

# Lutheran Church of the Holy Comforter

• 216 N. Main Street • Belmont, NC 28012 • February 22<sup>nd</sup>, 2023



## WELCOME/GATHERING

**PRELUDE:** *Come to Me, O Weary Traveler*

Chamber Choir

## INVITATION TO LENT

*Lent begins with a solemn call to fasting and repentance as we begin our journey to the baptismal waters of Easter. As we hear in today's readings, now is the acceptable time to return to the Lord. During Lent the people of God will reflect on the meaning of their baptism into Christ's death and resurrection. The sign of ashes suggests our human mortality and frailty. What seems like an ending is really an invitation to make each day a new beginning, in which we are washed in God's mercy and forgiveness. With the cross on our brow, we long for the spiritual renewal that flows from the springtime Easter feast to come.*

**PROCESSION:** *Bless the Lord My Soul*

All Sing Refrain,  
Leader Sings Verses

Bless the Lord My Soul  
And Bless His Holy name.  
Bless the Lord My Soul,  
He Rescues me from death...

## CONFESSION AND FORGIVENESS

P Blessed be the holy Trinity, ☩ one God, who journeys with us these forty days, and sustains us with the gift of grace.

**C Amen.**

P Let us acknowledge before God and one another our need for repentance and God's mercy.

*Silence is kept for reflection.*

P Holy God,

**C we confess to you our faults and failings. Too often we neglect and do not trust your holy word; we take for ourselves instead of giving to others; we spoil rather than steward your creation; we cause hurt though you call us to heal; we choose fear over compassion. Forgive us, renew us, and lead us, as we seek to follow in your way of life. Amen.**

P Hear the good news: God so loved the world that God gave God's only Son, so that all may receive life. This promise is for you! God embraces you with divine mercy, ✝ forgives you in Christ's name, and revives you in the Spirit's power.

**C Amen**

## IMPOSITION OF ASHES

*People may come forward to receive the ashes.*

*Ministers mark the forehead of each person with a cross of ashes, saying:*

P Remember that you are dust, and to dust you shall return.

*After those who desire ashes have received them,  
all may kneel or sit and the minister continues.*



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.**

## PRAYER OF THE DAY

P 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.**

## FIRST READING

Joel 2:1-2, 12-17

A reading from the second chapter of Joel.

*Because of the coming Day of the Lord, the prophet Joel calls the people to a community lament. The repentant community reminds God of his gracious character and asks God to spare the people, lest the nations doubt God's power to save.*

<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.**

## SECOND READING

2 Corinthians 5:20b-6:10

A reading from the fifth and sixth chapters of Second Corinthians.

*The ministry of the gospel endures many challenges and hardships. Through this ministry, God's reconciling activity in the death of Christ reaches into the depths of our lives to bring us into a right relationship with God. In this way, God accepts us into the reality of divine salvation.*

<sup>5:20</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



Let your stead-fast love come to us, O Lord.



Let your stead-fast love come to us, O Lord.



Save us as you prom-ised; we will trust your word.



Let your stead-fast love come to us, O Lord.

## GOSPEL

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

**P** The Holy Gospel according to St. Matthew, the sixth chapter.

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

*In the Sermon on the Mount, Jesus commends almsgiving, prayer, and fasting, but emphasizes that spiritual devotion must not be done for show.*

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

*Pastor Micah*

*Silence is Kept for Reflection.*

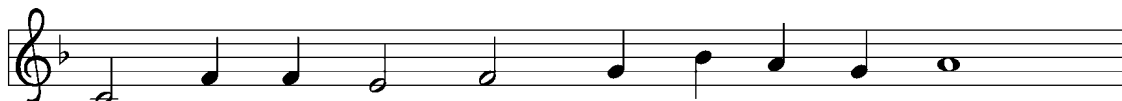
# HYMN OF THE DAY: *Eternal Lord of Love, Behold Your Church...* All Stand & Sing



1 E - ter - nal Lord of love, be - hold your church  
 2 So dai - ly dy - ing to the way of self,  
 3 If dead in you, so in you we a - rise,



walk - ing once more the pil - grim way of Lent,  
 so dai - ly liv - ing in your way of love,  
 you the first - born of all the faith - ful dead;



led by your cloud by day, by night your fire,  
 we walk the road, Lord Je - sus, that you trod,  
 and as through ston - y ground the green shoots break,



moved by your love and toward your pres - ence bent:  
 know - ing our - selves bap - tized in - to your death:  
 glo - rious in spring - time dress of leaf and flow'r,



far off yet here— the goal of all de - sire.  
 so we are dead and live with you in God.  
 so in - to life and glo - ry shall we wake.

Text: Thomas H. Cain, 1931–2003

Music: OLD 124TH, *Trente quatre psaumes de David*, Geneva, 1551

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## THE PRAYERS OF INTERCESSION

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

*A brief silence.*

O Lord, our God, you gather your church and call us to return to you. Accompany us throughout our Lenten pilgrimage. Create in us clean hearts and renew all the baptized to declare your praise.

Merciful God,  
**receive our prayer.**

Renew your creation, O God. Bring rains to parched places and heal lands affected by a changing climate, that all inhabitants of the earth experience your abundance.

Merciful God,  
**receive our prayer.**

Renew the nations, O God. Give voice to those on the margins and resolve to world leaders who seek to protect those most vulnerable. Loosen the bonds of injustice and bring an end to all violence, oppression, and persecution.

Merciful God,  
**receive our prayer.**

Renew your people, O God. Respond to those who cry out to you in secret or in seclusion. Equip us with compassion to care for those who experience homelessness, food insecurity, economic hardship, and illness.

Merciful God,  
**receive our prayer.**

Renew this congregation, O God. Inspire our faith formation ministries and those who teach and lead. Invigorate us with lifelong curiosity and wonder as we grow as your disciples.

Merciful God,  
**receive our prayer.**

O Lord, our God, we give thanks for all your faithful ones of every time and place. Renew us by the example of their lives of prayer and service, and at the last, bring us with them into your everlasting presence.

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.

**Amen.**

## PEACE

P The peace of Christ be with you always.

C And also with you.

## OFFERING

### OFFERTORY ANTHEM: *As The Winter Days Grow Longer*

Choir vs 1 & 2

All vs 3



1 As the win - ter days grow long - er, draw - ing short the hours of night;  
2 As the vines burst in - to blos - som, fra - grant in the morn - ing air,  
3 As we jour - ney through this sea - son, pil - grims through a thirst - y land,



as our ea - ger ex - pec - ta - tion waits for Eas - ter's dawn - ing light—  
lift - ing spir - its with their sweet - ness, lur - ing hearts to thank - ful prayer—  
quench us with your liv - ing pres - ence; guide us with your lov - ing hand.



yearn - ing peo - ple, here we gath - er, turn - ing watch - ful eyes to you:  
Lent - en peo - ple, here we gath - er, seek - ing lives re - fresh - ed from sin.  
Wan - d'ring peo - ple, here we gath - er, called to rest a - long our way.



God who bless - es earth with spring - time, shine with - in our world a - new!  
God who bless - es earth with spring - time, bloom with - in our hearts a - gain!  
God who bless - es earth with spring - time, grant us sab - bath joy this day!

Text: Mary Louise Bringle, b. 1953

Music: SUO GÂN, Welsh melody

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## OFFERING PRAYER

P Let us pray.

**C God of good gifts, receive these and all our offerings as we present them in faithful service for the sake of your gospel. Prepare our hearts to receive you in this meal as you pour out your very presence through Christ Jesus, the wellspring of eternal life. Amen.**

## DIALOGUE

*The presiding minister greets the assembly and invites all present to give thanks.*

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:** *“we praise your name and join their unending hymn:”*

## SANCTUS

Ho - ly, ho - ly, ho - ly Lord, God of pow'r and might,

The first system of musical notation for the Sanctus. It consists of a treble and a bass staff, both in B-flat major (two flats). The treble staff has a key signature of two flats and a common time signature. The melody is written in a simple, hymn-like style. The lyrics "Ho - ly, ho - ly, ho - ly Lord, God of pow'r and might," are written below the treble staff. The bass staff provides a harmonic accompaniment with chords and single notes.

ho - ly, ho - ly, ho - ly Lord, God of pow'r and might,

The second system of musical notation for the Sanctus. It continues the melody and accompaniment from the first system. The lyrics "ho - ly, ho - ly, ho - ly Lord, God of pow'r and might," are written below the treble staff. The notation is consistent with the first system, using a treble and bass staff in B-flat major.

heav-en and earth are full, full of your glo - ry.

Ho - san - na in the high - est, 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, ho - san - na in the high - est.

## WORDS OF INSTITUTION

*As we proclaim the mystery of faith:*



*We praise you O God blessed and Holy Trinity, now and forever:*



## LORD'S PRAYER

**Our Father, who art in heaven,**

**hallowed be thy name,**

**thy kingdom come,**

**thy will be done, on earth as it is in heaven.**

**Give us this day our daily bread;**

**and forgive us our trespasses, as we forgive those**

**who trespass against us;**

**and lead us not into temptation,**

**but deliver us from evil.**

**For thine is the kingdom,**

**and the power, and the glory, forever and ever. Amen.**



## INVITATION TO COMMUNION

**P** Come and receive Jesus, our strength in the wilderness.

**C** Thanks be to God.

*The assembly is seated.*

## LAMB OF GOD

*All Sing*

Je - sus, Lamb of God, have mer - cy on us.

The first system of music for 'LAMB OF GOD' consists of a treble and bass staff. The treble staff begins with a treble clef and a key signature of one sharp (F#). The melody starts on a half note G4, followed by quarter notes A4 and B4, then a half note C5. The bass staff begins with a bass clef and the same key signature. It provides a harmonic accompaniment with chords and moving lines. The lyrics 'Je - sus, Lamb of God, have mer - cy on us.' are written below the treble staff.

Je - sus, bear - er of our sins, have mer - cy on us.

The second system of music continues the melody and accompaniment. The treble staff continues with the melody, and the bass staff continues with the accompaniment. The lyrics 'Je - sus, bear - er of our sins, have mer - cy on us.' are written below the treble staff.

Je - sus, re - deem - er, re - deem - er of the world,

The third system of music continues the melody and accompaniment. The treble staff continues with the melody, and the bass staff continues with the accompaniment. The lyrics 'Je - sus, re - deem - er, re - deem - er of the world,' are written below the treble staff.

grant us peace, grant us peace.

The fourth system of music concludes the piece. The treble staff ends with a double bar line, and the bass staff also ends with a double bar line. The lyrics 'grant us peace, grant us peace.' are written below the treble staff.

## COMMUNION

*During communion the congregation is invited forward by rows, beginning in the back, and will receive the bread and wine at the front of the aisle. You may either eat and drink then, or return to your seat to do so, and place the cups in the bin in your pew.*

## **COMMUNION BLESSING**

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

**C** Amen.

## **CONCLUDING PRAYER**

**A** Embodied God,

**C** 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. Amen.

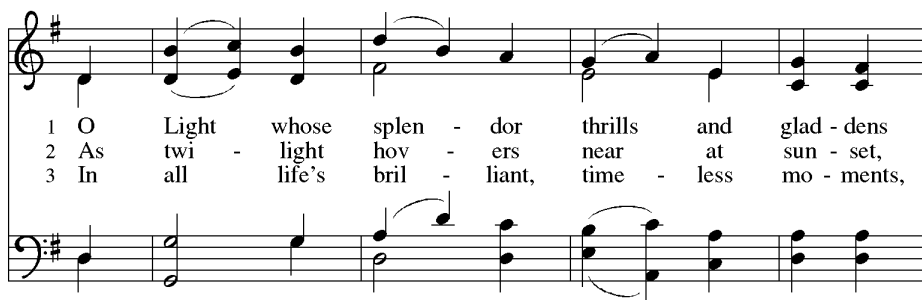
## **BLESSING**

**P** God, the giver of love, ☩ Christ, the resurrection and the life, and the Holy Spirit of rebirth bless you in this Lenten journey.

**C** Amen.

# RECESSIONAL HYMN: *O Light Whose Splendor Thrills*

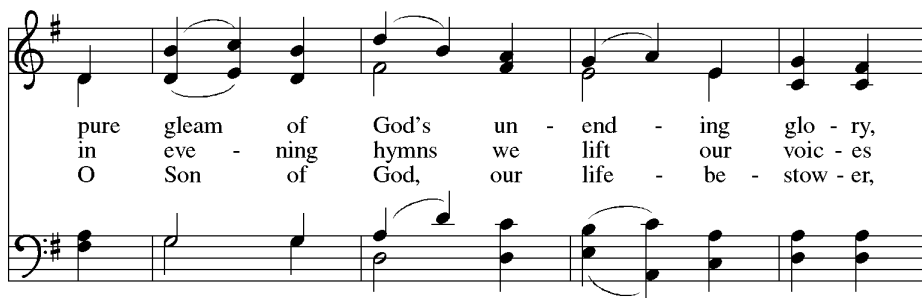
All Stand & Sing



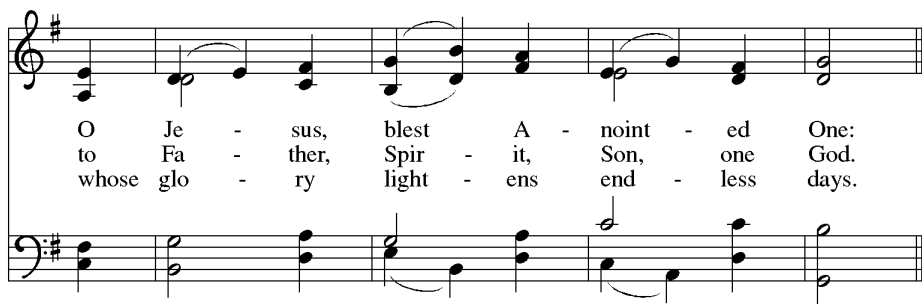
1 O Light whose splen - dor thrills and glad - dens  
 2 As twi - light hov - ers near at sun - set,  
 3 In all life's bril - liant, time - less mo - ments,



with ra - diance bright - er than the sun,  
 and lamps are lit, and chil - dren nod,  
 let faith - ful voic - es sing your praise,



pure gleam of God's un - end - ing glo - ry,  
 in eve - ning hymns we lift our voic - es  
 O Son of God, our life - be - stow - er,



O Je - sus, blest A - noint - ed One:  
 to Fa - ther, Spir - it, Son, one God.  
 whose glo - ry light - ens end - less days.

Text: Greek hymn, 3rd cent.; para. Carl P. Daw Jr., b. 1944  
 Music: ST. CLEMENT; Clement C. Scholefield, 1839-1904  
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## **SENDING**

**A** Go in peace. Serve in love.

**C** **Thanks be to God.**

Remember that you are dust, and to dust you shall return.



### **Holy Comforter Lutheran Church**

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Greg Cline, Organist /Choirmaster

Chelsea Spicer, Office Manager



**"Journeying through faith in a joyful, safe community, welcoming and serving Belmont and beyond."**

Our core values are: **Embrace, Grow, Connect, and Give**