

Service of Holy Communion

3rd Sunday of Lent

March 8th, 2026



INTRODUCTION

In today's gospel the Samaritan woman asks Jesus for water, an image of our thirst for God. Jesus offers living water, a sign of God's grace flowing from the waters of baptism. The early church used this gospel and those of the next two Sundays to deepen baptismal reflection during the final days of preparation before baptism at Easter. As we journey to the resurrection feast, Christ comes among us in word, bath, and meal—offering us the life-giving water of God's mercy and forgiveness.

GATHERING

CONFESSION AND FORGIVENESS

The congregation stands. All may make the sign of the cross, the sign that is marked at baptism, as the presiding minister begins.

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

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

The congregation sits or kneels. Silence is kept for reflection.

Gracious God,

have mercy on us according to your steadfast love.

For seeking worldly delights that deceive us and dishonor you: Gracious God,
have mercy on us according to your steadfast love.

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

have mercy on us according to your steadfast love.

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

have mercy on us according to your steadfast love.

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

have mercy on us according to your steadfast love.

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

have mercy on us according to your steadfast love.

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

have mercy on us according to your steadfast love.

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. **Amen.**

Congregation stands

GATHERING HYMN Come, Bring Your Burdens to God *sing 4x through
printed in back of bulletin*

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

A. Hold us in your mercy.

C. Hold us in your mercy.

A. Open our hearts.

C. Open our hearts.

A. Hold us in your love.

C. Hold us in your love. Amen.

PRAYER OF THE DAY

P. Merciful God, the fountain of living water, you quench our thirst and wash away our sin. Give us this water always. Bring us to drink from the well that flows with the beauty of your truth through Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever.

Amen.

Congregation is seated

WORD

PSALM: Psalm 95 (*read responsively*)

¹ Come, let us sing to the LORD;

let us shout for joy to the rock of our salvation.

² **Let us come before God's presence with thanksgiving
and raise a loud shout to the LORD with psalms.**

³ For you, LORD, are a great God,
and a great ruler above all gods.

⁴ **In your hand are the caverns of the earth;
the heights of the hills are also yours.**

⁵ The sea is yours, for you made it,
and your hands have molded the dry land.

⁶ **Come, let us worship and bow down,
let us kneel before the LORD our maker.**

⁷ For the LORD is our God, and we are the people of God's pasture and the sheep of God's hand.

Oh, that today you would hear God's voice!

⁸ **"Harden not your hearts,
as at Meribah, as on that day at Massah in the desert.**

⁹ There your ancestors tested me,
they put me to the test, though they had seen my works.

¹⁰ **Forty years I loathed that generation, saying,
'The heart of this people goes astray; they do not know my ways.'**

¹¹ Indeed I swore in my anger,
'They shall never come to my rest.' "

SECOND READING: Romans 5:1-11

¹ Since we are justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ, ² through whom we have obtained access to this grace in which we stand, and we boast in our hope of sharing the glory of God. ³ And not only that, but we also boast in our afflictions, knowing that affliction produces endurance, ⁴ and endurance produces character, and character produces hope, ⁵ and hope does not put us to shame, because God's love has been poured into our hearts through the Holy Spirit that has been given to us.

⁶ For while we were still weak, at the right time Christ died for the ungodly. ⁷ Indeed, rarely will anyone die for a righteous person—though perhaps for a good person someone might actually dare to die. ⁸ But God proves his love for us in that while we still were sinners Christ died for us. ⁹ Much more surely, therefore, since we have now been justified by his blood, will we be saved through him from the wrath of God. ¹⁰ For if while we were enemies we were reconciled to God through the death of his Son, much more surely, having

been reconciled, will we be saved by his life. ¹¹ But more than that, we even boast in God through our Lord Jesus Christ, through whom we have now received reconciliation.

A. Word of God, word of life.

C. Thanks be to God.

TIME FOR THE CHILD IN US ALL

Children & Youth are invited forward for a special sermon time with Pastor Peggy.

Congregation stands

GOSPEL ACCLAMATION



Re - turn to the Lord, your God, for he is gra - cious and mer - ci - ful,



slow to an - ger, and a - bound - ing in stead - fast love.

GOSPEL: John 4:5-42

P. The holy gospel according to John. C. **Glory to you, O Lord.**

⁵ [Jesus] came to a Samaritan city called Sychar, near the plot of ground that Jacob had given to his son Joseph. ⁶ Jacob's well was there, and Jesus, tired out by his journey, was sitting by the well. It was about noon.

⁷ A Samaritan woman came to draw water, and Jesus said to her, "Give me a drink." ⁸ (His disciples had gone to the city to buy food.) ⁹ The Samaritan woman said to him, "How is it that you, a Jew, ask a drink of me, a woman of Samaria?" (Jews do not share things in common with Samaritans.) ¹⁰ Jesus answered her, "If you knew the gift of God and who it is that is saying to you, 'Give me a drink,' you would have asked him, and he would have given you living water." ¹¹ The woman said to him, "Sir, you have no bucket, and the well is deep. Where do you get that living water?" ¹² Are you greater than our ancestor Jacob, who gave us the well and with his sons and his flocks drank from it?" ¹³ Jesus said to her, "Everyone who drinks of this water will be thirsty again, ¹⁴ but those who drink of the water that I will give them will never be thirsty. The water that I will give will become in them a spring of water gushing up to eternal life." ¹⁵ The woman said to him, "Sir, give me this water, so that I may never be thirsty or have to keep coming here to draw water."

¹⁶ Jesus said to her, "Go, call your husband, and come back." ¹⁷ The woman

answered him, "I have no husband." Jesus said to her, "You are right in saying, 'I have no husband,'¹⁸ for you have had five husbands, and the one you have now is not your husband. What you have said is true!"¹⁹ The woman said to him, "Sir, I see that you are a prophet."²⁰ Our ancestors worshiped on this mountain, but you say that the place where people must worship is in Jerusalem."²¹ Jesus said to her, "Woman, believe me, the hour is coming when you will worship the Father neither on this mountain nor in Jerusalem."²² You worship what you do not know; we worship what we know, for salvation is from the Jews."²³ But the hour is coming and is now here when the true worshipers will worship the Father in spirit and truth, for the Father seeks such as these to worship him."²⁴ God is spirit, and those who worship him must worship in spirit and truth."²⁵ The woman said to him, "I know that Messiah is coming" (who is called Christ). "When he comes, he will proclaim all things to us."²⁶ Jesus said to her, "I am he, the one who is speaking to you."

²⁷ Just then his disciples came. They were astonished that he was speaking with a woman, but no one said, "What do you want?" or, "Why are you speaking with her?"²⁸ Then the woman left her water jar and went back to the city. She said to the people,²⁹ "Come and see a man who told me everything I have ever done! He cannot be the Messiah, can he?"³⁰ They left the city and were on their way to him.

³¹ Meanwhile the disciples were urging him, "Rabbi, eat something."³² But he said to them, "I have food to eat that you do not know about."³³ So the disciples said to one another, "Surely no one has brought him something to eat?"³⁴ Jesus said to them, "My food is to do the will of him who sent me and to complete his work."³⁵ Do you not say, 'Four months more, then comes the harvest'? But I tell you, look around you, and see how the fields are ripe for harvesting."³⁶ The reaper is already receiving wages and is gathering fruit for eternal life, so that sower and reaper may rejoice together."³⁷ For here the saying holds true, 'One sows and another reaps.'³⁸ I sent you to reap that for which you did not labor. Others have labored, and you have entered into their labor."

³⁹ Many Samaritans from that city believed in him because of the woman's testimony, "He told me everything I have ever done."⁴⁰ So when the Samaritans came to him, they asked him to stay with them, and he stayed there two days."⁴¹ And many more believed because of his word."⁴² They said to the woman, "It is no longer because of what you said that we believe, for we have heard for ourselves, and we know that this is truly the Savior of the world."

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

Congregation is seated

SERMON

Invitation

PRAYER STATIONS

There are 5 prayer stations throughout the sanctuary that you can move to during this time. The 6th option is to stay seated while meditating, praying, and listening to the background music. The prayer stations are the same each week, with the exception of the poem changing weekly. The intention is that you take in 1 or 2 stations each week, visiting each station at least once by the end of Lent. We will spend about 5 minutes at the prayer stations before entering into the Hymn of the Day.

Congregation stands

HYMN OF THE DAY

Guide Me Ever Great Redeemer

ELW 618

APOSTLE'S 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 THE CHURCH

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

A brief silence.

A. O God, when suffering arises, preserve your church. Give to pastors, deacons, bishops, and all servants of your gospel the endurance that produces character and the hope that will never disappoint. Hear us, O God. **Your mercy is great.**

A. When the waters run dry, sustain this earth. Send water to places languishing with drought and bring relief to places damaged by floods. Hear us, O God. **Your mercy is great.**

A. When quarrels ensue, soften our hearts. Quell hostilities between nations and peoples, and reconcile all humans across the lines of race, class, age, nationality, moral conviction, religion, and all else that divides or oppresses. Hear us, O God. **Your mercy is great.**

A. When your people thirst, satisfy their needs. Send water and food to all who need nourishment. Grant welcome to all who are excluded. Show your mercy to any in need, especially we pray for...those we now say aloud...and those we hold in our hearts. Hear us, O God. **Your mercy is great.**

A. When we gather to worship, send us your Spirit. Renew our hearts through the joyful noise we make and bless the work of our church musicians and musical ensembles. Hear us, O God. **Your mercy is great.**

A. O God, when death draws near, we rejoice in the promise of life with you. We remember all who have entered eternal rest, and we pray that you bring us the hope of sharing in your glory. Hear us, O God. **Your mercy is great.**

P. Receive our prayers, O God, through Jesus Christ, our strength and salvation. **Amen.**

SHARING OF THE PEACE

P. The Peace of Christ be with you always.

C. And also with you.

P. Let us share with each other a sign of Christ's peace.

Congregation is seated

CHOIR ANTHEM

Amazing Love

Bob Burroughs

MEAL

OFFERTORY INVITATION

Scan to give
via Venmo ↓



Offering can be given by putting it in the offering plate when it is passed, online directly via the QR codes for Tithely or Venmo, or by requesting your bank to send a check to the church. Find more details on our website.

Scan to give
via Tithely ↓



Thank you for your generous gifts!

Congregation stands

OFFERTORY SONG

Just as I am; thy love un-known has bro - ken ev - 'ry
bar - rier down; now to be thine, yea, thine a - lone,
O Lamb of God, I come, I come.

OFFERTORY PRAYER

A. Let us pray... 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. **Amen.**

DIALOGUE & PREFACE OF 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; who on this day overcame death and the grave, and by his glorious resurrection opened to us the way of everlasting life. And so, with all the choirs of angels, with the church on earth and the hosts of heaven, we praise your name and join their unending hymn:

Ho - ly, ho - ly, ho - ly Lord, God of
pow-er and might, heav-en and earth are full of your glo - ry. Ho -
san - na in the high-est. Blessed is he who comes in the
name of the Lord. Ho - san - na in the high - est.

The congregation sits or kneels.

THANKSGIVING AT THE TABLE

P. Holy God, our living Water and our merciful Guide, together with rivers and seas, wells and springs, we bless and magnify you. You led your people Israel through the desert, and provided them water from the rock.

We praise you for Christ, our Rock and our Water, who joins us in our desert, pouring out his life for the world.

In the night in which he was betrayed, our Lord Jesus took bread, 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 life, death, and resurrection, we await your salvation for all this thirsty world.

Pour out your Spirit on this holy food and on all gathered for this feast: wash away our sin, that we may be renewed for our journey by the love of Christ.

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

LORD'S PRAYER

Our Father, who art in heaven, hallowed be thy name, thy kingdom come, thy will be done, on earth as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread; and forgive us our trespasses, as we forgive those who trespass against us; and lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil. For thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, forever and ever. Amen.

INVITATION TO COMMUNION

Believing in the real presence of Christ, we practice Eucharistic hospitality. All baptized persons are welcome to Communion this morning. Children may come forward for a blessing.

Please come forward, guided by the Ushers, to receive the bread and wine. Gluten free wafers are available, please note this to Pastor Peggy when you come forward. Grape juice is available in the second communion plate. As you return to your seat via the side aisles you can place your empty cup in the baskets on either side.

P. Come to the table. Feast on God's goodness and mercy.

COMMUNION SONG

sing 2X through

Take, oh, take me as I am; sum-mon out what I shall be;

set your seal up - on my heart and live in me.

DISTRIBUTION OF COMMUNION

After all have received Communion the congregation stands.

TABLE BLESSING

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

SONG AFTER COMMUNION

"Go, my chil - dren, with my bless - ing, nev - er a - lone.

Wak - ing, sleep - ing, I am with you, you are my own.

In my love's bap-tis - mal riv - er I have made you mine for - ev - er.

Go, my chil - dren, with my bless - ing, you are my own."

PRAYER AFTER COMMUNION

A. Let us pray... God of our salvation, we give you thanks for this meal that restores our souls, reconciles us to you, and strengthen 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. **Amen.**

SENDING

BENEDICTION

P. Receive the blessings 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. **Amen.**

SENDING HYMN

Rock of Ages

ELW 623

DISMISSAL

A. Go in peace. Believe the good news. **C. Thanks be to God**

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Announcements for March 8th, 2026

Welcome to Holy Counselor Lutheran Church. May you experience the joy of God's presence in our worship!

If today is your **first time** worshipping at Holy Counselor, please be sure to fill out the "Guest Book" on the table in the narthex and **take a welcome bag**. Please ask our ushers any questions you may have regarding worship this morning. **Large print bulletins are available.**

The **Pray-ground** is a special place to help **support kids and families** in worshipping. We love the sound of kids in worship! God made kids wiggly and curious, and we celebrate that here. **Tips:** explain, participate, and move around together. Need to leave? No problem, but please come back!

Worship is live streamed to our church Facebook page, but the camera is pointed away during Communion and is not on the children when they come forward during A Time for the Child in Us All. **Anyone on the altar is on camera.**

Volunteers for Today's Worship

- Lay Asst. Pam Kucks
- Ushers *Volunteer needed*
- Comm. Asst. *Volunteer needed*
- Tech *Volunteer needed*
- Tellers *Volunteer needed*
- Refreshments *Volunteer needed*

******* Join us for refreshments after worship*******



HOLY WEEK SCHEDULE

- Palm Sunday** Worship, March 29th, 9:30am
- Easter Egg Hunt**, Palm Sunday, March 29th, 11:30am
- Maundy Thursday** Worship, Thursday, April 2nd, 7pm
- Good Friday** Tenebrae Worship, Friday, April 3rd, 7pm
- Easter** Worship, Sunday, April 5th, 9:30am



THIS WEEK AT HOLY COUNSELOR

- Sunday, March 8:** Sunday School, 8:45-9:15am
Worship w/Communion, 3rd Sunday of Lent, 9:30am
Choir Practice following worship
- Tuesday, March 10:** Pastor's Com. Office Hours, Café Dolci, Warwick, 12-2pm
Lent & Lament, 7-8pm
- Wednesday, March 11:** Adult Ed Lenten Bible Study, Zoom, 10am & 7pm
- Saturday, March 14:** Sisters in Prayer, Zoom, 8:30am
- Sunday, March 15:** Sunday School, 8:45-9:15am
Worship w/Communion, 4th Sunday of Lent, 9:30am
Corned Beef & Cabbage to Go meal pickup
Choir Practice following worship

Pajama Sunday: Pajama Sunday is TODAY Sunday, March 8th! Donate \$5 per person or \$20 for the whole family to support Lutheran Disaster Response if you're wearing your pjs!

Lighten Your Load: Lent & Lament: Pastor Peggy will be offering a Lenten evening of releasing our laments and receiving hope through the remembrance of our baptism. Join her in the Sunday School classroom **THIS Tuesday, March 10th from 7-8pm**. Soup dinner will be provided.

Pastor's Community Office Hours-March: Pastor Peggy will be at **Café Dolci in Warwick on Tuesday, March 10th, 17th, and 24th from 12-2pm** for Community Office Hours. All are welcome to visit as she is present in the community.

Corned Beef and Cabbage Meals to Go: Following worship **NEXT Sunday, March 15th** we will have **Corned Beef and Cabbage meals to go**. Please call the office or **sign up** on the sheet with **how many meals** you would like so that we can plan accordingly. **Free will donations**, suggested donation of \$15-20! Lots of love goes into the preparation, so you can always give more.

Easter Flowers: You can order **beautiful Easter Lilies, Daffodils, Tulips, or Hyacinths** to adorn the sanctuary on Easter morning and then take them home to enjoy! **Easter flower orders are due to the office by NEXT Sunday, March 15th**. Please use the half sheet flyer to order and note your payment option.

Loaves & Fishes: Loaves and Fishes (our young adults and young families group) will gather for **game night** at church on **Friday, March 20th from 5-6:30pm**. Dinner will be provided! **Let Pastor Peggy know if you plan to come** so we have enough food. Come join the fun and **bring your favorite game** to share!

Easter Egg Hunt & Donations: We are excited for our annual Easter Egg Hunt on Sunday, March 29th at 11:30am! We are looking for **donations of individually wrapped candy and non-candy prizes**. **Please bring all donations to church by Sunday, March 22nd** and put them under the narrow table in the Narthex. Speak to Diane Rossi with questions.

Vacation Bible School—Coordinator Needed: **We are looking for a leader to be the VBS Coordinator this summer**. Pastor Peggy will help with planning, organizing, and running VBS, but we need a point person. **If you are available during the daytime in the summer and love having fun with kids this is for you!** Please contact Pastor Peggy ASAP as planning needs to begin.

Food Pantry: Food items to help restock: boxed cereal, boxed oatmeal pouches, scanned stew, canned chili, canned corn, children's juice boxes or pouches, 4-pack toilet paper, liquid dish soap, & toothpaste. You can always bring donations of canned goods, paper goods, and hygiene products. All donations can be **placed in the blue bin** by the sanctuary doors. Thank you!

Come, Bring Your Burdens

Wo - za nom - thwa - lo wa - kho; wo - za nom -
Come, bring your bur - dens to God; come, bring your

thwa - lo wa - kho; wo - za nom - thwa - lo wa - kho, U -
bur - dens to God; come, bring your bur - dens to God, for

ye - s'a - ka - so - za - thi hayi.
Je - sus will nev - er say no.

Text: South African; English text Barbara Clark, Mairi Munro, and Martine Stemerick

Music: WOZA NOMTHWALO WAKHO, South African melody; arr. Welile Sigabi

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Holy Counselor
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MISSION STATEMENT

*As Children of God,
we are called to share and serve
Christ's love and bring God's word to all.*

CHURCH COUNCIL

Pastor Rev. Peggy Ludlow
President Nancy Knecht
Vice President Frank Urbaniak
Treasurer Claire Speroni
Recording Secretary Dawn McCormick
Financial Secretary John Heeren
Outreach Coordinator Francine Vince
Nurture Coordinator Fred Schoenagel
Administration Coordinator Diane Rossi

PASTORAL RELATIONS COMMITTEE

Kristina Heeren
Pam Kucks
Matt Moller
Aileen Donovan

Holy Counselor is located on the original and ancestral homelands of the Munsee people, and we give thanks for their presence here since time immemorial. We also wish to recognize and honor our Indigenous siblings who have and continue to call this land their home.

