

REFORMATION LUTHERAN CHURCH
Serving Absecon - Galloway Township
Rev. Heidi Link – Pastor
Brian Conover - Music Director

Sunday, March 9th, 2025
THE FIRST SUNDAY IN LENT / 10:00 AM

*** CONFESSION AND FORGIVENESS**

Blessed be the holy Trinity, † one God, who forgives all our sin, whose mercy endures forever. **Amen.**

Let us return to God, confessing our sin in the assurance of God’s abiding love.

Silence is kept for reflection.

Compassionate One,

you are slow to anger and abounding in steadfast love, but our lives do not always reflect you and your love for the world. We do not show others the tender compassion you have shown to us. We do not welcome others with the radical hospitality you grant to all people. We oppress others, even though you have set us free again and again. We squander the abundant gifts of the earth. Transform our lives and guide us again in the way of the cross. Amen.

Beloved in Christ, God’s arms are always stretched open wide to welcome the wandering ones home. In † Christ your sins are forgiven. You have a place in God’s house forever. **Amen.**

*** OPENING SONG**

What a Fellowship, What a Joy Divine
Leaning on the Everlasting Arms



1 What a fel - low-ship, what a joy di - vine, lean - ing on the ev - er -
2 Oh, how sweet to walk in this pil - grim way, lean - ing on the ev - er -
3 What have I to dread, what have I to fear, lean - ing on the ev - er -



last - ing arms; what a bless - ed - ness, what a peace is mine,
last - ing arms; oh, how bright the path grows from day to day,
last - ing arms? I have bless - ed peace with my Lord so near,

... song continues ...

* - Congregation Stands (If for any reason you are unable to stand during the service, please remain seated.)

lean - ing on the ev - er - last - ing arms.
 lean - ing on the ev - er - last - ing arms.
 lean - ing on the ev - er - last - ing arms.

Refrain

Lean - ing, lean - ing, safe and se - cure from all a - larms;

lean - ing, lean - ing, lean - ing on the ev - er - last - ing arms.

Text: Elisha A. Hoffman, 1839–1929
 Music: SHOWALTER, Anthony J. Showalter, 1858–1924

*** GREETING & PRAYER OF THE DAY**

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.

Let us pray: O Lord God, you led your people through the wilderness and brought them to the promised land. Guide us now, so that, following your Son, we may walk safely through the wilderness of this world toward the life you alone can give, through Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. **Amen**

FIRST READING: Deuteronomy 26:1-11

26 “When you have come into the land that the Lord your God is giving you as an inheritance to possess and you possess it and settle in it, ² you shall take some of the first of all the fruit of the ground, which you harvest from the land that the Lord your God is giving you, and you shall put it in a basket and go to the place that the Lord your God will choose as a dwelling for his name. ³ You shall go to the priest who is in office at that time and say to him, ‘Today I declare to the Lord your God that I have come into the land that the Lord swore to our ancestors to give us.’ ⁴ When the priest takes the basket from your hand and sets it down before the altar of the Lord your God, ⁵ you shall make this response before the Lord your God: ‘A wandering Aramean was my ancestor; he went down into Egypt and lived there as an alien, few in number, and there he became a great nation, mighty and populous. ⁶ When the Egyptians treated us harshly and afflicted us, by imposing hard labor on us, ⁷ we cried to the Lord, the God of our ancestors; the Lord heard our voice and saw our affliction, our toil, and our oppression. ⁸ The Lord brought us out of Egypt with a mighty hand and an outstretched arm, with a terrifying display of power, and with signs and wonders; ⁹ and he brought us into this place and gave us this land, a land flowing with milk and honey. ¹⁰ So now I bring the first of the fruit of the ground that you, O Lord, have given me.’ You shall set it down before

the Lord your God and bow down before the Lord your God. ¹¹ Then you, together with the Levites and the aliens who reside among you, shall celebrate with all the bounty that the Lord your God has given to you and to your house.

RESPONSIVE READING: Psalm 91:1-2, 9-16

- ¹ You who dwell in the shelter of the Most High,
who abide in the shadow of the Almighty—
² **you will say to the LORD, “My refuge and my stronghold,
my God in whom I put my trust.”**
- ⁹ Because you have made the LORD your refuge,
and the Most High your habitation,
¹⁰ **no evil will befall you,
nor shall affliction come near your dwelling.**
- ¹¹ For God will give the angels charge over you,
to guard you in all your ways.
¹² **Upon their hands they will bear you up,
lest you strike your foot against a stone.**
- ¹³ You will tread upon the lion cub and viper;
you will trample down the lion and the serpent.
¹⁴ **I will deliver those who cling to me;
I will uphold them, because they know my name.**
- ¹⁵ They will call me, and I will answer them;
I will be with them in trouble; I will rescue and honor them.
¹⁶ **With long life will I satisfy them,
and show them my salvation.**

SECOND READING: Romans 10:8b-13

⁸ But what does it say?
“The word is near you,
in your mouth and in your heart”

(that is, the word of faith that we proclaim), ⁹ because if you confess with your mouth that Jesus is Lord and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved. ¹⁰ For one believes with the heart, leading to righteousness, and one confesses with the mouth, leading to salvation. ¹¹ The scripture says, “No one who believes in him will be put to shame.” ¹² For there is no distinction between Jew and Greek; the same Lord is Lord of all and is generous to all who call on him. ¹³ For “everyone who calls on the name of the Lord shall be saved.”

LIGHTING OF THE “CROWN OF THORNS” ADVENT WREATH

In our world we are tempted to think that our Heavenly Father has not given us all that we need. In essence, this was the temptation that led to original sin. May we be delivered from the temptation to turn our heads to anyone other than Almighty God.

As we journey through lent, may we believe without a doubt that God has provided for all our needs. No matter how desolate the landscape of our lives may look, God has made a Way through Jesus Christ – through his death on the cross and resurrection.

Let us pray together:

Heavenly Father, throughout these forty days, unseal within us the wellspring of your grace, cleanse our hearts of all that is not holy, and cause your gift of new life to flourish once again. Amen.

*** HYMN OF PRAISE**

I Want Jesus to Walk with Me

1 I want Je - sus to walk with me;
2 In my tri - als, Lord, walk with me;
3 When I'm in trou - ble, Lord, walk with me;

I want Je - sus to walk with me;
in my tri - als, Lord, walk with me;
when I'm in trou - ble, Lord, walk with me;

all a - long my pil - grim jour - ney,
when my heart is al - most break - ing,
when my head is bowed in sor - row,

Lord, I want Je - sus to walk with me.
Lord, I want Je - sus to walk with me.
Lord, I want Je - sus to walk with me.

Text: African American spiritual
Music: SOJOURNER, African American spiritual

*** THE WORD OF GOD: Luke 4:1-13**

A reading from the Gospel of St. Luke:

4 Jesus, full of the Holy Spirit, returned from the Jordan and was led by the Spirit in the wilderness, ² where for forty days he was tested by the devil. He ate nothing at all during those days, and when they were over he was famished. ³ The devil said to him, “If you are the Son of God, command this stone to become a loaf of bread.” ⁴ Jesus answered him, “It is written, ‘One does not live by bread alone.’ ”

⁵ Then the devil led him up and showed him in an instant all the kingdoms of the world. ⁶ And the devil said to him, “To you I will give all this authority and their glory, for it has been given over to me, and I give it to anyone I please. ⁷ If you, then, will worship me, it will all be yours.” ⁸ Jesus answered him, “It is written, ‘Worship the Lord your God, and serve only him.’ ”

⁹ Then the devil led him to Jerusalem and placed him on the pinnacle of the temple and said to him, “If you are the Son of God, throw yourself down from here, ¹⁰ for it is written, ‘He will command his angels concerning you, to protect you,’

¹¹ and

‘On their hands they will bear you up, so that you will not dash your foot against a stone.’ ”

¹² Jesus answered him, “It is said, ‘Do not put the Lord your God to the test.’ ” ¹³ When the devil had finished every test, he departed from him until an opportune time.

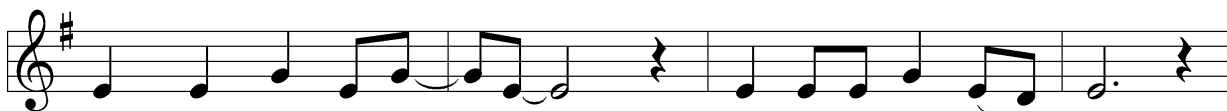
Word of God, Word of Life.

Thanks be to God.

SERMON

CONGREGATIONAL SONG

Out in the Wilderness



1 Driv - en by the Spir - it out in the wil - der - ness;
 2 Tempt - ed by the dev - il out in the wil - der - ness;
 3 An - gels all a - round you out in the wil - der - ness;
 4 “You are my be - lov - ed” out in the wil - der - ness.



driv - en by the Spir - it out in the wil - der - ness;
 tempt - ed by the dev - il out in the wil - der - ness;
 an - gels all a - round you out in the wil - der - ness;
 “You are my be - lov - ed” out in the wil - der - ness.



when the Spir - it says, “Go,” you can’t say, “No.”
 though you try to be strong, it’s been so long.
 you are far . . . from home where wild things roam.
 When you were . . . bap - tized, you re - a - lized

... song continues ...



You lis - ten for the voice when you're bend - ed low;
 He whis - pers in your ear and you know he's wrong;
 There's dan - ger ev - 'ry - where but you're not a - lone;
 you'd heard the voice of God from the o - p'ning skies:



driv - en by the Spir - it out in the wil - der - ness.
 tempt - ed by the dev - il out in the wil - der - ness.
 an - gels all a - round you out in the wil - der - ness.
 "You are my be - lov - ed" out in the wil - der - ness.

Text: Jay Beech
 Music: OUT IN THE WILDERNESS, Jay Beech

Text and music © 1999 Jay Beech

*** APOSTLE'S CREED**

I believe in God, the Father almighty, creator of heaven and earth.

I believe in Jesus Christ, his only Son, our Lord. He was conceived by the power of the Holy Spirit and born of the virgin Mary. He suffered under Pontius Pilate, was crucified, died, and was buried. He descended into hell. On the third day he rose again. He ascended into heaven, and is seated at the right hand of the Father. He will come again to judge the living and the dead.

I believe in the Holy Spirit, the holy catholic Church, the communion of saints, the forgiveness of sins, the resurrection of the body, and the life everlasting. Amen

*** PRAYERS OF INTERCESSION**

Led by the Spirit, let us turn to God in prayer for the church, the world, and all those in need. *A brief silence.*

Gracious God, speak your word anew among your church. Strengthen it to withstand the temptation to turn inward in fear or complacency. Embolden church institutions to turn from self-preservation toward the self-giving love of Jesus. God, in your mercy,
receive our prayer.

Mothering God, speak the word of life into wilderness places and fertile fields. Grant wisdom to your people, that we may quell the urge to strip lands of their resources and instead preserve first fruits for future generations. God, in your mercy,
receive our prayer.

Almighty God, speak a word of wisdom to people in positions of power: mayors, councils, and tribal leaders, legislators, judges and juries, presidents, and monarchs. Help them discern your voice and follow your guidance, resisting the temptations of the evil one. God, in your mercy,
receive our prayer.

Steadfast God, speak words of courage to your people in the wilderness. Protect migrants and refugees on perilous journeys, that they find safe refuge and a portion in the bounty you have given humanity to share. God, in your mercy,
receive our prayer.

Loving God, speak gently to all who are alone. Bless lay ministers, home communion teams, and others who attend to those who are overlooked, vulnerable, or lonely, that all find belonging in your love. We pray for all who are ill (*especially*). God, in your mercy,
receive our prayer.

Here other intercessions may be offered.

Living God, we give thanks for all the faithful who have crossed the threshold from death to life (*especially*). Guide us who are living to learn from their wisdom and follow their example. God, in your mercy,
receive our prayer.

Receive the prayers of your people and draw all things together in your love, in the name of Jesus, who leads us from death to life.

Amen.

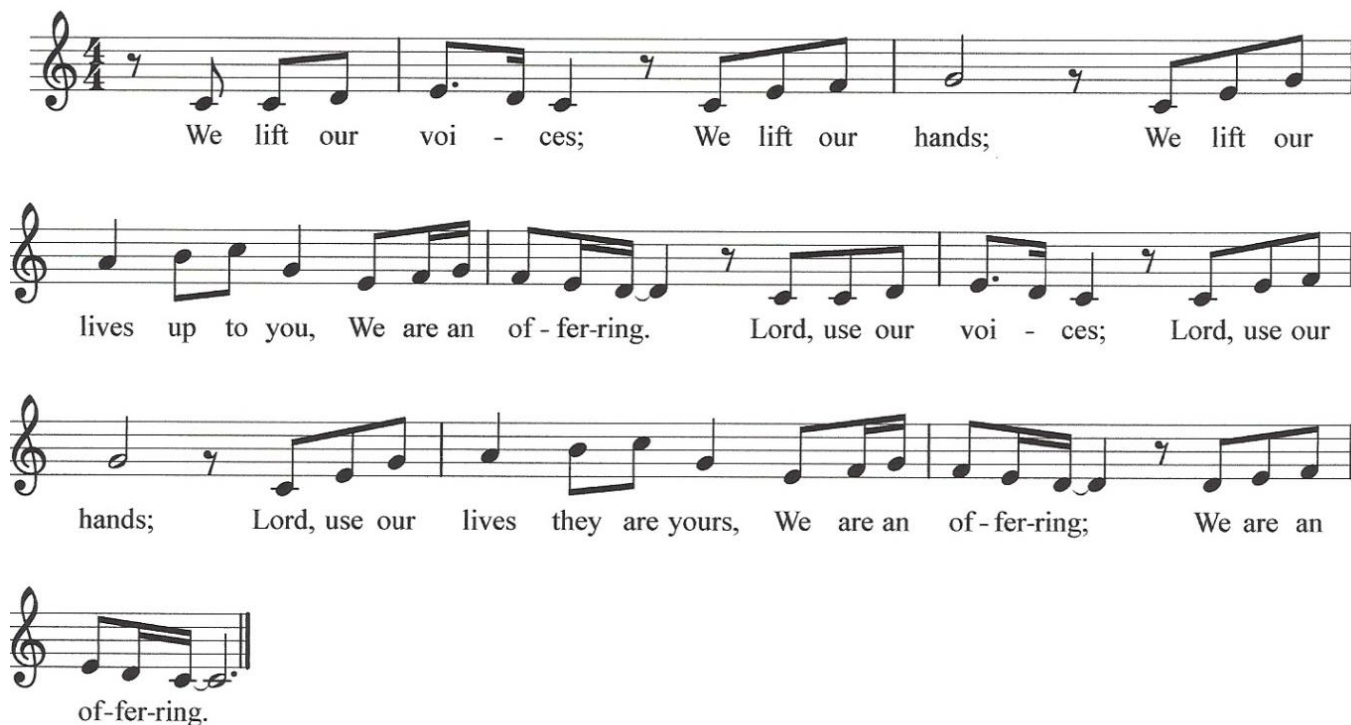
* SHARING OF THE PEACE

The Peace of the Lord be with you always.

And also with you.

OFFERING / SPECIAL MUSIC

* OFFERING SONG



We lift our voi - ces; We lift our hands; We lift our
lives up to you, We are an of - fer-ring. Lord, use our voi - ces; Lord, use our
hands; Lord, use our lives they are yours, We are an of - fer-ring; We are an
of-fer-ring.

*** OFFERING PRAYER**

Let us pray: Gracious Provider, you set your immense treasures among us, opening your heart to the world. As we prepare to feast on your bountiful love, deepen our commitment to sharing those treasures with others, through our Savior, Jesus Christ. **Amen.**

*** THE GREAT THANKSGIVING**

The Lord be with you.

And also with you.

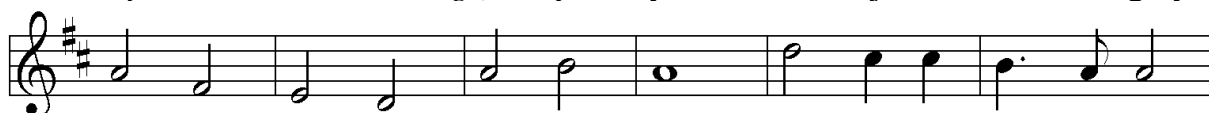
Lift up your hearts.

We lift them to the Lord.

Let us give thanks to the Lord our God.

It is right to give him thanks and praise.

It is indeed right and salutary...*(Here the minister continues with the preface appropriate to the day or season, concluding:)* we praise your name and join their unending hymn:



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.

*** WORDS OF INSTITUTION**

With Thanksgiving, we remember that in the night in which he was betrayed, our Lord Jesus took bread and gave thanks, broke it, and gave it to the disciples saying: "Take and eat; this is my body given for you. Do this in 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 in remembrance of me."

For as often as we eat of this bread and drink from this cup, we proclaim:

Christ has died, Christ is risen, Christ will come again. Amen.

*** THE LORD'S PRAYER**

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**

All who are hungry, come!
We come.

DISTRIBUTION OF HOLY COMMUNION

(BAPTIZED CHRISTIANS who believe that the risen Christ is present in the Eucharist to forgive sin and renew life are invited to either come to the altar area for communion as directed or share at your pew. If you come forward, you will receive the elements. If you choose to receive at your seat, please remain there, kneel as you are able, and receive the elements using the communion packets available from the ushers. If there are other special needs, please speak to an usher.)

*** POST COMMUNION BLESSING**

The body and blood of our Lord Jesus Christ strengthen you and keep you in his grace.
Amen

*** POST COMMUNION SONG**

Go, My Children, with My Blessing

3 "Go, my chil - dren, fed and nour-ished, clos - er to me.
Grow in love and love by serv - ing, joy - ful and free.
Here my Spir - it's pow - er filled you, here his ten - der com - fort stilled you.
Go, my chil - dren, fed and nour-ished, joy - ful and free."

*** PRAYER AFTER COMMUNION**

Let us pray: Generous Host, you have shared your feast with us and made us new. Send us now to set tables of love and grace in our communities, that your liberating love might nourish the world into freedom, in the name of the crucified one, Jesus Christ our Lord.
Amen.

*** BLESSING**

And now a blessing: God our tender parent, God the crucified one, God the reconciling Spirit, ✝ bless you now and forever. **Amen.**

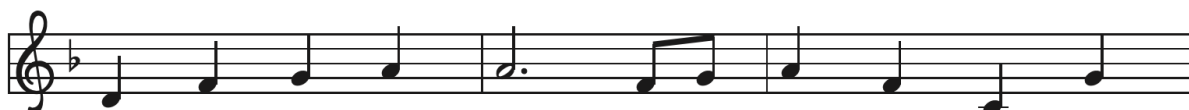
*** CELEBRATIONS!!!**

*** CLOSING SONG**

When it Seems the Day Will End



1 When it seems the day will end, and all
2 When it seems the day will end, sink - ing
3 When it seems the day will end, and a



light gives way to fear, we will speak your name a -
low un - der our skin, we are dead and born a -
cold - ness fills our bones, we will walk the way you've



gain to re - mind us you are here.
gain, and with you now en - ter in.
been, and our hearts will be your home.

Refrain



New life ris - ing, New life ris - ing, ash - es fall - ing, ash - es fall - ing,



joy and weep-ing, joy and weep-ing, in your call-ing. in your call - ing.

Text: Justin Rimbo, b. 1980
Music: HUMBLE WALK, Justin Rimbo
Text and music © 2020 Augsburg Fortress

*** SENDING**

Go in peace. Care for others as God cares for you.

Thanks be to God.

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