

Welcome to Worship

at

St. John's Evangelical Lutheran Church

a reconciling in Christ congregation



Ash Wednesday

March 5, 2025

7:00 pm

**Interim Pastor:** The Rev. Mike Button

**Director of Music:** Jessica Madow

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## Statement of Welcome

*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 in Christ Jesus. — Galatians 3:28*

As a community of God striving to be open to all people, we at St. John's Lutheran Congregation believe that the gospel is God's gift to all people, to be shared unconditionally. We welcome all to join us as we struggle to better understand the mysteries of God's teachings. We are challenged by Christ to care for, to love, to understand, and to listen to each other, regardless of race, age, gender, marital status, physical and mental abilities, sexual/affectional orientation, national origin, or economic status. We celebrate together our unity as God's people.

St. John's Lutheran Congregation is a place for each person to shine in their own unique gifts.

## Statement of Mission

St. John's Lutheran Church is a downtown, community-oriented, congregation of Christians. We worship God, strive to welcome, and wholly accept everyone, and reach out with and in God's love.

~

**Communion** is a time we invite all baptized Christians who believe that our Lord Jesus is truly present in the bread and wine of the Sacrament. If this is your belief, there are instructions to follow at the time of Communion later in the bulletin.

### **Service Notes:**

- (asterisk) indicates, please stand as you are able.
- Page # indicates the front of the hymnal is used . . .
- Hymn # indicates the back of the Hymnal is used . . .

### **Hymn Book Abbreviations:**

ELW – Evangelical Lutheran Worship Book  
WOV – With One Voice  
ACS – All Creation Sings

# Gathering

*The Holy Spirit calls us together as the people of God.*

Welcome

## \*Gathering Hymn

ELW # 320 *“The Glory of These Forty Days”*

**1 The glory of these forty days  
we celebrate with songs of praise;  
for Christ, through whom all things were made,  
himself has fasted and has prayed.**

**2 Alone and fasting Moses saw  
the loving God who gave the law;  
and to Elijah, fasting, came  
the steeds and chariots of flame.**

**3 So Daniel trained his mystic sight,  
delivered from the lions' might;  
and John, the Bridegroom's friend, became  
the herald of Messiah's name.**

**4 Then grant, O God, that we may, too,  
return in fast and prayer to you.  
Our spirits strengthen with your grace,  
and give us joy to see your face.**

## \*Greeting

P: The Lord be with you.

**C: And also with you.**

## \*Prayer of the Day

A: Let us pray. Almighty and ever-living God, you hate nothing you have made, and you forgive the sins of all who are penitent. Create in us new and honest hearts, so that, truly repenting of our sins, we may receive from you, the God of all mercy, full pardon and forgiveness through your Son, Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever.

**C: Amen**

## Word

*God speaks to us in scripture reading, preaching, and song.*

### First Reading

**Joel 2:1-2, 12-17**

<sup>1</sup>Blow the trumpet in Zion; sound the alarm on my holy mountain!

Let all the inhabitants of the land tremble, for the day of the LORD is coming, it is near—<sup>2</sup>a day of darkness and gloom, a day of clouds and thick darkness!

Like blackness spread upon the mountains a great and powerful army comes; their like has never been from of old, nor will be again after them in ages to come.

<sup>12</sup>Yet even now, says the LORD, return to me with all your heart, with fasting, with weeping, and with mourning; <sup>13</sup>rend your hearts

and not your clothing.

Return to the LORD, your God, for he is gracious and merciful, slow to anger, and abounding in steadfast love, and relents from punishing.

<sup>14</sup>Who knows whether he will not turn and relent, and leave a blessing behind him, a grain offering and a drink offering for the LORD, your God?

<sup>15</sup>Blow the trumpet in Zion; sanctify a fast; call a solemn assembly; <sup>16</sup>gather the people.

Sanctify the congregation; assemble the aged; gather the children, even infants at the breast.

Let the bridegroom leave his room, and the bride her canopy.

<sup>17</sup>Between the vestibule and the altar let the priests, the ministers of the LORD, weep.

Let them say, "Spare your people, O LORD, and do not make your heritage a mockery, a byword among the nations.

Why should it be said among the peoples,  
'Where is their God?'"

A: The Word of the Lord.

**C: Thanks be to God.**

**Responsive Reading:**

**Psalm 51:1-17**

<sup>1</sup>Have mercy on me, O God, according to your steadfast love; in your great compassion blot out my offenses.

<sup>2</sup>**Wash me through and through from my wickedness, and cleanse me from my sin.**

<sup>3</sup>For I know my offenses, and my sin is ever before me.

**<sup>4</sup>Against you only have I sinned and done what is evil in your sight;  
so you are justified when you speak and right in your judgment.**

<sup>5</sup>Indeed, I was born steeped in wickedness,  
a sinner from my mother's womb.

**<sup>6</sup>Indeed, you delight in truth deep within me,  
and would have me know wisdom deep within.**

<sup>7</sup>Remove my sins with hyssop, and I shall be clean;  
wash me, and I shall be purer than snow.

**<sup>8</sup>Let me hear joy and gladness;  
that the body you have broken may rejoice.**

<sup>9</sup>Hide your face from my sins,  
and blot out all my wickedness.

**<sup>10</sup>Create in me a clean heart, O God,  
and renew a right spirit within me.**

<sup>11</sup>Cast me not away from your presence,  
and take not your Holy Spirit from me.

**<sup>12</sup>Restore to me the joy of your salvation  
and sustain me with your bountiful Spirit.**

<sup>13</sup>Let me teach your ways to offenders,  
and sinners shall be restored to you.

**<sup>14</sup>Rescue me from bloodshed, O God of my salvation,  
and my tongue shall sing of your righteousness.**

<sup>15</sup>O Lord, open my lips,  
and my mouth shall proclaim your praise.

**<sup>16</sup>For you take no delight in sacrifice, or I would give it.  
You are not pleased with burnt offering.**

<sup>17</sup>The sacrifice of God is a troubled spirit;  
a troubled and broken heart, O God, you will not despise.

## **Second Reading**

## **2 Corinthians 5:20b--6:10**

<sup>20b</sup>We entreat you on behalf of Christ, be reconciled to God. <sup>21</sup>For our sake he made him to be sin who knew no sin, so that in him we might become the righteousness of God.

<sup>6:1</sup>As we work together with him, we urge you also not to accept the grace of God in vain. <sup>2</sup>For he says,

“At an acceptable time I have listened to you,  
and on a day of salvation I have helped you.”

See, now is the acceptable time; see, now is the day of salvation!

<sup>3</sup>We are putting no obstacle in anyone’s way, so that no fault may be found with our ministry, <sup>4</sup>but as servants of God we have commended ourselves in every way: through great endurance, in afflictions, hardships, calamities, <sup>5</sup>beatings, imprisonments, riots, labors, sleepless nights, hunger; <sup>6</sup>by purity, knowledge, patience, kindness, holiness of spirit, genuine love, <sup>7</sup>truthful speech, and the power of God; with the weapons of righteousness for the right hand and for the left; <sup>8</sup>in honor and dishonor, in ill repute and good repute. We are treated as impostors, and yet are true; <sup>9</sup>as unknown, and yet are well known; as dying, and see—we are alive; as punished, and yet not killed; <sup>10</sup>as sorrowful, yet always rejoicing; as poor, yet making many rich; as having nothing, and yet possessing everything.

A: The Word of the Lord.

**C: Thanks be to God.**

**\*Gospel Acclamation**

*“Return to the Lord . . .”*



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, and a - bound - ing in stead - fast love.

**\* Gospel**

**Matthew 6:1-6, 16-21**

L: The Holy Gospel according to Matthew, the 6<sup>th</sup> chapter.

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

<sup>1</sup>“Beware of practicing your piety before others in order to be seen by them; for then you have no reward from your Father in heaven.

<sup>2</sup>“So whenever you give alms, do not sound a trumpet before you, as the hypocrites do in the synagogues and in the streets, so that they may be praised by others. Truly I tell you, they have received their reward. <sup>3</sup>But when you give alms, do not let your left hand know what your right hand is doing, <sup>4</sup>so that your alms may be done in secret; and your Father who sees in secret will reward you.

<sup>5</sup>“And whenever you pray, do not be like the hypocrites; for they love to stand and pray in the synagogues and at the street corners, so that they may be seen by others. Truly I tell you, they have received their reward. <sup>6</sup>But whenever you pray, go into your room



and shut the door and pray to your Father who is in secret; and your Father who sees in secret will reward you.

<sup>16</sup>“And whenever you fast, do not look dismal, like the hypocrites, for they disfigure their faces so as to show others that they are fasting. Truly I tell you, they have received their reward.

<sup>17</sup>But when you fast, put oil on your head and wash your face, <sup>18</sup>so that your fasting may be seen not by others but by your Father who is in secret; and your Father who sees in secret will reward you.

<sup>19</sup>“Do not store up for yourselves treasures on earth, where moth and rust consume and where thieves break in and steal; <sup>20</sup>but store up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust consumes and where thieves do not break in and steal. <sup>21</sup>For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also.”

P: The Gospel of the Lord.

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

**Sermon** — *The Reverend Mike Button*

## **\*Hymn of the Day –**

ELW #793 *“Be Thou My Vision”*

**1 Be thou my vision, O Lord of my heart;  
naught be all else to me, save that thou art:  
thou my best thought both by day and by night,  
waking or sleeping, thy presence my light.**

**2 Be thou my wisdom, and thou my true word;  
I ever with thee and thou with me, Lord.  
Thou my soul's shelter, and thou my high tow'r,  
raise thou me heav'nward, O Pow'r of my pow'r.**

**3 Riches I heed not, nor vain, empty praise,  
thou mine inheritance, now and always:  
thou and thou only, the first in my heart,  
great God of heaven, my treasure thou art.**

**4 Light of my soul, after victory won,  
may I reach heaven's joys, O heaven's Sun!  
Heart of my own heart, whatever befall,  
still be my vision, O Ruler of all.**

## **\*Invitation to Lent**

P: Friends in Christ, today with the whole church we enter the time of remembering Jesus' passover from death to life, and our life in Christ is renewed.

We begin this holy season by acknowledging our need for repentance and for God's mercy. We are created to experience joy in communion with God, to love one another, and to live in harmony with creation. But our sinful rebellion separates us from

God, our neighbors, and creation, so that we do not enjoy the life our creator intended.

As disciples of Jesus, we are called to a discipline that contends against evil and resists whatever leads us away from love of God and neighbor. I invite you, therefore, to the discipline of Lent—self-examination and repentance, prayer and fasting, sacrificial giving and works of love—strengthened by the gifts of word and sacrament. Let us continue our journey through these forty days to the great Three Days of Jesus' death and resurrection.

### **\*Confession of Sin**

P: Let us confess our sin in the presence of God and of one another. Most holy and merciful God,

**C: We confess to you and to one another, and before the whole company of heaven, that we have sinned by our fault, by our own fault, by our own most grievous fault, in thought, word, and deed, by what we have done and by what we have left undone.**

P: We have not loved you with our whole heart, and mind, and strength. We have not loved our neighbors as ourselves. We have not forgiven others as we have been forgiven.

**C: Have mercy on us, O God.**

P: We have shut our ears to your call to serve as Christ served us. We have not been true to the mind of Christ. We have grieved your Holy Spirit.

**C: Have mercy on us, O God.**

P: Our past unfaithfulness, the pride, envy, hypocrisy, and apathy that have infected our lives, we confess to you.

**C: Have mercy on us, O God.**

P: Our self-indulgent appetites and ways, and our exploitation of other people, we confess to you.

**C: Have mercy on us, O God.**

P: Our negligence in prayer and worship, and our failure to share the faith that is in us, we confess to you.

**C: Have mercy on us, O God.**

P: Our neglect of human need and suffering, and our indifference to injustice and cruelty, we confess to you.

**C: Have mercy on us, O God.**

P: Our false judgments, our uncharitable thoughts toward our neighbors, and our prejudice and contempt toward those who differ from us, we confess to you.

**C: Have mercy on us, O God.**

P: Our waste and pollution of your creation, and our lack of concern for those who come after us, we confess to you.

**C: Have mercy on us, O God.**

P: Restore us, O God, and let your anger depart from us.

**C: Hear us, O God, for your mercy is great.**

## Imposition of Ashes

P: Let us pray. Almighty God, you have created us out of the dust of the earth. May these ashes be a sign of our mortality and penitence, reminding us that only by the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ are we given eternal life, through the same Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord.

**C: Amen.**

*(People may come forward to receive the ashes.)*

P: Accomplish in us, O God, the work of your salvation,

**C: that we may show forth your glory in the world.**

P: By the cross and passion of your Son, our Savior,

**C: bring us with all your saints to the joy of his resurrection.**

P: Almighty God have mercy on us, forgive us all our sins through our Lord Jesus Christ, strengthen us in all goodness, and by the power of the Holy Spirit keep us in eternal life.

**C: Amen.**

## **\*Prayers of Intercession**

A: Let us pray. God of our journeys, we pray for the church as the season of Lent begins. Guide your people in spiritual practices and preparation for baptism. Strengthen communities of faith in discipleship and witness for the sake of the gospel. God, in your mercy,

**C: Receive our prayer.**

A: God of creation, we pray for the earth. As you once brought forth life from the dust, breathe healing and renewal into all places where ecosystems are stretched and strained. Nurture organic cycles of life, death, and rebirth. God, in your mercy,

**C: Receive our prayer.**

A: God of the nations, we pray for an end to wars and occupations that reduce communities to ash. Turn leaders away from fearful decision-making, and lead all people into the justice and compassion of your reign. God, in your mercy,

**C: Receive our prayer.**

A: God of the suffering, we pray for all who live with any pain including *those we mention on our prayer list . . . and those we name aloud or in our hearts . . .*). Comfort people living with chronic or terminal illnesses, addictions, or anxiety. Grant that all who dwell in the dust of grief may know your presence there. God, in your mercy,

**C: Receive our prayer.**

A: God of community, we pray for those who accompany the dying: for first responders, health care and hospice workers, chaplains, and those who facilitate burials of the dead. Sustain them as they serve their neighbors in life and death with dignity and care. God, in your mercy,

**C: Receive our prayer.**

*Here other intercessions may be offered.*

A: God of the cross, we give thanks for those who have completed their lives on earth and have returned to you. Strengthen us with the promise that within the ashes of death are the seeds of resurrection life. God, in your mercy,

**C: Receive our prayer.**

A: Receive the prayers of your people and draw all things together in your love, in the name of Jesus, who leads us from death to life.

**C: Amen.**

## Meal

*God feeds us with the presence of Jesus Christ.*

*(Ushers now proceed to the Altar to receive the offering plates...)*

**Offertory** “Hear Our Prayer” by Mark Patterson  
Sung by the Wittenberg Choir

**\*Presentation of Gifts** *(Ushers now bring the offering plates forward.)*

## \*Offertory Hymn

ELW #185 "Create in Me a Clean Heart"

Cre - ate in me a clean heart, O God, and re - new a right  
spir - it with - in me. Cast me not a - way from your  
pres - ence, and take not your Ho - ly Spir - it from me.  
Re - store to me the joy of your sal - va - tion, and up - hold me  
with your free Spir - it. Cre - ate in me a clean heart, O God,  
and re - new a right spir - it with - in me.

## \*Offertory Prayer

A: Let us pray. God our provider, you have not fed us with bread alone, but with words of grace and life. Bless us and these your gifts, which we receive from your bounty, through Jesus Christ our Lord.

C: Amen



## **\*Great Thanksgiving**

P: The Lord be with you.

**C: And also with you.**

P: Lift up your hearts.

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

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

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

## **\* Preface**

*(Leader continues . . .)*

## \*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.

## \*Thanksgiving at the Table *(Leader continues . . .)*

P: Blessed are you, O God of the universe. Your mercy is everlasting and your faithfulness endures from age to age.

Praise to you for creating the heavens and the earth.

Praise to you for saving the earth from the waters of the flood.

Praise to you for bringing the Israelites safely through the sea.

Praise to you for leading your people through the wilderness to the land of milk and honey.

Praise to you for the words and deeds of Jesus, your anointed one.

Praise to you for the death and resurrection of Christ.

Praise to you for your Spirit poured out on all nations.

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.

With this bread and cup we remember our Lord's Passover from death to life as we proclaim the mystery of faith:

**C: Christ has died. Christ is risen. Christ will come again.**

P: O God of resurrection and new life: Pour out your Holy Spirit on us and on these gifts of bread and wine. Bless this feast. Grace our table with your presence.

**C: Come, Holy Spirit.**

P: Reveal yourself to us in the breaking of the bread. Raise us up as the body of Christ for the world. Breathe new life into us. Send us forth, burning with justice, peace, and love.

**C: Come, Holy Spirit.**

P: With . . . your holy ones of all times and places, with the earth and all its creatures, with sun and moon and stars, we praise you, O God, blessed and holy Trinity, now and forever.

**C: Amen.**

*\*Lord's Prayer*

**C: 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.**

## \*Lamb of God

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.

## \*Invitation to Communion

**Holy Communion** - *If you are baptized and believe that it is the real blood and body of Christ, we welcome you at the Lord's table.*

*\*At the invitation of the usher, please proceed to the front to receive communion. Communion is also available in your pew, please let an usher know. Gluten free wafers and grape juice are available upon request.*

## \*Table Blessing

# \*Post Communion Hymn

ELW #209 " *Blessed Be God, the Source of All Life* "



Bless-ed be God, the source of all life, the word of sal -



va-tion, the spir - it of mer - cy. Bless-ed be God, the source of all



life, the word of sal - va-tion, the spir - it of mer - cy.

# \*Prayer after Communion

A: Let us pray. Merciful God, accompany our journey through these forty days. Renew us in the gift of baptism, that we may provide for those who are poor, pray for those in need, fast from self-indulgence, and above all that we may find our treasure in the life of your Son, Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever.

**C: Amen.**

# Sending

*God blesses us and sends us in mission to the world.*

## **\*Blessing**

P: Almighty God, Father, ✚ Son, and Holy Spirit, bless you now and forever.

C: Amen.

## **\*Sending Hymn**

ELW # 599 *“Lord Jesus, Think on Me ”*

**1 Lord Jesus, think on me,  
and purge away my sin;  
from selfish passions set me  
free  
and make me pure within.**

**2 Lord Jesus, think on me,  
by anxious thoughts  
oppressed;  
let me your loving servant be  
and taste your promised rest.**

**3 Lord Jesus, think on me,  
nor let me go astray;  
through darkness and  
perplexity  
point out your chosen way.**

**4 Lord Jesus, think on me,  
that, when the flood is past,  
I may the eternal brightness  
see  
and share your joy at last.**

## **\*Dismissal**

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

C: Thanks be to God.

**Thank you to our Worship Volunteers . . .**

**Worship Assistant**– Jim Heck

**Ushers** – Bob & Cindy Black

**Reader** – Jim Heck

**Altar Guild** – Sylvia Orem / Barbara Horinko

**Video Team** – David Faulkner

**This Week at St. John's: March 5<sup>th</sup> – March 9<sup>th</sup>**

**Wednesday** (3/5/25) – Ash Wednesday Evening  
Worship, 7:00 pm, Sanctuary

**Wednesday** (3/5/25) – Council Reports Due

**Friday** (3/7/25) – Gallery Art Drop-off, 10-1:00 pm

**Saturday** (3/8/25) – Archives, 10:00 am

**Sunday** (3/9/25) – Sunday School / Adult Form, 9:00 am

**Sunday** (3/9/25) – First Sunday of Lent, 10:30 am

**Sunday** (3/9/25) – Following Worship: Finance – Office,  
Membership –

**Sunday** (3/9/25) – Gallery Opening, 12-2:00 pm



***Prayer Concerns:***

Chuck, Vicki, Clark, Joe, Donna,  
Kara, Christine, Jessica, Janice, Donald, Danny,  
Helen, John, Carolyn, Lois Anne, Julia,  
Charles, David, Grace, Donald, Terry,  
Barbara, Jeff, Debbie, Pastor Orem, Peggy,  
Tony, Sharon, Sarah, Ruth, Arlene, Joan, Karen,  
our future Pastor, and Our Homebound  
Family and Friends . . .

Join the Easton Lutheran Churches for . . .

## Lenten Midweek Services

Light Meal – 6:00 pm

Worship – 7:00 pm

† Wednesday—March 12<sup>th</sup>

@ St. Paul's Third 2561 Newburg Rd, Easton, PA

† Wednesday—March 19<sup>th</sup>

@ St. John's 330 Ferry Street, Easton, PA

† Wednesday—March 26<sup>th</sup>

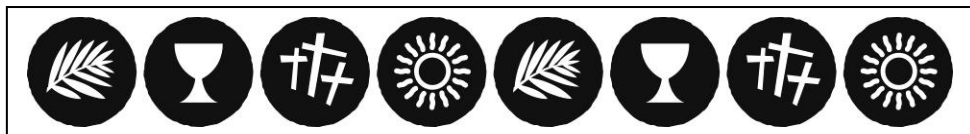
@ Arndt's Lutheran Church 1851 Arndt Rd, Easton, PA

† Wednesday—April 2<sup>nd</sup>

@ United Fellowship 2115 Washington Blvd. – Easton, PA

† Wednesday—April 9<sup>th</sup>

@ St. Andrew's 3900 Freemansburg Ave, Easton, PA



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