



March 18th 2026
Tell Me Something Good, Vespers Service
6:30 p.m.

St. John Immanuel Lutheran Church

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CALL TO WORSHIP & OPENING DIALOGUE

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

If you need good news,

settle into this space. We have good news to share.

If you need a word of hope,

then trust us when we say, there is hope enough to go around.

If you need a glimmer of joy,

then you're in luck! We have resilient joy abounding.

If you need to feel God's presence in your midst,

then know that this is God's house.

This is the good news of the gospel.

God is here. Love is real. Joy is on the move. Let us worship our with-us God!

CONFESSION AND FORGIVENESS

Lent is a season that invites us to be intentional. Lent asks us, how will you go deeper? How will you grow closer to God and your neighbor? What will you do to strengthen your faith? Despite our best efforts, that soul-tending work is often easier said than done. So let us come together as we are. Let us share our hopes, concerns, challenges, and joys. Let us embrace God's grace and speak honestly.

Loving God, you know the desires of our heart and nothing is hidden from you. Forgive us when we fail to trust in you, when we fall into temptation, when we are swayed by false words, and when we speak false words of our own. Be patient, as we amend who we are, in the hope of becoming who you created us to be. In Christ, your beloved son, we pray. Amen.

Faithful friends, God knows your heart. When you mean well and lose your way, God knows. When you try to do the right thing and miss the point, God knows. When you long to be close to God, and doubt your worth, God knows. You are seen. You are loved. In Christ † you are forgiven. This is the good news of the gospel! Nothing can separate you from God's love.

Thanks be to God for a love like that.

GATHERING HYMN

God, Who Made the Earth and Heaven



1 God, who made the earth and heav-en, dark - ness and light:
2 And when morn a - gain shall call us to run life's way,
3 Guard us wak - ing, guard us sleep-ing, and, when we die,
4 Ho - ly Fa - ther, throned in heav-en, all - ho - ly Son,



you the day for work have giv - en, for rest the night.
may we still, what - e'er be - fall us, your will o - bey.
may we in your might - y keep-ing all peace - ful lie.
Ho - ly Spir - it, free - ly giv - en, blest Three in One:



May your an - gel guards de - fend us, slum-ber sweet your mer - cy send us,
From the pow'r of e - vil hide us, in the nar - row path - way guide us,
When the last dread call shall wake us, then, O Lord, do not for - sake us,
grant us grace, we now im - plore you, till we lay our crowns be - fore you



ho - ly dreams and hopes at - tend us all through the night.
nev - er be your smile de - nied us all through the day.
but to reign in glo - ry take us with you on high.
and in wor - thier strains a - dore you while a - ges run.

Text: Reginald Heber, 1783–1826, st. 1, alt.; William Mercer, 1811–1873, sts. 2, 4, alt.; Richard Whately, 1787–1863, st. 3, alt.
Music: AR HYD Y NOS, Welsh traditional

VESPER PRAYER

Spirit of the Living God,

As evening settles around us and the day loosens its grip, we come longing to hear something good. So tell us something good: that you are still at work within us, still tending what is growing, still bringing forth fruit even when we cannot yet see it. Tell us that joy is possible, even when the road has been long. Tell us that peace is more than the absence of noise—it is your steady presence within us. In this Lenten season, grow in us what we cannot manufacture on our own. Plant patience where we are hurried, kindness where we are tired, generosity where we are guarded. Shape us into people of faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control—not as burdens to carry, but as fruit born of your grace. Rest us in your presence this night, and send us into tomorrow bearing fruit that reflects your love. We pray in the name of Jesus, in whom all goodness finds its source. **Amen.**

Spirit, Open My Heart

The image shows three staves of musical notation for the hymn "Spirit, Open My Heart". The music is written in a single 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 consists of a series of eighth and quarter notes, with some rests and a final cadence.

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.

Galatians 5:22-23

The fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, generosity, faithfulness, ²³ gentleness, and self-control. There is no law against such things.

Word of God. Word of Life.

Thanks be to God.

SERMON

HYMN OF THE DAY

Spirit of Gentleness

Refrain



Spir - it, Spir - it of gen - tle - ness, blow through the wil - der - ness



call - ing and free; Spir - it, Spir - it of rest - less - ness,



stir me from plac - id - ness, wind, wind on the sea.



1 You moved on the wa - ters, you called to the deep,
2 You swept through the des - ert, you stung with the sand,
3 You sang in a sta - ble, you cried from a hill,
4 You call from to - mor - row, you break an - cient schemes.



then you coaxed up the moun - tains from the val - leys of sleep;
and you goad - ed your peo - ple with a law and a land;
then you whis - pered in si - lence when the whole world was still;
From the bond - age of sor - row all the cap - tives dream dreams;



and o - ver the e - ons you called to each thing;
and when they were blind - ed with i - dols and lies,
and down in the cit - y you called once a - gain,
our wom - en see vi - sions, our men clear their eyes.

Refrain



"A - wake from your slum - bers and rise on your wings,"
then you spoke through your proph - ets to o - pen their eyes,
when you blew through your peo - ple on the rush of the wind.
With . . . bold new de - ci - sions your peo - ple a - rise.

Text: James K. Manley, b. 1940
Music: SPIRIT, James K. Manley
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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>

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 & LORD'S PRAYER

Gracious God,

Our treasures come only from you. It is only through your goodness, that we have received so much. We came into this life with nothing, and we leave the same way. Guide us, and inspire us, to share ourselves and the resources we have.

Gather us together and teach us to pray as Jesus taught.

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.

PEACE

The peace of Christ be with you always.

And also with you.

Watch, O Lord

Watch, O Lord, with all those a - wake this night,
watch, O Lord, with all those who weep; give your
an - gels and saints charge o - ver all who sleep.

All

1 Tend your ail - ing ones:
2 Soothe your suf - f'ring ones: in your love, Lord.
3 Hold your griev - ing ones:
4 Guard your lit - tle ones:

All

Rest your wea - ry ones:
Heal af - flict - ed ones: in your love, Lord.
Raise your fall - en ones:
Guide your search - ing ones:

All *Refrain*

Bless your dy - ing ones:
Shield your joy - ous ones: in your love, O Lord of all.
Mend your bro - ken ones:
Grant us all your peace:

Text: Marty Haugen, b. 1950, based on a prayer attributed to Augustine

Music: WATCH, O LORD, Marty Haugen

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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

Be Thou My Vision



1 Be thou my vi - sion, O Lord of my heart;
2 Be thou my wis - dom, and thou my true word;
3 Rich - es I heed not, nor vain, emp - ty praise,
4 Light of my soul, af - ter vic - to - ry won,



naught be all else to me, save that thou art:
I ev - er with thee and thou with me, Lord.
thou mine in - her - i - tance, now and al - ways:
may I reach heav - en's joys, O heav - en's Sun!



thou my best thought both by day and by night,
Thou my soul's shel - ter, and thou my high tow'r,
thou and thou on - ly, the first in my heart,
Heart of my own heart, what - ev - er be - fall,



wak - ing or sleep - ing, thy pres - ence my light.
raise thou me heav'n - ward, O Pow'r of my pow'r.
great God of heav - en, my trea - sure thou art.
still be my vi - sion, O Rul - er of all.

Text: Irish, 8th cent.; vers. Eleanor H. Hull, 1860–1935, alt.; tr. Mary E. Byrne, 1880–1931
Music: SLANE, Irish traditional

DISMISSAL

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

Thanks be to God.

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Join us
during this
season
of Lent.

