



Love of Christ Lutheran Church

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Welcome to LOC's Weekly E-News

5th Sunday of Lent, March 22, 2026

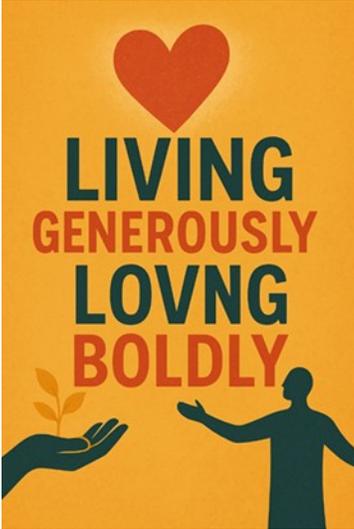


“The Unsettling Reality of Death”

The older we get, the more exposure we have to the unsettling reality of death. A quote from **All Our Losses, All Our Grief** has been shared in the grief seminar here at Love of Christ: *“Grief is a normal emotional response to significant loss...It is a composite of powerful emotions assailing us whenever we lose someone or something of value...It can be avoided, though at a very high cost to the one who refuses it.”* In John 11, Jesus confronts the grief of close friends who have lost a beloved brother.

The average lifespan in Jesus' day was 27 years of age, so loss and grief were familiar to all Jesus encountered. When you are surrounded by grieving people, it is hard not to be affected. It is especially hard when you know and love the people grieving, or you were exceptionally close to the one who died. It is believed that Lazarus, Mary, and Martha were among Jesus' closest friends. There are lots of questions surrounding this reading. Why did Jesus wait for Lazarus to die only to have to deal with the impact of that loss personally and within his community? Jesus expresses that this whole event will lead to deeper faith.

Loss and grief awaken us all to what do we hang on to when it seems like there is nothing to hold. But then working through the emotions, you discover life goes on and new life is possible. With Jesus' word, the power of death over Lazarus is broken. Death cannot stop the power of God's love. Lazarus comes out, formerly dead, now alive. We get in this story a foretaste of the victory Jesus will experience and demonstrate, so that we do not have to remain unsettled when the reality of



More than forty years ago, people with a heart for sharing God's good news in Jesus Christ believed a new Lutheran church needed to plant in NE Mesa. The city planners already had developers lined up to bring new housing into the area. A young pastor was serving youth and young adults in central Phoenix at Shepherd of the Valley Lutheran Church. Prayers and conversation led Pastor Don and Linda Thompson to say "Yes!" to God's call to start a new church during the heat of summer. The A/C on Don's car was broken so it really was a test of faith as he knocked on thousands of doors to listen and invite.

As our 40th anniversary approaches many memories have been captured and will be shared. There is no question this congregation would not exist if there had not been countless individuals and families who creatively and sacrificially chose to live generously and love boldly so that the love of Christ could reach thousands in NE Mesa to touching lives around the globe.

As others have said before, "We stand on the shoulders of those who have gone before us." We thank God for both the living and now deceased who allowed God to use them as ambassadors and evangelists these past 40 years!



Easter Lily or Mum flowers will be decorating our chancel areas. Order forms are available in the Sanctuary and Center of Compassion. Return it to the church office or place in the Sunday offering by March 29th. You can also email dianneo-ien@loclc.org with information on where or who you would like to give the flower in memory of or given to the Glory of God or in honor of.

Please make check out to "Love of Christ Flowers" The cost is \$18.00 per plant. Thank you for sharing this Easter blessing to decorate our chancel on Easter Sunday.



We are offering midweek Lenten services on Wednesdays during Lent. We will be using a Taize' service of meditative song and each week focus on themes from "Lent in Plain Sight." A soup supper will be available at 5:30 in Rooms 48-49 in the Center of Compassion, followed by the service in the Sanctuary at 6:15PM. Following the service, we hope to continue the practice of our Faith in Action team bringing in some of our mission partners for sharing updates and answering questions of how we are joining others in loving our neighbors and making the love of Christ known.

Wednesday during Lent sharing our Outreach Ministries:

Lenten Education-

March 18- Ted Taylor from Family Promise

March 25- Egypt Highlights, Pastor Nanette and Mark Christofferson



Music Notes....

Handbell Ringers Needed

Do you read music and count beats? We would love to have you join our Handbell Choir! We are looking for ringers for monthly Sunday performances.

Rehearsals are held **Thursdays at 7:30 p.m. in the Greenroom**. If you're interested, please let me know—we'd love to ring with you! You can contact me at jungmusic@loclc.org

We can't wait to celebrate this wonderful season of music, fellowship, and joy with all of you.

With gratitude and excitement,
Jung Lee



New Member Classes

New Member class will be held on Sunday, March 22nd at 11:45am to 2:30pm in the Fellowship Hall. Lunch will be served. Any questions, please contact Dianne Oien at dianneoien@loclc.org



Calling All Bakers

Cookie Ministry is looking for people who like to bake. The Cookie Ministry is part of the Faith in Action programs at Love of Christ. This ministry makes cookies for our various events that are held here on our campus and beyond our campus. If you are interested in baking cookies for this ministry, please contact Eunice Ketterling at ketts14az@gmail.com



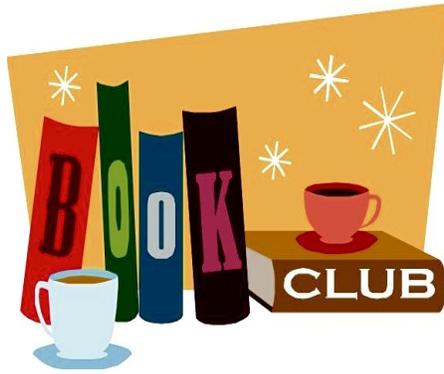
Community Garden News

Come join us and grow something beautiful. Meeting on 3/22 at noon in Rooms 48 & 49.

Questions, contact Nancy at Dntoll74@gmail.com



Naomi Circle will meet on April 13th, at 1PM in the Fellowship Hall. All women are welcome—invite your friends!



The next meeting of the LOC Book Club will be held on Sunday, March 22nd in the Leadership Room after the 9:00 am service.

We will be discussing **The Glassmaker** by Tracy Chevalier. Here is a synopsis of the book:

In 1486, Orsola Rosso is the eldest daughter in a family of glassblowers in Murano, Italy. As a woman, she is not meant to blow glass - but when her father dies, she teaches herself to make beads in secret, and her work becomes the cornerstone of the Rosso family fortune. Skipping through six centuries, we follow the Rosso family as they live through creative triumph and heartbreaking loss. From a plague in Venice to Continental soldiers stripping its palazzos bare, from the domination of Murano and its glass maestros to the transformation of the city of trade into a city of tourists, we experience it all.

In every era, the Rosso women ensure that their work and their bonds endure.

Please join us on March 22nd as we explore the beauty of glassmaking and the family who endured through centuries of change.

Grab a cup of coffee and a treat in the Hospitality Room and head over to the Leadership Room located next to the church offices.

Happy Reading!

Fortieth Anniversary Celebration to be Held on April 12

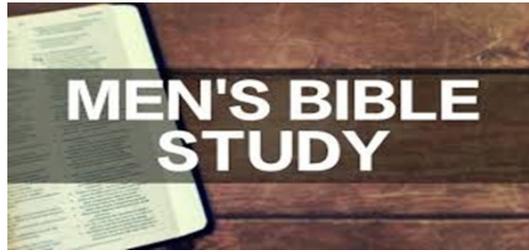


We will celebrate 40 years of the ministry of Love of Christ Lutheran Church on April 12 with one joint worship service at 9:00 in the Center of Compassion.

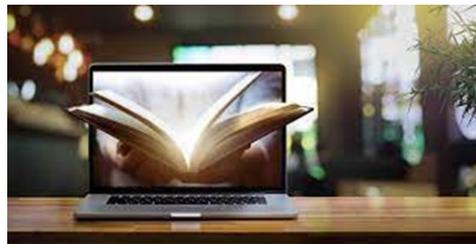
Special guests will include some of those who have led Love of Christ and its programs through the years. Rev. Bill Phillips, who served as senior pastor from 2002 to 2006, and his wife Christine will be present, as will Rev. Eric Allert, associate pastor from 2011 to 2016, and his wife Jenny.

In addition, several of the staff who served Love of Christ for more than 10 years will also be recognized. These include Dick Beckman who joined the Love of Christ staff in 2001, Dianne Oien in 2003, and Jung Lee in 2006. Retired Preschool Director, Janice Herron; former Youth Director, Nathan Thompson; and long-time church secretary Darlene Fleischhauer also plan to attend, if able.

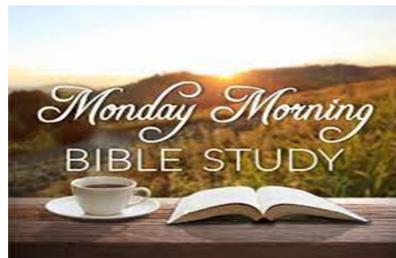
Following the worship service, there will be a video presentation of highlights of our first 40 years. Everyone is welcome to greet old friends and meet new ones while enjoying a variety of snacks and coffee provided by the Hospitality Team and viewing photo displays of the church's ministries over the years.



Pastor Steve Talmage is leading the Monday Men's Bible Study on 1st Corinthians at 6:30-7:30AM in the Leadership Room. Men of all ages are welcome to participate.



Online Video introductions provided by our pastors of Sunday Lectionary readings are offered each week. They may be found on Facebook, YouTube or loveofchristchurch.net



Monday Morning Bible Study is offered in the Leadership Room, 10:30-Coffee Fellowship, 11:00AM Bible Study.



Prayer Share Care Women's Bible Study

All women are invited to a weekly Bible study group called Prayer Share Care. ***This group meets on Thursday afternoons at 1:00 in the Leadership Room.*** Please contact Ruth Leonard or Margrit Aeschbach at the following emails for more information. (Margrit: mswiss43@gmail.com and Ruth: ruthleonard@icloud.com)



Faith stretch yoga **meets on Thursdays at 9:00am in Outreach room.**
For questions and more information, text Georgia at 406-925-0013 or
email: nonnagg51@gmail.com .



There is hangout this Sunday from 10 to Noon in the Youth Room!
There is Youth Group this Wednesday night from 6-7:30pm in Youth Room!
Contact Mason Weatherly for more info at masonw@loclc.org



Confirmation

Confirmation will be held on Wednesday nights from 6PM to 7PM in the room 48.

Next Confirmation class will be held on Wednesday, March 25th.

Any questions, please contact Pastor Nanette at nanette@loclc.org

Spring/Summer Overview for 2026 Save the Dates:

April 12: 40th Anniversary Celebration at 9:00 am. This is the only service we are having that day! Come and celebrate!

May 3: Children's Musical

May Family Promise 5/10-17, We will need meals, overnights, and hosts.

June 11,12,13: Synod Assembly at LoC

Wednesday during Lent sharing our Outreach Ministry: Family Promise

About Family Promise

In Operation since 2000, Family Promise – Greater Phoenix has provided more than just shelter for families. For the past 19 years, the programs at Family Promise have helped more than 500 families. These programs have enabled families to move from homelessness to self-sufficiency.

The Family Promise Mission is providing emergency shelter and social services to help families move toward independent housing and self-sufficiency.

Vision: The Vision of Family Promise is a community of whole and healthy families.

At Family Promise, we give families the tools and training to care for their children, find employment and housing, and become independent and successful. We strive to provide a safety net for children and their families before they drop into a cycle of endless shelters, loss of school attendance, unemployment, family instability and foster care.

Family Promise provides basic needs such as food, clothing and shelter, but we also provide a safe, encouraging, and constructive environment for families that feel lost and scared. Family Promise's long-term goal is to break the cycle of homelessness and create a sense of community for the families that participate in the program, and the thousands of volunteers that have contributed to this program over the years.

Congregations

Congregations are at the heart of our work. More than two dozen congregations provide temporary shelter, meals, activities and compassion to our families. Up to four families are housed on the campus of each congregation for a week at a time, providing a safe, accepting environment. Each morning, a Family Promise van brings family members to the Family Center, where the children may depart for school, some adults may head to work and others continue their job search. Each evening, the families return to the congregation for dinner, activities and an overnight stay in their own room or area.

"A chance for volunteers at congregations to live their faith. It's a wonderful mission outreach program that takes place right in the safe environment of your congregation."

Refugee Family Co-Sponsorship with Lutheran Social Services:

Our Co-Sponsorship Team has been helping a refugee family from Syria. The help that is needed is working with the adults who are learning English. This team is making wonderful progress and forming some beautiful relationships with the family as well. We have provided back to school clothing and backpacks for each of the four children, along with teaching them English. If you are interested in learning more or think you might like to join this team, please contact Chris Norden at norden6162@gmail.com



Young Adults are typically between the ages of 18 and 30-5 ish! We are fortunate to have these Young Adults interested in gathering and learning together. Our next meeting will be **on Sunday, April 26th** at 12:15 at Got Sushi on N. Power Rd and McDowell, where we will discuss Buddhism and Confucianism. If you have any questions, please contact Pastor Nanette or Laura Ontiveros.



Our Sunday School Ministry continues for ages 4-2nd grade, Sunday School is from 9:10-9:50. Children are to come to church with their parents and are dismissed for Sunday School after the Children's Message. They return to worship during Communion. For grades 3-6, Sunday school begins at 9:50 and they are done at 10:20. Sunday School takes place in the Godly Play room. For any questions, please contact Pastor Nanette at nanette@loclc.org



Grades 4,5, and 6 will meet in the CoC on **Sunday, April 12th at 9:00** to be a part of the 40th anniversary worship service. Please contact Laura Ontiveros or Pastor Nanette for more information

WOW! Word on Wednesdays continues!

Children's Musical, Adult Bible Study, and Confirmation/Youth Group begin at 6PM. A light meal will be served at 5:30 in rooms 48 & 49 in Center of Compassion.

Children's Musical—The FAB 4 Kids Show—Rockin' the Gospels All the Way to the Cross!

Rehearsals are on Wednesdays from 6pm to 7pm in Room 50

Performance: Sunday, May 3rd at 9AM

🌸 MomCo at Love of Christ Lutheran Church! 🌸

Calling all moms! Whether you're in the thick of toddlerhood, navigating teenage years, or somewhere in between — you're not alone.



We're excited to announce that our church will now be hosting MomCo, a community designed for moms, by moms. MomCo is a place where women gather in circles of support, friendship, and faith — because raising humans is both beautiful and hard, and no one should have to do it alone:

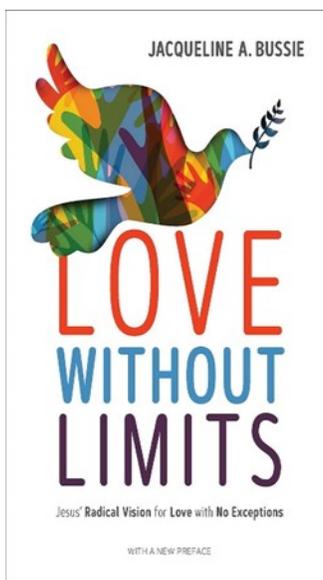
- Build meaningful, lasting friendships
- Encourage and equip moms to lead with love
- Grow the church by nurturing families in faith
- Bring mothers and their families closer to Jesus

Join Us! Location: Love of Christ

📅 When: **Next meeting April 1st**, first Wednesday of the month from 6:00 PM to 7:00 PM in Godly Playroom located in entrance to Center of Compassion.

📞 Contact: Kacey Weir or Pastor Nanette Christofferson 🌐

Online Options: - <http://www.themom.co/groups/loveofchristmesa>



Love Without Limits will meet on Wednesday, April 8th at 4:30 in the Fellowship Hall.

In her book, Jacqueline Bussie says nothing is more scandalous than a “love without limits.” How does a love without limits mirror Jesus and the God we are called to serve? How does this echo Jesus’ ministry in Luke 15 (the parables of being lost) or Paul’s proclamation in Galatians 3:28 (There is no longer Jew or Greek, there is no longer slave or free, there is no longer male and female; for all of you are one Christ Jesus)? This study is open to all women who are interested in learning about our God who loves without limits! They will be discussing Chapter 6.

BLANKETS FOR KIDS!!!



Questions? Contact Jan Barnett at: barnett105@gmail.com

- 2 Methods of finishing the edges of the blankets
- Sewing around the edges
- Crocheting around the edges
- Both methods start the same

Lay Fabric on a table trim off the Salvage edges of the fleece;

- Sewing around the edges

Fold $\frac{3}{4}$ to 1 inch old around the edge of the;

Pin the folded edges all around the edge;

Choose a decorative stitch on sewing machine and start sewing

If your machine only does Zig Zag that is great also.

- Optional--Baste $\frac{3}{8}$ to $\frac{1}{2}$ inch of fold around the edge of the fleece with a needle and thread (Optional)

OR

- Just fold the fabric over about $\frac{3}{8}$ to $\frac{1}{2}$ of an inch and cut very small slits in the fold;
- Slits should be no more than $\frac{1}{4}$ of an inch in length and around $\frac{1}{2}$ to $\frac{5}{8}$ inch from the each other
- If you basted around the edges

Remove the basting from the fleece

- If you have a rotary cutter your can purchase wheels that will cut the slits in the fleece material the same distance and the slit created is large enough to slip the crochet hook through. Then follow the remaining directions.
- If you just folded and cut the slits;

Start crocheting around the edge. (I start 6 or 7 inches from the corner of the fleece to make turning the first corner easier.)

1. Start by creating a slipknot.
2. Insert the crochet hook through a slit in the fleece and pull the loop of the slip knot through;
3. Chain 3 times (create a chain by yarning over the hook and pulling it back through the initial loop.); chain only 2 times if you have used the rotary cutter;
4. Push the crochet hook through the slit next to the one just used (back to front) and pull a loop back through the slit. (You will have 2 loops on the crochet hook.)
5. With the 2 loops still on the hook, yarn over the hook and pull through both loops. Now chain 2 more times.
6. Proceed around the fleece using steps 4 and 5.
7. To turn a corner follow steps 4 and 5, but insert the hook again in the same slit and do 1 chain and then insert the hook again and perform steps 4 and 5, Then you should be on a new side of the blanket and proceed following steps 4 and 5

There is an additional set of slides which have instructions on how to start crocheting. If you do not need those instructions, ignore.

Scripture Lesson
A Brief Look at Ezekiel 37:1-14
with Pastor Steve Talmage
(14 min)



A Brief Look at Ezekiel 37:1-14

Sunday, March 22, 2026



YouTube: <https://youtu.be/TkvlQlj-gk4>

Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/reel/3173434452856426>

Website: <https://www.loveofchristchurch.net/media/series/7vjwfnk/bible-lessons>

Scripture Lesson
A Brief Look at John 11:1-45
With Pastor Steve Talmage
(13 min)



YouTube: <https://youtu.be/2fv1Jvaq2aM>

Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/reel/832758086502433>

Website: <https://www.loveofchristchurch.net/media/series/7vjwfnk/bible-lessons>

Sunday, March 22, 2026, 7:50 am, 9 and 10:30,

some on  & 

Pastor Steve Talmage “The Unsettling Reality of Death ”

Ezekiel 37:1-14

The hand of the Lord came upon me, and he brought me out by the spirit of the Lord and set me down in the middle of a valley; it was full of bones. He led me all around them; there were very many lying in the valley, and they were very dry. He said to me, “Mortal, can these bones live?” I answered, “O Lord God, you know.” Then he said to me, “Prophecy to these bones and say to them: O dry bones, hear the word of the Lord. Thus says the Lord God to these bones: I will cause breath to enter you, and you shall live. I will lay sinews on you and will cause flesh to come upon you and cover you with skin and put breath in you, and you shall live, and you shall know that I am the Lord.”

So I prophesied as I had been commanded, and as I prophesied, suddenly there was a noise, a rattling, and the bones came together, bone to its bone. I looked, and there were sinews on them, and flesh had come upon them, and skin had covered them, but there was no breath in them. Then he said to me, “Prophecy to the breath, prophesy, mortal, and say to the breath: Thus says the Lord God: Come from the four winds, O breath, and breathe upon these slain, that they may live.” I prophesied as he commanded me, and the breath came into them, and they lived and stood on their feet, a vast multitude.

Then he said to me, “Mortal, these bones are the whole house of Israel. They say, ‘Our bones are dried up, and our hope is lost; we are cut off completely.’ Therefore prophesy and say to them: Thus says the Lord God: I am going to open your graves and bring you up from your graves, O my people, and I will bring you back to the land of Israel. And you shall know that I am the Lord when I open your graves and bring you up from your graves, O my people. I will put my spirit within you, and you shall live, and I will place you on your own soil; then you shall know that I, the Lord, have spoken and will act, says the Lord.”

Romans 8:6-11

To set the mind on the flesh is death, but to set the mind on the Spirit is life and peace. For this reason the mind that is set on the flesh is hostile to God; it does not submit to God’s law—indeed, it cannot, and those who are in the flesh cannot please God.

But you are not in the flesh; you are in the Spirit, since the Spirit of God dwells in you. Anyone who does not have the Spirit of Christ does not belong to him. But if Christ is in you, then the body is dead because of sin, but the Spirit is life because of righteousness. If the Spirit of him who raised Jesus from the dead dwells in

you, he who raised Christ Jesus from the dead will give life to your mortal bodies also through his Spirit that dwells in you.

John 11:1-45

The Death of Lazarus

Now a certain man was ill, Lazarus of Bethany, the village of Mary and her sister Martha. Mary was the one who anointed the Lord with perfume and wiped his feet with her hair; her brother Lazarus was ill. So the sisters sent a message to Jesus, “Lord, he whom you love is ill.” But when Jesus heard it, he said, “This illness does not lead to death; rather, it is for God’s glory, so that the Son of God may be glorified through it.” Accordingly, though Jesus loved Martha and her sister and Lazarus, after having heard that Lazarus^[b] was ill, he stayed two days longer in the place where he was.

Then after this he said to the disciples, “Let us go to Judea again.” The disciples said to him, “Rabbi, the Jews were just now trying to stone you, and are you going there again?” Jesus answered, “Are there not twelve hours of daylight? Those who walk during the day do not stumble because they see the light of this world. But those who walk at night stumble because the light is not in them.” After saying this, he told them, “Our friend Lazarus has fallen asleep, but I am going there to awaken him.” The disciples said to him, “Lord, if he has fallen asleep, he will be all right.” Jesus, however, had been speaking about his death, but they thought that he was referring merely to sleep. Then Jesus told them plainly, “Lazarus is dead. For your sake I am glad I was not there, so that you may believe. But let us go to him.” Thomas, who was called the Twin, said to his fellow disciples, “Let us also go, that we may die with him.

When Jesus arrived, he found that Lazarus had already been in the tomb four days. Now Bethany was near Jerusalem, some two miles away, and many of the Jews had come to Martha and Mary to console them about their brother. When Martha heard that Jesus was coming, she went and met him, while Mary stayed at home. Martha said to Jesus, “Lord, if you had been here, my brother would not have died. But even now I know that God will give you whatever you ask of him.” Jesus said to her, “Your brother will rise again.” Martha said to him, “I know that he will rise again in the resurrection on the last day.” Jesus said to her, “I am the resurrection and the life. Those who believe in me, even though they die, will live, and everyone who lives and believes in me will never die. Do you believe this?” She said to him, “Yes, Lord, I believe that you are the Messiah, the Son of God, the one coming into the world.” cont’d on next page

When she had said this, she went back and called her sister Mary and told her privately, "The Teacher is here and is calling for you." And when she heard it, she got up quickly and went to him. Now Jesus had not yet come to the village but was still at the place where Martha had met him. The Jews who were with her in the house consoling her saw Mary get up quickly and go out. They followed her because they thought that she was going to the tomb to weep there. When Mary came where Jesus was and saw him, she knelt at his feet and said to him, "Lord, if you had been here, my brother would not have died." When Jesus saw her weeping and the Jews who came with her also weeping, he was greatly disturbed in spirit and deeply moved. He said, "Where have you laid him?" They said to him, "Lord, come and see." Jesus began to weep. So the Jews said, "See how he loved him!"³⁷ But some of them said, "Could not he who opened the eyes of the blind man have kept this man from dying?"

Then Jesus, again greatly disturbed, came to the tomb. It was a cave, and a stone was lying against it. Jesus said, "Take away the stone." Martha, the sister of the dead man, said to him, "Lord, already there is a stench because he has been dead four days." Jesus said to her, "Did I not tell you that if you believed you would see the glory of God?" So they took away the stone. And Jesus looked upward and said, "Father, I thank you for having heard me. I knew that you always hear me, but I have said this for the sake of the crowd standing here, so that they may believe that you sent me." When he had said this, he cried with a loud voice, "Lazarus, come out!" The dead man came out, his hands and feet bound with strips of cloth and his face wrapped in a cloth. Jesus said to them, "Unbind him, and let him go."