

WELCOME TO WORSHIP!

*"I have come
seeking fruit
on this fig tree ..."*

Luke 13:7, ESV



Open Door Policies:
Always Present, Always Patient
Third Sunday in Lent

St. Paul's Ev. Lutheran Church | Wisconsin Rapids, WI

March 23, 2025



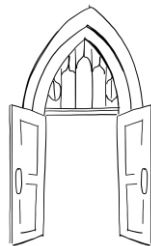
Welcome To Worship

If you are a visitor to our church, we extend you a warm welcome. We are happy you are here. Please fill out a Connect Card to let us know how we might continue to serve you.

It's encouraging to see parents bring their families to worship the Lord. If your child becomes restless, you can use the Family Room to calm them. Quiet bags and children's bulletins are also available to keep little ones busy. Restrooms are located in the hallways along either side of the worship space. For those with special needs, large print copies of the service folder and listening devices are available from the ushers. One of our ushers can help you find the restrooms or family room and answer any other questions.

Service Notes For This Service

The heavenly Father is always present in the lives of his children. He sees every sorrow we endure. He also sees every sin that we commit, even if it's only in our thoughts. He is always present. Yet, he is also always patient. God does not snap at us the second we turn from him. He gives us time to see the error of our ways. He assures us that the door back to him remains always open. By giving us room to share our struggles and shortcomings, he works in us the very repentance he desires and saves us from the judgement that would otherwise be ours.



Those Serving in Worship

Pastor Peter Plagenz; Accompanists, Destinee Fiecko and Tammy Paul; Musical Offering by Rose Paul

Acknowledgements

The Service: Setting One from Christian Worship with Opening for Sundays in Lent (Year C). Unless otherwise noted, Scripture quotations are from the Holy Bible, Evangelical Heritage Version® (EHV®) © 2017 Wartburg Project. All rights reserved. Used by permission. Liturgical and musical settings of Scripture based on text from The Holy Bible, New International Version®, NIV®. Copyright © 1973, 1978, 1984, 2011 by Biblica, Inc.™ Used by permission of Zondervan. All rights reserved worldwide.

The Service

Welcome

Hymn

406 *In the Hour of Trial*

Stand

Invocation

In the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit.

Amen.

Confession and Absolution

When God's children rebel and wander from his ways, he desires that they return to him for pardon and peace through his Son. The courts of heaven resound with joy when a single wayward child returns home.

There is rejoicing in the presence of angels of God over one sinner who repents. Luke 15:10

Children of God, the time to turn to our Father for forgiveness is now. God made Christ our sin that we might become his righteousness. He implores us to be reconciled to him, promising:

**In the time of my favor I heard you,
and in the day of salvation I helped you.**

2 Corinthians 5:21-6:2

Congregation sings:

916 *Today Your Mercy Calls Us*

3 To - day our Fa - ther calls us, his Ho - ly Spir - it waits;
his bless - ed an - gels gath - er a - round the heav'n - ly gates.
No ques - tion will be asked us how of - ten we have come;
al - though we oft have wan - dered, it is our Fa - ther's home.

Text: Oswald Allen, 1816–1878, alt. Tune: Friedrich K. Anthes, 1812–after 1857. Text and tune: Public domain

Let us confess our sins to the Lord.

Holy God, gracious Father, I am sinful by nature and have sinned against you in my thoughts, words, and actions. I have not loved you with my whole heart; I have not loved others as I should. I deserve your punishment both now and forever. But Jesus, my Savior, paid for my sins with his innocent suffering and death. Trusting in him, I pray: God, have mercy on me, a sinner.

Silence for meditation and reflection

Our gracious Father in heaven has been merciful to us. He sent his only Son, Jesus Christ, who gave his life as the atoning sacrifice for the sins of the whole world. Therefore, as a called servant of Christ and by his authority, I forgive you all your sins in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit.

Amen.

Congregation sings:

916 Today Your Mercy Calls Us

2 To - day your gate is o - pen, and all who en - ter in
shall find a Fa - ther's wel - come and par - don for their sin.
The past shall be for - got - ten, a pres - ent joy be giv'n,
a fu - ture grace be prom - ised, a glo - rious crown in heav'n.

The image shows a musical score for a congregational song. It consists of four staves of music in G major (one sharp) and 2/4 time. The lyrics are written below the notes. The first staff begins with a '2' indicating a second ending. The music is simple and suitable for a congregation to sing.

Text: Oswald Allen, 1816–1878, alt. Tune: Friedrich K. Anthes, 1812–after 1857. Text and tune: Public domain

Lord, Have Mercy - Kyrie

In peace let us pray to the Lord.

Lord, have mercy.

For minds set on heavenly things, for hearts that long for heavenly glory, and for the will to bear our earthly crosses, let us pray to the Lord.

Lord, have mercy.

For the gifts of humility and repentance, for faith that finds security in Christ and does not use God's patience as an excuse for sin, let us pray to the Lord.

Lord, have mercy.

For perspective to see that, apart from Christ, gain is loss, and in Christ, loss is gain, and for the perseverance to press on and take hold of our heavenly prize, let us pray to the Lord.

Lord, have mercy.

Help, save, comfort, and defend us, gracious Lord.

Amen.

Hymn

916 Today Your Mercy Calls Us

4 O all - em - brac - ing Mer - cy, O ev - er - o - pen Door,
what should we do with - out you when heart and eye run o'er?
When all things seem a - gainst us, to drive us to de - spair,
we know one gate is o - pen, one ear will hear our prayer.

Text: Oswald Allen, 1816–1878, alt. Tune: Friedrich K. Anthes, 1812–after 1857. Text and tune: Public domain

Stand

The Word

The Lord be with you.

And also with you.

Prayer of the Day

Let us pray.

O God, whose glory it is always to have mercy, be gracious to all who have gone astray from your ways, and bring them again with penitent hearts and steadfast faith to embrace and hold fast the unchangeable truth of your Word; through your Son, Jesus Christ our Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever.

Amen.

First Reading

Exodus 3:1–15

The Lord reveals his presence to Moses as flames within a bush—fire that warms and gives light yet does not consume.

¹Now Moses was shepherding the flock of Jethro, his father-in-law, a priest of Midian, and he led the flock to the far side of the wilderness and came to Horeb, the mountain of God.

²The Angel of the LORD appeared to him in blazing fire from within a bush. Moses saw that the bush was on fire, but the bush was not burning up. ³So he said, “I will go over and look at this amazing sight—to find out why the bush is not burning up.”

⁴When the LORD saw that Moses had gone over to take a look, God called to him from the middle of the bush and said, “Moses! Moses!”

Moses said, “I am here.”

⁵The LORD said, “Do not come any closer. Take your sandals off your feet, for the place where you are standing is holy ground.” ⁶He then said, “I am the God of your fathers, the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob.”

Moses hid his face, because he was afraid to look at God.

⁷The LORD said, “I have certainly seen the misery of my people in Egypt, and I have heard their cry for help because of their slave drivers. Yes, I am aware of their suffering. ⁸So I have come down to deliver them from the hand of the Egyptians and to bring them up out of that land to a good and spacious land, to a land flowing with milk and honey, to the place of the Canaanites, the Hittites, the Amorites, the Perizzites, the Hivites, and the Jebusites. ⁹Now indeed, the Israelites' cry for help has come to me. Yes, I have seen how the Egyptians are oppressing them. ¹⁰Come now, I will send you to Pharaoh to bring my people, the Israelites, out of Egypt.”

¹¹But Moses said to God, “Who am I, that I should go to Pharaoh, and that I should bring the Israelites out of Egypt?”

¹²So he said, “I will certainly be with you. This will be the sign to you that I have sent you: When you have brought the people out of Egypt, you will serve God on this mountain.”

¹³But Moses said to God, “If I go to the Israelites and say to them, ‘The God of your fathers has sent me to you,’ and they ask me, ‘What is his name?’ what should I say to them?”

¹⁴So God replied to Moses, “I AM WHO I AM.” He also said, “You will say this to the Israelites: I AM has sent me to you.”

¹⁵God also told Moses, “Say this to the Israelites: ‘The LORD, the God of your fathers—the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob—has sent me to you. This is my name forever, and this is how I am to be remembered from generation to generation.’” (EHV®)

The Word of the Lord.

Thanks be to God.

Psalm of the Day

85C The LORD Has Long Looked with Favor
Trusting in the LORD's patient goodness, we pray for mercy.

The congregation will sing the refrain only.

Refrain

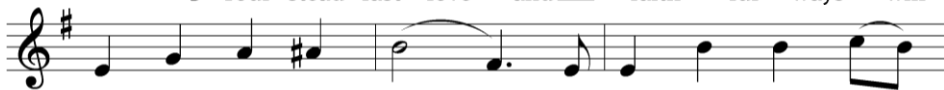


LORD, in your mer - cy hear my prayer; your good-ness nev - er fails.

Verses



- 1 The LORD has long looked with fa - vor up -
- 2 Re - store to us sal - va - tion, LORD, let
- 3 Your stead - fast love and faith - ful ways will



on the cho - sen land; to Ja - cob's heirs, the
your dis - plea - sure cease; and still the pow'r of
meet us face to face; the arm of jus - tice,



wealth of earth is lav - ished in their hand.
your own wrath with gen - tle winds of peace.
mer - cy sways; the right - eous, truth em - brace.



The cap - tive chains of ser - vi - tude are
My hum - ble heart the still small voice of
May wis - dom dwell in hu - man law, and



loosed, the slaves are free; and through God's grace, the
your great love at - tend; the faith - ful, you from
jus - tice, courts dis - play; let right - eous ways pre -



bonds of sin give way to lib - er - ty.
death re - deem, the fear - ful you de - fend.
cede your steps, and guide us on our way.

Refrain

Gospel

Luke 13:1–9

God is always patient, but our time of grace does come to an end at the moment of death. Since that can come at unexpected times, Jesus teaches that the time to repent is right now.

¹At that time there were some present who told Jesus about the Galileans whose blood Pilate had mixed with their sacrifices. ²He answered them, “Do you think that these Galileans were worse sinners than all the other Galileans because they suffered these things? ³I tell you, no. But unless you repent, you will all perish too. ⁴Or those eighteen who were killed when the tower in Siloam fell on them—do you think that they were worse sinners than all the people living in Jerusalem? ⁵I tell you, no. But unless you repent, you will all perish too.”

⁶He told them this parable: “A man had a fig tree planted in his vineyard. He came looking for fruit on it, but he did not find any. ⁷So he said to the gardener, ‘Look, for three years now I have come looking for fruit on this fig tree, and I have found none. Cut it down. Why even let it use up the soil?’ ⁸But the gardener replied to him, ‘Sir, leave it alone this year also, until I dig around it and put fertilizer on it. ⁹If it produces fruit next year, fine. But if not, then cut it down.’” (EHV[®])

The Gospel of the Lord.

Praise be to you, O Christ!

Be seated

Children’s Message

Hymn of the Day

712 Delay Not! Delay Not

Sermon

Stand

Apostles’ Creed

**I believe in God, the Father Almighty,
maker of heaven and earth.**

**I believe in Jesus Christ, his only Son, our Lord,
who was conceived by the Holy Spirit,
born of the Virgin Mary,
suffered under Pontius Pilate,
was crucified, died, and was buried.
He descended into hell.**

**The third day he rose again from the dead.
He ascended into heaven
and is seated at the right hand of God the Father Almighty.
From there he will come to judge the living and the dead.**

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

Be seated

Prayer of the Church

Heavenly Father, you loved the world and gave your Son to free us from sin and death by his obedient death on the cross.

We confess that without your love we are lost.

Lord of the Church, we thank you for the treasure of the gospel. By your Spirit, keep our eyes fixed on Jesus, the pioneer and perfecter of our faith.

Strengthen our determination to do what pleases you, no matter what the danger or the cost.

Guard and guide those who carry a cross in the name of Christ and face ridicule and persecution for the sake of the kingdom: missionaries and chaplains, young people who stand up for what is right in the face of pressure to do what is wrong, and all who pay a high price for their faith and values as Christians.

By your Spirit, O Lord, grant them patience and endurance.

Keep in your care those who carry heavy burdens in life: the sick and the chronically ill, the depressed and the lonely, those torn by conflict in personal relationships, and those victimized by war and injustice. Comfort all who face the terrors of life with a heavy heart.

Grant them peace, O Lord, and in your mercy, be their guardian and friend, their comfort and hope.

Watch over those who care for others: pastors and counselors; physicians and nurses; social workers and caring friends; all who feed the hungry, comfort the hurting, and stand beside the dying.

Strengthen them in their work, O Lord, and do not let them become weary in doing good.

Special prayers and petitions

Hear us as we pray in silence.

Silent prayer

Help us run with perseverance the race marked out for us. Keep us faithful even to the point of death, that we may receive the crown of life, through Jesus Christ, our Lord.

Amen.

Special Prayers This Week

- † For those suffering with dementia and for those who so lovingly care for them.
- † For a person in our community who has cancer.
- † For Kevin & Lynn Proeber, who we have called to serve as teachers in our school.
- †
- †
- †

Connect Card and Offering

Please take a moment to fill out a Connect Card. After a few moments, the ushers will come forward to collect the offering. You may place your Connect Card and any offering you brought in the plate as it is passed. Moved by God's love in Christ, we offer him our first and best gifts, purely out of thanks to him. If the gospel message has moved you to give and you would like an electronic option, you can scan this QR code with your mobile phone. It will connect you with our website's giving page.



Musical Offering

Stand

Almighty God, we thank you for teaching us the things you want us to believe and do. Help us by your Holy Spirit to keep your Word in pure hearts that we may be strengthened in faith, guided in holiness, and comforted in life and in death, through Jesus Christ our Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever.

Amen.

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.

Lead us not into temptation,
but deliver us from evil.

For the kingdom, the power,
and the glory are yours
now and forever. Amen.

Blessing

The Lord bless you and keep you.

The Lord make his face shine on you and be gracious to you.

The Lord look on you with favor and give you peace.

Amen.

Be seated

Hymn

402 *Glory Be to Jesus*



Take Home Questions

Exodus 3:1-15

1. God did not forget the Israelites for the hundreds of years they lived in Egypt. What comfort is that for us?
2. Sometimes Christians are asked to do work in God's church for which they feel completely inadequate. Why is God's first answer to Moses the perfect answer for the feeling of inadequacy?
3. All the gods of Egypt had names. Why does the name God gives himself surpass them all?

1 Corinthians 10:1-13

4. What spiritual blessings had God given the Israelites? How did they use these blessings?
5. What spiritual blessings has God given you? Learning from the example of the Israelites, how can we use these blessings in our lives?
6. Share a time in your life where perceived security led to you falling into temptation. Or share a time when God, in his faithfulness, brought you through a temptation in your life.

Luke 13:1-9

7. What do people often conclude about individuals who suffer a tragedy? What did Jesus teach through the two tragedies he mentions here?
8. What does the parable in verses 6-9 teach us about God's patience toward the Jewish people? What about God's patience toward us?

News & Announcements



This Sunday's Bible Study Hour: Apologetics—Defending Your Faith How Would a Historian Look at the Evidence?

Join us in the cafeteria from 9:15 to 10:15 AM

Teachers Called

At Tuesday's call meeting, we called a married couple, Kevin and Lynn Proeber, to teach grades 4-5 and 1st grade respectively. (The plans for next year include Keeping the junior high departmentalized with Mr. Biesterfeld and Mr. Van Weele teaching grades 6-8.) The Proebers currently serve Peace Lutheran School in Sun Prairie, WI, and they have three children. Please keep the Proeber family in your prayers as they deliberate their calls.

Help Still Needed for Easter for Kids

April 12 | 9:00-11:45

We still need some key leaders and many helpers to make our Easter for Kids run smoothly. This important event helps share Christ's resurrection with children that may not attend our grade school and Sunday school and may not even attend church regularly. We always get several children from the community. Having a full crew of volunteers is essential. Please check out the Ministry Table (which is now located across from the mailslots) to see what areas still need help. You can also find a link to the online signup on our website under the Serve tab.

Also on our Ministry Table, we have a list of items needed for the lunch. If you plan to donate something, be sure to note it on the signup sheet, so we don't end up with too much of one thing and not enough of another.

Come to *The Magic Flute*

April 2 | 1:30

Our school invites you to *The Magic Flute* on Wednesday, April 2 at 1:30 pm in the gym. Professional artists from Opera for the Young (OFTY) will perform alongside students from our school. This fun adaptation of Mozart's classic opera is set in outer space. It is coming-of-age story is about coping with life's trials and learning to forgive. We hope you can come!

Congregational Meeting Scheduled

April 6 | 12:30

Our quarterly congregational meeting is on Sunday, April 6 at 12:30 pm. A lunch will be served after the late service until the time of the meeting to allow everyone to enjoy some fellowship time with their church family before we discuss ministry.

Sunday	8:00 AM	Worship
	9:15 AM	Bible Study in the cafeteria
	9:15 AM	Sunday School
	10:30 AM	Worship
	2:00 PM	Co-ed Volleyball in the gym
Monday	4:30 PM	Choir Practice in the Balcony
Tuesday	6:45 AM	Men's Bible Study at From the Ground Up Coffee Shop
	9:45 AM	Women Walking in the Word in the Resource Center
	6:30 PM	Stephen Ministers in the Resource Center
Wednesday	5:00 PM	Lenten Service
	5:45 PM	Fellowship Meal (<i>Endowment Fund Committee serving BBQ</i>)
	6:30 PM	Handbell Practice in the balcony
Thursday	7:00 AM	Men's Small Group at From the Ground Up Coffee Shop
Sunday	8:00 AM	Worship
	9:15 AM	Bible Study in the cafeteria
	9:15 AM	Sunday School
	10:30 AM	Worship
	2:00 PM	Co-ed Volleyball in the gym

Attendance Report

Last Week's Attendance: 220

Amazing Grace Update

Thru Mar. 16: \$72,531 toward mortgage principal
 Goal: \$125,000 in 125 days (by May 31)

Next Sunday

Theme: Open Door Policies:
 Always Present, Always Patient
 Readings: Exodus 3:1-15; 1 Corinthians 10:1-13;
 Luke 13:1-9

Upcoming Events

Mar. 24-28 NO SCHOOL - Spring Break
 Apr. 2 Opera for the Young





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