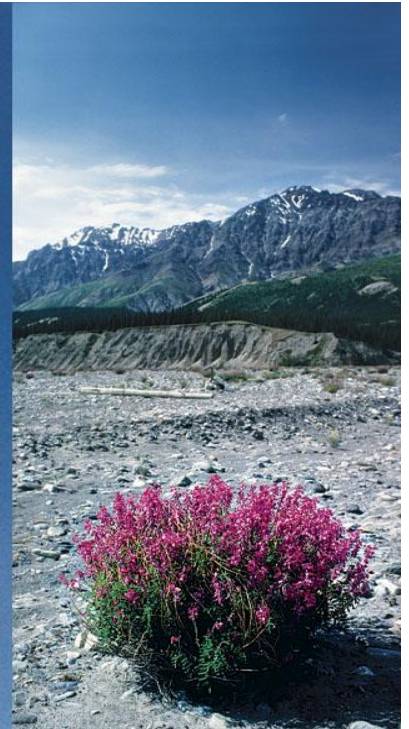


Jesus was
led by the Spirit in
the wilderness

LUKE 4:1



Sunday, March 9, 2025 First Sunday in Lent

These forty days called Lent are like no other. It is our opportune time to return to the God who rescues, to receive the gifts of God's grace, to believe with the heart and confess with the mouth the wonder of God's love in Jesus, and to resist temptation at every turn. This is no small pilgrimage on which we have just embarked. It is a struggle Jesus knew. It is a struggle Jesus shares. The nearness of the Lord, in bread and wine, water and word, will uphold and sustain us.

GATHERING

WELCOME

(Please stand as you are able)

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 ELW #774 vs.1&2 *What a Fellowship, What a Joy Divine*

- 1 What a fellowship, what a joy divine,
leaning on the everlasting arms;
what a blessedness, what a peace is mine,
leaning on the everlasting arms.

Refrain

Leaning, leaning, (*Leaning on Jesus, leaning on Jesus,*)
safe and secure from all alarms;
leaning, leaning, (*leaning on Jesus, leaning on Jesus,*)
leaning on the everlasting arms.

- 2 Oh, how sweet to walk in this pilgrim way,
leaning on the everlasting arms;
oh, how bright the path grows from day to day,
leaning on the everlasting arms. *Refrain*

Text: Elisha A. Hoffman, 1839-1929

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.

CANTICLE OF PRAISE ELW 840 vs. 3 *Now Thank We All Our God*

- 3 All praise and thanks to God
the Father now be given,
the Son, and Spirit blest,
who reign in highest heaven,
the one eternal God,
whom earth and heav'n adore;
for thus it was, is now,
and shall be evermore.

Text: Martin Rinkhart, 1586-1649; tr. Catherine Winkworth, 1827-1878

PRAYER OF THE DAY

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.

(Please be seated)

WORD

SPECIAL MUSIC

First Reading: Deuteronomy 26:1-11

The annual harvest festival, called the Feast of Weeks, provides the setting for this reading. This festival celebrates the first fruits of the produce of the land offered back to God in thanks. In this text, worshipers announce God's gracious acts on behalf of Israel.

¹ 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.

Psalm: 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.**

Word of God. Word of Life.

Thanks be to God.

(Please stand as you are able)

GOSPEL ACCLAMATION

**Return to the Lord, your God, for he is gracious and merciful,
slow to anger, and abounding in steadfast love,
and abounding in steadfast love.**

Gospel: Luke 4:1-13

After being filled with the Holy Spirit at his baptism, Jesus is led in the wilderness. Through his responses to the temptations of the devil, he defines what it means to be called “the Son of God.”

¹ 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 tempted 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 their glory and all this authority; 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 took him to Jerusalem, and placed him on the pinnacle of the temple, saying 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.

The gospel of the Lord.
Praise to you, O Christ.

(Please be seated)

Music: *Jesus Loves Me* – ELW #595

CHILDREN’S SERMON

Music: *Lord, Listen to your Children Praying* – ELW #752

SERMON

SONG OF THE DAY ELW 319 vs.1&2 *O Lord, Throughout These Forty Days*

- 1 O Lord, throughout these forty days
you prayed and kept the fast;
inspire repentance for our sin,
and free us from our past.
- 2 You strove with Satan, and you won;
your faithfulness endured;
lend us your nerve, your skill, and trust
in God's eternal word.

Text: based on Claudia F. Hernaman, 1838-1898; para. Gilbert E. Doan Jr., b. 1930
Text © 1978 *Lutheran Book of Worship*, admin. Augsburg Fortress.

(Please stand as you are able)

APOSTLE’S CREED

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

**I believe in Jesus Christ, Gods 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 to the dead.
On the third day he rose again;
he ascended into heaven,
he is seated at the right hand of the Father,
and he will come 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.

Accept our thanksgiving for the people you surround us with, especially for those who celebrate their lives and birth this week:

Vada Ortega
Barbara Marrs
Eunice Lovaas
Larry Lamar
Paula Crespin
Rolly Buechler

enrich them with a sense of joy and grace for yet another year. God, in your mercy,
receive our prayer.

For police officers and firefighters, for peacekeepers and military personnel, and for the leaders of governments, that they provide protection to all people, especially the most vulnerable. God, in your mercy,
receive our prayer.

For your people in the midst of war, civil unrest, or conflict, grant protection, strength and hope for a better tomorrow. Bring peace and an end to the conflict. God, in your mercy,
receive our prayer.

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.

PEACE

The peace of the Lord be with you always.

And also with you.

Let us share the Lord's Peace with one another

(Please be seated)

MEAL

OFFERING

The Worship/Communion Registration Card may be placed in the offering plate as it is passed.

Thank you for your support of our ministry.

(Please stand as you are able)

OFFERTORY ELW #182 *Let the Vineyards Be Fruitful*

Let the vineyards be fruitful, Lord,
and fill to the brim our cup of blessing.
Gather a harvest from the seeds that were sown,
that we may be fed with the bread of life.
Gather the hopes and the dreams of all;
unite them with the prayers we offer now.
Grace our table with your presence,
and give us a foretaste of the feast to come.

Text © 1978 *Lutheran Book of Worship*, admin. Augsburg Fortress.

OFFERING PRAYER

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.

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 our thanks and praise.

PREFACE

It is indeed right and [our joy] that we should at all times and in all places offer thanks and praise to you, O Lord, holy Father, through Christ our Lord.

Sharing our life, he lived among us to reveal your glory and love, that our darkness should give way to his own brilliant light.

And so, with the Church on earth and the hosts of heaven, we praise your name and join their unending hymn:

Music: *Holy, Holy, Holy* – ELW Service Page 144 (Setting 3)

**Holy, holy, holy Lord, God of pow'r and might,
heaven and earth are full, full of your glory.**

**Hosanna. Hosanna. Hosanna in the highest.
Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord.
Hosanna in the highest.**

Blessed are you, O holy God:

you are the Life and Light of all.

By your powerful word you created all things.

Through the prophets you called your people to be a light to the nations.

Blessed are you for Jesus, your Son.

He is your Light, shining in our darkness
and revealing to us your mercy and might.

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.

Remembering, therefore,
his preaching and healing,
his dying and rising,
and his promise to come again,
we await that day when all the universe
will rejoice in your holy and life-giving light.

By your Spirit bless us and this meal,
that, refreshed with this heavenly food,
we may be light for the world,
revealing the brilliance of your Son.

Through him all glory and honor is yours,
Almighty Father, with the Holy Spirit,
in your holy Church,
both now and forever.

Amen

PRAYER AT THE TABLE

Let us pray together the prayer our Lord taught us:

**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**

(Please be seated)

COMMUNION

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

COMMUNION SONG *Lamb of God*

**Lamb of God, you take away the sin of the world; have mercy on us.
Lamb of God, you take away the sin of the world; have mercy on us.
Lamb of God, you take away the sin of the world; grant us peace, grant us peace.**
Text: Evangelical Lutheran Worship

CONTINUOUS COMMUNION BEGINS

When giving the bread and cup, the communion ministers say:
The body of Christ, given for you.
The blood of Christ, shed for you.

POST COMMUNION BLESSING

(Please stand as you are able)

The body and blood of our Lord,
Jesus Christ, strengthen you and
preserve you in his grace.

POST COMMUNION CANTICLE WOV 798 *Bless the Lord*

**Bless the Lord, O my soul;
bless the Lord, O my soul;
and all that is within me
bless God's holy name.**

PRAYER AFTER COMMUNION

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

SENDING

(Please be seated)

ANNOUNCEMENTS

BLESSING

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

SENDING SONG ELW 338 vs 1, 3 *Beneath the Cross of Jesus*

1 Beneath the cross of Jesus
I long to take my stand;
the shadow of a mighty rock

within a weary land,
a home within a wilderness,
a rest upon the way,
from the burning of the noontide heat
and burdens of the day.

- 3 I take, O cross, your shadow
for my abiding place;
I ask no other sunshine than
the sunshine of his face;
content to let the world go by,
to know no gain nor loss,
my sinful self my only shame,
my glory all, the cross.

Text: Elizabeth C. Clephane, 1830-1869

DISMISSAL

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

Thanks be to God!

ADDITIONAL READINGS FOR THE DAY

Romans 10:8b-13

NEXT WEEK'S READINGS FOR

Second Sunday in Lent

March 16, 2025

Genesis 15:1-12, 17-18

The covenant with Abram and his descendants

Psalm 27

In the day of trouble, God will give me shelter. (Ps. 27:5)

Philippians 3:17—4:1

Our citizenship is in heaven from where we expect a Savior

Luke 13:31-35

I have desired to gather Jerusalem as a hen gathers her brood

Upcoming Commemorations

Harriet Tubman, died 1913; Sojourner Truth, died 1883; renewers of society

Monday, March 10, 2025

Harriet Tubman, born into slavery, helped about 300 others to escape slavery until the institution was abolished. Sojourner Truth, whose birth name was Isabella, was freed after slavery was abolished, and discerned a call to be a preacher. Taking the name Sojourner Truth, she set out on an evangelistic journey, where people found her testimony to be deeply moving.

Gregory the Great, Bishop of Rome, died 604

Wednesday, March 12, 2025

Born into wealth and power, Gregory was for a time the chief administrator of the city of Rome. Giving this up for a life in the church, he was elected pope in 590. He influenced public worship through the establishment of a lectionary and prayers to correlate with the readings. Gregorian chant is named in his honor.

GOSPEL MESSAGE

March 9, 2025

FIRST SUNDAY IN LENT

Journeying through the Wilderness

The wilderness has captured the imaginations of artists, adventurers, and spiritual seekers for thousands of years. It can be a place of profound self-discovery, exploration, beauty, and solitude. It is a place of few distractions: no commerce, no schedule, no business as usual. The wilderness can be a freeing place that opens us up to experience life in new and profound ways.

However, the wilderness is also disorienting and lonely. The landscape can be brutal and unforgiving. Wilderness wanderers can easily find themselves lost, exhausted, and dirty. The unbearable heat of the day, the uncomfortable cold of the nights, and the lack of food, water, or shade can bring people to their breaking point. The wilderness has been a place of exile and punishment, and a place where people's strength, determination, and faith are put to the test.

The complexities of the wilderness set the stage for today's gospel story, in which we get a glimpse of who Jesus is and who he is called to be. In the wilderness, we see the depth of Jesus' faith. Jesus is not swayed by the allure of power, control, authority, or physical comfort. He does not buy into the tempter's lies. Even in the disorientation and isolation of the wilderness, Jesus trusts in the Spirit, who has led him to this place and who gives him the strength to live into his call throughout his journey.

We are at the beginning of our own journey, a Lenten season of metaphorical wilderness wandering. The good news is that we do not go alone. The Spirit goes before us, behind us, beside us, and within us. Along this journey, the many voices of the tempter may try to lure us in with power, control, authority, or comfort. And yet, our trust and our identities lie with the One who already defeated the tempter. We already have all we need. In Christ, we are already loved, forgiven, and made whole, no matter where our journeys take us.

Flowering purple bush in Kluane National Park and Reserve, Yukon, Canada. Copyright © DeAgostini/Superstock. Used by permission.

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