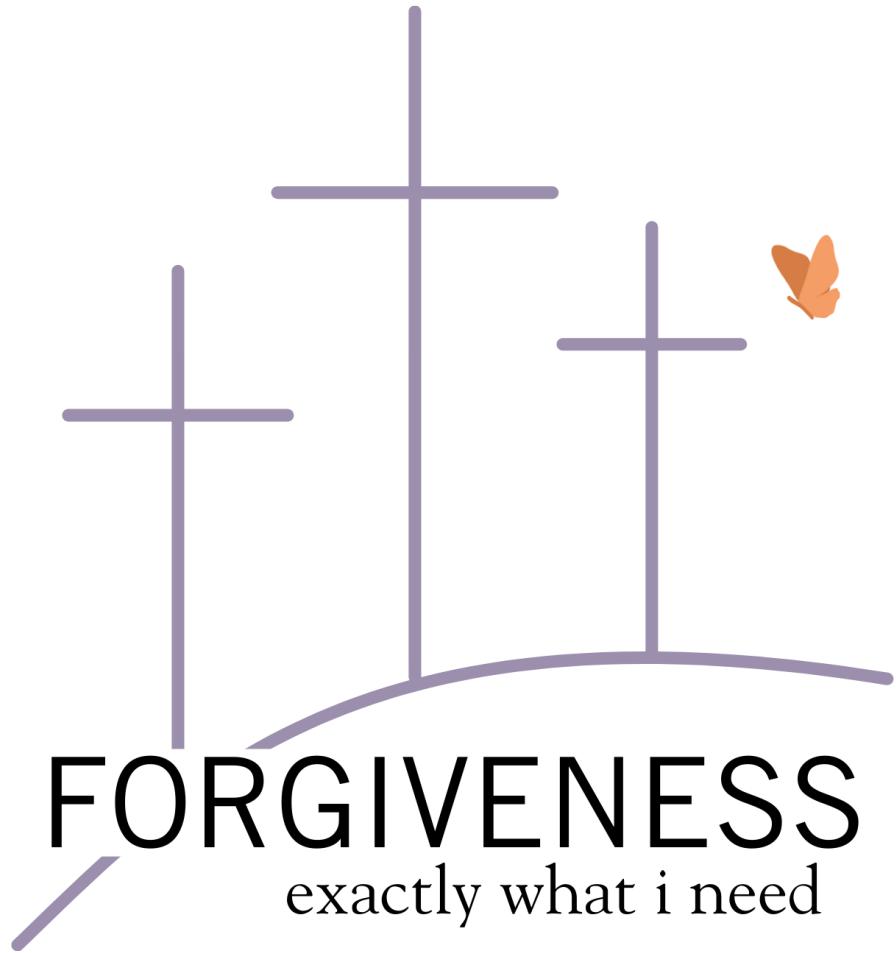


February 18, 2026

Ash Wednesday



FORGIVENESS

exactly what i need



14940 62nd St. N - Stillwater, MN 55082

651-439-7831

www.salemlutheran.org

Welcome! Thank you for joining us for worship today. In our services we gather before our almighty God to receive his gifts and to offer him our worship and praise. Through God's powerful Word and sacraments he renews our faith and strengthens us to serve in joy.

WORSHIP THEME: "I didn't know how much I needed that" is a common expression of surprise and realization. It suggests that something new has come to light, and we now see it as essential or valuable, even if we didn't see it before.

Lent is the season of the Church Year when we recognize our greatest needs. In this season we realize that all our greatest needs are met in Christ. God knows what we need most. If we lack Christ, we have nothing. But if we have Christ, we have exactly what we need.

ASH WEDNESDAY: This is the first day in the season of Lent, receiving its name from the ancient Christian tradition of receiving ashes to signify inner repentance. This practice finds its roots in the Old Testament, where people would "put on sackcloth and ashes" as a sign of sorrow and mourning. Christians are called to the altar during the worship service, and the pastor marks their forehead or hand with ashes in the sign of a cross. As he does this, he quotes Genesis 3:19, saying, "Remember that you are dust and to dust you will return."

This practice is a visible sign of the true purpose for Ash Wednesday: repentance. To prepare ourselves to see our Savior shed his blood, we spend time, especially today, in godly sorrow over our sins and all we have done wrong. We remember that the wages of our sin is death, and that one day we will return to the dust from which our race was made. In such sorrow and repentance, we then are properly prepared to see how Jesus has paid for our sins by giving his life on the cross.

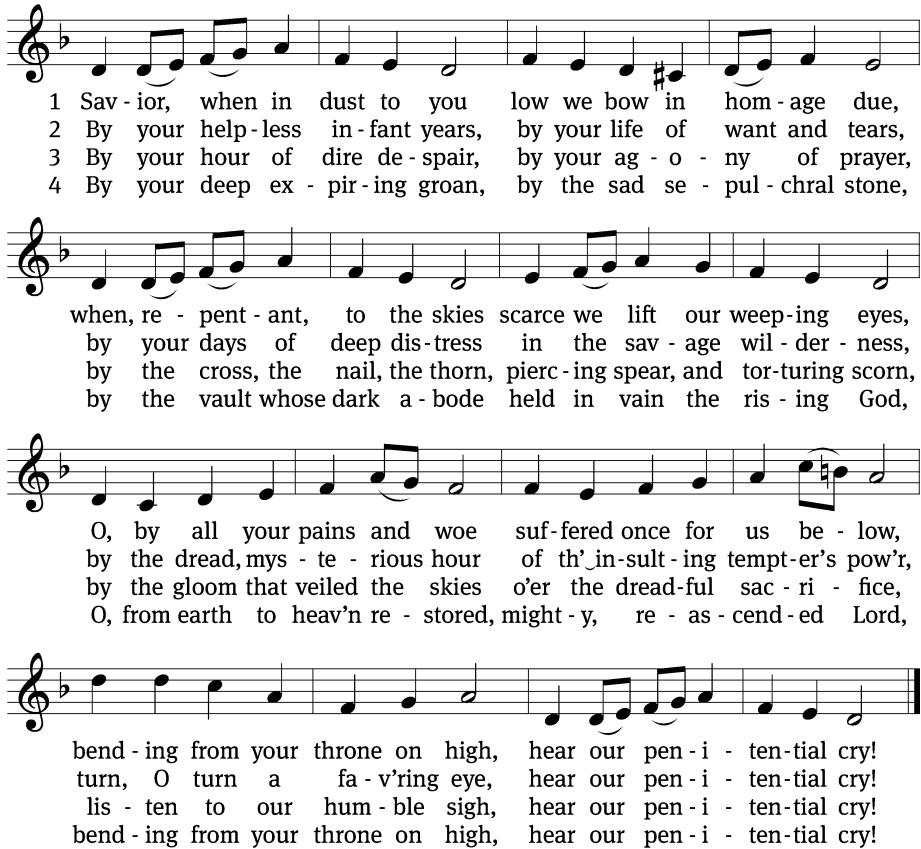
A WORD ABOUT HOLY COMMUNION: Our church observes the biblical practice of member communion (also called close communion). In Holy Communion we not only receive forgiveness from God, but we also express the unique relationship our members have with each other. If you are not a member of our congregation, we kindly ask that you not take communion today, but speak with our pastor after the service. We would love to share the sacrament with you in the future.

Order of Worship



Opening Hymn: Savior, When in Dust to You

CW 393



1 Sav - ior, when in dust to you low we bow in hom - age due,
2 By your help - less in - fant years, by your life of want and tears,
3 By your hour of dire de - spair, by your ag - o - ny of prayer,
4 By your deep ex - pir - ing groan, by the sad se - pul - chral stone,

when, re - pent - ant, to the skies scarce we lift our weep-ing eyes,
by your days of deep dis-tress in the sav - age wil - der - ness,
by the cross, the nail, the thorn, pierc - ing spear, and tor-turing scorn,
by the vault whose dark a - bode held in vain the ris - ing God,

O, by all your pains and woe suf - fered once for us be - low,
by the dread, mys - te - rious hour of th' in-sult - ing tempt-er's pow'r,
by the gloom that veiled the skies o'er the dread-ful sac - ri - fice,
O, from earth to heav'n re - stored, might - y, re - as - cend - ed Lord,

bend - ing from your throne on high, hear our pen - i - ten-tial cry!
turn, O turn a fa - v'ring eye, hear our pen - i - ten-tial cry!
lis - ten to our hum - ble sigh, hear our pen - i - ten-tial cry!
bend - ing from your throne on high, hear our pen - i - ten-tial cry!

Invocation

M: In the name of the Father and of the  Son and of the Holy Spirit.

C: Amen.

GATHERING RITE FOR LENT

M: Brothers and sisters in Christ, God created us to know perfect peace with him, to love all humanity, and to live in harmony with all creation. But sin separates us from God, our neighbors, and creation, and so we do not enjoy the life our Creator intended for us. By our sin we grieve our Father, who does not desire us to come under his judgment but to hear him and live. Therefore, God in his

mercy has sent our Lord Jesus Christ to take our place under the law, to suffer for us, and to take the punishment of death that we deserve. God made Jesus, “who had no sin, to be sin for us so that in him, we might become the righteousness of God.” (*2 Corinthians 5:21*)

M: During the 40 days of Lent, “we fix our eyes on Jesus, the author and perfecter of our faith, who for the joy set before him endured the cross, scorning its shame, and sat down at the right hand of God.” (*Hebrews 12:2*) The time of Lent reminds us that “to know Christ and the power of his resurrection, we must also know the fellowship of sharing in his sufferings, becoming like him in his death.” (*Philippians 3:10*) As disciples of the Lord Jesus, we are called to struggle against everything that leads us away from love of God and neighbor.

I invite you, therefore, to confess your sins, ask our Father for forgiveness, and commit yourselves to this struggle against sin.

M: Most holy and merciful Father,

C: **I confess to you and to my brothers and sisters that I have sinned in thought, word, and deed, by what I have done and by what I have left undone.**

M: Most holy and merciful Father,

C: **we confess to you and to one another that we have sinned by our own fault, by our own grievous fault. In thought, word, and deed, by what we have done, and by what we have left undone.**

M: 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, Lord.**

M: We have been deaf to your call to serve as Christ served us.

We have not been true to the mind of Christ. We have grieved the Holy Spirit.

C: **Have mercy on us, Lord.**

M: We have placed our wants before your will.

We have gratified the desires of our sinful nature.

We have merited your punishment now and forever.

C: **Have mercy on us, Lord.**

M: We confess to you, Lord, all our past unfaithfulness.

The pride, hypocrisy, and impatience in our lives.

C: **We confess to you, O Lord.**

M: Our self-indulgent appetites and ways, our manipulation of other people, our anger when our selfish aims are denied, and our envy of those more fortunate than ourselves.

C: **We confess to you, O Lord.**

M: Our love of worldly goods and comforts, and our dishonesty in daily life and work, our negligence in worship and prayer, and our failure to show the faith that is in us.

C: **We confess to you, O Lord.**

M: Forgive us, Lord, for the wrongs we have done. For our blindness to human need and suffering and our indifference to injustice and cruelty,

C: **Forgive us, Lord.**

M: For all false judgments, for uncharitable thoughts toward others, and for our prejudice and contempt for those who differ from us,

C: **Forgive us, Lord.**

M: For what we think or say or do that is at variance with your will,

C: **Forgive us, Lord.**

M: Restore us, good Lord, and let your anger depart from us.

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

Be seated.

(4 pm) Shining Lights Choir Anthem

Create in Me a Clean Heart

Arr. by Jeff Reeves

Create in me a clean heart, make my spirit right and true.

Guide me with your wisdom, Lord, as I seek to follow you.

Create in me a clean heart, give me strength to trust and obey.

Call me with your voice of love to the light of your perfect way.

God of creation and Lord of my life,

Show me how I can be more like you in all that I do,

In word and thought and deed.

Restore in me your joy, the gift of life anew;

And then shall my mouth sing songs of praise, for all that comes from you.

(6:30 pm) Choir Anthem

Mercy

Arr. by Susan Bentall Boersma and Craig Courtney

I dare not lift my guilty eyes. I hide my lips in trembling shame.

And in the darkness of my soul, I shrink from your rekindling flame.

Kyrie eleison, have mercy

In mercy cover me with grace and blot out my iniquity.

Renew my heart and wash me clean; grant with your pardon, purity.

Kyrie eleison, have mercy.

In equal measure of Your love, you promise mercy,
Tender compassion to the one who seeks your face.
A broken heart, a fainting soul, a contrite spirit,
Together cry for your forgiveness and your grace.

Against you only have I sinned. My deeds are evil in Your sight.
Of your forgiveness let me sing, and in my singing take delight.
Kyrie eleison, have mercy.

Imposition of Ashes

Those who desire to receive the sign of ashes come forward at the direction of the ushers. Parents may bring their children forward at their discretion. If you would like to receive the ashes on the back of your hand instead of your forehead, please hold out your hand. Once you receive the ashes please return to your seat.

The pastor or attendant applies the ashes to the forehead or hand in the form of a small cross, saying,

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

After all who desire have received ashes, the minister says:

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

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

M: By the cross and suffering of your Son, O Lord,

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

Absolution

M: The almighty God, the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, does not desire the death of sinners but rather that they turn from their wickedness and live. Therefore, I forgive you all your sins in the name of the Father and of the Son + and of the Holy Spirit. During these days of Lent, let us implore God to give us renewal and his Holy Spirit. May we continue to abide in the true faith and at the last be received by him only through the life, death, and resurrection of Jesus Christ our Lord.

C: **Amen.**

Scripture Reading

Zechariah 1:1-6

The "Holy Week prophet" begins by calling God's people to repentance.

¹In the eighth month of the second year of Darius, the word of the LORD came to the prophet Zechariah son of Berekiah, the son of Iddo:

²"The LORD was very angry with your ancestors. ³Therefore tell the people: This is what the LORD Almighty says: 'Return to me,' declares the LORD Almighty, 'and I will return to you,' says the LORD Almighty. ⁴Do not be like your

ancestors, to whom the earlier prophets proclaimed: This is what the LORD Almighty says: 'Turn from your evil ways and your evil practices.' But they would not listen or pay attention to me, declares the LORD.⁵ Where are your ancestors now? And the prophets, do they live forever?⁶ But did not my words and my decrees, which I commanded my servants the prophets, overtake your ancestors?

"Then they repented and said, 'The LORD Almighty has done to us what our ways and practices deserve, just as he determined to do.' "

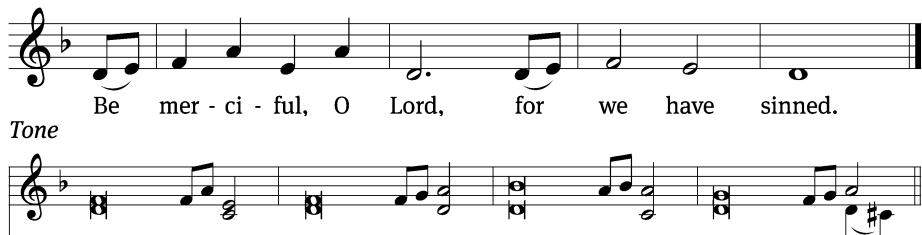
M: The Word of the Lord.

C: **Thanks be to God.**

Psalm: Be Merciful, O Lord

Psalm 51A

Refrain



Have mercy on / me, O God,
according to your un- / failing love;
according to your great com- / passion
blot out my trans- / gressions.

Wash away all my in- / iquity
and cleanse me / from my sin.
For I know my trans- / gressions,
and my sin is always be- / fore me. *Refrain*

Against you, you only, / have I sinned
and done what is evil / in your sight.
Surely I was sin- / ful at birth,
sinful from the time my mother con- / ceived me.

Cleanse me with hyssop, and I / will be clean;
wash me, and I will be whit- / er than snow.
Hide your face / from my sins
and blot out all my in- / iquity.

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

Godly sorrow results in repentance.

⁸Even if I caused you sorrow by my letter, I do not regret it. Though I did regret it—I see that my letter hurt you, but only for a little while—⁹yet now I am happy, not because you were made sorry, but because your sorrow led you to repentance. For you became sorrowful as God intended and so were not harmed in any way by us. ¹⁰Godly sorrow brings repentance that leads to salvation and leaves no regret, but worldly sorrow brings death. ¹¹See what this godly sorrow has produced in you: what earnestness, what eagerness to clear yourselves, what indignation, what alarm, what longing, what concern, what readiness to see justice done. At every point you have proved yourselves to be innocent in this matter. ¹²So even though I wrote to you, it was neither on account of the one who did the wrong nor on account of the injured party, but rather that before God you could see for yourselves how devoted to us you are. ¹³By all this we are encouraged.

Gospel

Matthew 6:1-6, 16-21

When I recognize my need for forgiveness, I express my repentance with humility.

⁹To some who were confident of their own righteousness and looked down on everyone else, Jesus told this parable: ¹⁰“Two men went up to the temple to pray, one a Pharisee and the other a tax collector. ¹¹The Pharisee stood by himself and prayed: ‘God, I thank you that I am not like other people—robbers, evildoers, adulterers—or even like this tax collector. ¹²I fast twice a week and give a tenth of all I get.’

¹³“But the tax collector stood at a distance. He would not even look up to heaven, but beat his breast and said, ‘God, have mercy on me, a sinner.’

¹⁴“I tell you that this man, rather than the other, went home justified before God. For all those who exalt themselves will be humbled, and those who humble themselves will be exalted.”

M: The Gospel of the Lord.

C: **Praise be to you, O Christ!**

Hymn: From Depths of Woe, Lord God, I Cry

CW 650 sts. 1, 3, 5

1 From depths of woe, Lord God, I cry; O hear my
3 Thus an - y mer - it of my own is void and
5 Al - though our sin is great in - deed, the grace of

hum - ble plead - ing! Lis - ten in mer - cy to my sigh,
un - a - vail - ing; I trust in God and God a - lone,
God is great - er; no loss we suf - fer can ex - ceed

my prayer for res - cue heed - ing! Were you, O
he is my hope un - fail - ing. Since he is
the help of our Cre - a - tor. Our shep - herd

Lord, to fix your gaze on our re - bel - lious,
good, I soon will see the com - fort he has
good and true is he, who will at last his

sin - ful ways, then who could stand be - fore you?
prom - ised me; I wait for its ar - ri - val.
peo - ple free from all their sin and sor - row.

Sermon

Zechariah 1:1-6

"Return to Me!"

Offering



Our members give offerings to support God's work in our church. Offerings can be put in the basket or made online by scanning the code. Visitors may give, but aren't expected to.

We ask members and visitors alike to fill out the connection card and place it in the basket now or as you leave. Please share your prayer requests that we can pray for you.



Give Online

(4:00 pm) Junior Bells Offertory

Many and Great
by Cathy Moklebust

Lord's Prayer

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. Lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil. For the kingdom, the power, and the glory are yours now and forever. Amen.

SACRAMENT OF HOLY COMMUNION

Our Lord Jesus has given us a holy supper in which we receive his true body and blood for the forgiveness of sins. The meal also bears witness to the unity and fellowship we share with each other. Therefore, we invite to communion all those who share in our confession by virtue of their membership here or in a sister WELS or ELS congregation. We ask visitors to speak to the pastor before communing.

M: Our Lord Jesus Christ, on the night he was betrayed, took bread; and when he had given thanks, he broke it and gave it to his disciples, saying, "Take and eat; this is my + body, which is given for you. Do this in remembrance of me."

Then he took the cup, gave thanks, and gave it to them, saying, "Drink from it, all of you; this is my + blood of the new covenant, which is poured out for you for the forgiveness of sins. Do this, whenever you drink it, in remembrance of me."

M: The peace of the Lord be with you always.

C: Amen.

O Christ, Lamb of God

The musical notation consists of five staves of music. The lyrics are as follows:

O Christ, Lamb of God, you take a-way the sin of the world;
have mer-cy on us. O Christ, Lamb of God,
you take a-way the sin of the world; have mer-cy on us.
O Christ, Lamb of God, you take a-way the sin of the world;
grant us your peace. A - men.

Communion Distribution

For those who cannot have any alcohol for personal or medical reasons we offer white grape juice. You will find cups of white grape juice in the center of each communion tray. Gluten-free wafers are available by request for those medically unable to tolerate gluten. Communionists may choose to receive the wine by individual or common cup. If you choose the common cup, please allow the individual tray to pass and then assist the minister by helping to tip the common cup.

If you have not communed with us before, please see the announcement on the inside cover of this service folder.

Hymn: Jesus Sinners Does Receive

CW 654 sts. 1, 3-5, 7

1 Je - sus sin - ners does re - ceive; oh, may all this
3 Sheep that from the fold did stray are not by the
4 I, a sin - ner, come to you with a pen - i -
5 Oh, how blest it is to know, were as scar - let
7 Je - sus sin - ners does re - ceive, e - ven I have

say - ing pon - der who in sin's de - lu - sions live
Lord for - sak - en; wea - ry souls who lost their way
tent con - fes - sion. Sav - ior, show me mer - cy, too;
my trans - gres - sion, it shall be as white as snow
been for - giv - en. And when I this earth must leave,

and from God and heav - en wan - der. Here is hope for
are by Christ, the Shep - herd, tak - en in his arms that
grant for all my sins re - mis - sion. Let these words my
by your blood and bit - ter pas - sion, for these words I
I shall find an o - pen heav - en. Dy - ing, still to

all who grieve: Je - sus sin - ners does re - ceive.
they may live: Je - sus sin - ners does re - ceive.
soul re - lieve: Je - sus sin - ners does re - ceive.
do be - lieve: Je - sus sin - ners does re - ceive.
him I cleave: Je - sus sin - ners does re - ceive.

Hymn: Lord, to You I Make Confession

CW 653



1 Lord, to you I make con - fes - sion: I have sinned and
2 Yet, though con-science' voice ap - pall me, Fa - ther, I will
3 For your Son has suf - fered for me, giv'n him - self to
4 Lord, on you I cast my bur - den— sink it in the

gone a - stray; I have mul - ti - plied trans - ges - sion,
seek your face. Though your child I dare not call me,
res - cue me, died to save me and re - store me,
deep - est seal! Let me know your gra - cious par - don,

cho - sen for my - self my way. Led by you to
yet re - ceive me to your grace. Do not for my
rec - on - ciled and set me free. Je - sus' cross a -
cleanse me from in - iq - ui - ty. Let your Spir - it

see my er - rors, Lord, I trem - ble at your ter - rors.
sins for - sake me, do not let your wrath o'er - take me.
lone can van - quish these dark fears and soothe this an - guish.
leave me nev - er, make me on - ly yours for - ev - er.

After the distribution please stand at the pastor's direction.

Response of Thanksgiving

M: Give thanks to the Lord, for he is good.

C: His mercy endures forever.

Psalm 118:1

M: Whenever we eat this bread and drink this cup,

C: We proclaim the Lord's death until he comes.

1 Corinthians 11:26

M: We give you thanks, O Lord, for the foretaste of the heavenly banquet you have given us in this Sacrament. Through this gift you have fed our faith, nourished our hope, and strengthened our love. By your Spirit, help us to live as your holy people until that day when you will receive us as your guests at the wedding supper of the Lamb, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever.

C: Amen.

Blessing

M: The Lord bless you and keep you.

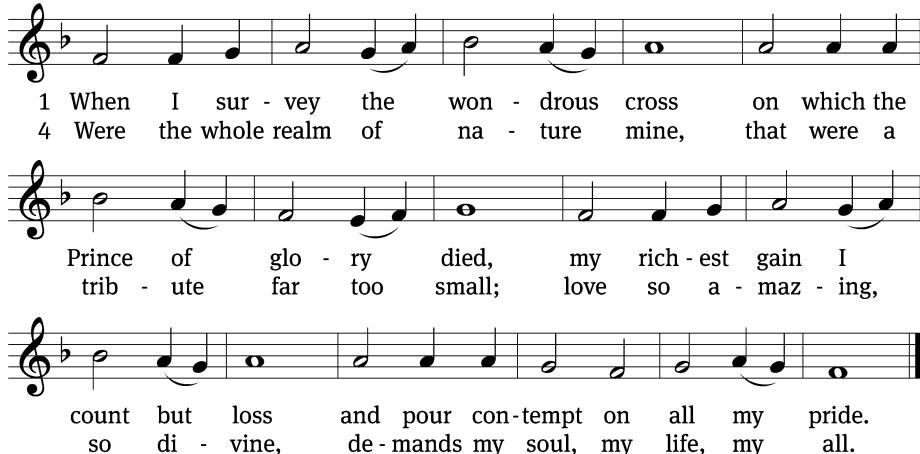
The Lord make his face shine on you and be gracious to you.

The Lord look on you with favor and + give you peace.

C: Amen.

Hymn: When I Survey the Wondrous Cross

CW 407 sts. 1, 4



1 When I sur - vey the won - drous cross on which the
4 Were the whole realm of na - ture mine, that were a

Prince of glo - ry died, my rich - est gain I
trib - ute far too small; love so a - maz - ing,

count but loss and pour con - tempt on all my pride.
so di - vine, de - mands my soul, my life, my all.

Silent Prayer and Dismissal

Acknowledgments

Setting One from Christian Worship

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SERVING GOD, SERVING US:

Worship Leader: Pastor Ryan Wolfe

Choir Director/Keyboard: Luke Dorn

Choir Accompanist: Jessica Klatt

Bells Director: Jessie Wolfe

WELCOME TO WORSHIP!

FOR OUR GUESTS

We are glad that you joined us to worship our Savior today. If you have questions about our church or service simply ask an usher or someone near you. We're happy to help!

Please take note of a few helpful things:

- ◆ Restrooms with diaper-changing tables are located straight down the hall opposite the sanctuary entrance.
- ◆ Our sanctuary is equipped with a “loop” system for hearing assistance. Please set hearing aids to the “T” position or ask an usher for a headset.
- ◆ You will find a connection card in your pew. Please share names, contact information, and prayer requests.
- ◆ Salem members give an offering to support the work we do for the Lord. Guests are not expected to give anything, but if you wish to make a donation you can place it in a basket as it's passed during the service or give online.
- ◆ Our services are streamed live on our YouTube channel. If you would prefer not to be on camera, please sit in the seats located beneath the balcony.

FOR THOSE WITH YOUNG CHILDREN

We love to see families worship together and we welcome children to sing, pray, and grow with us in our services.

We provide a few special worship aids and helps for families:

- ◆ Children's bulletins & activity bags are available in the entry, just to the left of the office hallway. Ask an usher if you need help finding them.
- ◆ If your child needs a quiet space, you can use the fireside room down the hallway across from the restrooms. The service is streamed live into the room.
- ◆ Children of all ages are invited to come to the front of church for the weekly children's message. Parents are welcome too!

**Salem Lutheran Church exists to glorify God
by teaching his timeless Truth, that all may
grow in grace and faith to share tomorrow's eternity.**

