
BETHESDA LUTHERAN CHURCH OF MALMO

21590 State Highway 47, Isle, MN 56342

February 18th, 2026

12:00 pm



We are a community that is passionate about sharing the love of Jesus Christ, and we provide as many opportunities as we can to help everyone grow spiritually and in loving service to the community and the world.

*We're glad you're here. We are a congregation of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America (ELCA) and celebrate the work we're able to do together.
(to learn more about the ELCA visit www.elca.org).*

Those joining worship online, either live or later in the week, are invited to prepare their worship space by creating a home altar. You might include meaningful linens, candles, a cross, enough bread or crackers and wine or juice for everyone at your table, and anything that helps you engage more fully in worship.

This altar becomes a gathering place for prayers, songs, communion, and a shared sense of God's presence in your home.

For this Ash Wednesday worship, you are invited to participate in the imposition of ashes. If you have ashes available, perhaps from a fireplace, burned paper, or last year's palms, you may mark your forehead (or hand) or that of another, with the sign of the cross. If ashes are not available, use a small amount of soil or simply trace the sign of the cross.

✠ GATHERING IN GOD'S PRESENCE ✠

~ **The gathering responds together with texts in bold print** ~

WELCOME

Good afternoon, and welcome to worship on this Ash Wednesday. I'm so glad you are here. Today, we begin the season of Lent with an open invitation. Jesus tells a story of a host who prepares a great feast and sends word out into the streets, the back alleys, and the wide roads: Come. There is still room. Again and again the invitation is extended, persistent, generous, and full of grace, until the house is filled. This is how God meets us tonight. As we receive ashes and begin this Lenten journey together, we remember our shared humanity and our deep belonging to God and to one another. We come as we are, trusting that God's abundant mercy is already reaching toward us. I'm grateful you are here as we begin this holy season together.

CALL TO WORSHIP

If God threw a party, **all would be invited.**

If God hosted a dinner, **there'd be a seat saved for each of us.**

If God prepared a banquet, **a cheer would go up when you arrived.**

This is the good news:

God is throwing a party. God is hosting a dinner.

God is preparing a banquet, and all are invited.

Let us worship this invitational God.

Softly and Tenderly Jesus Is Calling



- 1 Soft - ly and ten - der - ly Je - sus is call - ing, call - ing for
- 2 Why should we tar - ry when Je - sus is plead - ing, plead - ing for
- 3 Oh, for the won - der - ful love he has prom - ised, prom - ised for



you and for me. See, on the por - tals he's wait - ing and watch - ing,
you and for me? Why should we lin - ger and heed not his mer - cies,
you and for me! Though we have sinned, he has mer - cy and par - don,

Refrain



watch - ing for you and for me.
mer - cies for you and for me? "Come home, come home!"
par - don for you and for me.



You who are wea - ry, come home." Ear - nest - ly, ten - der - ly,



Je - sus is call - ing, call - ing, "O sin - ner, come home!"

Text: Will L. Thompson, 1847-1909
Music: THOMPSON, Will L. Thompson

GREETING

The immeasurable grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, the rich mercy and love of God, and the unity of the Holy Spirit be with you all. **And also with you.**

PRAYER FOR ILLUMINATION

Table-setting God, **this Lent we do not want to miss your invitation. We do not want to be so caught up in our own business that we miss the holiness right in front of us. So settle our hearts, and open our spirits to hear your word anew. Help us hear your good news today. With hope we pray, amen.**

✠ HEARING GOD'S WORD ✠

POETRY READING

"The Gospel According to Mrs. Farnell's Pre-K Class"

Poem by Rev. Sarah A. Speed | A Sanctified Art LLC | sanctifiedart.org

The Gospel According to Mrs. Farnell's Pre-K Class by Rev. Sarah A. Speed

In Pre-K the whole class gets an invite to Tommy's birthday.
He places the paper invites in our cubbies. There's a helter-skelter sticker
sealing each one, proof that tiny hands did the work. So we,
the members of Mrs. Farnell's Pre-K class, arrive at the park on Saturday.
We arrive whether or not we've ever built a sandcastle with Tommy.
We arrive whether or not we've ever shared half of our PB&J at lunch.
We arrive at the park on Saturday, with pigtails and balloons,
because we were *invited*.

And together we play tag, and we eat birthday cake,
and we run barefoot in the grass. Together, we sing *Happy birthday to youuuuuuu*,
so excited we can barely stand still. Together,
we momentarily forget that Chloe never gets picked for Red Rover
and that Quinn cried in class last week,
because the park is not the playground and everyone was invited.
And when we load into our cars at the end of the day, with grass-stained knees,
chocolate frosting on our faces, and the awareness of inclusion,
we say to our parents, *This was the best day of my life*.

SCRIPTURE READING

Luke 14:15-24

The holy gospel according to Luke

This is the story of grace flowing down. **Glory to you, O Lord.**

¹⁵ One of the dinner guests, on hearing this, said to him, "Blessed is anyone who will eat bread in the kingdom of God!" ¹⁶ Then Jesus said to him, "Someone gave a great dinner and invited many. ¹⁷ At the time for the dinner he sent his slave to say to those who had been invited, 'Come, for everything is ready now.' ¹⁸ But they all alike began to make excuses. The first said to him, 'I have bought a piece of land, and I must go out and see it; please accept my regrets.' ¹⁹ Another said, 'I have bought five yoke of oxen, and I am going to try them out; please accept my regrets.' ²⁰ Another said, 'I have just been married, and therefore I cannot come.' ²¹ So the slave returned and reported this to his master. Then the owner of the house became angry and said to his slave, 'Go out at once into the streets and lanes of the town and bring in the poor, the crippled, the blind, and the lame.' ²² And the slave said, 'Sir, what you ordered has been done, and there is still room.' ²³ Then the master said to the slave, 'Go out into the roads and lanes, and compel people to come in, so that my house may be filled. ²⁴ For I tell you, none of those who were invited will taste my dinner.' "

This is the story of grace that covers us. **Praise to you, O Christ.**

REFLECTION

Reverend Christina Kadelbach

Will You Come and Follow Me

The Summons

1 "Will you come and fol - low me if I but call
 2 "Will you leave your - self be - hind if I but call
 3 "Will you let the blind - ed see if I but call
 4 "Will you love the you you hide if I but call
 5 Lord, your sum - mons ech - oes true when you but call

your name? Will you go where you don't
 your name? Will you care for cruel and
 your name? Will you set the pris - 'ners
 your name? Will you quell the fear in -
 my name. Let me turn and fol - low

know and nev - er be the same?
 kind and nev - er be the same?
 free and nev - er be the same?
 side and nev - er be the same?
 you and nev - er be the same.

Will you let my love be shown, will you let my
 Will you risk the hos - tile stare, should your life at -
 Will you kiss the lep - er clean, and do such as
 Will you use the faith you've found to re - shape the
 In your com - pa - ny I'll go where your love and

name be known, will you let my life be
 tract or scare? Will you let me an - swer
 this un - seen, and ad - mit to what I
 world a - round, through my sight and touch and
 foot - steps show. Thus I'll move and live and

grown in you and you in me?"
 pray'r in you and you in me?"
 mean in you and you in me?"
 sound in you and you in me?"
 grow in you and you in me.

Text: John L. Bell, b. 1949
 Music: KELVINGROVE, Scottish traditional
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✚ SHARING & RECEIVING THE GIFTS OF GOD ✚

AFFIRMATION OF FAITH

We believe in a table-setting God
who always has a seat saved for you.

We believe in an inviting God
who leaves the porch light on and a hand extended.

We believe in a radically welcoming God
**who eats with the overlooked and the outcast,
the hungry and the downtrodden.**

We believe in the good news of the gospel, which reminds us
**that all are welcomed, all are celebrated,
all are loved, and all are claimed.**

Pull up a seat at God's table.

There is good news to be shared here. Amen.

INVITATION TO LENT

The presiding minister invites the gathering into the discipline of Lent.

The gather responds:

Let us pray. **Bless, O God, these ashes and those who receive them.**

Let them be a sign of our shared humanity and a witness to your mercy.

**Gather us and lead us on this Lenten path as people formed by grace and
renewed by your steadfast love; through Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord.
Amen.**

CALL TO CONFESSION

Family of faith, if someone declines our invitations again and again,
in our human ways, we tend to stop inviting them. We get the hint.
We assume they'd rather be elsewhere.

With God, however, things are different. No matter how many times we overlook or
ignore God's outstretched hand, God will never stop reaching for us.
So with that good news in mind, let us go to God in prayer.

PRAYER OF CONFESSION

Gracious God, **you invite all of us to your table: the faithful and the doubting,
the restless and the hopeless, the addicted and the lonely, the lost and the
confused. You invite all of us, regardless of who we are or where we've
been, but we fail to do the same. When given the opportunity, we are guilty
of casting judgment on our neighbors. We draw lines, assume the worst,
create cliques, and accept exclusion. Forgive our harmful ways. This Lent,
show us how to love others the way you love us. With hope we pray, amen.**

WORDS OF FORGIVENESS

Friends, no matter how many times we mess up, no matter how many times we lose
our way, no matter how many times we decline God's invitation, God will never stop
inviting us to the table. There is and always will be a seat saved for you.

So join me in these good news words:

We are forgiven, again and again. We are invited, again and again.

We are loved, from beginning to end. Thanks be to God, our inviter. Amen.

PRAYERS OF THE PEOPLE

Rooted in God's abundant mercy, let us pray for the church, the world, and all who hunger for good news.

Each petition ends with: God of abundant grace.

*The gathering responds: **Hear our prayer.***

The prayers conclude:

Into your hands, O gracious Host, we place all for whom we pray, trusting in your mercy; through Jesus Christ, who invites all to the table of grace. **Amen.**

PEACE

May Jesus Christ, our Lord and Savior, fill you with unconditional love, mend you with mercy, and grant you perfect peace. **And also with you.**

We are changed by Christ's peace and now we have the holy opportunity to extend that peace to others.

OFFERING

Giving is an act of worship our response to God's goodness and grace.

Your gifts support the ministry of Bethesda Lutheran Church and extend God's love into the world. During this time the table is set.

For the healing of this world, let us give our tithes and offerings.

Ways to Give:

- Give electronically through Vanco Services.
- Use the giving app by scanning the QR code.
- Recurring or one-time online options <https://app.autobooks.co/pay/bethesda-lutheran-church-of-malmo>



Thank you for your faithful and generous support.

OFFERING PRAYER

O God, maker of heaven and earth, your steadfast love embraces all creation.

In every season you speak good news. You send rain and sunshine to nourish the earth and bring forth its bounty. Gather us at this table of grace.

Through these gifts of bread and wine, tell us again the good news of Jesus, his life poured out for the world, his love alive among us, his promise renewing all things. Shape us to carry this good news into our days, so that what we receive here may be lived and shared beyond these walls. We ask this in Jesus' name. Amen.

THANKSGIVING AT THE TABLE

The presiding minister gives thanks and leads the words of institution.

*The gathering responds: **Amen.***

THE LORD'S PRAYER

Grounded in the good news of God's abundant mercy, we pray. **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 AND IMPOSITION OF ASHES

Holy Communion is a gift of grace, where we receive the presence of Jesus in bread and wine and are reminded that we are deeply loved. All who hunger for mercy and hope are welcome at this feast. Jesus is the host, and the invitation is wide. Even across time and space, God is present in these gifts, and we, the community, are present to one another.

Come to the table. Come and receive the good news made tangible
Feast on God's goodness and mercy.

Bread for the journey, grace for your life, love that sustains the world.

You are invited to receive ashes by tracing the sign of the cross on your forehead or hand, or on the forehead or hand of those with you. As you do, say:

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

COMMUNION VIDEO "Come To The Banquet"

By Fay White <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Q7nXzx7cBVI>

BLESSING & PRAYER AFTER THE IMPOSITION OF ASHES & COMMUNION

The body and blood of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ strengthen you and keep you in his grace. Amen. Marked by dust, claimed by love, we do not walk this road alone. Even in our frailty, God goes before us, behind us, and beside us.

Let us pray. God of dust and promise, **we give you thanks for this meal that restores our souls, reconciles us to you, and strengthens us for the journey. Through the body and blood of your Son, may we become Christ's body in the world, bearing witness to your love for all creation, through Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord. Amen.**

✠ SENDING ✠

MEAL PRAYER

Gracious God, **we give thanks for this food, for the hands that prepared it, from farm to table, and for the community gathered around these tables. Bless this meal and our time together. As we share in this feast, nourish our bodies, deepen our fellowship, and remind us of your abundant love for all. In Jesus' name we pray. Amen.**

BLESSING

As you leave this place, when you meet anger, speak with love. When you meet fear, speak with hope. When you meet pain, speak with gentleness. But no matter what, speak this good news. For the good news of the gospel is love and justice for all.

It is joy that surprises, and nonviolence that transforms. May the triune God † bless you now and forever. **Amen.**

BEAUTIFUL THINGS

ACS 925

Text and music: Michael Gungor, b. 1980, and Lisa Gungor, b. 1982 Text and music © 2009 worshiptogether.com Songs, admin. CapitolCMGPublishing.com tune beautiful things Irregular Musician: Tim McNabb Accompaniment Style: Easy Acoustic Bld. <https://youtu.be/nyHAUJFKq8?si=gzykuuOIFE5Jx8mS>

¹All this pain; I wonder if I'll ever find my way.

I wonder if my life could really change at all. *Refrain.*

²All this earth: could all that is last ever be found?

Could a garden come up from this ground at all? *Refrain.*

³All around, hope is springing up from this old ground.

Out of chaos, life is being found in you. *Refrain.*

Refrain: You make beautiful things, you make beautiful things out of the dust.

You make beautiful things, you make beautiful things out of us.

DISMISSAL

Marked with the cross of Christ, go in peace. Believe the good news.

Thanks be to God.

We're so glad you joined us for worship today.

Wherever life finds you, know that this community welcomes you with open hearts.

Acknowledgements: Texts and hymns from sundaysandseasons.com copyright © 2026 Augsburg Fortress. All rights reserved. Reprinted by permission under Augsburg Fortress Liturgies Annual License # SAS028183. New Revised Standard Version updated edition Bible Copyright © 2021 National Council of Churches of Christ in the United States of America. Used by permission. All rights reserved. Additional Liturgical texts adapted for Bethesda Lutheran by Reverend Christina Kadelbach. Graphic Design by Rev. Lauren Wright Pittman | A Sanctified Art LLC | sanctifiedart.org Hymn lyrics by Rev. Anna Strickland | A Sanctified Art LLC | sanctifiedart.org Liturgy by Dr. Cláudio Carvalhaes | A Sanctified Art LLC | sanctifiedart.org

LIFE TOGETHER ANNOUNCEMENTS

Life together announcements reflect the shared life of our congregation by highlighting upcoming events, service opportunities, and ways we continue to grow in faith together.

We invite you to read through what's ahead and participate as you are able. Your presence matters.

PRAYER & CARE LIST Jim Christensen, Sherry Whipple, Pam Dugdale

As a community of faith, we are committed to holding one another in prayer and care.

We invite you to pray for those listed here and offer support as you are able.

To request prayers for yourself or someone else (with their permission).

Please contact the church office.

WELCOME Friends in Christ, we're glad you're here. Your presence is a gift to this community. If you would like us to be in touch or want to learn more about Bethesda, you're welcome to share your name in the friendship/welcome notebook.

NAME TAGS Help your neighbors, and your pastor, remember your name! Name tags make it easier to connect and grow together in community. Sticker name tags are available near the guest book at the main entrance.

POTLUCK All are warmly invited to join us for a potluck meal following worship today. As we begin this Lenten journey grounded in good news, we gather around tables of shared food and conversation, remembering that God's invitation is wide and generous. Come as you are and stay for fellowship; there is a place for you here.

LENTEN WORSHIP & FORMATION OPPORTUNITIES

- **Wednesday Midweek Lenten Worship at Noon** (following Ash Wednesday)
Wednesdays, through March 25th
Our worship will be guided by the Holden Evening Prayer
Potluck lunch to follow.
The noon worship will be live-streamed each week.
- **Lenten Devotional Booklets**
Devotional booklets are available. These weekly devotions follow the scriptures of the *Tell Me Something Good* series through Easter Sunday and include commentary, poetry, visual art, hymns, written reflections, and prayer and conversation prompts.



Bethesda Lutheran Church blcmalmo.org

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A member congregation of the NE MN Synod of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America.

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