



*The Congregations of
First English Lutheran Church
And Zion Lutheran Parish
Welcome You to Worship
Pastor Cheryl Rondeau-Bassett ~ 605-237-1501*

Journey to the Cross

Lent Week 4 ~ March 18, 2026 ~ 6:00 pm

(congregation reads what is written in bold)

Welcome and Announcements

During this season of Lent, we have been reflecting on Christ's journey to the cross as we step away from the noise and busy-ness of our everyday life.

As Jesus traveled, he encountered many who were in need of healing, whether broken in mind, body or spirit. His teachings transformed many hearts of these new followers as they learn how God cares for all His beloved children, for all are welcome.

Just as Jesus went out of His way to find the lost, like the women at the well last week, He gathered with the poor and wealthy, men and woman, Jew and Gentile, those of low status, servants, and the powerful, inviting them to hear His word of promise and life.

As we worship tonight, you are encouraged to let go of the fear sin causes and the desire to focus on doing right in the eyes of others. Be transformed in humble repentance, to sit at the feet of Jesus, healed of spiritual blindness, and trust in the saving grace of God.

Now, let our eyes be opened to know the one who is the resurrection and life and move from a distracted heart, to a faithful trusting witness for Christ as we continue our journey to the cross.

Let us stand for the call to worship

Call to Worship

Day by day, God leads us:

to the deep, deep pools of peace, to the green, lush lawns of grace.

Day by day, Jesus calls us:

to pour out ourselves in service, to anoint the stranger with hope.

Day by day, the Holy Spirit shows us:
the community we could be, the family we are called to become.

Gathering Song

“Awake, O Sleeper”

WOV 745

Greeting

The love of God poured into our hearts, the saving grace of Jesus Christ, and the abundant life of the Holy Spirit be with you all.

C: And also with you.

Opening Prayer

Let us pray.

God of justice, peace and righteousness come into our midst this evening
Breathe your breath, your Spirit of prophecy, your energy, your
enlivening, your imagination on us. Wake us up. Open our eyes. Unplug
our ears. That we might hear. That we might see. That we might grieve.
That we might dream. That we might follow the ways of your
extraordinary kingdom.

C: Amen.

Scripture Reading

First Reading: Ephesians 5:8-14

Because we now live in the divine light which is Jesus Christ, we conduct our lives in ways that reflect the light of Christ, so that our activity is truly pleasing to God.

⁸ Once you were darkness, but now in the Lord you are light. Walk as children of light, ⁹ for the fruit of the light is found in all that is good and right and true. ¹⁰ Try to find out what is pleasing to the Lord. ¹¹ Take no part in the unfruitful works of darkness; rather, expose them. ¹² For it is shameful even to mention what such people do secretly, ¹³ but everything exposed by the light becomes visible, ¹⁴ for everything that becomes visible is light. Therefore it says,

“Sleeper, awake!

Rise from the dead,
and Christ will shine on you.”

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

Responsive Reading: Psalm 23

¹ The Lord is my shepherd;
I shall not be in want.

² **The Lord makes me lie down in green pastures
and leads me beside still waters.**

³ You restore my soul, O Lord,
and guide me along right pathways for your name's sake.

⁴ **Though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I
shall fear no evil;
for you are with me; your rod and your staff, they comfort me.**

⁵ You prepare a table before me in the presence of my enemies;
you anoint my head with oil, and my cup is running over.

⁶ **Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me all the days of my
life,
and I will dwell in the house of the Lord forever.**

Holy Gospel Reading: John 9: 1-12 & 35-41

Jesus heals a man born blind, provoking a hostile reaction that he regards as spiritual blindness to the things of God.

C: Glory to you oh Lord

Gospel Reading: John 9: 1-12 & 35-41

¹ As [Jesus] walked along, he saw a man blind from birth. ² His disciples asked him, "Rabbi, who sinned, this man or his parents, that he was born blind?" ³ Jesus answered, "Neither this man nor his parents sinned; he was born blind so that God's works might be revealed in him. ⁴ We must work the works of him who sent me while it is day; night is coming, when no one can work. ⁵ As long as I am in the world, I am the light of the world." ⁶ When he had said this, he spat on the ground and made mud with the saliva and spread the mud on the man's eyes, ⁷ saying to him, "Go, wash in the pool of Siloam" (which means Sent). Then he went and washed and came back able to see. ⁸ The neighbors and those who had seen him before as a beggar began to ask, "Is this not the man who used to sit and beg?" ⁹ Some were saying, "It is he." Others were saying, "No,

but it is someone like him.” He kept saying, “I am he.” ¹⁰ But they kept asking him, “Then how were your eyes opened?” ¹¹ He answered, “The man called Jesus made mud, spread it on my eyes, and said to me, ‘Go to Siloam and wash.’ Then I went and washed and received my sight.” ¹² They said to him, “Where is he?” He said, “I do not know.”

³⁵ Jesus heard that they had driven him out, and when he found him he said, “Do you believe in the Son of Man?” ³⁶ He answered, “And who is he, sir? Tell me, so that I may believe in him.” ³⁷ Jesus said to him, “You have seen him, and the one speaking with you is he.” ³⁸ He said, “Lord, I believe.” And he worshiped him. ³⁹ Jesus said, “I came into this world for judgment, so that those who do not see may see and those who do see may become blind.” ⁴⁰ Some of the Pharisees who were with him heard this and said to him, “Surely we are not blind, are we?” ⁴¹ Jesus said to them, “If you were blind, you would not have sin. But now that you say, ‘We see,’ your sin remains.”

The Gospel of the Lord

C: Praise be to you, O Christ.

Holy Conversations – Lent 4

Instructions

In our Holy Conversation tonight we meet a man born blind from birth, a beggar who is healed of his blindness as he received the gift of spiritual sight and two sisters, Martha and Mary, who host Jesus in their home, responding in different ways. We learn that we can serve God in different ways, but our priority is to hear the word to which we respond in witness and service to the Savior.

Following each conversation, there will be questions to humbly reflect on their obedience to God’s will for our Lenten journey

Conversation by Martha and Mary

Engage with questions:

Conversation by the Man born Blind

Engage with questions:

Time of Meditation

We will now have our offering

Offering Prayer for Lent

God of the wilderness,

We give these offerings in gratitude,

C: rejoicing in the abundance of your gifts to us.

We give these offerings in faith,

C: trusting that you will provide for our needs.

We give these offerings in hope,

C: knowing you can use them to spread your love in this world.

And with these offerings, we give ourselves;

C: May we live with generous hearts, with open hands. Amen

Song of Response “Healer of Our Every Ill” WOV 738 (1-2, 4)

Prayers for Others

Heavenly Father, We come before You with humble hearts, remembering how Your Son brought light to the eyes of the man born blind. Just as You opened his physical eyes, open the eyes of our hearts to see Your truth clearly.

A brief silence.

O God of Light ... we pray for those who walk in darkness For the opening of the eyes and hearts of the people of faith during our Lenten walk with the One who is the Light of the world. For our individual response to Jesus’ question, “Do you believe in the Son of Man”... Let us pray to the Lord.

Lord, have mercy

O God of the Downtrodden... we pray for those who have too long been judged by their pasts. For those who have never seen the goodness of others. For those who have been marginalized and overlooked along the dusty roads of their lives. For those who have been belittled by their

differences of abilities. For those who find themselves begging for light in their darkness

Let us pray to the Lord.

Lord, have mercy

O God of Mercy... For those who are blind to the witness of others. For those who think God's healing is only for them. And yes, even for those who seek to discredit the Son of Man. Help us to be like the healed man—bold in our testimony, steadfast in our trust, and unashamed to proclaim what You have done for us. Give us compassion for those who question or oppose us, remembering that once we too were blind, but now we see through Your mercy.

Let us pray to the Lord

Lord, have mercy

O God of the Church ... For those in leadership who are praying for sight, direction and guidance for the good of the Church. For their decision-making through you. For those who live in darkness, unable to share the gifts of the Spirit you have blessed them with. For congregations and pastors to grow together for one great and holy purpose ...

Let us pray to the Lord.

Lord, have mercy

O Listening God ... we pray for those who suffer, whether through pain, doubt, or misunderstanding. Shine Your light into their lives, so they may know Your love and grace. Remove the blindness of pride, fear, and unbelief, and replace it with faith, humility, and joy. For those prayers which we do not know how to speak, and the prayers we make in the silence of our hearts ...

Let us pray to the Lord.

Lord, have mercy.

O God of our Calling ... For the desire within us to become the hands of Christ. For our willingness to muddy our hands and touch the blindness of others. For the courage and strength to stand in the face of scoffers and point to your Light in this world

May our lives reflect Your light in every word and action, so that others may be drawn to You, the true Light of the world.

In Jesus' name we pray, **Amen.**

Let us pray as Jesus has taught us...

Lord's Prayer

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.

Blessing

Go now, and embrace the hope to which God has called us. Recognize Christ in friend and stranger, and as Christ has been gracious to you, so be gracious to those in need and may God lead you to places of rest and renewal; may Christ Jesus give your life in abundance; and may the Holy Spirit fill your hearts with gladness and generosity, both now and forevermore.

C: Amen.

Sending Song: "O God of Mercy, god of Light" LBW 425 (vs 1, 3-4)

Dismissal

Go in peace, and journey with Christ

C: We Will. Thanks be to God.