



February 18th 2026
Ash Wednesday
6:30 p.m.

St. John Immanuel Lutheran Church

Reverend Maggie Westaby

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ELCA

WELCOME

CALL TO WORSHIP

Blessed be the Holy Trinity † one God, who journeys with us these forty days, and sustains us with the gift of grace. **Amen.**

OPENING DIALOGUE

If God threw a party,
all would be invited.

If God hosted a dinner,
there'd be a seat saved for each of us.

If God prepared a banquet,
a cheer would go up when you arrived.

This is the good news:

God is throwing a party.

God is hosting a dinner.

God is preparing a banquet,
and all are invited.

Let us worship this invitational God.

CONFESSION

Family of faith, if someone declines our invitations again and again, in our human ways, we tend to stop inviting them. We get the hint. We assume they'd rather be elsewhere. With God, however, things are different. No matter how many times we overlook or ignore God's outstretched hand, God will never stop reaching for us. So with that good news in mind, let us go to God in prayer.

Loving God, you invite us deeper into faith, deeper into relationship, and deeper into community. You invite us to your table, but we cling to the wall. We RSVP "Maybe." We come up with excuses for why we can't attend. Forgive us for doubting the invitation, and forgive us for doubting our worth. Show us how to respond to you with confidence instead of hesitancy, and joy instead of doubt. With gratitude we pray. Amen.

FORGIVENESS

Friends, no matter how many times we mess up, no matter how many times we lose our way, no matter how many times we decline God's invitation, God will never stop inviting us to the table. There is and always will be a seat saved for you. So join me in these good news words:

We are forgiven, again and again. We are invited, again and again. We are loved, from beginning to end. Thanks be to God, our Inviter. Amen.

GATHERING HYMN

Joyous Light of Heavenly Glory



1 Joy - ous light of heav'n-ly glo - ry, lov-ing glow of God's own
2 In the stars that grace the dark - ness, in the blaz - ing sun of
3 You who made the heav-en's splen - dor, ev-'ry danc - ing star of



face, you who sing cre - a - tion's sto - ry, shine on
dawn, in the light of peace and wis - dom, we can
night, make us shine with gen - tle jus - tice, let us



ev - 'ry land and race. Now as eve - ning falls a -
hear your qui - et song. Love that fills the night with
each re - flect your light. Might - y God of all cre -



round us, we shall raise our songs to you. God of day - break,
won - der, love that warms the wea - ry soul, love that bursts all
a - tion, gen - tle Christ who lights our way, lov - ing Spir - it



God of shad - ows, come and light our hearts a - new.
chains a - sun - der, set us free and make us whole.
of sal - va - tion, lead us on to end - less day.

Text: Greek hymn, 3rd cent., para. Marty Haugen, b. 1950

Music: JOYOUS LIGHT, Marty Haugen

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GREETING & PRAYER OF THE DAY

May 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.

Table-setting God, this Lent we do not want to miss your invitation. We do not want to be so caught up in our own business that we miss the holiness right in front of us. So settle our hearts, and open our spirits to hear your word anew. Help us hear your good news today. With hope we pray. **Amen.**

WILL YOU MEET US? *By Jan Richardson*

Will you meet us in the ashes,
will you meet us in the ache
and show your face within our sorrow
and offer us your word of grace:

that you are life within the dying,
that you abide within the dust,
that you are what survives the burning,
that you arise to make us new.

And in our aching, you are breathing;
and in our weeping, you are here
within the hands that bear your blessing,
enfolding us within your love. Amen.

Spirit, Open My Heart

The image shows a musical score for the hymn "Spirit, Open My Heart". It consists of three staves of music in a single system, all written on a treble clef with a key signature of one flat (B-flat). The lyrics are written below the notes. The first staff contains the lyrics "Spir-it, o - pen my heart to the joy and pain of". The second staff contains "liv-ing. As you love may I love, in re - ceiv - ing". The third staff contains "and in giv - ing. Spir - it, o - pen my heart." The music is written in a simple, accessible style with various note values including quarter, eighth, and half notes, and rests.

Spir-it, o - pen my heart to the joy and pain of
liv-ing. As you love may I love, in re - ceiv - ing
and in giv - ing. Spir - it, o - pen my heart.

GOSPEL: Luke 14:15-24

The holy gospel according to Luke.

Glory to you, O Lord.

¹⁵ One of the dinner guests, on hearing this, said to him, “Blessed is anyone who will eat bread in the kingdom of God!” ¹⁶ Then Jesus said to him, “Someone gave a great dinner and invited many. ¹⁷ At the time for the dinner he sent his slave to say to those who had been invited, ‘Come, for everything is ready now.’ ¹⁸ But they all alike began to make excuses. The first said to him, ‘I have bought a piece of land, and I must go out and see it; please accept my regrets.’ ¹⁹ Another said, ‘I have bought five yoke of oxen, and I am going to try them out; please accept my regrets.’ ²⁰ Another said, ‘I have just been married, and therefore I cannot come.’ ²¹ So the slave returned and reported this to his master. Then the owner of the house became angry and said to his slave, ‘Go out at once into the streets and lanes of the town and bring in the poor, the crippled, the blind, and the lame.’ ²² And the slave said, ‘Sir, what you ordered has been done, and there is still room.’ ²³ Then the master said to the slave, ‘Go out into the roads and lanes, and compel people to come in, so that my house may be filled. ²⁴ For I tell you, none of those who were invited will taste my dinner.’” The Gospel of The Lord.

Praise to you, O Christ.

SERMON

HYMN OF THE DAY

Bless Now, O God, the Journey



1 Bless now, O God, the jour - ney that all your peo - ple make,
2 Bless so - journ - ers and pil - grims who share this wind - ing way;
3 Di - vine e - ter - nal lov - er, you meet us on the road.



the path through noise and si - lence, the way of give and take,
your hope burns through the ter - rors, your love sus - tains the day.
We wait for lands of prom - ise where milk and hon - ey flow,



The trail is found in des - ert and winds the moun - tain round,
We yearn for ho - ly free - dom while of - ten we are bound;
but wait - ing not for plac - es, you meet us all a - round.



then leads be - side still wa - ters, the road where faith is found.
to - geth - er we are seek - ing the road where faith is found.
Our cov - e - nant is writ - ten on roads, as faith is found.

Text: Sylvia G. Dunstan, 1955–1993

Music: LLANGLOFFAN, Welsh tune, 19th cent.

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BLESSING THE DUST *By Jan Richardson*

All those days you felt like dust, like dirt,
as if all you had to do was turn your face toward the wind
and be scattered to the four corners

or swept away by the smallest breath as insubstantial—
did you not know what the Holy One can do with dust?

This is the day we freely say we are
scorched.

This is the hour we are marked
by what has made it through the burning.

This is the moment we ask for the blessing
that lives within the ancient ashes, that
makes its home inside the soil of this sacred
earth.

So let us be marked not for sorrow.
And let us be marked not for shame.
Let us be marked not for false humility
or for thinking we are less than we are

but for claiming what God can do
within the dust, within the dirt
within the stuff of which the world is made
and the stars that blaze in our bones
and the galaxies that spiral
inside the smudge we bear. Amen.



IMPOSITION OF THE ASHES

Remember: You are dust, and to dust you shall return. All are welcome to come forward and receive the ashes: a reminder of the fleetingness of life and our own mortality. As we open the deepest corners of our hearts before God, we see God's grace, forgiveness, and love in the shape of the cross of ashes. Harkening back to the cross we receive at baptism – a promise of forgiveness, love, and everlasting life – birthed from the divine mystery of Christ's crucifixion. Ashes to ashes, dust to dust. Return to God with all your heart.



INVITATION TO THE OFFERING

The God who speaks and summons the earth into being now speaks to us, calling us to offer of ourselves.

<https://secure.myvanco.com/L-ZEVQ/home>

SPECIAL MUSIC *St. John Immanuel Bell Choir*

GIVE THANKS

Give thanks with a grateful heart, give thanks to the Holy One, give thanks because he's given Jesus Christ, his Son. Give thanks with a grateful heart, give thanks to the Holy One, give thanks because he's given Jesus Christ, his Son. And now let the weak say, "I am strong," let the poor say, "I am rich," because of what the Lord has done for us. And now let the weak say, "I am strong," let the poor say, "I am rich," because of what the Lord has done for us. Give thanks!

OFFERING PRAYER

Gracious and Generous God,

We are amazed by the good gifts you bestow in abundance. Thank you for food that sustains us on our journey. Thank you for the company of saints to whom we are joined. Thank you for giving us your work to do on earth. We offer back to you a portion of all that we have received, setting down our baskets in celebration of your greatest gift, Jesus Christ, in whose name we pray. **Amen.**

GREAT THANKSGIVING & PREFACE

With-us God, it is right, and it is good, to give you thanks and praise. In this Lenten season, we come carrying dust and questions, longings and laments. We come having heard so much bad news that our hearts ache for something true, something steady, something good. So tell us something good, O God. Tell us again the story of love that refuses to let us go. Tell us again of manna in the wilderness, of water from the rock, of mercy that meets us on the road. Tell us the good news that sounds like welcome and feels like home. For when the world feels harsh and divided, you draw near. When hope feels fragile, you remain faithful. When we wander, you do not abandon us. Instead, you send us Jesus. In him, we see the good news alive in the world—love embodied, mercy made flesh, hope refusing to die. So remind us that you are still on the move, living even here, in the words that Jesus said.

WORDS OF INSTITUTION

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

Beloved of God, in this season of wandering and watching, of ashes and honest prayers, we come hungry for good news. So hear this: The good news of Jesus Christ meets us where we are. It sounds like laughter breaking through fear and feels like mercy meeting us on every path we take. Here, at God's table, the good news takes on flesh. Here, at God's table, there is a seat for the weary, for the aching, for those who long for peace, for hope, for joy. Here, at God's table, there is always something good. So come and taste the good news, for it really is good news, alive in this bread, alive in this cup, alive among us still.



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, grant us peace.

COMMUNION HYMNS

The King of Love My Shepherd Is



1 The King of love my shep - herd is, whose good - ness
2 Where streams of liv - ing wa - ter flow, my ran - somed
3 Per - verse and fool - ish oft I strayed, but yet in
4 In death's dark vale I fear no ill, with thee, dear



fail - eth nev - er; I noth - ing lack if
soul he lead - eth and, where the ver - dant
love he sought me, and on his shoul - der
Lord, be - side me, thy rod and staff my



I am his and he is mine for - ev - er.
pas - tures grow, with food ce - les - tial feed - eth.
gent - ly laid, and home, re - joic - ing, brought me.
com - fort still; thy cross be - fore to guide me.

5 Thou spreadst a table in my sight;
thine unction grace bestoweth;
and, oh, what transport of delight
from thy pure chalice floweth!

6 And so, through all the length of days,
thy goodness faileth never.
Good Shepherd, may I sing thy praise
within thy house forever.

Text: Henry W. Baker, 1821-1877

Music: St. COLUMBA, Irish tune

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Just As I Am, without One Plea



1 Just as I am, with - out one plea, but that thy blood was
2 Just as I am, though tossed a - bout with man - y_a con - flict,
3 Just as I am, thou wilt re - ceive, wilt wel - come, par - don,
4 Just as I am; thy love un - known has bro - ken ev - 'ry



shed for me, and that thou bidd'st me come to thee,
man - y_a doubt, fight - ings and fears with - in, with - out,
cleanse, re - lieve; be - cause thy prom - ise I be - lieve,
bar - rier down; now to be thine, yea, thine a - lone,



O Lamb of God, I come, I come.

Text: Charlotte Elliott, 1789–1871

Music: WOODWORTH, William B. Bradbury, 1816–1868

PRAYER AFTER COMMUNION

Embodied God,

At your table, we have tasted the goodness of Jesus. With the eyes of our hearts open to your promise, empower us to hear the needs of our neighbors and touch the world with your love.

Amen.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

BLESSING

As you leave this place, when you meet anger, speak with love.

When you meet fear, speak with hope.

When you meet pain, speak with gentleness.

But no matter what, speak this good news.

For the good news of the gospel is love and justice for all.

It is joy that surprises, and nonviolence that transforms.

The good news of the gospel is alive in the world, so go forth speaking.

For if you won't, then who will?

Thanks be to God—Father, † son, and Holy Spirit for this good, good news.

Amen.

SENDING HYMN

I Want Jesus to Walk with Me



1 I want Je - sus to walk with me;
2 In my tri - als, Lord, walk with me;
3 When I'm in trou - ble, Lord, walk with me;



I want Je - sus to walk with me;
in my tri - als, Lord, walk with me;
when I'm in trou - ble, Lord, walk with me;



all a - long my pil - grim jour - ney,
when my heart is al - most break - ing,
when my head is bowed in sor - row,



Lord, I want Je - sus to walk with me.
Lord, I want Je - sus to walk with me.
Lord, I want Je - sus to walk with me.

Text: African American spiritual
Music: SOJOURNER, African American spiritual

DISMISSAL

Go in peace. Care for others as God cares for you. **Thanks be to God.**

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Welcome to all! Please remember to silence pagers and cell phones.

To those who are visiting: Welcome to St. John Immanuel and thank you for joining us! You are welcome to sign our registry in the narthex.

Holy Communion is celebrated every Sunday. All are welcome to Christ's Table.

Reminder! If you are in need of Pastoral care, please contact St. John Immanuel (715) 675-6950 If you or a loved one is in the hospital and would like a visit from Pastor Maggie, please contact St. John Immanuel.

Prayers for Health & Healing. This week, we pray for Lester Lueddecke, Mollie Krebsbach, Robin Hein, Sandra Law, Doug Doede, Rita Radant, Judi McGill, Gene Bahr, Anthony Barneson, John Rakow, Will Rode, Karen Ohrmundt, Bob Henning, Karen Voigt, Mike Hoffman, Fritz Poeske, Susan Knight, Lee Sillars, Alene Howe, Dorothy Westfall, Rose Rosenau, Anne Ohrmundt, Thia Heil, Carol Fitzke.

Food Basket. Each week you are invited to bring **non-perishable grocery** items to be given to a local food pantry. Place your gift in the *Shopping Cart* next to the main entrance.



ANNOUNCEMENTS

Immanuel History Task Force – We are in search of people to help with Immanuel’s history for our website and our church – Please let Ann or Pastor Maggie know.

Noisy offering! The 2nd Sunday of the month! Next Noisy offering: **Sunday, March 8th** bring your coins (bills also accepted 😊).

Money will be raised and donated quarterly. This noisy offering will go to: *Community Dinners for those in need*. Did you know St. John Immanuel hosts three Community Dinners a year and each one costs approximately \$1,300. Your donations help serve a very real need in our community! **If you are a Thrivent member, you may be eligible to apply for a \$250 Thrivent Action Team card** which can go directly towards our community dinners. Please see Connie Nowak if you can help!

Please note: *Any money that is raised from the Lenten Dinners will go towards community outreach support, such as community dinners and the Marty Bus.*

Join us for Lent! Lenten dinners will be served from 5-6 pm. Worship starts at 6:30.

Chair Yoga: February 21st / February 28th all starting at 10:00 a.m. at St. John Immanuel! A free event, donations are accepted for St. John Immanuel Youth.

Sunday, February 22nd at 10:15 a.m. – St. John Annual Cemetery Association Meeting

Monday, February 23rd at 6:30 – Adult Study – Luke 14-19:27

Sunday, March 1st at 10:15 a.m. – Advance Funeral Planning by Helke & Brainard

Monday, March 9th at 6:30 p.m. **Pastor Maggie’s Book Club** will discuss *The Correspondent* by Virginia Evans.

Kwik Trip Gift Cards Sign-up in the Fellowship Hall or on our website! Help support St. John Immanuel with Kwik Trip gift cards!

Live Streaming and Photography Notice. When you enter a St. John Immanuel Lutheran Church service or event, you will be entering an area where photography, video and audio recording or live streaming may occur. If you prefer not to be recognized on camera, the back row inside the church is not within viewing distance of a camera and communion will typically be only on a wide shot where it may be difficult to recognize congregants. Parents, please note our children's sermons are being recorded and live streamed. If you do not want your child to be recognized on camera, please refrain from having them participate.

Coming The Rest of This Week @ St. John Immanuel February 18th – February 22nd

Today – Ash Wednesday, February 18th

5:00 p.m. Lenten Dinner

6:30 p.m. Ash Wednesday Worship

Thursday, February 19th

5:30 p.m. Bells Practice – come try the bells! No experience needed.

Sunday, February 22nd

9:00 a.m. Worship

10:15 a.m. Coffee Hour / Sunday School – Elijah & The Widow