



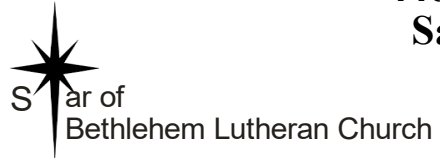
**NORTHWESTERN
PUBLISHING HOUSE**

"This son
of mine was
dead and is
alive again;
he was lost
and is found."

Luke 15:24



**NORTHWESTERN
PUBLISHING HOUSE**



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Pastor Michael Foley

Worship Service

Sunday, March 30, 2025 10:00 a.m.

Fourth Sunday in LENT

Theme of the day: The repentant sinner rejoices at being found in the loving embrace of the Father's full, free, and "foolish" forgiveness.

WELCOME

A warm welcome to our friends and visitors! Star of Bethlehem Lutheran Church is eager to share with you the blessings of its Christ-centered ministry. If you are a new or long-time resident of the Central Coast looking for a church home, we invite you to meet with us at the close of this worship service or at your convenience. All are welcome to stay for refreshments in the fellowship hall.

Families are encouraged to worship together. If you need to step out with your children, the service can be seen and heard in the fellowship hall or narthex area. Feel free to enter and return at any time.

OUR MISSION

Our congregation exists for the purpose of "HOLDING OUT THE WORD OF LIFE." This is accomplished by faithfully preserving and proclaiming all of God's inerrant word, and administering the Sacraments as they were instituted by Christ.

OPENING HYMN: # 708 “Come, Thou Fount of Every Blessing”

♪ **Come, thou Fount of ev’ry blessing,
tune my heart to sing thy grace;
streams of mercy, never ceasing,
call for songs of loudest praise.
Teach me some melodious sonnet,
sung by flaming tongues above.
Praise his name, I’m fixed upon it,
name of God’s redeeming love.**

**Hitherto thy love has blessed me,
thou hast drawn me to this place;
and I know thy hand will lead me
safely home by thy good grace.
Jesus sought me when a stranger,
wand’ring from the fold of God;
he, to rescue me from danger,
bought me with his precious blood.**

Please stand for last verse:

**Oh, to grace how great a debtor
daily I’m constrained to be!
Let thy goodness, like a fetter,
bind my wand’ring heart to thee:
prone to wander, Lord, I feel it,
prone to leave the God I love;
here’s my heart, O take and seal it;
seal it for thy courts above.**

Minister: The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ and the love of God and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit be with you.

Congregation: **And also with you.** (*spoken*)

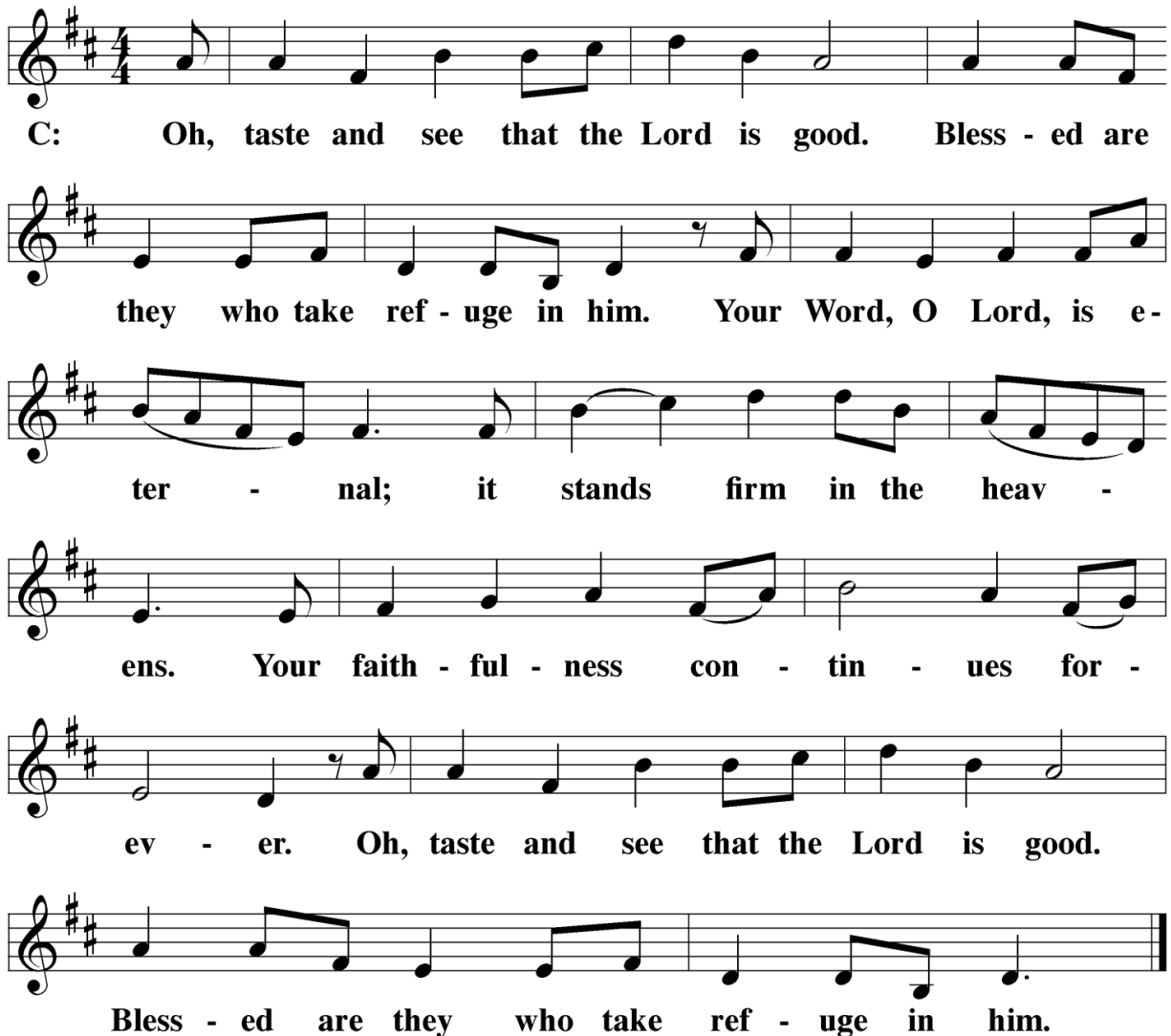
M: We have come into the presence of God, who created us to love and serve him as his dear children. But we have disobeyed him and deserve only his wrath and punishment. Therefore, let us confess our sins to him and plead for his mercy.

C: **Merciful Father in heaven, I am altogether sinful from birth. In countless ways I have sinned against you and do not deserve to be called your child. But trusting in Jesus, my Savior, I pray: Have mercy on me according to your unfailing love. Cleanse me from my sin, and take away my guilt.**

M: God, our heavenly Father, has forgiven all your sins. By the perfect life and innocent death of our Lord Jesus Christ, he has removed your guilt forever. You are his own dear child. May God give you strength to live according to his will.

C: Amen.

M: In the peace of forgiveness, let us praise the Lord.



C: Oh, taste and see that the Lord is good. Bless - ed are they who take ref - uge in him. Your Word, O Lord, is e - ter - nal; it stands firm in the heav - ens. Your faith - ful - ness con - tin - ues for - ev - er. Oh, taste and see that the Lord is good. Bless - ed are they who take ref - uge in him.

M: Almighty God, our heavenly Father, your mercies are new every morning; and though we deserve only punishment, you receive us as your children and provide for all our needs of body and soul. Grant that we may heartily acknowledge your merciful goodness, give thanks for all your benefits, and serve you in willing obedience; through your Son Jesus Christ, our Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever.

C:  Amen. *Please be seated.*

FIRST LESSON: Isaiah 12:1-6

In that day you will say:

I will give thanks to you, LORD,
for though you were angry with me,
your anger has turned away, and you comfort me.

²Surely God is my salvation.

I will trust him and will not be afraid,
because Yah, the LORD, is my strength and song,
and he has become my salvation.

³Therefore with joy you will draw water
from the wells of salvation.

⁴In that day you will say:

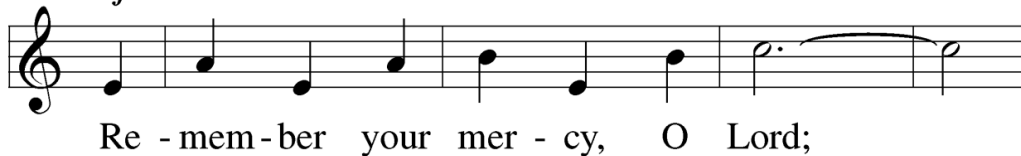
Give thanks to the LORD! Proclaim his name.
Declare among the peoples what he has done.
Proclaim that his name is exalted!

⁵Sing to the LORD, for he has done amazing things!
Let this be known in all the earth!

⁶Shout aloud and sing for joy, daughter of Zion,
for the Holy One of Israel is great among you!

PSALM OF THE DAY: Psalm 32

Refrain



Psalm tone



Blessed is he whose transgressions are forgiven,*
whose sins are covered.

When I kept silent, your hand was heavy upon me;*
my strength was sapped as in the heat of summer.

Then I acknowledged my sin to you*
and did not cover up my iniquity.

I said, “I will confess my transgressions to the LORD,”*
and you forgave the guilt of my sin.

Refrain

You are my hiding place;*
you will protect me from trouble.

Many are the woes of the wicked,*
but the LORD’S unfailing love surrounds those who trust in
him.

Glory be to the Father and to the Son*
and to the Holy Spirit,
as it was in the beginning,*
is now, and will be forever. Amen.

Refrain

SECOND LESSON: Romans 8:1-10

So then, there is now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus. ²For in Christ Jesus the law of the Spirit of life set me free from the law of sin and death. ³Indeed, what the law was unable to do, because it was weakened by the flesh, God did, when he sent his own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh to deal with sin. God condemned sin in his flesh, ⁴so that the righteous decree of the law would be fully satisfied in us who are not walking according to the flesh, but according to the spirit.

⁵To be sure, those who are in harmony with the sinful flesh think about things the way the sinful flesh does, and those in harmony with the spirit think about things the way the spirit does. ⁶Now, the way the sinful flesh thinks results in death, but the way the spirit thinks results in life and peace. ⁷For the mind-set of the sinful flesh is hostile to God, since it does not submit to God’s law, and in fact, it cannot. ⁸Those who are in the sinful flesh cannot please God.

⁹But you are not in the sinful flesh but in the spirit, if indeed God's Spirit lives in you. And if someone does not have the Spirit of Christ, that person does not belong to Christ. ¹⁰But if Christ is in you, your body is dead because of sin, but your spirit is alive because of righteousness.

HYMN: # 576 "Amazing Grace"

♪ Amazing grace—how sweet the sound —
that saved a wretch like me!
I once was lost but now am found, was blind but now I see.

The Lord has promised good to me,
his Word my hope secures;
he will my shield and portion be as long as life endures.

Through many dangers, toils, and snares
I have already come;
'tis grace has brought me safe thus far,
and grace will lead me home.

When we've been there ten thousand years,
bright shining as the sun,
we've no less days to sing God's praise
than when we'd first begun.

SERMON: Luke 15:1-3,11-32

All the tax collectors and sinners were coming to Jesus to hear him. ²But the Pharisees and the experts in the law were complaining, "This man welcomes sinners and eats with them."

³He told them this parable:

¹¹Jesus said, "A certain man had two sons. ¹²The younger of them said to his father, 'Father, give me my share of the estate.' So he divided his property between them. ¹³Not many days later, the younger son gathered together all that he had and traveled to a distant country. There he wasted his wealth with reckless living.

¹⁴After he had spent everything, there was a severe famine in that country, and he began to be in need. ¹⁵He went and hired himself out to one of the citizens of that country, who sent him into his fields to feed pigs. ¹⁶He would have liked to fill his stomach with the carob pods that the pigs were eating, but no one gave him anything.

¹⁷“When he came to his senses, he said, ‘How many of my father’s hired servants have more than enough bread, and I am dying from hunger! ¹⁸I will get up, go to my father, and tell him, “Father, I have sinned against heaven and in your sight. ¹⁹I am no longer worthy to be called your son. Make me like one of your hired servants.”’

²⁰“He got up and went to his father. While he was still far away, his father saw him and was filled with compassion. He ran, hugged his son, and kissed him. ²¹The son said to him, ‘Father, I have sinned against heaven and in your sight. I am no longer worthy to be called your son.’

²²“But the father said to his servants, ‘Quick, bring out the best robe and put it on him. Put a ring on his finger and sandals on his feet. ²³Bring the fattened calf and kill it. Let us eat and celebrate, ²⁴because this son of mine was dead and is alive again. He was lost and is found.’ Then they began to celebrate.

²⁵“His older son was in the field. As he approached the house, he heard music and dancing. ²⁶He called one of the servants and asked what was going on. ²⁷The servant told him, ‘Your brother is here! Your father killed the fattened calf, because he has received him back safe and sound.’ ²⁸The older brother was angry and refused to go in. His father came out and began to plead with him.

²⁹“He answered his father, ‘Look, these many years I’ve been serving you, and I never disobeyed your command, but you never gave me even a young goat so that I could celebrate with my friends. ³⁰But when this son of yours arrived after wasting your property with prostitutes, you killed the fattened calf for him!’

³¹“The father said to him, ‘Son, you are always with me, and all that I have is yours. ³²But it was fitting to celebrate and be glad, because this brother of yours was dead and is alive again. He was lost and is found.’”

APOSTLES’ CREED

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

**I believe in Jesus Christ, his 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 into hell.

The third day he rose again from the dead.

He ascended into heaven

and is seated at the right hand of God the Father almighty.

From there he will come to judge the living and the dead.

I believe in the Holy Spirit;

the holy Christian Church, the communion of saints;

the forgiveness of sins;

the resurrection of the body;

and the life everlasting. Amen.

HYMN: # 657 “Baptismal Waters Cover Me”

**♪ Baptismal waters cover me
as I approach on bended knee;
my Father’s mercy here I plead,
for grievous sins of thought and deed.**

**I look to Christ upon the tree,
his body broken there for me;
I lay before him all my sin,
my darkest secrets from within.**

**Lord, may your wounded hand impart
your healing to my broken heart;
your love alone can form in me
a heart that serves you joyfully.**

**From your own mouth comes forth a word;
your shepherd speaks, but you are heard;
through him your hand now stretches out,
forgiving sin, destroying doubt.**

**Baptismal waters cover me;
Christ's wounded hand has set me free.
Held in my Father's strong embrace,
with joy I praise him for his grace.**

OFFERING

PRAYER OF THE CHURCH

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.

**M: Brothers and sisters, go in peace.
Live in harmony with one another.
Serve the Lord with gladness.
The Lord bless you and keep you.
The Lord make his face shine on you and be gracious to you.
The Lord look on you with favor and (+) give you peace.**

C: ♪ Amen. Amen. Amen.

CLOSING HYMN: # 523 "How Deep the Father's Love for Us"

**♪ How deep the Father's love for us,
how vast beyond all measure,
that he should give his only Son
to make a wretch his treasure.
How great the pain of searing loss.
The Father turns his face away
as wounds which mar the Chosen One
bring many sons to glory.**

**Behold the Man upon a cross, my sin upon his shoulders.
Ashamed, I hear my mocking voice
call out among the scoffers.**

**It was my sin that held him there
until it was accomplished;
his dying breath has brought me life.
I know that it is finished.**

**I will not boast in anything: no gifts, no pow'r, no wisdom.
But I will boast in Jesus Christ: his death and resurrection.
Why should I gain from his reward?
I cannot give an answer. But this I know with all my heart:
his wounds have paid my ransom.**

WELS CONNECTION

ANNOUNCEMENTS

FLOWERS for today's service were given to the glory of God by Holly & Carl in celebration of birthdays of Janetta & Adda.

PRAYERS: Remember to pray for: Shawn Lozano, little Elias, Dennis Douglas, Bob Ward, George Caravana, Molly Webb, Helen Marten, Doug Ward, Kathy Jones, Art Amarillas, Melinda Brown, Alice Taubman, Monica, Louise Perry, Rylan Downs, Jeff Brown, Aaron Taubman, Marlene Washburn, Helen Cummings, Phil Schaaf, and Claire Oberg.

THIS WEEK

Tuesday ESL (English as a Second Language), 6:00 p.m.
Wednesday Lenten Worship Service, 7:00 p.m.
Thursday ESL, 6:00-7:30 p.m.
Sunday Bible Class and Sunday School, 9:00 a.m.
Worship with Holy Communion, 10:00 a.m.

COMING UP

Clean-up/Work Day: Saturday, April 12, 9:00-12:00

Holy Week:

Passion Sunday - April 13, 10:00 a.m.

Maundy Thursday - April 17, 7:00 p.m.

Good Friday - April 18, 7:00 p.m.

Easter Sunday - April 20, 10:00 a.m.