

ST. MICHAEL'S

LUTHERAN CHURCH

Our mission is to celebrate and share God's love in Jesus Christ

²⁵ "Now his elder son was in the field, and as he came and approached the house, he heard music and dancing. 26 He called one of the slaves and asked what was going on. ²⁷ He replied, 'Your brother has come, and your father has killed the fatted calf because he has got him back safe and sound.' 28 Then he became angry and refused to go in. His father came out and began to plead with him.²⁹ But he answered his father, 'Listen! For all these years I have been working like a slave for you,



and I have never disobeyed your command, yet you have never given me even a young goat so that I might celebrate with my friends. 30 But when this son of vours came back. who has devoured your assets with prostitutes, vou killed the fatted calf for him!' 31 Then the father said to him, 'Son, you are always with me, and all that is mine is yours. 32 But we had to celebrate and rejoice, because this brother of yours was dead and has come to life: he was lost and has been found."

Fourth Sunday of Lent

March 30, 2025 at 8:15 &11:00 AM

ELW Setting 4

WELCOME TO ST. MICHAEL'S!

If you are visiting with us for the first time, please share in all that is ours in Christ! We invite you to consider making St. Michael's your church home. Please ask us about our participation in God's mission in the world. By God's grace we celebrate and share Christ. Our worship service at 11:00 is streamed live to St. Michael's Facebook and YouTube pages. Please keep conversation to a minimum in the sanctuary, you may be picked up by our sound system. If you prefer not to be seen on camera please speak to an usher and they will seat you outside of the video frame. Thank you for your understanding.

DIGITAL SIGN IN

You are welcome to sign in to worship digitally. Please use the QR Code that can be found here in the bulletin or the iPad located in the narthex.



Ministers: The People of St. Michael's
The Reverend Christopher Bruesehoff, Pastor (pastor@stmlutheran.org)
Mark P. Dishong, Director of Music (markdishong@gmail.com)
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ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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INTRODUCTION

The psalm sets the tone this day: "Happy are they whose transgressions are forgiven, and whose sin is put away!" Happy are those who have "become the righteousness of God" in the merits of Christ Jesus. Happy are those for whom the forgiveness of God has "rolled away... the disgrace" of former times. Happy is the father at the return of his prodigal son. Happy are we that our sins are forgiven for Jesus' sake. Rejoice!

WELCOME & ANNOUNCEMENTS

PRELUDE

"Voluntary No. 1"—Paul F. Page

GATHERING

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

The assembly is invited to stand. All may make the sign of the cross, the sign that is marked at baptism, as the presiding minister begins.

CONFESSION AND FORGIVENESS

Blessed be the holy Trinity, \pm one God, who forgives 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 \oplus Christ your sins are forgiven. You have a place in God's house forever. **Amen.**

- 1 Come, thou Fount of ev'ry blessing, tune my heart to sing thy grace; streams of mercy, never ceasing, call for songs of loudest praise. While the hope of endless glory fills my heart with joy and love, teach me ever to adore thee; may I still thy goodness prove.
- 2 Here I raise my Ebenezer: "Hither by thy help I've come"; and I hope, by thy good pleasure, safely to arrive at home.

- Jesus sought me when a stranger, wand'ring from the fold of God; he, to rescue me from danger, interposed his precious blood.
- Oh, to grace how great a debtor daily I'm constrained to be; let that grace now like a fetter bind my wand'ring heart to thee. Prone to wander, Lord, I feel it; prone to leave the God I love. Here's my heart, oh, take and seal it; seal it for thy courts above.

Text: Robert Robinson, 1735-1790, alt.. OneLicense.net #A-711336

GREETING

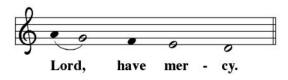
The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, the love of God, and the communion of the Holy Spirit be with you all.

And also with you.

KYRIE



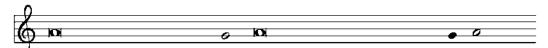
In peace, let us pray to the Lord.



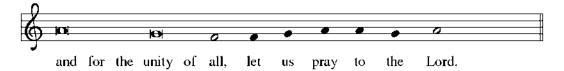


For the peace from a-bove, and for our sal-vation, let us pray to the Lord.

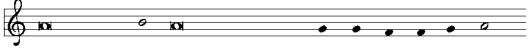




For the peace of the whole world, for the well-being of the church of God,

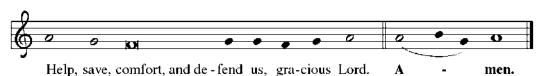






For this holy house, and for all who offer here their wor-ship and praise,





PRAYER OF THE DAY

God of compassion, you welcome the wayward, and you embrace us all with your mercy. By our baptism clothe us with garments of your grace, and feed us at the table of your

love, through Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever.

Amen.

The assembly is seated.

WORD

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

FIRST READING Joshua 5:9-12

By celebrating the Passover and eating the produce of the promised land instead of the miraculous manna that had sustained them in the desert, the Israelites symbolically bring their forty years of wilderness wandering to an end at Gilgal.

A reading from Joshua.

⁹ The Lord said to Joshua, "Today I have rolled away from you the disgrace of Egypt." And so that place is called Gilgal to this day.

¹⁰ While the Israelites were camped in Gilgal, they kept the Passover in the evening on the fourteenth day of the month in the plains of Jericho. ¹¹ On the day after the Passover, on that very day, they ate the produce of the land, unleavened cakes and roasted grain. ¹² The manna ceased on the day they ate the produce of the land, and the Israelites no longer had manna; they ate the crops of the land of Canaan that year.

The word of the Lord. Thanks be to God.

SECOND READING 2 Corinthians 5:16-21

One way to describe the gospel is the promise that in Christ everything is transformed into newness. All mistakes, all deliberate sins, all old history is reconciled with Christ's resurrection. This is Paul's strong message to the congregation in the city of Corinth.

A reading from Second Corinthians.

¹⁶ From now on, therefore, we regard no one from a human point of view; even though we once knew Christ from a human point of view, we no longer know him in that way. ¹⁷ So if anyone is in Christ, there is a new creation: everything old has passed away; look, new things have come into being! ¹⁸ All this is from God, who reconciled us to himself through Christ and has given us the ministry of reconciliation; ¹⁹ that is, in Christ God was

reconciling the world to himself, not counting their trespasses against them, and entrusting the message of reconciliation to us. ²⁰ So we are ambassadors for Christ, since God is making his appeal through us; we entreat you on behalf of Christ: be reconciled to God. ²¹ For our sake God made the one who knew no sin to be sin, so that in him we might become the righteousness of God.

The word of the Lord. Thanks be to God.

The assembly is invited to stand.

GOSPEL ACCLAMATION





GOSPEL: Luke 15:1-3, 11b-32

Jesus tells a parable about a son who ponders his father's love only after he has spurned it. The grace he receives is beyond his hopes. That same grace is a crisis for an older brother who believes it is his obedience that has earned his place in the father's home.

The Holy Gospel according to Luke.

Glory to you, O Lord.

¹ Now all the tax collectors and sinners were coming near to listen to [Jesus.] ² And the Pharisees and the scribes were grumbling and saying, "This fellow welcomes sinners and eats with them."

³ So he told them this parable: ^{11b} "There was a man who had two sons. ¹² The younger of them said to his father, 'Father, give me the share of the wealth that will belong to me.' So he divided his assets between them. ¹³ A few days later the younger son gathered all he had and traveled to a distant region, and there he squandered his wealth in dissolute living. ¹⁴ When he had spent everything, a severe famine took place throughout that region, and he began to be in need. ¹⁵ So he went and hired himself out to one of the citizens of that region, who sent him to his fields to feed the pigs. ¹⁶ He would gladly have filled his stomach with the pods that the pigs were eating, and no one gave him anything. ¹⁷ But

when he came to his senses he said, 'How many of my father's hired hands have bread enough and to spare, but here I am dying of hunger! ¹⁸ I will get up and go to my father, and I will say to him, "Father, I have sinned against heaven and before you; ¹⁹ I am no longer worthy to be called your son; treat me like one of your hired hands." ' ²⁰ So he set off and went to his father. But while he was still far off, his father saw him and was filled with compassion; he ran and put his arms around him and kissed him. ²¹ Then the son said to him, 'Father, I have sinned against heaven and before you; I am no longer worthy to be called your son.' ²² But the father said to his slaves, 'Quickly, bring out a robe—the best one—and put it on him; put a ring on his finger and sandals on his feet. ²³ And get the fatted calf and kill it, and let us eat and celebrate, ²⁴ for this son of mine was dead and is alive again; he was lost and is found!' And they began to celebrate.

²⁵ "Now his elder son was in the field, and as he came and approached the house, he heard music and dancing. ²⁶ He called one of the slaves and asked what was going on. ²⁷ He replied, 'Your brother has come, and your father has killed the fatted calf because he has got him back safe and sound.' ²⁸ Then he became angry and refused to go in. His father came out and began to plead with him. ²⁹ But he answered his father, 'Listen! For all these years I have been working like a slave for you, and I have never disobeyed your command, yet you have never given me even a young goat so that I might celebrate with my friends. ³⁰ But when this son of yours came back, who has devoured your assets with prostitutes, you killed the fatted calf for him!' ³¹ Then the father said to him, 'Son, you are always with me, and all that is mine is yours. ³² But we had to celebrate and rejoice, because this brother of yours was dead and has come to life; he was lost and has been found.'"

The Gospel of the Lord.

Praise to you, O Christ.

The assembly is seated.

SERMON

The assembly is invited to stand.

HYMN OF THE DAY

"Softly and Tenderly Jesus is Calling"

ELW 608

Softly and tenderly Jesus is calling, calling for you and for me.
See, on the portals he's waiting and watching,
watching for you and for me.

Refrain

"Come home, (Come home,)
come home! (come home!)
You who are weary, come home."
Earnestly, tenderly, Jesus is calling,
calling, "O sinner, come home!"

- Why should we tarry when Jesus is pleading, pleading for you and for me? Why should we linger and heed not his mercies, mercies for you and for me? Refrain
- Oh, for the wonderful love he has promised, promised for you and for me!
 Though we have sinned, he has mercy and pardon, pardon for you and for me. Refrain

Text: Will L. Thompson, 1847-1909 Used by permission. OneLicense.net #A-711336

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 INTERCESSION

Led by the Spirit, let us turn to God in prayer for the church, the world, and all those in need, responding with "receive our prayer".

A brief silence.

God of faithful promise, make your church a new creation in Christ. As you reconcile us to yourself, guide us also in your way of reconciliation, that through confession and forgiveness, repentance and reparations, your church may bear witness to your love. God, in your mercy, **receive our prayer.**

God of new beginnings, restore balance to the earth. Send rain to places of drought and sunshine to places of flooding, that the produce of the land may again support life. God, in your mercy, **receive our prayer.**

God of prodigal grace, unite the nations as fellow members of the human family. Give leaders the courage to put aside pride and ego, to cease squandering lives and time, and to work for the well-being of all. God, in your mercy, **receive our prayer.**

God of boundless love, receive with open arms any in need of compassion, especially...those we name aloud...and those we hold in our hearts. Embrace all who are far from home or estranged from loved ones, and all who live with regret. Embolden your people to offer and to seek forgiveness. God, in your mercy, receive our prayer.

God of radical inclusion, widen human circles to welcome all who are excluded. Bless the work of disability ministries, ministries by and with neurodivergent people, and multicultural and ethnic-specific ministries; that the welcome of Jesus be extended to all. God, in your mercy, **receive our prayer.**

God of resurrection life, welcome home all who have died, especially Joseph Washington. We thank you for their lives and entrust them into your keeping, where true reconciliation and eternal peace are found. 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.**

SHARING OF THE PEACE

The peace of Christ be with you always.

And also with you.

The assembly is seated.

MEAL

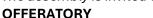
God feeds us with the presence of Jesus Christ.

OFFERING

MUSICAL OFFERING 8:15: "By The Babylonian Rivers"

11:00: "By The Babylonian Rivers"

Offering is being gathered for the mission of the church, including the care of those in need. You are invited to place your offering in one of the offering plates located in the rear of the Sanctuary or send your offering to the church office through the mail or by having your bank mail a check directly. You can also contribute using the electronic giving options found on our church website and app.



"Create In Me A Clean Heart"

ELW 186



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, **Amen.**

THE GREAT THANKSGIVING

DIALOGUE

The presiding minister greets the assembly and invites all present to give thanks.

The Lord be with you.

And also with you.

Lift up your hearts.

We lift them up to the Lord.

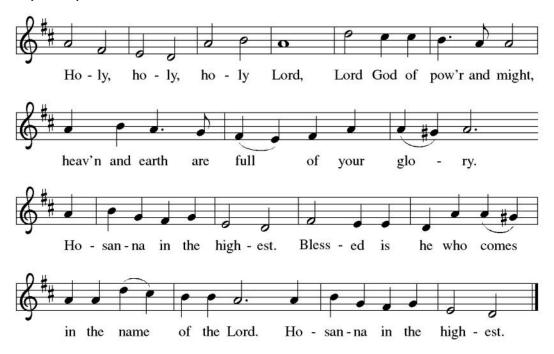
Let us give thanks to the Lord, our God.

It is right to give our thanks and praise.

PROPER PREFACE

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. 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:

HOLY, HOLY, HOLY



THANKSGIVING AT THE TABLE

You are indeed holy, almighty and merciful God. You are most holy, and great is the majesty of your glory. You so loved the world that you gave your only Son, so that everyone who believes in him may not perish but have eternal life. We give you thanks for his coming into the world to fulfill for us your holy will and to accomplish all things for our salvation.

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.

For as often as we eat of this bread and drink from this cup, we proclaim the Lord's death until he comes.

Christ has died. Christ is risen. Christ will come again

Remembering, therefore, his salutary command, his life-giving passion and death, his glorious resurrection and ascension, and the promise of his coming again, we give thanks to you, O Lord God Almighty, not as we ought but as we are able; we ask you mercifully to accept our praise and thanksgiving and with your Word and Holy Spirit to bless us, your servants, and these your own gifts of bread and wine, so that we and all who share in the body and blood of Christ may be filled with heavenly blessing and grace, and, receiving the forgiveness of sin, may be formed to live as your holy people and be given our inheritance with all your saints.

To you, O God, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, be all honor and glory in your holy church, now and forever **Amen.**

THE LORD'S PRAYER

Let us pray: 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.

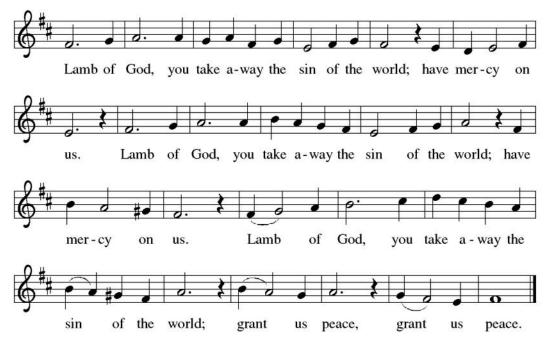
DISTRIBUTION OF COMMUNION

We give thanks as we receive the real presence of our resurrected Lord in, with, and under the bread and the wine. At the 8:15 service Communion will be distributed at the altar rail. At the 11:00 service Communion will be distributed continuously under the direction of the ushers. Take an empty cup to receive from a pouring chalice (let the communion assistant know if you prefer grape juice). Please let the pastor know if you require a gluten free host. When giving the bread and cup, the communion ministers say "The body of Christ, given for you. The blood of Christ, shed for you." and each person may respond, "Amen". Worshippers who are not yet communing are invited to come forward for a blessing.

INVITATION TO COMMUNION

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

LAMB OF GOD



The assembly is seated.

COMMUNION HYMN "Amazing Grace, How Sweet the Sound"

ELW 779

- 1 Amazing grace! how sweet the sound that saved a wretch like me! I once was lost, but now am found; was blind, but now I see.
- 2 'Twas grace that taught my heart to fear, and grace my fears relieved; how precious did that grace appear the hour I first believed!
- Through many dangers, toils, and snares
 I have already come;
 'tis grace has brought me safe thus far, and grace will lead me home.
- 4 The Lord has promised good to me; his word my hope secures; he will my shield and portion be as long as life endures.

5 When we've been there ten thousand years, bright shining as the sun, we've no less days to sing God's praise than when we'd first begun.

Text: John Newton, 1725-1807, alt., sts. 1-5; anonymous. OneLicense.net #A-711336

After all have communed the assembly is invited to stand if able.

TABLE BLESSING

The Body and Blood of our Lord, Jesus Christ, strengthen you and keep you in Christ's Grace.

Amen.

POST COMMUNION SONG





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

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

BLESSING

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

SENDING HYMN

"God, When Human Bonds Are Broken"

ELW 603

- 1 God, when human bonds are broken and we lack the love or skill to restore the hope of healing, give us grace and make us still.
- 2 Through that stillness, with your Spirit come into our world of stress, for the sake of Christ forgiving all the failures we confess.
- 3 You in us are bruised and broken: hear us as we seek release from the pain of earlier living; set us free and grant us peace.

- 4 Send us, God of new beginnings, humbly hopeful into life.
 Use us as a means of blessing:
 make us stronger, give us faith.
- 5 Give us faith to be more faithful, give us hope to be more true, give us love to go on learning: God, encourage and renew!

Text: Fred Kaan, b. 1929. Text © 1989 Hope Publishing Company, Carol Stream, IL 60188. All rights reserved. Used by permission.OneLicense.net #A-711336

DISMISSAL

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

Thanks be to God.

POSTLUDE

"On My Heart Imprint Your Image"

UPCOMING COMMEMORATIONS

John Donne, poet, died 1631

Monday, March 31, 2025

After finishing his education at Oxford University, Donne seemed headed for a career in the English public service. But a series of circumstances led him into the ordained ministry. He is well known as a writer of both secular and sacred poetry.

Benedict the African, confessor, died 1589

Friday, April 4, 2025

Born into slavery on the island of Sicily, Benedict lived as a hermit until the pope ordered all hermits to attach themselves to a monastery, at which time Benedict joined the Franciscans. Though illiterate, he was highly respected as a confessor and later superior of his community.

CONFIRMATION CLASS

Here is the schedule for Confirmation Class for the next few weeks:

- Wednesday, April 2
- Sunday, April 6

Class starts at 7:00 PM. If you have any questions or concerns, please reach out to Pastor Chris.

EASTER FLOWERS

Easter Tulips, Daffodils and Hyacinths will adorn the chancel for our Easter celebration on April 20th. If you would like to sponsor the beauty of our Sanctuary, please fill out a form and return it to the office by no later than Monday, April 14th. Each flower costs \$10. Checks should be payable to "St. Michael's Lutheran Church." Write Easter Flowers on the envelope and in the check memo. Forms are available in the Narthex and through Constant Contact.

FESTIVAL CHOIR INVITATION

Festival Choir will be continuing this spring. This is a seasonal ensemble available to all SMLC members and non-members. It is designed to provide an opportunity for singers whose schedules prevent them from making a yearly commitment to sing in the Choir. All Youth are also welcomed to join this music ministry. The Festival Choir sings for the Palm/Passion Sunday liturgy on April 13 at 11:00AM and Easter Sunday liturgy on April 20 at 11:00AM. Rehearsals will be held on April 6, 13 from 12:00-12:45PM. For more information, contact Mark Dishong at markdishong@gmail.com.

JOSEPH'S HOUSE DINNER CASSEROLES

The next opportunity to provide DINNER casseroles will be **SUNDAY, APRIL 13.**Casseroles can be dropped off to the church kitchen before or after Sunday worship services. Please mark your casserole as Pork (sausage), Beef, Turkey (sausage), or None (vegetarian). This will assist the staff serving to meet any dietary needs for the dinner guests. Sign-Up using this link: https://bit.ly/4j1SDnP

Volunteers are needed to serve dinner at Joseph's House on the second Tuesday of each month. We will meet at church at 7:30pm and return around 10:00pm. If you would like to serve, please contact Ray Kratz by phone (609-923-5718) or email (raykratz@gmail.com)

MID-WEEK LENTEN SERVICES

Join us every Wednesday evening during Lent, (April 2, 9, 16) as we gather for Holden Evening Prayer at 7:30 PM. The service will also be streamed live on Facebook and YouTube.

EASTER DINNER BAGS FOR LSM

We still have a couple bags that need filling. Please take a bag, and sign up on the sheet that corresponds to the color tag you have chosen. As always, feel free to personalize your bag with holiday napkins, décor, or cards. *Please return your filled bags by Sunday, April 6, 2025.* Monetary donations are also welcome, and will be used to purchase suitable proteins to accompany the dinner bags and address food insecurity. Please write "Easter Meats" on checks and pew envelopes. *All donations must be received by Sunday, April 6, 2025.*

HELP OUR BIRDS

Warmer Winters have encouraged birds that would naturally migrate south to stick around. Many of these birds are unprepared for the weather we experience. The Environmental Stewardship Committee is attempting to help by providing seeds and suet on the church property and in the backyard of 102 Chapel. You can make a difference by feeding birds in your backyard or donate to assist with our efforts here by way of supplies or cash towards a future purchase. If you would like to assist or join our SMLC team of bird feeders, contact Ruth Morgenroth (856-261-3464) or Lew Gorman (856-985-6970). We would be delighted and so would our feathered friends.

BOOK CLUB

Join SMLC Book Club for their next meeting on Monday, April 7th as they discuss *I Will Find You* by Harlan Coben. The meeting starts at 7pm; all are welcome to join us.

MONTHLY EARLY MORNING PRAYER SERVICE

Start the new month off on the right foot by joining us for our monthly early morning prayer service on Wednesday, April 2 at 7:00 AM.

PARISH CALENDAR

Sunday, March 30

8:15 AM Worship In-Person
9:30 AM Sunday School
11:00 AM Worship In-Person, Facebook & YouTube
12:00PM Festival Choir Rehearsal
6:00 PM NA Meeting

Monday, March 31

Tuesday, April 1

7:00 PM Executive Committee Meeting 7:30 PM Communications Meeting

Wednesday, April 2

7:00 AM Monthly Prayer Service 9:30 AM Weight Watchers Meeting 7:00 PM Confirmation Class 7:30 PM Mid-Week Lent Service

Thursday, April 3

7:30 PM Bell Choir Rehearsal

Friday, April 4

Saturday, April 5

Sunday, April 6

8:15 AM Worship In-Person
9:30 AM Sunday School
11:00 AM Worship In-Person, Facebook & YouTube
12:00 PM Festival Choir Rehearsal
6:00 PM NA Meeting



Evangelical Lutheran Church in America God's work. Our hands.