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St. John's is a congregation of the Lehigh Mission District, Northeastern Pennsylvania Synod, and the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America.

# First Sunday of Lent February 26, 2023

Today's gospel tells of Jesus' temptation in the desert. His forty-day fast becomes the basis of our Lenten pilgrimage. In the early church Lent was a time of intense preparation for those to be baptized at the Easter Vigil. This catechetical focus on the meaning of faith is at the heart of our Lenten journey to the baptismal waters of Easter. Hungry for God's mercy, we receive the bread of life to nourish us for the days ahead.

MINISTERS	The Baptized People of St. John's
PASTOR	The Rev. Jeffrey S. Carstens
MUSIC MINISTRY DIRECTOR	Timothy M. Ginder
PRESCHOOL DIRECTOR	Denise Mill
PRESCHOOL TEACHER ASSISTANT	Mary Racek
OFFICE ADMINISTRATOR	Barbara E. Walck
BOOKKEEPER	Anna Galante
CUSTODIAN	Brian P. Dunton
PASTOR EMERITUS	The Rev. Fred S. Foerster

WELCOME TO ST. JOHN'S in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ! We pray that as God speaks to us in worship we will be nurtured in Christian faith and equipped for our life of serving love and justice in the world.

**St. John's Prayer Chain** members pray for your concerns confidentially each day for a week. Request prayers by contacting the Church Office (<u>info@stjohnsemmaus.org</u> or 610-965-9885) or coordinator Faith Drescher (<u>fdresch@ptd.net</u> or 610- 966-5321).

## Let us pray . . .

for our ELCA and our Presiding Bishop, The Rev. Elizabeth Eaton; for our Northeastern PA Synod and our Bishop, The Rev. Christopher deForest; for our Lehigh Mission District and our Dean, The Rev. Nelson Quinones.

If Jesus Christ were to sit down with us and ask for an accounting of our stewardship, I am not sure He would focus much on programs and statistics. What the Savior would want to know is the condition of our heart. He would want to know how we love and minister to those in our care, how we show our love to our spouse and family, and how we lighten their daily load. And the Savior would want to know how you and I grow closer to Him and to our Heavenly Father.

# **GATHERING**

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

#### *PRELUDE*

## ANNOUNCEMENTS AND PASSING OF THE FRIENDSHIP REGISTER

#### CONFESSION AND FORGIVENESS

The assembly stands. All may make the sign of the cross, the sign that is marked at baptism, as the presiding minister begins.

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

#### Amen.

P Almighty God, to whom all hearts are open, all desires known, and from whom no secrets are hid: cleanse the thoughts of our hearts by the inspiration of your Holy Spirit, that we may perfectly love you and worthily magnify your holy name, through Jesus Christ our Lord.

#### Amen.

P Let us confess our sin in the presence of God and of one another.

The assembly kneels or stands. Silence is kept for reflection.

## P Gracious God,

have mercy on us. We confess that we have turned from you and given ourselves into the power of sin. We are truly sorry and humbly repent. In your compassion forgive us our sins, known and unknown, things we have done and things we have failed to do. Turn us again to you, and uphold us by your Spirit, so that we may live and serve you in newness of life through Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord. Amen.

P God, who is rich in mercy, loved us even when we were dead in sin, and made us alive together with Christ. By grace you have been saved. In the name of + Jesus Christ, your sins are forgiven. Almighty God strengthen you with power through the Holy Spirit, that Christ may live in your hearts through faith.

### Amen.

The assembly stands to sing.

### **GATHERING SONG**

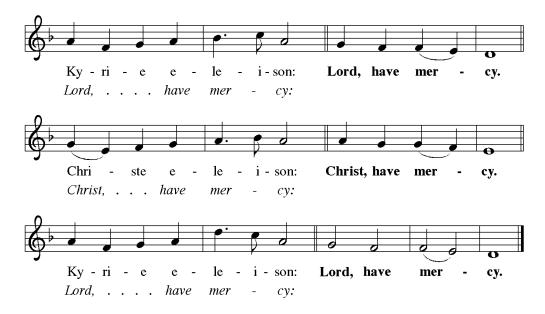
"God is Here!"

**Hymn 526** 

### **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.

### **KYRIE**



### PRAYER OF THE DAY

- P Lord God, our strength, the struggle between good and evil rages within and around us, and the devil and all the forces that defy you tempt us with empty promises. Keep us steadfast in your word, and when we fall, raise us again and restore us 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.

The assembly is seated.

# **WORD**

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

#### FIRST READING

Genesis 2:15-17; 3:1-7

Human beings were formed with great care, to be in relationship with the creator, creation, and one another. The serpent's promise to the first couple that their eyes would be opened led, ironically, to the discovery only that they were naked.

<sup>15</sup>The LORD God took the man and put him in the garden of Eden to till it and keep it. <sup>16</sup>And the LORD God commanded the man, "You may freely eat of every tree of the garden; <sup>17</sup>but of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil you shall not eat, for in the day that you eat of it you shall die."

3:1Now the serpent was more crafty than any other wild animal that the LORD God had made. He said to the woman, "Did God say, 'You shall not eat from any tree in the garden'?" <sup>2</sup>The woman said to the serpent, "We may eat of the fruit of the trees in the garden; <sup>3</sup>but God said, 'You shall not eat of the fruit of the tree that is in the middle of the garden, nor shall you touch it, or you shall die.'" <sup>4</sup>But the serpent said to the woman, "You will not die; <sup>5</sup>for God knows that when you eat of it your eyes will be opened, and you will be like God, knowing good and evil." <sup>6</sup>So when the woman saw that the tree was good for food, and that it was a delight to the eyes, and that the tree was to be desired to make one wise, she took of its fruit and ate; and she also gave some to her husband, who was with her, and he ate. <sup>7</sup>Then the eyes of both were opened, and they knew that they were naked; and they sewed fig leaves together and made loincloths for themselves.

## After the reading:

- A The word of the Lord.
- C Thanks be to God.

### **RESPONSIVE READING:**

Psalm 32

Mercy embraces those who trust in the LORD. (Ps. 32:10)

<sup>1</sup>Happy are they whose transgressions are forgiven, and whose sin is put away!

<sup>2</sup>Happy are they to whom the LORD imputes no guilt, and in whose spirit there is no guile!

<sup>3</sup>While I held my tongue, my bones withered away, because of my groaning all day long.

<sup>4</sup>For your hand was heavy upon me day and night; my moisture was dried up as in the heat of summer.

<sup>5</sup>Then I acknowledged my sin to you, and did not conceal my guilt.

I said, "I will confess my transgressions to the LORD." Then you forgave me the guilt of my sin.

<sup>6</sup>Therefore all the faithful will make their prayers to you in time of trouble; when the great waters overflow, they shall not reach them.

<sup>7</sup>You are my hiding-place; you preserve me from trouble; you surround me with shouts of deliverance.

8"I will instruct you and teach you in the way that you should go; I will guide you with my eye.

<sup>9</sup>Do not be like horse or mule, which have no understanding; who must be fitted with bit and bridle, or else they will not stay near you."

<sup>10</sup>Great are the tribulations of the wicked;

but mercy embraces those who trust in the LORD.

<sup>11</sup>Be glad, you righteous, and rejoice in the LORD; shout for joy, all who are true of heart.

#### SECOND READING

Romans 5:12-19

Through Adam's disobedience, humanity came under bondage to sin and death, from which we cannot free ourselves. In Christ's obedient death, God graciously showers on us the free gift of liberation and life.

<sup>12</sup>Just as sin came into the world through one man, and death came through sin, and so death spread to all because all have sinned—<sup>13</sup>sin was indeed in the world before the law, but sin is not reckoned when there is no law. <sup>14</sup>Yet death exercised dominion from Adam to Moses, even over those whose sins were not like the transgression of Adam, who is a

type of the one who was to come.

<sup>15</sup>But the free gift is not like the trespass. For if the many died through the one man's trespass, much more surely have the grace of God and the free gift in the grace of the one man, Jesus Christ, abounded for the many. <sup>16</sup>And the free gift is not like the effect of the one man's sin. For the judgment following one trespass brought condemnation, but the free gift following many trespasses brings justification. <sup>17</sup>If, because of the one man's trespass, death exercised dominion through that one, much more surely will those who receive the abundance of grace and the free gift of righteousness exercise dominion in life through the one man, Jesus Christ.

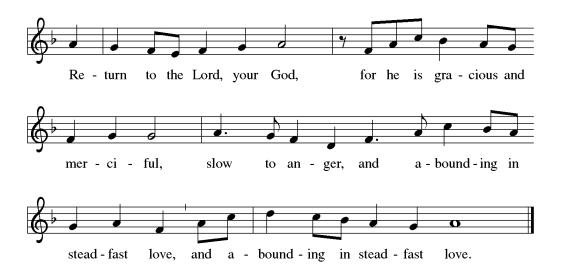
<sup>18</sup>Therefore just as one man's trespass led to condemnation for all, so one man's act of righteousness leads to justification and life for all. <sup>19</sup>For just as by the one man's disobedience the many were made sinners, so by the one man's obedience the many will be made righteous.

## After the reading:

- A The word of the Lord.
- C Thanks be to God.

### GOSPEL ACCLAMATION

The assembly stands to welcome the gospel.



- P The Holy Gospel according to St. Matthew.
- C Glory to you, O Lord.

HOLY GOSPEL Matthew 4:1-11

Jesus experiences anew the temptations that Israel faced in the wilderness. As the Son of God, he endures the testing of the evil one.

<sup>1</sup>Jesus was led up by the Spirit into the wilderness to be tempted by the devil. <sup>2</sup>He fasted forty days and forty nights, and afterwards he was famished. <sup>3</sup>The tempter came and said to him, "If you are the Son of God, command these stones to become loaves of bread." <sup>4</sup>But he answered, "It is written,

'One does not live by bread alone,

but by every word that comes from the mouth of God."

<sup>5</sup>Then the devil took him to the holy city and placed him on the pinnacle of the temple, <sup>6</sup>saying to him, "If you are the Son of God, throw yourself down; for it is written,

'He will command his angels concerning you,'

and 'On their hands they will bear you up,

so that you will not dash your foot against a stone."

<sup>7</sup>Jesus said to him, "Again it is written, 'Do not put the Lord your God to the test.'"

<sup>8</sup>Again, the devil took him to a very high mountain and showed him all the kingdoms of the world and their splendor; <sup>9</sup>and he said to him, "All these I will give you, if you will fall down and worship me." <sup>10</sup>Jesus said to him, "Away with you, Satan! for it is written,

'Worship the Lord your God, and serve only him.'"

<sup>11</sup>Then the devil left him, and suddenly angels came and waited on him.

# After the reading:

- P The Gospel of the Lord.
- C Praise to you, O Christ.

The assembly is seated.

SERMON Silence for reflection Pastor Jeffrey Carstens

The assembly stands to proclaim the word of God in song.

### APOSTLES' CREED

- P With the whole church, let us confess our faith.
- C 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

P Sustained by God's abundant mercy, let us pray for the church, the world, and all of creation.

You alone are God. Sustain your church in times of wilderness. Give vision and wisdom to bishops, their staff, and all entrusted with the ministry of administration. Counsel all who faithfully lead your people into the future. Merciful God, **receive our prayer.** 

You create verdant gardens and expansive deserts. Tend to the needs of every living creature. Bless those who work in fields and orchards, that the world is nourished by the fruits of their labor. Merciful God,

## receive our prayer.

You know our temptations. Sustain those who govern and legislate. Instill in them a sense of your justice and righteousness, that equity and peace would pervade all the regions and nations of the world. Merciful God.

receive our prayer.

You are a hiding place for all in distress. Draw near to exiles, and accompany all refugees and immigrants, especially children who travel alone. In times of trouble, trauma, or illness, surround your people with your steadfast love. Merciful God, **receive our prayer.** 

You offer abundance to all. Bless the ministries of hospitality in this place. Care for those who tend to the needs of others, especially worship greeters, coffee hour hosts, and nursery attendants. Merciful God,

receive our prayer.

You alone are God. We praise you for the faithful departed in every age. Unite our prayers with theirs, until our wilderness journey is complete, and we rest in you. Merciful God.

receive our prayer.

We lift our prayers to you, O God, trusting in your steadfast love and your promise to renew your whole creation; through Jesus Christ our Savior.

C Amen.

### **PEACE**

P The peace of the Lord be with you always.

C And also with you.

The people may greet one another with a sign of Christ's peace saying "Peace be with you" or similar words.

An Offering of Song may be presented by the Choir at this time.

HYMN "As the Grains of Wheat" (vs. 1) Hymn 465

# **MEAL**

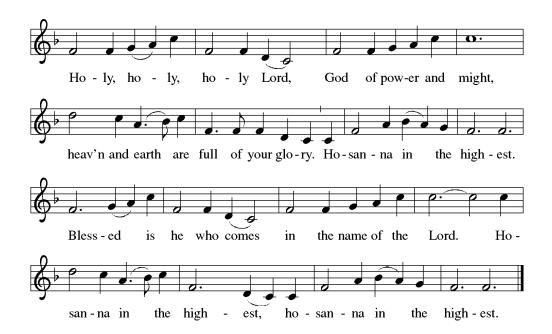
God feeds us with the presence of Jesus Christ.

### 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.
- P It is indeed right, our duty and our joy, that we should at all times and in all places give thanks and praise to you, almighty and merciful God, through our Savior Jesus Christ.

  You call your people to cleanse their hearts and prepare with joy for the paschal feast, that, renewed in the gift of baptism, we may come to the fullness of your grace.

  And so, with all the choirs of angels, with the church on earth and the hosts of heaven, we praise your name and join their unending hymn:



P On 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.

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

### **COMMUNION**

- P God's love is poured out in Christ for you. Open yourselves to receive it.
- C Thanks be to God!

The assembly is seated.



All baptized Christians are welcome to receive the Sacrament of Holy Communion. We believe and teach that in the Holy Communion the crucified and risen Christ is present, giving his true body and blood as food and drink. This real presence is a mystery.

Those who for reasons of health do not drink wine, commune fully when receiving only the bread. In partaking of either element (bread or wine), the whole Christ is received. Children who have not yet received first communion instruction are welcome at the altar to receive a blessing.

To receive the Sacrament, please follow the directions of an usher to the front of the church via the center aisle. Receive the host from the pastor. Step to the side and take an empty cup from the tray, then receive the wine from the Communion Assistant. Return to your pew via the side aisle, placing your used cup in the waste basket.

Persons who are not able to come to the altar are invited to sit in the first pew on the pulpit side where the Pastor will commune you. Please notify an usher.

During this period of online worship, we invite you to participate in communion in your own home as the Pastor shares communion with you.

COMMUNION HYMN

"Let Us Break Bread Together"

**HYMN 471** 

- P The body and blood of our Lord Jesus Christ strengthen you and keep you in his grace.
- C Amen.

### **PRAYER**

A Embodied God, at your table, we have tasted the goodness of Jesus. With the eyes of our hearts open to your promise, empower us to hear the needs of our neighbors and touch the world with your love.

C Amen.

# **SENDING**

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

#### **BLESSING**

P God, the giver of love,

☐ Christ, the resurrection and the life, and the Holy Spirit of rebirth bless you in this Lenten journey.

Amen.

## THREE-FOLD AMEN



# SENDING SONG "Lord, Dismiss Us with Your Blessing" HYMN 545

### DISMISSAL

- A Go in peace. Serve in love.
- C Thanks be to God.

**POSTLUDE** 

### **Liturgical Texts and Music**

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