

FOURTH SUNDAY IN LENT  
BETHANY LUTHERAN CHURCH  
*Nurture with Love, Serve with Hope*  
MARCH 30, 2025 PASTOR ELAINA SALMON

**Prelude**

**Welcome and Announcements**

THE GATHERING

*(Please stand.)*

**Confession & Forgiveness**

P Blessed be the holy Trinity,  
Creator, Redeemer, and Sustainer.

C **Amen.**

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

*(a moment of silence)*

P Merciful God,

C **we confess to you that we have forgotten  
our connection to the earth  
and our kinship with other living things.**

**We treat the earth as a boundless warehouse.  
We have disrupted creation  
and have ignored the earth's groaning.  
We have not loved creation  
as you have loved us.**

**Restore in us, O God,  
wonder and gratitude for earth's gifts.  
Restore in us, O God,  
an awareness of our kinship  
to all living things.  
Help us to hear your call to serve the earth  
as you served us.  
We confess and pray for transformation,  
through Jesus Christ our Lord.  
Amen.**

P In the name of God, maker of heaven and earth,  
and Jesus, the one through whom all things were made,  
and by the Holy Spirit, the giver of life,  
you are forgiven.  
You are a new creation.

C **Amen**

### Gathering Song "O Living Breath of God"

*O living Breath of God, wind at the beginning upon the waters;  
O living Breath of God, bearing the creation to wondrous birth;*

*O living Breath of God, by whose pow'r the Son came to birth among us;  
O living Breath of God, who to the creation gives life a new;*

*O living Breath of God, bearing us to life through baptismal waters;  
O living Breath of God, sighing with creation for freedom's birth;*

#### Refrain

*Come now, and fill our spirits; pour out your gifts abundant.  
O living Breath of God, Holy Spirit, breathe in us as we pray.*

### Greeting

P The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, the love of God, and the communion of the Holy Spirit be with you all.

C **And also with you.**

### Kyrie

#### KYRIE

*The Kyrie may follow.*



**A** Ky - ri - e e - le - i - son: **C** Lord, have mer - cy.  
*Lord, . . . . have mer - cy:*



**A** Chri - ste e - le - i - son: **C** Christ, have mer - cy.  
*Christ, . . . . have mer - cy:*



**A** Ky - ri - e e - le - i - son: **C** Lord, have mer - cy.  
*Lord, . . . . have mer - cy:*

**Hymn of Praise**      *“Before the Waters Nourished Earth”*

*Before the waters nourished earth  
or night imagined morning,  
a Love conceived the universe  
and reveled in its forming.*

*This Love remained as time revealed  
the loss of Eden's glory  
and, grieving, holds in memory  
each tragic human story.*

*Despair, so deep it bears no name,  
or sorrows paralyzing  
cannot revoke Love's faithful claim  
to dwell within our dying.*

*The Love that called creation good  
all goodness still is bringing.  
This Love turns death again to life  
and silence into singing.*

**Prayer of the Day**

**P**      God of compassion, you welcome the wayward, and you embrace us all with your mercy. By our baptism clothe us with garments of your grace, and feed us at the table of your love, through Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever.

**C**      **Amen.**

*(Please be seated.)*

THE WORD

**Children's Sermon**

**The First Reading** Joshua 5:9-12

The Lord said to Joshua, “Today I have rolled away from you the disgrace of Egypt.” And so that place is called Gilgal to this day.

While the Israelites were camped in Gilgal they kept the passover in the evening on the fourteenth day of the month in the plains of Jericho. On the day after the passover, on that very day, they ate the produce of the land, unleavened cakes and parched grain. The manna ceased on

the day they ate the produce of the land, and the Israelites no longer had manna; they ate the crops of the land of Canaan that year.

A The Word of the Lord.

C **Thanks be to God.**

### Psalm 32

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

C **Happy are they to whom the Lord imputes no guilt,  
and in whose spirit there is no guile!**

A While I held my tongue, my bones withered away,  
because of my groaning all day long.

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

A Then I acknowledged my sin to you, and did not conceal my guilt.  
I said, "I will confess my transgressions to the Lord." Then you forgave me the guilt of  
my sin.

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

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

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

A 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."

C **Great are the tribulations of the wicked;  
but mercy embraces those who trust in the Lord.**

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

### Second Reading 2 Corinthians 5:16-21

From now on, therefore, we regard no one from a human point of view; even though we once knew Christ from a human point of view, we know him no longer in that way. So if anyone is in Christ, there is a new creation: everything old has passed away; see, everything has become new! All this is from God, who reconciled us to himself through Christ, and has given us the ministry of reconciliation; that is, in Christ God was reconciling the world to himself, not counting their trespasses against them, and entrusting the message of reconciliation to us. So we are ambassadors for Christ, since God is making his appeal through us; we entreat you on behalf of Christ, be reconciled to God. For our sake he made him to be sin who knew no sin, so that in him we might become the righteousness of God.

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

*(Please stand.)*

**Gospel Acclamation** *“Lord, Let My Heart”*

*Lord, let my heart be good soil,  
open to the seed of your word.  
Lord, let my heart be good soil,  
where love can grow and peace is understood.  
When my heart is hard, break the stone away.  
When my heart is cold, warm it with the day.  
When my heart is lost, lead me on your way.  
Lord, let my heart, Lord, let my heart,  
Lord, let my heart be good soil.*

**Gospel** Luke 15:1-3, 11b-32

Now all the tax collectors and sinners were coming near to listen to Jesus. And the Pharisees and the scribes were grumbling and saying, “This fellow welcomes sinners and eats with them.”

So he told them this parable: “There was a man who had two sons. The younger of them said to his father, ‘Father, give me the share of the property that will belong to me.’ So he divided his property between them. A few days later the younger son gathered all he had and traveled to a distant country, and there he squandered his property in dissolute living. When he had spent everything, a severe famine took place throughout that country, and he began to be in need. So he went and hired himself out to one of the citizens of that country, who sent him to his fields to feed the pigs. He would gladly have filled himself with the pods that the pigs were eating; and no one gave him anything. But when he came to himself he said, ‘How many of my father’s hired hands have bread enough and to spare, but here I am dying of hunger! I will get up and go to my father, and I will say to him, “Father, I have sinned against heaven and before you; I am no longer worthy to be called your son; treat me like one of your hired hands.”’ So he set off and went to his father. But while he was still far off, his father saw him and was filled with compassion; he ran and put his arms around him and kissed him. Then the son said to him, ‘Father, I have sinned against heaven and before you; I am no longer worthy to be called your son.’ But the father said to his slaves, ‘Quickly, bring out a robe—the best one—and put it on him; put a ring on his finger and sandals on his feet. And get the fatted calf and kill it, and let us eat and celebrate; for this son of mine was dead and is alive again; he was lost and is found!’ And they began to celebrate.

“Now his elder son was in the field; and when he came and approached the house, he heard music and dancing. He called one of the slaves and asked what was going on. He replied, ‘Your brother has come, and your father has killed the fatted calf, because he has got him back safe and sound.’ Then he became angry and refused to go in. His father came out and began to plead with him. But he answered his father, ‘Listen! For all these years I have been working like a slave for you, and I have never disobeyed your command; yet you have never given me even a young goat

so that I might celebrate with my friends. But when this son of yours came back, who has devoured your property with prostitutes, you killed the fatted calf for him!’ Then the father said to him, ‘Son, you are always with me, and all that is mine is yours. But we had to celebrate and rejoice, because this brother of yours was dead and has come to life; he was lost and has been found.’”

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

*(Please be seated.)*

**Sermon            Rev. Elaina Salmon**

*(Please stand.)*

**Hymn of the Day**    *“There’s a Wideness in God’s Mercy”*

*There's a wideness in God's mercy,  
like the wideness of the sea;  
there's a kindness in God's justice  
which is more than liberty.  
There is no place where earth's sorrows  
are more felt than up in heav'n.  
There is no place where earth's failings  
have such kindly judgment giv'n.*

*There is welcome for the sinner,  
and a promised grace made good;  
there is mercy with the Savior;  
there is healing in his blood.  
There is grace enough for thousands  
of new worlds as great as this;  
there is room for fresh creations  
in that upper home of bliss.*

*For the love of God is broader  
than the measures of our mind;  
and the heart of the Eternal  
is most wonderfully kind.  
But we make this love too narrow  
by false limits of our own;  
and we magnify its strictness  
with a zeal God will not own.*

*'Tis not all we owe to Jesus;  
it is something more than all:*

*greater good because of evil,  
larger mercy through the fall.  
Make our love, O God, more faithful;  
let us take you at your word,  
and our lives will be thanksgiving  
for the goodness of the Lord.*

## **Prayers of the People**

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

*(a moment of silence)*

A God of faithful promise, make your church a new creation in Christ. As you reconcile us to yourself, guide us also in your way of reconciliation, that through confession and forgiveness, repentance and reparations, your church may bear witness to your love. God, in your mercy,

**C receive our prayer.**

A God of new beginnings, restore balance to the earth. Send rain to places of drought and sunshine to places of flooding, that the produce of the land may again support life. God, in your mercy,

**C receive our prayer.**

A God of prodigal grace, unite the nations as fellow members of the human family. Give leaders the courage to put aside pride and ego, to cease squandering lives and time, and to work for the well-being of all. God, in your mercy,

**C receive our prayer.**

A God of boundless love, receive with open arms any in need of compassion. Embrace all who are far from home or estranged from loved ones, and all who live with regret. Embolden your people to offer and to seek forgiveness. God, in your mercy,

**C receive our prayer.**

A God of radical inclusion, widen human circles to welcome all who are excluded. Bless the work of disability ministries, ministries by and with neurodivergent people, and multicultural and ethnic-specific ministries; that the welcome of Jesus be extended to all. God, in your mercy,

**C receive our prayer.**

A God of resurrection life, welcome home all who have died. We thank you for their lives and entrust them into your keeping, where true reconciliation and eternal peace are found. God, in your mercy,

**C receive our prayer.**

A 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.

**C Amen.**

## Sharing of Christ's Peace

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

*(Please be seated.)*

## THE MEAL

### Invitation to the Offering

P For all we receive from God's bounty, let us give thanks and offer our first fruit gifts as an act of love for God and our neighbor.

### Offering

*(Please stand.)*

### Offertory Song "For the Beauty of the Earth"

*For the beauty of the earth,  
for the beauty of the skies,  
for the love which from our birth  
over and around us lies:*

#### Refrain

*Christ, our God, to thee we raise  
this our sacrifice of praise.*

*For the wonder of each hour  
of the day and of the night,  
hill and vale and tree and flow'r,  
sun and moon and stars of light: Refrain*

### Offertory Prayer

A Creator of the universe and bearer of love, we give thanks for the beauty of the earth and for all the gifts you provide from her bounty. As we prepare to feast on grain made into bread and fruit of the vine made into wine, deepen our commitment to love one another and care for creation, through our Savior, Jesus Christ.  
C **Amen.**



## Eucharistic Prayer

P The Lord be with you.

C **And also with you.**

P Lift up your hearts.

C **We lift them to the Lord.**

P Let us give thanks to the Lord our God.

C **It is right to give our thanks and praise.**

P Holy God, mighty and merciful,  
your people praise you, saying:  
Your mercy endures forever.

C **Your mercy endures forever.**

P By your promise  
you bound yourself to earth and all its creatures,  
granting them life and calling them to flourish,  
setting the sign of your bow in the clouds,  
the colors of your love and faithfulness.  
Your mercy endures forever.

C **Your mercy endures forever.**

P By your promise  
you bound yourself to your people of old,  
blessing them with family outnumbering the stars  
and calling them to be a blessing to others,  
showing them steadfast love in every generation  
and calling them to be a light to the nations.  
Your mercy endures forever.

C **Your mercy endures forever.**

P By your promise  
you joined us to Jesus, your Beloved,  
grafting us into your living Vine,  
and calling us to bear the fruit of your self-giving love.

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 his life laid down and lifted up

as we proclaim the mystery of faith.  
**C Christ has died. Christ is risen. Christ will come again.**

**P** Send your Holy Spirit upon us  
and these gifts of bread and wine.  
Bless us to be a blessing.  
Make us a sign of your faithfulness.  
Send us to tend and cherish the earth  
and to serve the world with mercy and love.

With all the saints in light,  
with the earth and all its creatures,  
with sun and moon and stars,  
we praise you, O God, through Christ Jesus,  
in your Spirit, now and forever.

**C Amen.**

### **Lord's Prayer**

**P** Remember us in your kingdom and teach us to pray,  
**C 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, the power and the glory, forever and ever. Amen.**

### **Invitation to Communion**

**P** All who are hungry, come!  
The feast of grace is spread.

*(Please be seated.)*

### **Communion Distribution**

#### **Communion Songs**

*“Lamb of God”*

*Jesus, Lamb of God, you take away the sins of the world:  
have mercy on us.*

*Jesus, grain of wheat, you take away the sins of the world:  
have mercy on us.*

*Jesus, sinner's friend, you take away the sins of the world:  
grant us your peace.*

*"Softly and Tenderly"*

*Softly and tenderly Jesus is calling,  
calling for you and for me.  
See, on the portals he's waiting and watching,  
watching for you and for me.*

*Refrain*

*"Come home, (Come home,  
come home! (come home!)  
You who are weary, come home."  
Earnestly, tenderly, Jesus is calling,  
calling, "O sinner, come home!"*

*Why should we tarry when Jesus is pleading,  
pleading for you and for me?  
Why should we linger and heed not his mercies,  
mercies for you and for me? Refrain*

*Oh, for the wonderful love he has promised,  
promised for you and for me!  
Though we have sinned, he has mercy and pardon,  
pardon for you and for me. Refrain*

*(Please stand.)*

### **Communion Blessing**

**P** May the body and blood of our Lord Jesus Christ strengthen you and keep you in his  
grace.  
**C** **Amen.**

### **Prayer After Communion**

**A** 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.  
**C** **Amen.**

## SENDING

### Blessing

P God our tender parent,  
God the crucified one,  
God the reconciling Spirit,  
bless you now and forever.

C **Amen.**

### Sending Song “One There Is, above All Others”

*One there is, above all others,  
well deserves the name of friend;  
his is love beyond a brother's,  
costly, free, and knows no end;  
they who once his kindness prove  
find it everlasting love.*

*Which of all our friends, to save us,  
could or would have shed his blood?  
But this Savior died to have us  
reconciled in him to God;  
this was boundless love indeed;  
Jesus is the friend we need.*

*When he lived on earth, they scorned him;  
“friend of sinners” was his name.  
Though the angels have adored him,  
still he answers to that claim;  
still he calls them dearest friends  
and to all their needs attends.*

### Dismissal

P Go in peace to nurture with love and serve with hope.

C **Thanks be to God!**

## *PRAYERS FOR THE COMMUNITY*

|                   |                   |                     |
|-------------------|-------------------|---------------------|
| MariLynn Bergmark | Monica Johnson    | Misty Pounder       |
| Sharon Bolerjack  | Pat Johnson       | Brilee Robbins      |
| Hazel Brant       | Caty K            | Ken Rose            |
| Scott Browne      | Zepplyn Killmer   | Frank Roy           |
| Anthony Campagna  | Lenny Kobilca     | Ben Sabourin        |
| Gary Cobbett      | Carrie Koon       | George Scheel       |
| Sidney Colburn    | Rev. John Lang    | Bernie Schroeder    |
| Jim Connelly      | Nancy Lang        | Tim Schroeder       |
| Beau Dowling      | Sue Luchon        | Virginia Schroeder  |
| Maggie Driscoll   | Scott Lundgren    | Josh Shaw           |
| Finley Engnell    | Dede Machowski    | Sharon Skopec       |
| Elwood Faulhaber  | Hanna Mau         | Gene Sobba          |
| Judy Faulhaber    | Jim McKeever      | Gary Sperka         |
| Abby Galvin       | Ruth Ann Miller   | Burt Swartz         |
| David Gilchrist   | Omni Rook Myers   | Dom Thielmann       |
| Chriss Hassel     | Linda Nelson      | Kayley Koter Taddeo |
| Marie Heeren      | Jane Nilles       | Chuck Vlcek         |
| Mike Hoffman      | Dave Nommenson    | Cindy Vorel         |
| Bob Hoster        | Charlotte Pohlman | Kyle Williams       |

For Sean Acosta, Dustin Johnson, Steve Kleinfelder, Damen McDermott, Chad Peters, Mitch Pohlman and all others serving our country and their families.

For those we name in our hearts, and for those who have not yet found Jesus.

### Acknowledgements

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*For the Beauty of the Earth* Text: Foliott S. Pierpoint, 1835-1917, alt.  
*Lamb of God* from Lent Communion Rite: Take, O Take Me as I am Music by John Bell. Adapted/arranged by Tony Alonso. Published by GIA Publications  
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*One There Is, above All Others* Text: John Newton, 1725-1807, alt.  
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## **ANNOUNCEMENTS**

**SERVING TODAY** — Glenda Anderson

**ACOLYTES** — Evan Parker and Nia Salmon

**MUSICIAN** — Sue Gray

**TECH CREW** — Gary Gray, Sue Gray and Zach Howell

### **SNEAKER RECYCLING**

Reflecting on our Lenten theme “For the Beauty of the Earth”, we will be partnering with GotSneakers to eliminate footwear waste in our landfills. Your donated used sneakers & cleats will be either repurposed or recycled, helping you declutter your home while at the same time being kind to the environment. We will have donation bins available at the back of the church and will be collecting thru the end of April. Please feel free to spread the word & happy spring cleaning!

### **TERRA DIVINA**

Our Prayer Group will head outside for "terra divina" on Wednesday April 2 at 6:30pm. We'll gather in the pavilion near the entrance to the Heritage Quarries Recreation Area. We'll engage in a new way of praying with creation. For those unsure of location, please meet at Bethany at 6:15pm to carpool or caravan to the location.

### **POTATO SAUSAGE!**

We still have about 30 pounds of Bethany Swedish Potato Sausage stocked in the freezer in the Community Room. It is available in three pound bags. If you would like some, we ask you make a donation to Bethany.

### **NEXT PROJECT: COMMUNITY ROOM FLOOR**

The Building Committee is focusing efforts on assessment and repair of the floor in the Community Room. If, at any point, you have been in the crawl space under the Community Room, Dave Forkel would like to speak to you to gather information. You can reach Dave at 312-296-0855.

### **EASTER FLOWERS AND MEMORIALS**

Forms are available. Please return the form along with payment by April 6<sup>th</sup> to the church office.

### **KITCHEN ITEMS AVAILABLE**

After some kitchen organization, there are crystal serving dishes and platters looking for a new home. Items are on the table in the kitchen.

**A DONATION TO THE GENERAL FUND** was given in memory of Kerri Schroeder on the anniversary of her death, April 1<sup>st</sup> by Kelly Jaje.

**A DONATION TO THE CAPITAL IMPROVEMENT FUND** was given in memory of Loved Ones by Floyd & Kim Kujawa.

**DONATIONS TO THE OPEN PANTRY** were given by Alyssa Jaje, St. Alphonsus and St. Patrick Parishes, Adrian Zeglin and Douglas & Marie DeGregorio.

**ELECTRONIC GIVING** is available to support Bethany Lutheran Church. It is fast, easy and secure. You can schedule a weekly or monthly contribution that is automatically debited from your savings or checking account. Make a one-time donation to a special fund; even direct the gift in honor or in memory of someone. Visit our website: [bethanylemont.org](http://bethanylemont.org) and click the Donate button on the homepage.