



# Faith Evangelical Lutheran Church

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Pastor Tim Miller

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**Fifth Sunday in Lent**

**March 22, 2026**

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Setting 3 with Holy Communion

\*Congregation please stand as you are able.

## **Introduction**

In today's gospel Jesus reveals his power over death by raising Lazarus from the dead. The prophet Ezekiel prophesies God breathing new life into dry bones. To those in exile or living in the shadows of death, these stories proclaim God's promise of resurrection. In baptism we die with Christ that we might also be raised with him to new life. At the Easter Vigil we will welcome the newly baptized as we remember God's unfailing promise in our baptism.

## **Prelude:**

*When You Prayed Beneath the Trees*

**L. Larson**

## **Welcome & Announcements:** Joys and Concerns

Signing of the Pew Register by all present.

## **GATHERING**

The Holy Spirit calls us together as the people of God.

## **\*Invitation to Worship**

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

**C: And also with you.**

**P:** Jesus, you did everything to show us both your love and your Father's love. You became a small dependent child to show us yourself in your weakness. You worked for many years as a simple carpenter to show us that you wanted to be with us in our daily work. You were tempted in the desert to show us how to resist the forces of evil around us.

**C: What sacrifice the Son of God has given for me.**

**P:** You surrounded yourself with disciples to show us to share our vision with others and to work together in ministry. You preached the word of God to show us truth and how to become ourselves, witnesses to truth.

**C: What sacrifice the Son of God has given for me.**

P: You healed the sick and raised the dead to show us that you have power over death. You were transfigured to show us your divine splendor. You went the long road of suffering and death to show us that you love us and that you have redeemed us.

**C: What sacrifice the Son of God has given for me. Amen**

**Gathering Song:**

*Lamb of God*

**TBOB 139**

**\*Confession and Forgiveness**

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

**C: Amen.**

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

*Silence is kept for reflection.*

P: Gracious God,

**C: have mercy on us according to your steadfast love.**

P: For seeking worldly delights that deceive us and dishonor you:  
Gracious God,

**C: have mercy on us according to your steadfast love.**

P: For desiring self-reliance instead of hungering for your word:  
Gracious God,

**C: have mercy on us according to your steadfast love.**

P: For failing to recognize your coming reign,  
and for hindering the work of the Spirit: Gracious God,

**C: have mercy on us according to your steadfast love.**

P: For drawing from the well of self-serving ambition,  
and for disdain the living water Christ offers: Gracious God,

**C: have mercy on us according to your steadfast love.**

P: For disregarding voices from the margin,  
and for distrusting signs of your healing and hope in the world:  
Gracious God,

**C: have mercy on us according to your steadfast love.**

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

**C: have mercy on us according to your steadfast love.**

P: God's steadfast love, grace, and forgiveness abound.  
Through faith, the free gift of God,  
you have been clothed in the righteousness of Christ.  
In the name of † Jesus Christ, your sins are forgiven.  
The Spirit of the One who raised Christ from the dead  
dwells in you,  
pours God's love into your hearts,  
and gives you life and peace.

**C: Amen.**

**\*Prayer of the Day**

P: Let us pray.

**C: Almighty God, your Son came into the world to free us all from sin and death. Breathe upon us the power of your Spirit, that we may be raised to new life in Christ and serve you in righteousness all our days, through Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. Amen.**

**WORD**

God speaks to us in scripture reading, preaching, and song.

**First Reading:**

**Ezekiel 37:1-14**

*Ezekiel's vision of the valley of dry bones is a promise that Israel as a nation, though dead in exile, will live again in their land through God's life-giving spirit. Three times Israel is assured that through this vision they will know that "I am the LORD."*

R: A reading from Ezekiel, the 37<sup>th</sup> chapter.

<sup>1</sup> The hand of the LORD came upon me, and he brought me out by the spirit of the LORD and set me down in the middle of a valley; it was full of bones. <sup>2</sup> He led me all around them; there were very many lying in the valley, and they were very dry. <sup>3</sup> He said to me, "Mortal, can these bones live?" I answered, "O Lord GOD, you know." <sup>4</sup> Then he said to me, "Prophecy to these bones and say to them: O dry bones, hear the word of the LORD. <sup>5</sup> Thus says the Lord GOD to these bones: I will cause breath to enter you, and you shall live. <sup>6</sup> I will lay sinews on you and will cause flesh to come upon you and cover you with skin and put breath in you, and you shall live, and you shall know that I am the LORD."

<sup>7</sup> So I prophesied as I had been commanded, and as I prophesied, suddenly there was a noise, a rattling, and the bones came together, bone to its bone. <sup>8</sup> I looked, and there were sinews on them, and flesh had come upon them, and skin had covered them, but there was no breath in them. <sup>9</sup> Then he said to me, “Prophesy to the breath, prophesy, mortal, and say to the breath: Thus says the Lord GOD: Come from the four winds, O breath, and breathe upon these slain, that they may live.” <sup>10</sup> I prophesied as he commanded me, and the breath came into them, and they lived and stood on their feet, a vast multitude.

<sup>11</sup> Then he said to me, “Mortal, these bones are the whole house of Israel. They say, ‘Our bones are dried up, and our hope is lost; we are cut off completely.’” <sup>12</sup> Therefore prophesy and say to them: Thus says the Lord GOD: I am going to open your graves and bring you up from your graves, O my people, and I will bring you back to the land of Israel. <sup>13</sup> And you shall know that I am the LORD when I open your graves and bring you up from your graves, O my people. <sup>14</sup> I will put my spirit within you, and you shall live, and I will place you on your own soil; then you shall know that I, the LORD, have spoken and will act, says the LORD.”

The word of the Lord.

**C: Thanks be to God.**

**Responsive Reading:**

**Psalm 130**

<sup>1</sup> Out of the depths

I cry to you, O LORD;

<sup>2</sup> **O LORD, hear my voice!**

**Let your ears be attentive to the voice of my supplication.**

<sup>3</sup> If you were to keep watch over sins,

O LORD, who could stand?

<sup>4</sup> **Yet with you is forgiveness,**

**in order that you may be feared.**

<sup>5</sup> I wait for you, O LORD; my soul waits;

in your word is my hope.

<sup>6</sup> **My soul waits for the Lord more than those who keep watch for the morning, more than those who keep watch for the morning.**

<sup>7</sup> O Israel, wait for the LORD, for with the LORD there is steadfast love; with the LORD there is plenteous redemption.

<sup>8</sup> **For the LORD shall redeem Israel from all their sins.**

**Second Reading:****Romans 8:6-11**

*For Paul, Christian spirituality entails living in the reality of the Holy Spirit. The driving force behind our actions and values is not our sinful desire for self-satisfaction but the very Spirit by which God raised Jesus from the dead and will also raise us from the dead.*

R: A reading from Romans, the eighth chapter.

<sup>6</sup> To set the mind on the flesh is death, but to set the mind on the Spirit is life and peace. <sup>7</sup> For this reason the mind that is set on the flesh is hostile to God; it does not submit to God's law—indeed, it cannot, <sup>8</sup> and those who are in the flesh cannot please God.

<sup>9</sup> But you are not in the flesh; you are in the Spirit, since the Spirit of God dwells in you. Anyone who does not have the Spirit of Christ does not belong to him. <sup>10</sup> But if Christ is in you, then the body is dead because of sin, but the Spirit is life because of righteousness. <sup>11</sup> If the Spirit of him who raised Jesus from the dead dwells in you, he who raised Christ Jesus from the dead will give life to your mortal bodies also through his Spirit that dwells in you.

The word of the Lord.

**C: Thanks be to God.**

**\*Gospel Acclamation**      *Open Our Eyes*

**Open our eyes, Lord, we want to see Jesus.**

**To reach out and touch Him**

**And say that we love Him.**

**Open our ears. Lord, help us to listen.**

**Open our eyes, Lord, we want to see Jesus.**

**\*Gospel**

**John 11:1-45**

*Jesus is moved to sorrow when his friend Lazarus falls ill and dies. Then, in a dramatic scene, he calls his friend out of the tomb and restores him to life.*

P: The Holy Gospel according to St. John, the 11th chapter.

**C: Glory to you, O Lord.**

P: <sup>1</sup> Now a certain man was ill, Lazarus of Bethany, the village of Mary and her sister Martha. <sup>2</sup> Mary was the one who anointed the Lord with perfume and wiped his feet with her hair; her brother Lazarus was ill. <sup>3</sup> So the sisters sent a message to Jesus, "Lord, he whom you love is ill."<sup>4</sup> But when Jesus heard it, he said, "This illness does not lead to

death; rather, it is for God's glory, so that the Son of God may be glorified through it." <sup>5</sup> Accordingly, though Jesus loved Martha and her sister and Lazarus, <sup>6</sup> after having heard that Lazarus was ill, he stayed two days longer in the place where he was.

<sup>7</sup> Then after this he said to the disciples, "Let us go to Judea again." <sup>8</sup> The disciples said to him, "Rabbi, the Jews were just now trying to stone you, and are you going there again?" <sup>9</sup> Jesus answered, "Are there not twelve hours of daylight? Those who walk during the day do not stumble because they see the light of this world. <sup>10</sup> But those who walk at night stumble because the light is not in them." <sup>11</sup> After saying this, he told them, "Our friend Lazarus has fallen asleep, but I am going there to awaken him." <sup>12</sup> The disciples said to him, "Lord, if he has fallen asleep, he will be all right." <sup>13</sup> Jesus, however, had been speaking about his death, but they thought that he was referring merely to sleep. <sup>14</sup> Then Jesus told them plainly, "Lazarus is dead. <sup>15</sup> For your sake I am glad I was not there, so that you may believe. But let us go to him." <sup>16</sup> Thomas, who was called the Twin, said to his fellow disciples, "Let us also go, that we may die with him."

<sup>17</sup> When Jesus arrived, he found that Lazarus had already been in the tomb four days. <sup>18</sup> Now Bethany was near Jerusalem, some two miles away, <sup>19</sup> and many of the Jews had come to Martha and Mary to console them about their brother. <sup>20</sup> When Martha heard that Jesus was coming, she went and met him, while Mary stayed at home. <sup>21</sup> Martha said to Jesus, "Lord, if you had been here, my brother would not have died. <sup>22</sup> But even now I know that God will give you whatever you ask of him." <sup>23</sup> Jesus said to her, "Your brother will rise again." <sup>24</sup> Martha said to him, "I know that he will rise again in the resurrection on the last day." <sup>25</sup> Jesus said to her, "I am the resurrection and the life. Those who believe in me, even though they die, will live, <sup>26</sup> and everyone who lives and believes in me will never die. Do you believe this?" <sup>27</sup> She said to him, "Yes, Lord, I believe that you are the Messiah, the Son of God, the one coming into the world."

<sup>28</sup> When she had said this, she went back and called her sister Mary and told her privately, "The Teacher is here and is calling for you." <sup>29</sup> And when she heard it, she got up quickly and went to him. <sup>30</sup> Now Jesus had not yet come to the village but was still at the place where Martha had met him. <sup>31</sup> The Jews who were with her in the house consoling her saw Mary get up quickly and go out. They followed her because they thought that she was going to the tomb to weep there.

<sup>32</sup> When Mary came where Jesus was and saw him, she knelt at his feet and said to him, “Lord, if you had been here, my brother would not have died.” <sup>33</sup> When Jesus saw her weeping and the Jews who came with her also weeping, he was greatly disturbed in spirit and deeply moved. <sup>34</sup> He said, “Where have you laid him?” They said to him, “Lord, come and see.” <sup>35</sup> Jesus began to weep. <sup>36</sup> So the Jews said, “See how he loved him!” <sup>37</sup> But some of them said, “Could not he who opened the eyes of the blind man have kept this man from dying?”

<sup>38</sup> Then Jesus, again greatly disturbed, came to the tomb. It was a cave, and a stone was lying against it. <sup>39</sup> Jesus said, “Take away the stone.” Martha, the sister of the dead man, said to him, “Lord, already there is a stench because he has been dead four days.” <sup>40</sup> Jesus said to her, “Did I not tell you that if you believed you would see the glory of God?” <sup>41</sup> So they took away the stone. And Jesus looked upward and said, “Father, I thank you for having heard me. <sup>42</sup> I knew that you always hear me, but I have said this for the sake of the crowd standing here, so that they may believe that you sent me.” <sup>43</sup> When he had said this, he cried with a loud voice, “Lazarus, come out!” <sup>44</sup> The dead man came out, his hands and feet bound with strips of cloth and his face wrapped in a cloth. Jesus said to them, “Unbind him, and let him go.”

<sup>45</sup> Many of the Jews, therefore, who had come with Mary and had seen what Jesus did believed in him.

The Gospel of the Lord.

**C: Praise to you, O Christ.**

## **Children’s Sermon**

### **Sermon**

**\*Sermon Hymn:    *Spread, Oh, Spread, Almighty Word*        **ELW 663****

## **\*Apostles' Creed**

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

**I believe in Jesus Christ, God's 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**

R: Reconciled by God's mercy and sustained by God's presence, let us pray for the world and its needs.

*A brief silence.*

R: We pray for the church. Grant life and peace to all who gather in your name. Breathe into us so that we may share your message of forgiveness, hope, and love. Hear us, O God.

**C: Your mercy is great.**

R: We pray for creation. Renew landscapes that have dried up, prosper the work of those who restore homes and habitats after natural disasters, and sustain places where biodiversity thrives. Hear us, O God.

**C: Your mercy is great.**

R: We pray for the nations. Unbind leaders trapped by fear to act boldly for justice, free all who live in places of war and violence, and guide refugees and asylum seekers to safety. Hear us, O God.

**C: Your mercy is great.**

R: We pray for all people in need. Take away the stone of poverty that weighs down so many. Console any who weep and heal all who are sick, *especially those we name at this time (Pause for 10 seconds for people to be named)*. Hear us, O God.

**C: Your mercy is great.**

R: We pray for this assembly. Ready the hearts and spirits of all preparing to be baptized. Deepen our wonder at the mystery of your resurrection and life. Hear us, O God.

**C: Your mercy is great.**

R: We offer our thanksgiving for all people who have died in faith. Give us faith to trust in your power to redeem and save, and bring us up from our graves to life in you. Hear us, O God.

**C: Your mercy is great.**

R: Receive our prayers, O God, through Jesus Christ, our strength and salvation.

**C: Amen.**

### MEAL

God feeds us with the presence of Jesus Christ.

### \*Sharing of the Peace

P: The peace of Christ be with you always.

**C: And also with you.**

### (10:30) Senior Choir:

*For Those Who Believe*

**T. English**

### \*Offertory

*The Greatest Thing*

**The greatest thing in all my life is serving you.**

**The greatest thing in all my life is serving you.**

**I want to serve you more; I want to serve you more.**

**The greatest think in all my life is serving you.**

### \*Offering Prayer

P: 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.

**C: Amen.**

### **\*The Great Thanksgiving**

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: It is indeed right, our duty and our joy,  
that we should at all times and in all places  
give thanks and praise to you, almighty and merciful God,  
through our Savior Jesus Christ.

You call your people to cleanse their hearts  
and prepare with joy for the paschal feast,  
that, renewed in the gift of baptism,  
we may come to the fullness of your grace.

### **\*Thanksgiving at the Table**

P: Blessed are you, O God of the universe.

Your mercy is everlasting  
and your faithfulness endures from age to age.

Praise to you for creating the heavens and the earth.

Praise to you for saving the earth from the waters of the flood.

Praise to you for bringing the Israelites safely through the sea.

Praise to you for leading your people through the wilderness  
to the land of milk and honey.

Praise to you for the words and deeds of Jesus, your anointed one.

Praise to you for the death and resurrection of Christ.

Praise to you for your Spirit poured out on all nations.

P: 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.

P: With this bread and cup  
we remember our Lord's passover from death to life  
as we proclaim the mystery of faith:

**C: Christ has died.  
Christ is risen.  
Christ will come again.**

P: O God of resurrection and new life:  
Pour out your Holy Spirit on us  
and on these gifts of bread and wine.  
Bless this feast.  
Grace our table with your presence.

**C: Come, Holy Spirit.**

P: Reveal yourself to us in the breaking of the bread.  
Raise us up as the body of Christ for the world.  
Breathe new life into us.  
Send us forth,  
burning with justice, peace, and love.

**C: Come, Holy Spirit.**

P: With your holy ones of all times and places,  
with the earth and all its creatures,  
with sun and moon and stars,  
we praise you, O God,  
blessed and holy Trinity,  
now and forever.

**C: Amen.**

**\*Lord's Prayer**

P: Lord, 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.**

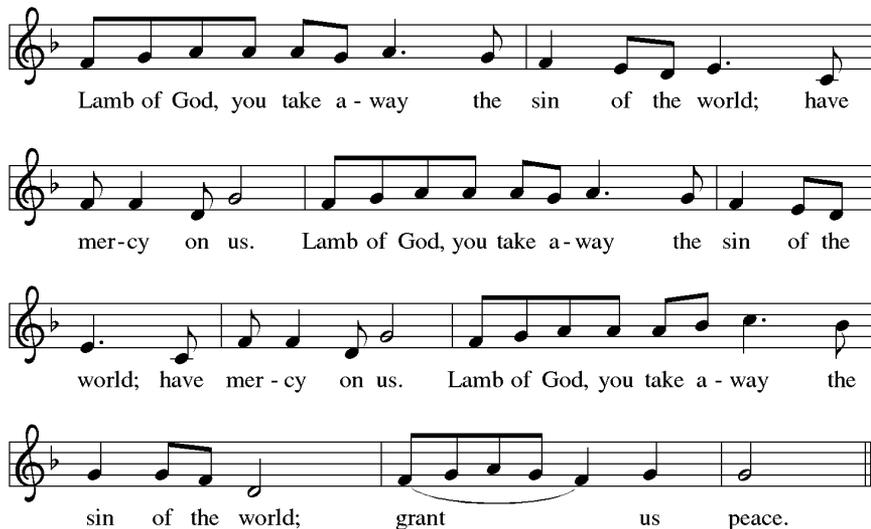
**For thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory,  
forever and ever. Amen.**

## \*Invitation to Communion

P: Come to the table.

Feast on God's goodness and mercy.

## Lamb of God



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

## Distribution of Communion

*Communion will be continuous. The ushers will invite you to come forward by the center aisle. You will be handed the bread with the words, "The Body of Christ given for you." You may respond with "Amen" or "Thanks be to God!". Step to the Communion Assistant and take the cup. They will speak the words, "The Blood of Christ shed for you." You may respond with "Amen" or "Thanks be to God!" Empty cups may be placed in the basket as you return to your seat by the side aisle.*

*If you prefer gluten-free bread, please let the Pastor know. If you prefer grape juice, please let the Communion Assistant know. If you prefer not to receive or have children who have not yet received, please let the Pastor know and he will offer a blessing.*

**(8:00) Praise Choir:**

*How Beautiful*

**Twila Paris**

**(10:30) Communion Hymn:**

**TBOB 236 *We Remember You* - (Sing twice)**

## \*Post 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**

P: God of our salvation,  
we give you thanks for this meal that restores our souls,  
reconciles us to you, and strengthens us for the journey.  
Through the body and blood of your Son,  
may we become Christ's body in the world,  
bearing witness to your love for all creation,  
through Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord.

C: Amen.

### **SENDING**

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

### **\*Blessing**

P: 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 you now and always.

C: Amen.

**\*Sending Song:**                      *You Are My All in All*                      **See Insert**

### **\*Dismissal**

P: Go in peace. Believe the good news.

C: Thanks be to God.

**\*Postlude:**                      *You Are My All in All*                      **Dennis Jernigan**

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**AS WE WORSHIP YOU, LORD**, unite us in heart and purpose. Let our songs rise as one voice, our prayers blend as one offering and our faith be strengthened through our fellowship. May our worship today draw us closer to you and to one another. Amen.

**ALTAR FLOWERS** are given today in honor of Lillian Harder's birthday. Love Dad, Mom and Mason.

### **The Chosen, Season 4**

Join us for Season 4 of the Chosen, in Faith Lutheran's **Lounge Wednesdays at 5 p.m.** during Lent.

Questions should be directed to Cheryl Paeth at 419-205-3659

### **HOLY WEEK AT FAITH**

*Please join us in worship as we journey from Palm Sunday to the cross and the grave.*

#### **Palm Sunday • March 29, 2026**

8:00 a.m. & 10:30 a.m.

The Passion & Celebration of Holy Communion

#### **Maundy Thursday • April 2, 2026 7:00 pm**

Worship with Celebration of Holy Communion

#### **Good Friday • April 3, 2026 7:00 pm**

Tenebrae Service

#### **Easter Celebration • April 5, 2026** **with Celebration of Holy Communion**

Sunrise Service at 7:00 a.m.

Easter Breakfast at 8:00 a.m.

Traditional Worship at 10:30 a.m.



**A COMMUNITY GOOD FRIDAY SERVICE** will be held April 3, 2026 from noon to 3 p.m. at Grace Lutheran Church, 705 W. State Street, Fremont with voices from many area churches joining in song. This service is designed for worshippers to come and go as their schedule allows.

**GOOD FRIDAY FISH FRY:** Come to Grace Lutheran Church, 705 W. State Street, Fremont on **Friday, April 3<sup>rd</sup>**, for a Lake Erie Yellow Perch dinner including Baked Potato, Cole Slaw, Roll, Dessert, and Beverage. Serving begins at 5 p.m. Dine-In or Carry-Out. **Advance Tickets only.** No Ticket Sales at the door. Cost is \$20 per person. Kid's Meal is \$5 (Hot Dog, Chips, Dessert). Purchase tickets at Grace Lutheran office located on Clover Street: Mon. -Thurs. 9-4 pm or Friday 9-1 pm. 419-332-1558. Event Sponsored by Fremont Floor Covering Outlet, LTD.



**FAITH'S MISSION AND OUTREACH PROJECT FOR ATKINSON SCHOOL TESTING WEEKS**



**LOCAL MISSIONS** We are continuing our partnership with Atkinson Elementary this year as the students in grades 3-5 approach state testing. The testing begins the last week in March and extends through the first week of May. The Faith Mission and Outreach Committee is again asking our congregation to help by purchasing snacks for the students during those testing weeks. During the school day, many students eat their lunches earlier in the day and then require a snack later in the afternoon. Mr. Ward, the principal, said that the teachers often provide a small snack for the students to eat. Some of the snacks may include **PRETZELS, LANCE PEANUT BUTTER CRACKERS, GOLDFISH CRACKERS, FRUIT SNACKS, CHEEZ IT CRACKERS, ANIMAL CRACKERS, and GRANOLA BARS.** These treats need to be in **single prepackaged units** for sanitary reasons.

A display will be set up in the narthex of our church showing the variety of items needed. A basket for monetary donations is also available if you would like us to do the shopping. Our committee is hoping to make its first delivery of items near the middle week of March. I hope you will prayerfully consider joining us in this endeavor to support the staff and students of Atkinson Elementary. Thank you.

In Christian Love, Randy J. Brown/ Project Coordinator

**CHICKEN & BISCUIT DINNER** – St. John’s Lutheran Church, 450 N. Rocky Ridge Rd., Oak Harbor is hosting the dinner on Sunday, April 12<sup>th</sup>, from 11:30 – 1:30 p.m. or until sold out. Cost is a Free Will Donation. You may dine-in or carry-out. Menu includes Chicken with gravy and Biscuit, Green Beans and Homemade Desserts. All proceeds will benefit The Light Neighborhood Pantry and Luther Home of Mercy, Williston. A Thrivent Action Team will help offset expenses. Help support our neighbors, and we’ll do the dishes.

**HEARTBEAT HOPE MEDICAL PREGNANCY RESOURCE CENTER 5K RUN/WALK FOR LIFE** - We would be honored to invite your church to join us for this year’s **5K / Walk for Life on May 9, 2026 at 9 am.** Day of registration opens at 8 a.m. To register online go to:

<https://secure.fundeasy.com/ministrysync/event/?e=31566>

For more information go to [www.friendsofheartbeat.org/events](http://www.friendsofheartbeat.org/events)

Every step taken and every person invited helps extend this life-saving work. Thank you for your heart for this mission and for considering how your church can be part of it. With appreciation, Micella Blymyer, Event Coordinator.

**LIGHT SUPPERS FOR LENT 2026:** Light suppers will be provided prior to the Lenten services on Wednesdays at 6:00 p.m., on February 25<sup>th</sup> through March 25<sup>th</sup>.

**THANK YOU** to the following groups that have volunteered to provide a meal before the Wednesday Lenten services in the Fellowship Hall!

March 25      Christian Worship Committee

Many hands make light work. **Please join us and consider bringing a dish to share!** A sign-up sheet to assist these groups with additional salads, sides, and desserts is posted on the bulletin board in the coat room area for anyone who wishes to share their culinary talents.

**Thank you for sharing with others your bountiful blessings from God!**

## PRAYING DAILY



Praying for...

**For healing and hope:** Joan Bolen, Mary Ann Diekman, Denny Fahle, Millie Fetterman, Pat Forsyth, Della Humbarger, Denny Krumnow, Laurie Krynock, Bill Leutenegger, Dean May, Stan Moyer, Nancy Mylander, Betty Nielsen, Gary Overmyer, Sharon Peña, Sandie Reed, Ken & Gloria Root, Bob Schneider, Janet Tressler, Minnie Weber, Linda Woessner. Mark Hausch, Al & Judi Krumnow, Jackie Mowry, Eric Paul, Laura Shields.

**For the Family of:** Adeline Bame

**For our Bishops:** Bishop Christian Ndossa, Bishop Yehiel Curry, and NWOS Bishop Daniel Beaudoin and Staff

**For our partner congregation in Bumila, Tanzania**

**And its pastor:** Pastor Peter Magasi

**PRAY FOR OUR**  
  
**MILITARY**

**For our Military:** Noah Egbert, Troy Halfhill, Jade Kayser, Daniel Linder, Tony Rozzi, Christopher Templeton, & Joshua Tooman.

**REMINDER...** *When Sandusky County is under a Level 3 Snow Advisory the church will be closed. This includes Sunday services as well as all weekday events, meetings and activities for that day. If we are under a level 1 or 2 snow emergency, the church will be open and if it's on a day of worship, we will have worship.*





## GOSPEL MESSAGE

March 22, 2026  
FIFTH SUNDAY IN LENT

### Roll the Stone Away

You can understand why they don't want to roll the stone away. "Already there is a stench," Martha says (John 11:39). Why open the grave? Why let out that smell? There could be no purpose. After all, Lazarus is dead.

This is not unbelief. "I believe that you are the Messiah," Martha says (v. 27), confident that her brother would one day rise again. But it is a faith that desperately wants God to provide an escape from suffering and struggle: "If you had been here," both sisters say, "my brother would not have died" (vv. 21, 32). The presence of Jesus, they think, should protect them from pain and death.

What they don't understand, though, is that the places of pain and suffering are exactly where Jesus goes. He enters dead places to bring hope to life. He transforms the stench of decay into an aroma of thriving. He summons Lazarus out of the tomb to walk into freedom.

This is why Jesus tells them to take away the stone. He wants to open the place that they are convinced holds only grief, and to expose what they believe to be a shameful smell. Yes, it is difficult to face. However, only when the grave is opened can Lazarus respond to Jesus' call. Martha and Mary must remove the stone that hides what they do not want to bear, so that new life can emerge from the tomb.

What are the stone-covered places in your life? What are the places in your heart that you are convinced hold only pain, decay, and fear? In the tender love of Jesus, you do not need to hide them. Jesus is calling you to open them. He will enter these places with resurrection power, transforming death into life and shame into glory. Facing these tombs takes courage. But you can trust that Jesus will bring healing to your brokenness. He is in the business of calling the dead back to life. Let the stones be rolled away.