "What Wondrous Love Is This," first published in the United States in 1811 during the Second Great Awakening, has somewhat ambiguous origins. Some attribute the text to Methodist minister Alexander Means (1801-1883) of Georgia. The tune, in a minor key, is possibly an 18th century English secular folk tune. Today, tune and text is found in many hymnals of various denominations.



LENTEN MID-WEEK SCHEDULE

3/11, 3/18. 3/25 5:00 PM – Potluck @ Bethel

6:00 PM – Worship @ Bethel

Grace Lutheran



Yoked parish of faith and service: *Bethel & Zion*

MISSION STATEMENT

"To boldly share God's Love and Grace universally in and through our communities."

VISION STATEMENT

Modeling the welcoming nature of God, we are humbly called and driven by the Spirit to witness, engage and walk with each other authentically, as Jesus' hands and feet, providing spiritual, emotional and physical nourishment.

Through evolving partnerships with ecumenical and other social service organizations we affirm justice and wholeness under the "agency of Grace" that feed the needs and hope of all.

The Rev. Andrew H. Borden, Pastor
pastor_andrew.b@verizon.net

Ann Spinner, Parish Administrator
bethelauburn@verizon.net
Main Office: 508-832-3427

grace-lutheran-elca.org

Randy Bloom – Minister of Music **Lois Toepfner**, Deacon – Minister of Music Emeritus

Shannon Papandrea - Sexton

Garret Peters - Treasurer

Kate Valleli – Christian Education Coordinator

Adam Hanks – Bell Director

Ann Spinner, Kate Valleli – Financial Secretaries

Marie Sturdevant, Adam Hanks – Lay Worship Leaders: NES Lay School of Theology: Auburn 8 AM, Worcester 2nd Sundays

Parish Council

President – **Dave Valleli (B)** Co-Vice-Presidents – **Jennifer Courtney (Z), Jessica Caminero (B)**

Council – **Dave Spinner (Z), Ruth Thompson (B), Joan Parker (B), LeAnne Carraher Virginia Carlson, (Z), Adam Hanks (B), Donna Hayes (Z)**

Worcester Campus - Zion Lutheran
41 Whitmarsh Avenue, 01606

Auburn Campus - Bethel Lutheran
90 Bryn Mawr Avenue, 01501

ReconcilingWorks
LUTHERANS FOR FULL PARTICIPATION



NST
Refugee Accompaniment



Grace  Lutheran
Café

