



# First Holy Communion

March 15, 2026

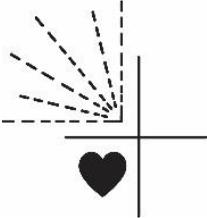


Mission Statement

*Living God's love through our devotion to  
service, worship, and one another*



# WELCOME TO FIRST LUTHERAN CHURCH



First Lutheran Church has been serving Strongsville, Ohio for nearly 70 years, ministering to its members and friends and supporting community, as well as regional and world ministries.

First Lutheran is a part of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America (ELCA). The ELCA pursues God's work in the world with 3 million members in more than 8700 congregations across the United States and in the Caribbean region. The ELCA works with Lutheran Disaster Response, Lutheran World Relief, Global Refuge, Lutheran World Federation, World Council of Churches, schools and colleges, seminaries, camps, and ecumenical and interreligious companions, as well as numerous global church partners and organizations across the world.

We invite you to our website, [firstchurchalive.org](http://firstchurchalive.org) for more information about First Church.

In addition, we also invite you to download our app by searching for FLC Strongsville in the Apple App Store and Google Play Store.

And please don't forget to scan the QR code to view our Connections Page where you will quickly find all of our current news and ministry sign-ups.



# GATHERING

## PRELUDE

Praise Band

*Open Up the Heavens*

## WELCOME AND ANNOUNCEMENTS

## CONFESSION AND FORGIVENESS

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

**C Amen**

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

*Silence is kept for reflection.*

P Gracious God,

**C have mercy on us according to your steadfast love.**

P For seeking worldly delights that deceive us and dishonor you: Gracious God,

**C have mercy on us according to your steadfast love.**

P For desiring self-reliance instead of hungering for your word: Gracious God,

**C have mercy on us according to your steadfast love.**

P For failing to recognize your coming reign, and for hindering the work of the Spirit: Gracious God,

**C have mercy on us according to your steadfast love.**

P For drawing from the well of self-serving ambition, and for disdainning the living water Christ offers: Gracious God,

**C have mercy on us according to your steadfast love.**

P For disregarding voices from the margin, and for distrusting signs of your healing and hope in the world: Gracious God,

**C have mercy on us according to your steadfast love.**

P For dwelling in tombs of self-pity and discontent, and for disregarding Christ's call to come forth to life: Gracious God,

**C have mercy on us according to your steadfast love.**

P 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.

**C Amen**

## OPENING HYMN

ELW # 779

*"Amazing Grace"*

## GREETING

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

**C And also with you.**

## PRAYER OF THE DAY

P 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.

**C Amen**

# WORD

## FIRST LESSON

Psalm 23, Stella Reed

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

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

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

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.

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

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

R: The Word of the Lord.

C: **Thanks be to God**

## MUSIC

*"Beautiful Savior"*  
arr Zack Richards

**Luke Jones, Lexie Gilbert, and Quinn Cassidy**

## SECOND LESSON

Ephesians 5:8-14, Kyle Wade

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

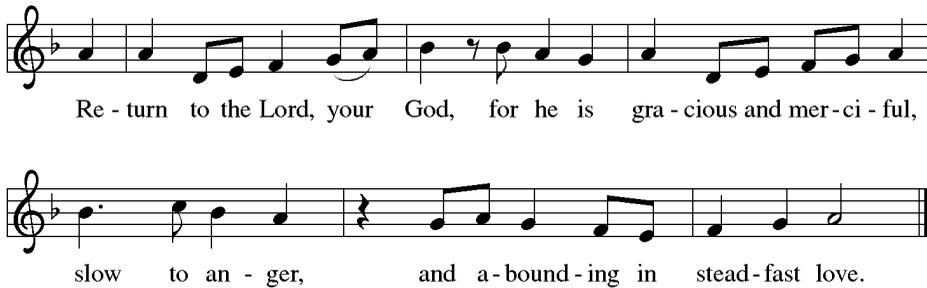
“Sleeper, awake!

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

R: The Word of the Lord.

C: **Thanks be to God**

## Gospel Acclamation – Lenten Acclamation



Re - turn to the Lord, your God, for he is gra - cious and mer - ci - ful,  
slow to an - ger, and a - bound - ing in stead - fast love.

### GOSPEL

John 9:1-41

P The Holy Gospel according to St. John the 9<sup>th</sup> Chapter.

**C Glory to you, O Lord.**

As [Jesus] walked along, he saw a man blind from birth. His disciples asked him, “Rabbi, who sinned, this man or his parents, that he was born blind?” Jesus answered, “Neither this man nor his parents sinned; he was born blind so that God’s works might be revealed in him. We must work the works of him who sent me while it is day; night is coming, when no one can work. As long as I am in the world, I am the light of the world.” 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, saying to him, “Go, wash in the pool of Siloam” (which means Sent). Then he went and washed and came back able to see. 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?” Some were saying, “It is he.” Others were saying, “No, but it is someone like him.” He kept saying, “I am he.” But they kept asking him, “Then how were your eyes opened?” 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.” They said to him, “Where is he?” He said, “I do not know.”

They brought to the Pharisees the man who had formerly been blind. Now it was a Sabbath day when Jesus made the mud and opened his eyes. Then the Pharisees also began to ask him how he had received his sight. He said to them, “He put mud on my eyes. Then I washed, and now I see.” Some of the Pharisees said, “This man is not from God, for he does not observe the Sabbath.” Others said, “How can a man who is

a sinner perform such signs?” And they were divided. So they said again to the blind man, “What do you say about him? It was your eyes he opened.” He said, “He is a prophet.”

The Jews did not believe that he had been blind and had received his sight until they called the parents of the man who had received his sight and asked them, “Is this your son, who you say was born blind? How then does he now see?” His parents answered, “We know that this is our son and that he was born blind, but we do not know how it is that now he sees, nor do we know who opened his eyes. Ask him; he is of age. He will speak for himself.” His parents said this because they were afraid of the Jews, for the Jews had already agreed that anyone who confessed Jesus to be the Messiah would be put out of the synagogue. Therefore his parents said, “He is of age; ask him.”

So for the second time they called the man who had been blind, and they said to him, “Give glory to God! We know that this man is a sinner.” He answered, “I do not know whether he is a sinner. One thing I do know, that though I was blind, now I see.” They said to him, “What did he do to you? How did he open your eyes?” He answered them, “I have told you already, and you would not listen. Why do you want to hear it again? Do you also want to become his disciples?” Then they reviled him, saying, “You are his disciple, but we are disciples of Moses. We know that God has spoken to Moses, but as for this man, we do not know where he comes from.” The man answered, “Here is an astonishing thing! You do not know where he comes from, yet he opened my eyes. We know that God does not listen to sinners, but he does listen to one who worships him and obeys his will. Never since the world began has it been heard that anyone opened the eyes of a person born blind. If this man were not from God, he could do nothing.” They answered him, “You were born entirely in sins, and are you trying to teach us?” And they drove him out.

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

P The Gospel of the Lord.

C Praise to you, O Christ.

# CHILDREN'S SHARING TIME

## SERMON

## SONG

Praise Band

*"Way Maker"*

## PRAYERS OF INTERCESSION

P Reconciled by God's mercy and sustained by God's presence, let us pray for the world and its needs.

*After each portion of the prayers:*

P Hear us, O God.

**C Your mercy is great.**

*The prayers conclude:*

P Receive our prayers, O God, through Jesus Christ, our strength and salvation.

**C Amen**

*Altar flowers are given by the Gilbert, Holda and Naso family in celebration of Ken and Ingrid's Birthdays and Lexie's First Communion.*

## PRESENTATION OF THE GIFTS

*An offering is gathered for the mission of the church, including the care of those in need. Please scan the QR code for the option to give online.*



## MUSIC

*"Amazing Grace"*

**Chancel Choir**

arr Craig Courtney

# Let the Vineyards Be Fruitful

## *Offering Song*



Let the vine-yards be fruit-ful, Lord, and fill to the brim our cup of



bles-sing. Gath-er a har-vest from the seeds that were sown, that



we may be fed with the bread of life. Gath-er the hopes and dreams of



all; u-nite them with the prayers we of-fer. Grace our ta-ble



with your pres-ence, and give us a fore-taste of the feast to come.

Text: John W. Arthur, 1922-1980  
Music: Ronald A. Nelson, b. 1927  
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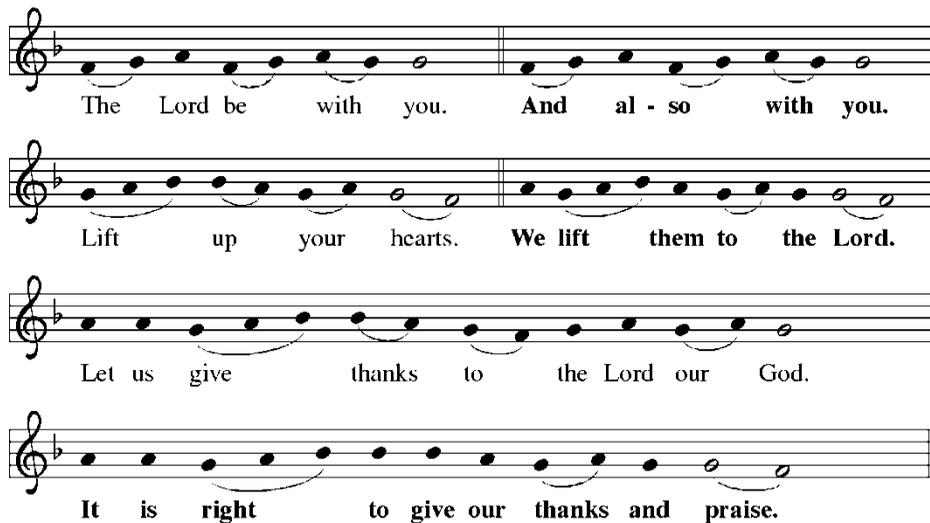
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**P** O God, maker of heaven and earth, your steadfast love embraces all creation,  
You send rain and sunshine to nourish the earth and bring forth its bounty.  
Through these gifts of bread and wine, draw us into the death and life of your  
Son, who calls us to bear witness to his saving work. We ask this in Jesus’  
name.

**C** **Amen**

# GREAT THANKSGIVING

## Preface Dialogue



The Lord be with you. **And al - so with you.**

Lift up your hearts. **We lift them to the Lord.**

Let us give thanks to the Lord our God.

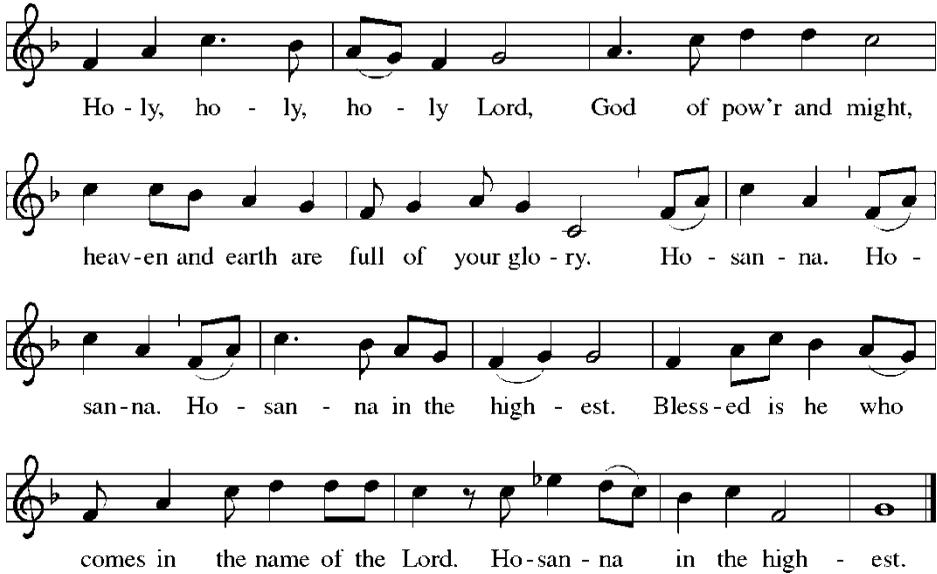
**It is right** to give our thanks and praise.

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## HOLY, HOLY, HOLY

It is indeed right, our duty and our joy, that we should at all times and in all places give thanks and praise ... we praise your name and join their unending hymn:

## Holy, Holy, Holy



Ho - ly, ho - ly, ho - ly Lord, God of pow'r and might,  
heav-en and earth are full of your glo - ry. Ho - san - na. Ho -  
san-na. Ho - san - na in the high - est. Bless-ed is he who  
comes in the name of the Lord. Ho-san - na in the high - est.

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## EUCCHARISTIC PRAYER

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.

**Amen.**

# THE 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**

# DISTRIBUTION OF COMMUNION

*When giving the bread and cup, the communion ministers say*  
The body of Christ, given for you.  
The blood of Christ, shed for you.  
*The communicant may respond: **Amen***

# SENDING

## POST COMMUNION PRAYER

**P** 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.

**C Amen**

## BLESSING

**P** 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.

**C Amen**

## SENDING SONG

Praise Band

*"I Am Free"*

## DISMISSAL

**P** Go in peace. Believe the good news.

**C Thanks be to God.**

## POSTLUDE

"Allegro Pomposo"

**David Gooding**

Ellen Newman

# WELCOME TO THE SEASON OF LENT

Lent in the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America (ELCA) is a 40-day season (excluding Sundays) of prayer, fasting, and almsgiving, beginning on Ash Wednesday and preparing for Easter. It is one of the six seasons that we observe within the calendar of the church year. It is a time for repentance, reflection, and deepening faith through acts of service, justice, and spiritual discipline.

## **A Very Brief History**

The term “Lent” originally comes from the Anglo-Saxon word “lencten” which means “spring.” This is the time, in the Northern Hemisphere, when the days are lengthening.

The season began as period of fasting leading up to the Vigil of Easter. Catechumens, those preparing for baptism at Easter, would fast and spend days in intense preparation. For those that were already baptized, Lent was a period to be renewed in their faith by studying the Bible, the Creed and the Lord’s Prayer.

Although it was originally only a two-day period of preparation, Lent became a three-week preparatory period in the middle of the fourth century and then this was further expanded into six-weeks, or forty days.

By the end of the fifth century, there was a desire to exclude Sundays from Lent since Sundays are always celebrated as feasts of the Resurrection. Thus, Lent begins not on Sunday, but on Ash Wednesday.

The current practice of forty days of Lent recall Jesus’ forty-day fast in the wilderness after his Baptism (Matthew 4:2, Luke 4:1-2) as well as Moses’ forty-day fast on Mount Sinai (Exodus 34:28).

The appointed liturgical color for Lent is purple because purple has long been associated with royalty. In this case, Christ’s reign from the cross.

# FIRST LUTHERAN CHURCH

## First Lutheran Church Staff

Rev. Kathleen L. Kluck

Zack Richards	Music Director
Andrea Cassidy	Contemporary Band Leader
David Gooding	Organist
Justin Lauschin	AV Specialist
Brenda Jacob	Controller
Vanessa Smith Whitford	Office Manager
Barb Nalette	Talents Coordinator
Gloria Reichert	KIDS HOPE USA, Director
Madi Snyder	KIDS HOPE NEXT USA, Director

## GOVERNING BOARD MEMBERS

June Zakrajsek	Dawn Zima
Ken Holda	Margaret Bewie
Lindee Flater	Janet Kaiser
Gary Walters	Ellen Kolman
Ron Uline	Kathleen Kluck
Brenda Jacob	

## MINISTRY TEAM LEADERS

Ellen Kolman	Beth Hartman
Mary Walters	Carolyn Roman
Sandy Treudler	Linda Browning
Pat Sauernheimer	Maureen Shorts
Monika Mueller	Ryan Hartman
Gayle Kovach	Kathleen Kluck

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