

**Lent Four**  
**Sunday March 15, 2026**



**ONLINE**  
 **GIVING**



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**St. Matthew Evangelical  
Lutheran Church**

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# St. Matthew Evangelical Lutheran Church

Lancaster, PA

## ***Lent Four***

March 15, 2026

\* *Indicates please stand as you are able.*

**PRELUDE** *Place of Healing*

Michael R. Hicks

### **\*Confession and Forgiveness**

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

**Amen.**

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

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 disdaining 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.**

## **GATHERING**

**GATHERING HYMN**    *Dearest Jesus, at Your Word*

**ELW #520**

### **\*GREETING**

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

**People:**    *And also with you.*

### **\*Kyrie**

**p. 203**

**Have mercy on us, Lord, and hear our solemn prayer.  
We come to hear your living word; it saves us from despair.**

**Have mercy on us, Christ, and wash away our sin.  
Pour out your grace and make us whole that new life may  
begin.**

**Have mercy on us, Lord; make sin and shame depart.  
Renew us with your saving pow'r; create in us new hearts!**

### **\*PRAYER OF THE DAY**

Bend your ear to our prayers, Lord Christ, and come among us. By  
your gracious life and death for us, bring light into the darkness of  
our hearts, and anoint us with your Spirit, for you live and reign with  
the Father and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever.

**People:**    *Amen*

## **WORD**

### **First Reading: 1 Samuel 16:1-13**

<sup>1</sup> The LORD said to Samuel, "How long will you grieve over Saul? I  
have rejected him from being king over Israel. Fill your horn with oil  
and set out; I will send you to Jesse the Bethlehemite, for I have  
provided for myself a king among his sons." <sup>2</sup> Samuel said, "How can

I go? If Saul hears of it, he will kill me." And the LORD said, "Take a heifer with you and say, 'I have come to sacrifice to the LORD.'  
<sup>3</sup> Invite Jesse to the sacrifice, and I will show you what you shall do, and you shall anoint for me the one whom I name to you."  
<sup>4</sup> Samuel did what the LORD commanded and came to Bethlehem. The elders of the city came to meet him trembling and said, "Do you come peaceably?"<sup>5</sup> He said, "Peaceably. I have come to sacrifice to the LORD; sanctify yourselves and come with me to the sacrifice." And he sanctified Jesse and his sons and invited them to the sacrifice.  
<sup>6</sup> When they came, he looked on Eliab and thought, "Surely his anointed is now before the LORD."<sup>7</sup> But the LORD said to Samuel, "Do not look on his appearance or on the height of his stature, because I have rejected him, for the LORD does not see as mortals see; they look on the outward appearance, but the LORD looks on the heart."<sup>8</sup> Then Jesse called Abinadab and made him pass before Samuel. He said, "Neither has the LORD chosen this one."<sup>9</sup> Then Jesse made Shammah pass by. And he said, "Neither has the LORD chosen this one."<sup>10</sup> Jesse made seven of his sons pass before Samuel, and Samuel said to Jesse, "The LORD has not chosen any of these."<sup>11</sup> Samuel said to Jesse, "Are all your sons here?" And he said, "There remains yet the youngest, but he is keeping the sheep." And Samuel said to Jesse, "Send and bring him, for we will not sit down until he comes here."<sup>12</sup> He sent and brought him in. Now he was ruddy and had beautiful eyes and was handsome. The LORD said, "Rise and anoint him, for this is the one."<sup>13</sup> Then Samuel took the horn of oil and anointed him in the presence of his brothers, and the spirit of the LORD came mightily upon David from that day forward. Samuel then set out and went to Ramah.

Reader: Word of God; Word of Life.  
**People: Thanks be to God.**

## **Psalm 23**

*Read responsively*

- <sup>1</sup> The LORD <sup>1</sup> is my shepherd;  
I shall not <sup>1</sup> be in want.  
<sup>2</sup> **The LORD makes me lie down <sup>1</sup> in green pastures  
and leads me be- <sup>1</sup> side still waters.**  
<sup>3</sup> You restore my <sup>1</sup> soul, O LORD,  
and guide me along right pathways <sup>1</sup> for your name's sake.  
<sup>4</sup> **Though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death,  
I shall <sup>1</sup> fear no evil;  
for you are with me; your rod and your staff, they <sup>1</sup>  
comfort me.**  
<sup>5</sup> You prepare a table before me in the presence <sup>1</sup> of my

enemies;  
you anoint my head with oil, and my cup is <sup>1</sup> running over.  
<sup>6</sup> **Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me all the days <sup>1</sup>  
of my life,  
and I will dwell in the house of the <sup>1</sup> LORD forever.**

### **Second Reading: Ephesians 5:8-14**

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

Reader: Word of God; Word of Life.

**People: *Thanks be to God***

### **\*Gospel Acclamation**

p. 205b

***We are turning, Lord, to hear you;  
you are merciful and kind  
Slow to anger, rich in blessing,  
and with love to us inclined.***

Pastor: The Holy Gospel according to St. John

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

### **Gospel: John 9:1-41**

See insert

Pastor: The Gospel of the Lord

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

### **SERMON**

**\*HYMN OF THE DAY** *Blind Man*  
Traditional African American Spiritual

1. Blind man stood by the road  
and he cried (3x)  
Cryin' oh, oh, oh  
Show me the way,  
Show me the truth  
Show me the life  
The way to go home.
2. Have you ever stood by the road  
and cried (3x)  
Cryin' oh, oh, oh  
Show me the way,  
Show me the truth,  
Show me the life  
The way to go home.
3. Jesus stood by the road and He said (3x)  
Sayin; oh, oh, oh  
I am the Way.  
I am the Truth  
I am the Life  
The way to go home.  
  
It's Jesus

**\*APOSTLES' CREED**

Asst. Min.: With the whole church, let us confess our faith.

***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 GOD'S PEOPLE**

*Between each petition the following is said:*

Asst. Min.: Hear us, O God,  
**People: *Your mercy is great.***

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

**People:** *Amen.*

**\*HYMN RESPONSE** *O Lord, Hear My Prayer*  
*(please sing twice)*

**ELW #751**

O Lord hear my prayer, O Lord hear my prayer,  
When I call, answer me.

O Lord, hear my prayer, O Lord hear my prayer,  
Come and listen to me.

### **SPECIAL MUSIC VIDEO**

*Amazing Grace*

John Newton  
arr. Steven Mercurio

Andrea Bocelli and Allison Krauss, soloists

### **PREPARING THE TABLE**

**OFFERING PRAYER** Spoken in Unison

**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.***

**\*The Great Thanksgiving** p. 206

Pastor: The Lord be with you.

**People:** *And also with you.*

Pastor: Lift up your hearts.

**People:** *We lift them to the Lord.*

Pastor: Let us give thanks to the Lord our God.

**People:** *It is right to give our thanks and praise.*

It is indeed right, our duty and our joy...we praise your name and join their unending hymn:

**\*Sanctus**

p. 207a

*Holy, holy, holy Lord, God of power and might,  
Heaven and earth are full of your glory. Hosanna in the highest.  
Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord.  
Hosanna in the highest, Hosanna in the highest.*

**\*Eucharistic Prayer**

**\*LORD'S PRAYER**

Spoken in Unison

Gathered into one by the Holy Spirit, let us pray the prayer that Jesus taught us.

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

**\*INVITATION TO COMMUNION**

Come to the table.  
Feast on God's goodness and mercy.  
**People:** *Thanks be to God.*

**SHARING OF THE SACRAMENT**

**\*TABLE BLESSING**

The Body and Blood of our Lord Jesus Christ  
strengthen you and keep you in his grace.  
**Amen.**

**\*PRAYER AFTER COMMUNION**

Spoken in Unison

**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.  
*Amen.***

**\*BENEDICTION**

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.  
**Amen.**

**\*SENDING HYMN**     *O Christ, Your Heart, Compassionate*  
**ELW #722**

**\*DISMISSAL**

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

**POSTLUDE**     *Every Day I Will Bless You*

Richard Blake

## **2026 Lent/ Easter Dates**

March 28, 29 - Palm Weekend

April 2 - Maundy Thursday, 12 Noon

April 3 - Good Friday, 12 Noon & 7

April 4 & 5 -Easter





**St. Matthew Lutheran Church  
Statement of Welcome, Affirmation  
and Full Participation**



Welcome to St Matthew, the little church  
with a big heart.



We are a Reconciling in Christ  
(Open and Affirming)  
congregation, so when we say "all are welcome",  
we really mean it.

We strive to live that out in our actions as well as our words.  
We publicly and humbly commit to do what it takes to truly be  
a sanctuary filled with warmth, love, understanding, safety,  
respect and care for all who enter here.

*(Please see our Full Statement of Welcome, Affirmation and Full  
Participation on our website: [www.stmatthewelc.com](http://www.stmatthewelc.com). Copies of  
the Full Statement are also available in the Education  
and Resources Stand in the Fellowship Hall.)*

**Chancel Flowers Dedications for 2026**

***Several dates are available for chancel flowers.  
Flower dedications are now \$50.***



**MARCH BIRTHDAYS!**

<b>3/9</b>	<b>Barb Emmerich</b>
<b>3/10</b>	<b>Sammy Sweitzer</b>
<b>3/14</b>	<b>Buzz Rothweiler</b>
<b>3/14</b>	<b>Pat Smith</b>
<b>3/17</b>	<b>Ray Shaub</b>
<b>3/25</b>	<b>Sandy Tucker</b>
<b>3/27</b>	<b>Sarah Teichmann</b>
<b>3/30</b>	<b>Judith Miller</b>

**The Congregation**

The Ministers

**Pastor Robin Fero**

**Church Office**

phone: 717-394-9607

Website: stmatthewelc.com

Email: info@stmatthewelc.com

**Cliff Eshbach**

Council President

**Susan Feldmann**

Director of Music/Choir

**Ann Hossler**

Organist/Pianist

**WORSHIP ASSISTANTS**

**Altar Care for March:**

Barb Elsen & Linda Tice

**Assisting Minister:**

Linda McIntyre

**Greeter:**

Kay Gontner

**Usher:**

Pat Smith

**Reader:**

Roxanne Koch

**Counters:**

Pam Frye & Linda Tice

**3/14 Saturday**  
5:00pm Worship

**3/21 Saturday**  
9:30am CPR Class \*  
2:00pm Quilting Workshop  
5:00pm Worship

**3/15 Sunday**  
10:00am Worship  
11:30am Game Day

**3/22 Sunday**  
10:00am Worship

**3/16 Monday**  
9:00am Community Meal  
7:00pm Church Council

*\*Events scheduled for outside groups that use our facility. You are welcome to attend or sign up for all other events on the calendar.*

**3/17 Tuesday**  
12:00pm Better Bones at St. Matthew

**Scripture Readings—  
March 21-22, 2026**

**3/18 Wednesday**  
12:00pm Bible Study

**Ezekial 37:1-14  
Psalm 130  
Romans 8:6-11  
John 11:1-45**

**3/19 Thursday**  
6:00pm Bell Choir  
7:00pm Vocal Choir