

# ORDER OF SERVICE

Service of the Word ELW (red), p. 211-222

First Sunday in Lent

[ \* Indicates when the congregation is seated ]

[ **Bolded** section of text is for congregation to recite ]

Music Director: Gloria Berg

## Gathering

\* **Chime ~ Time of Silence**

\* **Welcome & Announcements**

\* **Extinguishing of the first Lenten Candle**

We have come together this morning for renewal—in worship and as a community of faith. It's a time of reflection and stillness is upon us. It is the first Sunday in Lent—the season for journeys of the heart. We are entering a holy time. The Lenten candles have been lit, but over the next six weeks the light will slowly fade into darkness. For we are retelling the story of Jesus' betrayal and suffering and death. We do this not to be morbid, but because in the story of Jesus' death and resurrection, God is revealed—in the amazing transformation of death into life, in endings transformed into beginnings, and in dead-ends that become a source for new possibilities.

This is the sacred center of our faith—the truth made manifest in Jesus Christ—that God is in each and every one of us, quietly transforming us and the world. In his pain and suffering, Jesus speaks to every pain and loss you have endured and offers you the promise of transformation. It's an old story, but it still has the power to reveal, to heal, and to redeem. Jesus is at the heart of our faith, in the depth of our souls. He is waiting for us, inviting us to leave ordinary time and follow along with him on the journey that brought him to the Cross. Listen in silence, for Jesus is calling you.

*Silence*

As we extinguish this light, we acknowledge the darkness and pain of injustice in the world.

*A candle is extinguished.*

Loving God,

**as we journey through this holy season of Lent, give us strength and courage to make the changes that are needed in our lives. Open our hearts and minds to your steadfast presence and help us to put our trust in you. Amen.**

\* **Hymn (red) ELW 334 Tree of Life and Awesome Mystery (v. 1+Lent 1)**

1 Tree of Life and awesome myst'ry,  
in your death we are reborn;  
though you die in all of hist'ry,

still you rise with ev'ry morn,  
still you rise with ev'ry morn.

*Lent 1*

From the dawning of creation  
you have loved us as your own;  
stay with us through all temptation,  
make us turn to you alone.

Text: Marty Haugen, b. 1950. Text © 1984 GIA Publications, Inc., 7404 S. Mason Ave., Chicago, IL 60638.  
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**Confession and Forgiveness**

Blessed be the holy Trinity, one God, who forgives all our wrongdoings, whose mercy endures forever. **Amen.**

Let us return to God, confessing our sin in the assurance of God's abiding love.

*Silence is kept for reflection.*

Compassionate God,  
**you are slow to anger and abounding in steadfast love, but our lives do not always reflect you and your love for the world. We do not show others the tender compassion you have shown to us. We do not welcome others with the radical hospitality you grant to all people. We oppress others, even though you have set us free again and again. We squander the abundant gifts of the earth. Transform our lives and guide us again in the way of the cross. Amen.**

Beloved in Christ, God's arms are always stretched open wide to welcome the wandering ones home. In Christ you are forgiven. A place in God's house forever. **Amen.**

**Hymn (red) ELW 611 I Heard the Voice of Jesus Say**

- 1 I heard the voice of Jesus say,  
"Come unto me and rest;  
lay down, O weary one, lay down  
your head upon my breast."  
I came to Jesus as I was,  
so weary, worn, and sad;  
I found in him a resting-place,  
and he has made me glad.
- 2 I heard the voice of Jesus say,  
"Behold, I freely give  
the living water, thirsty one;  
stoop down and drink and live."  
I came to Jesus, and I drank  
of that life-giving stream;

my thirst was quenched, my soul revived,  
and now I live in him.

- 3 I heard the voice of Jesus say,  
"I am this dark world's light;  
look unto me, your morn shall rise,  
and all your day be bright."  
I looked to Jesus, and I found  
in him my star, my sun;  
and in that light of life I'll walk  
till trav'ling days are done.

Text: Horatius Bonar, 1808-1889

### **Apostolic Greeting (p. 213)**

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

Response: **And also with you.**

### **Kyrie (p. 213)**

Kyrie eleison: **Lord, have mercy.**

Christe eleison: **Christ, have mercy.**

Kyrie eleison: **Lord, have mercy.**

### **Prayer of the Day**

O Lord God, you led your people through the wilderness and brought them to the  
promised land. Guide us now, so that, following your Son, we may walk safely through the  
wilderness of this world toward the life you alone can give, through Jesus Christ, our  
Saviour and Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and  
forever. **Amen.**

\* **Choir** 'On Eagle's Wings' (Joncas/Wagner)

## **Word**

\* **First Reading: Deuteronomy 26:1-11**

The First Reading is from Deuteronomy, chapter 26:

<sup>1</sup>When you have come into the land that the LORD your God is giving you as an inheritance  
to possess, and you possess it, and settle in it, <sup>2</sup>you shall take some of the first of all the  
fruit of the ground, which you harvest from the land that the LORD your God is giving you,  
and you shall put it in a basket and go to the place that the LORD your God will choose as a  
dwelling for his name. <sup>3</sup>You shall go to the priest who is in office at that time, and say to  
him, "Today I declare to the LORD your God that I have come into the land that the LORD  
swore to our ancestors to give us." <sup>4</sup>When the priest takes the basket from your hand and  
sets it down before the altar of the LORD your God, <sup>5</sup>you shall make this response before  
the LORD your God: "A wandering Aramean was my ancestor; he went down into Egypt and  
lived there as an alien, few in number, and there he became a great nation, mighty and

populous. <sup>6</sup>When the Egyptians treated us harshly and afflicted us, by imposing hard labour on us, <sup>7</sup>we cried to the LORD, the God of our ancestors; the LORD heard our voice and saw our affliction, our toil, and our oppression. <sup>8</sup>The LORD brought us out of Egypt with a mighty hand and an outstretched arm, with a terrifying display of power, and with signs and wonders; <sup>9</sup>and he brought us into this place and gave us this land, a land flowing with milk and honey. <sup>10</sup>So now I bring the first of the fruit of the ground that you, O LORD, have given me." You shall set it down before the LORD your God and bow down before the LORD your God. <sup>11</sup>Then you, together with the Levites and the aliens who reside among you, shall celebrate with all the bounty that the LORD your God has given to you and to your house.

Response: Word of God. Word of Life. **Thanks be to God.**

**\* Psalm 91:1-2, 9-16 (sung responsively)**

Psalm 91 will be sung responsively:

<sup>1</sup> You who dwell in the shelter of | the Most High,  
who abide in the shadow of | the Almighty—

<sup>2</sup> **you will say to the LORD, "My refuge | and my stronghold,  
my God in whom I | put my trust."**

<sup>9</sup> Because you have made the | LORD your refuge,  
and the Most High your | habitation,

<sup>10</sup> **no evil | will befall you,  
nor shall affliction come | near your dwelling.**

<sup>11</sup> For God will give the angels charge | over you,  
to guard you in | all your ways.

<sup>12</sup> **Upon their hands they will | bear you up,  
lest you strike your foot a- | gainst a stone.**

<sup>13</sup> You will tread upon the lion | cub and viper;  
you will trample down the lion | and the serpent.

<sup>14</sup> **I will deliver those who | cling to me;  
I will uphold them, because they | know my name.**

<sup>15</sup> They will call me, and I will | answer them; I will be with  
them in trouble; I will rescue and | honour them.

<sup>16</sup> **With long life will I | satisfy them,  
and show them | my salvation.**

**Gospel Acclamation 'Return to the Lord' (p. 216)**

Return to the Lord, your God,  
return to the Lord, your God,  
who is gracious and merciful,

slow to anger,  
and abounding in steadfast love.

### **Gospel: Luke 4:1-13**

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

<sup>1</sup> Jesus, full of the Holy Spirit, returned from the Jordan and was led by the Spirit in the wilderness, <sup>2</sup> where for forty days he was tempted by the devil. He ate nothing at all during those days, and when they were over, he was famished. <sup>3</sup> The devil said to him, "If you are the Son of God, command this stone to become a loaf of bread." <sup>4</sup> Jesus answered him, "It is written, 'One does not live by bread alone.'" <sup>5</sup> Then the devil led him up and showed him in an instant all the kingdoms of the world. <sup>6</sup> And the devil said to him, "To you I will give their glory and all this authority; for it has been given over to me, and I give it to anyone I please. <sup>7</sup> If you, then, will worship me, it will all be yours." <sup>8</sup> Jesus answered him, "It is written, 'Worship the Lord your God, and serve only him.'" <sup>9</sup> Then the devil took him to Jerusalem, and placed him on the pinnacle of the temple, saying to him, "If you are the Son of God, throw yourself down from here, <sup>10</sup> for it is written, 'He will command his angels concerning you, to protect you,' <sup>11</sup> and 'On their hands they will bear you up, so that you will not dash your foot against a stone.'" <sup>12</sup> Jesus answered him, "It is said, 'Do not put the Lord your God to the test.'" <sup>13</sup> When the devil had finished every test, he departed from him until an opportune time.

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

### **Hymn (red) ELW 319 O Lord, throughout These Forty Days**

- 1 O Lord, throughout these forty days  
you prayed and kept the fast;  
inspire repentance for our sin,  
and free us from our past.
- 2 You strove with Satan, and you won;  
your faithfulness endured;  
lend us your nerve, your skill, and trust  
in God's eternal word.
- 3 Though parched and hungry, yet you prayed  
and fixed your mind above;  
so teach us to deny ourselves  
that we may know God's love.
- 4 Be with us through this season, Lord,  
and all our earthly days,  
that when the final Easter dawns,  
we join in heaven's praise.

Text: based on Claudia F. Hernaman, 1838-1898; para. Gilbert E. Doan Jr., b. 1930. Text © 1978 *Lutheran Book of Worship*, admin. Augsburg Fortress.

## \* Message

Grace and peace from our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. Amen.

Welcome to the season of Lent. Welcome to the forty-day journey leading up to Easter. This is an emotional, spiritual, deeply in history and tradition rooted journey. The word 'Lent' comes from an Old English word for 'lengthen,' and refers to the gradually lengthening days of late winter and early spring, at least here in the northern hemisphere. Imagine: if all you knew was winter, spring would seem impossible... and yet — the world comes back to life! Over the centuries, Lent evolved into a 40-day period of preparing for Holy Week, the joy of Easter, and the subsequent 50-day celebration of Eastertide.

We entered the season with the visual sign of the ashen cross on Ash Wednesday, remembering that we are dust and to dust we shall return. Remembering the cross we received on our baptism day on our foreheads as well. We belong to Christ in life and in death. A powerful symbol. Now we follow Jesus after he was baptized into his 40 day temptation in the wilderness just prior to the launch of his public ministry.

'40' was both a shorthand way of saying, 'for a long time,' and a way of resonating with other key '40's' in Israel's sacred memory: the flood's 40 days of rain, Moses' 40 days without food on Mount Sinai, Elijah's 40 days without food as he journeyed to Mount Horeb, Israel's 40 years of wilderness wandering, and not least, Jesus' 40 days of wilderness temptation. The underlying idea here is that God, like a master poet, choreographer, or composer, works through signature forms in time and space — and in the Season of Lent, we're invited to step into our own 40-day pilgrimage of preparation.

If you have been here last week you might recall when the Bishop pointed out in her sermon that there on the mountain top the voice from the cloud said, 'This is my Son, my Chosen; **listen** to him'. And now our season of Lent started on Ash Wednesday with the word: '**Remember**' – remember you are dust and to dust you shall return. In the English translation of the Bible, the word 'remember' appears no less than 253 times and that's not counting '*remembering*' or '*remembered*'. To *Remember* is a central theme in the bible. God knows the many distractions of the human mind and our gravitational pull toward 'worry', which draws us strongly, inevitably toward *forgetting*. From the portrayal of God's people that we read in the Bible — the image of ourselves, we are always in danger of losing our memory; God's people are often forgetting *who* they are, and *whose* they are.

That's what's happening in our first lesson from Deuteronomy today. Moses is *reminding* them to remember the mighty deeds of God on their behalf, because yeah – it doesn't take long to forget. In Deuteronomy, several times we see in Moses' remarks to the Israelites: Remember not to forget; don't forget to remember. And in all honesty, I have been there, too. When life is good – I take it for granted. But when things go downhill, well then ... yeah, then I turn to God in a blink.

Why all this remembering here at the beginning of Lent? Well, for one reason: psychologically, emotionally, spiritually, we need it. With war in the world, especially, between Ukraine and Russia; with the consequences of war all around us; with neo-fascism on the rise and with trade wars — there is a general anxiety in the world, economic questions and challenges; concerns for the protection of democracy as well as ecological concerns; and while all that is anxiety-producing enough, we all, always, have personal concerns for health and the welfare of family. We, God's people, need to be, deserve to be, *reminded* — to remember — that when our ancestors had just traveled through a desert, led by God, after ten miracles had been performed on their behalf back in Egypt; and then, their backs were up against a vast amount of water and an army was behind them in hot pursuit ... what happened? God sent a strong east wind that parted the water, causing a path through the sea along which his people could walk, and escape the pursuit of the Egyptian army. What is it, we have to remember? That God protects, provides, and is always with us.

With this knowledge we can follow Jesus into the wilderness. The wilderness is a place of transformation: Jesus was led into the wilderness after his baptism, where he faced the harsh conditions of solitude, hunger, and vulnerability. We might view the wilderness as a metaphor for those moments in life when we are stripped of comfort, security, and certainty. These are the moments when we are most open to change, when God can meet us in our deepest vulnerabilities.

Our own lives often mirror this journey into the wilderness. It's in these moments—times of personal loss, doubt, or crisis—that we can feel most disconnected from God, most tempted to take shortcuts to alleviate our pain. But it's also in these places that God's presence can become most real and most powerful. The wilderness is not just a test of endurance; it's a space where we can encounter the divine in ways we never imagined.

In the wilderness, Jesus is tempted by the devil in three distinct ways. Each temptation asks him to take a path that would separate him from his authentic self and from his relationship with God. The first temptation is about turning stones into bread. It is an invitation to prioritize survival at any cost, to trade spiritual integrity for immediate gratification. How often do we, too, face this temptation? We live in a world that values success, productivity, and consumption. The message is clear: 'If you aren't working hard enough, you're failing.' The temptation to fill the voids in our lives with superficial solutions—consumerism, perfectionism, achievement—is ever-present. But Jesus reminds us that life is not sustained by what we consume alone, but by every word that comes from God. True sustenance comes from living authentically, connected to the divine source of our being, not from external accomplishments or possessions.

The second temptation is one that offers Jesus' dominion over all the kingdoms of the world if he would only worship the devil. The devil's offer is the temptation of power and

control—something many of us grapple with in our own lives. We live in a world where power structures often shape our existence, where wealth, status, and influence seem to be the means by which we measure success and significance.

But Jesus rejects this temptation, recognizing that true power comes not from dominance or control, but from humble service and justice. We are called to resist systems of oppression and inequality—systems that tempt us to believe that power must come at the expense of others. Instead, we are called to embody a power rooted in love, compassion, and mutual respect for all people. It is through service and solidarity that we find true freedom, just as Jesus found His power in humble acts of love and liberation.

The third temptation is the challenge to throw himself from the pinnacle of the temple, testing God’s protection. This is the temptation to demand signs and miracles, to put God to the test in ways that manipulate or coerce divine intervention. We, too, sometimes seek to control God through our expectations or demand that God proves themselves to us. But faith is not about demanding signs or assurances; it is about trust. It’s about learning to walk in uncertainty, knowing that God is with us not because of signs or guarantees, but because of the deep, abiding relationship that we nurture day by day. Faith is not about certainty; it’s about the courage to take the next step even when the path ahead is unclear.

Jesus’ struggle in the wilderness invites us to ask deeper questions about the temptations we face in our own lives. How do we resist the pressures of the world that demand we conform to false ideals of success, power, and security? How do we embrace the wilderness moments of our lives as spaces for transformation and deeper connection with God?

In the end, Jesus shows us that the way forward is not through defeating temptation with power, but by leaning into our authentic selves—our deepest values, our spiritual practices, and our relationship with God. When we face the wilderness, we can do so with confidence, because we remember that God walks with us, inviting us to grow, heal, and become more fully who we are created to be. May we resist the temptations that draw us away from love and justice, and may we embrace the transformative wilderness as a place where we encounter God anew. Amen.

And the peace of God which surpasses all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus. Amen.

### **Hymn of the Month (blue) ACS 923 As Your Spirit in the Desert** (Choir sings Verse 1)

1 As your Spirit in the desert  
led the Christ to dust and stone,  
so instill our hearts with courage  
now to cross where Christ has gone.  
Let us cross into the wilderness



so to walk where Christ has gone.

2 As your fire and cloudy pillar  
Israel's tribes to Canaan led,  
may your presence be our comfort,  
may your manna be our bread.  
Let us cross into the wilderness  
with God's manna as our bread.

3 Though wild beasts may lurk in shadow,  
and dire thirst may sear and sting,  
you have promised living waters  
waiting for us at the spring.  
Let us cross out of the wilderness  
to the waters of the spring.

4 Through the narrow gate now draw us,  
past all empire's pull and strife,  
where beyond our fear and clinging  
stands the threshold of new life.  
Let us cross out of the wilderness  
to the threshold of new life.

5 God of desert, God of promise,  
you have bid us journey on  
through the days of dust and darkness  
to the rising of the dawn.  
Let us cross out of the wilderness  
to the rising of the dawn.

Text: Susan Palo Cherwien, b. 1953. Text © 2012 Susan Palo Cherwien, admin. Augsburg Fortress

### **Apostles' Creed (p. 217)**

With the whole church we confess our Christian faith.

**I believe in God, the Father almighty, creator of heaven and earth.**

**I believe in Jesus Christ, God's only Son, our Lord, who was conceived by the Holy Spirit, born of the Virgin Mary, suffered under Pontius Pilate, was crucified, died, and was buried; he descended to the dead. On the third day he rose again; he ascended into heaven, he is seated at the right hand of the Father, and he will come to judge the living and the dead.**

**I believe in the Holy Spirit, the holy catholic Church, the communion of saints, the forgiveness of sins, the resurrection of the body, and the life everlasting. Amen.**

### **Prayers of Intercession**

Response:

**O Lord, hear my prayer, O Lord, hear my prayer: when I call, answer me. O Lord, hear my prayer, O Lord, hear my prayer: come and listen to me.**

Led by the Spirit, let us turn to God in prayer for the church, the world, and all those in need. Each prayer petition ends with the sung response from ELW 751 'O Lord, Hear My Prayer'.

*A brief silence.*

Gracious God, speak your word anew among your church. Strengthen it to withstand the temptation to turn inward in fear or complacency. Embolden church institutions to turn from self-preservation toward the self-giving love of Jesus.

**O Lord, hear my prayer, O Lord, hear my prayer: when I call, answer me. O Lord, hear my prayer, O Lord, hear my prayer: come and listen to me.**

Mothering God, speak the word of life into wilderness places and fertile fields. Grant wisdom to your people, that we may quell the urge to strip lands of their resources and instead preserve first fruits for future generations.

**O Lord, hear my prayer, O Lord, hear my prayer: when I call, answer me. O Lord, hear my prayer, O Lord, hear my prayer: come and listen to me.**

Almighty God, speak a word of wisdom to people in positions of power: mayors, councils, and tribal leaders, legislators, judges, prime ministers, and monarchs. Help them discern your voice and follow your guidance, resisting the temptations of the evil one.

**O Lord, hear my prayer, O Lord, hear my prayer: when I call, answer me. O Lord, hear my prayer, O Lord, hear my prayer: come and listen to me.**

Steadfast God, speak words of courage to your people in the wilderness. Protect migrants and refugees on perilous journeys, that they find safe refuge and a portion in the bounty you have given humanity to share.

**O Lord, hear my prayer, O Lord, hear my prayer: when I call, answer me. O Lord, hear my prayer, O Lord, hear my prayer: come and listen to me.**

Loving God, speak gently to all who are alone. Bless lay ministers, home communion teams, and others who attend to those who are overlooked, vulnerable, or lonely, that all find belonging in your love. We pray for all who are ill, especially for those on our prayer list ..... and those we name in our hearts .....

**O Lord, hear my prayer, O Lord, hear my prayer: when I call, answer me. O Lord, hear my prayer, O Lord, hear my prayer: come and listen to me.**

Listening God, embrace your children who love each other and be concerned for each other's well-being. We thank you for those of our friends in Christ who gather around our prayer box and lift up the urgent and last-minute petitions which someone concerned has placed in there, asking that prayers be made for them. Continue to bless our Prayer Box ministry.

**O Lord, hear my prayer, O Lord, hear my prayer: when I call, answer me. O Lord, hear my prayer, O Lord, hear my prayer: come and listen to me.**

Living God, we give thanks for all the faithful who have crossed the threshold from death to life. Guide us who are living to learn from their wisdom and follow their example.

**O Lord, hear my prayer, O Lord, hear my prayer: when I call, answer me. O Lord, hear my prayer, O Lord, hear my prayer: come and listen to me.**

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. **Amen.**

### **Peace (p. 218)**

The peace of Christ be with you always.

Response: **And also with you.**

## **Thanksgiving**

### **\* Offering**

#### **Hymn (red) ELW 186 Create in Me a Clean Heart**

Create in me a clean heart, O God,  
and renew a right spirit within me.  
Cast me not away from your presence,  
and take not your Holy Spirit from me.  
Restore to me the joy of your salvation,  
and uphold me with your free Spirit.

#### **Thanksgiving for the Word (p. 220)**

O God of justice and love, we give thanks to you that you illumine our way through life with the words of your Son. Give us the light we need, awaken us to the needs of others, and at the end bring all the world to your feast; through Jesus Christ, our Saviour and Lord, to whom, with you and the Holy Spirit be honour and glory forever. **Amen.**

#### **Lord's Prayer (p. 221)**

Gathered into one by the Holy Spirit, let us pray as Jesus taught us.

**Our Father in heaven, hallowed be your name, your kingdom come, your will be done, on earth as in heaven. Give us today our daily bread. Forgive us our sins as we forgive those who sin against us. Save us from the time of trial and deliver us from evil. For the kingdom, the power, and the glory are yours, now and forever. Amen.**

## **Sending**

### **Blessing**

The Lord bless you and keep you. The Lord's face shine on you with grace and mercy. The Lord look upon you with favour and give you peace. **Amen.**

## Hymn (red) ELW 326 Bless Now, O God, the Journey

- 1 Bless now, O God, the journey  
that all your people make,  
the path through noise and silence,  
the way of give and take.  
The trail is found in desert  
and winds the mountain round,  
then leads beside still waters,  
the road where faith is found.
- 2 Bless sojourners and pilgrims  
who share this winding way;  
your hope burns through the terrors,  
your love sustains the day.  
We yearn for holy freedom  
while often we are bound;  
together we are seeking  
the road where faith is found.
- 3 Divine eternal lover,  
you meet us on the road.  
We wait for land of promise  
where milk and honey flow,  
but waiting not for places,  
you meet us all around.  
Our covenant is written  
on roads, as faith is found.

Text: Sylvia G. Dunstan, 1955-1993. Text © 1991 GIA Publications, Inc., 7404 S. Mason Ave., Chicago, IL 60638.  
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### **Dismissal**

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

### **\* Time of Silence**

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