

---

# BETHESDA LUTHERAN CHURCH OF MALMO

21590 State Highway 47, Isle, MN 56342

March 22<sup>nd</sup>, 2026

9:00 a.m.

---



the good news is..

**rooted in justice, mercy,  
& faithfulness**

*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](http://www.elca.org)).*

*Those joining worship online, whether 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.*

**✝ GATHERING IN GOD'S PRESENCE ✝**

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

## **WELCOME**

*Good morning, and welcome to worship. On this fifth Sunday in Lent, we gather around a story of interrupted judgment. When the religious leaders brought a woman before Jesus, certain of the verdict, Jesus knelt in the dust and turned their certainty back on them. One by one, they walked away. What remained was mercy. Today the good news is this: God is not looking for a reason to condemn us. God is the one who stays when everyone else has gone, and whose mercy is already at work before we even know we need it. As we worship, may we receive that grace — and may we be moved to extend it.*

## **CALL TO WORSHIP**

Welcome to the weary and the worn.

**Welcome to the wiggly and the eager.**

Welcome to the skeptical and the seeking.

**Welcome to the early risers and those still trying to wake up.**

Welcome to the rule followers and the rule breakers.

**Welcome to those hungry for justice and those desperate for mercy.**

Welcome to the sinners and the saints.

**This is God's house.**

You can make yourself at home here.

**Let us worship our just, merciful, and faithful God!**

## **LIFE TOGETHER ANNOUNCEMENTS**

*Find the full list of Life Together announcements near the end of the bulletin.*

## **CALL TO CONFESSION**

Jesus once said to a crowd,

"Let anyone among you who is without sin be the first to throw a stone."

Friends, none of us are without sin. None of us get it right all the time.

None of us can get by without God's grace.

In the Prayer of Confession, we acknowledge this truth.

We put down our stones and we turn to God for forgiveness.

Join me in this act of transformation.

Let us pray:

## **PRAYER OF CONFESSION**

Holy God, **we love to live our lives by the rules. We love clear answers.**

**We love right and wrong. We love swift justice.**

**We love to pick up stones, but you show us another way.**

**You welcome shades of gray and nuanced conversation.**

**You prioritize mercy over legality. You prioritize people over tradition.**

**You prioritize love over everything.**

**Forgive us for losing sight of what truly matters.**

**Forgive us for clinging tighter to laws than to each other or to you.**

**Forgive us. Soften our hearts. Root us in mercy, justice, and love.**

**With hope for a better tomorrow, we pray. Amen.**

## **WORDS OF FORGIVENESS**

Jesus saw a crowd ready to throw stones and invited them to choose another way.

Jesus offered them grace, mercy, and compassion, and the same can be said for us.

So hear and believe the good news of the gospel: Our God is a God of mercy.

Our God is a God of compassion. Our God is a God of grace.

**We are forgiven, loved, and invited to choose another way.**

**Thanks be to God for yet another second chance. Amen.**



1 A - maz - ing grace!— how sweet the sound— that  
 2 'Twas grace that taught my heart to fear, and  
 3 Through man - y dan - gers, toils, and snares I  
 4 The Lord has prom - ised good to me; his  
 5 When we've been there ten thou - sand years, bright



saved a wretch like me! I once was lost, but  
 grace my fears re - lieved; how pre - cious did that  
 have al - read - y come; 'tis grace has brought me  
 word my hope se - cures; he will my shield and  
 shin - ing as the sun, we've no less days to



now am found; was blind, but now I see.  
 grace ap - pear the hour I first be - lieved!  
 safe thus far, and grace will lead me home.  
 por - tion be as long as life en - dures.  
 sing God's praise than when we'd first be - gun.

Text: John Newton, 1725–1807, alt., sts. 1–4; anonymous, st. 5  
 Music: NEW BRITAIN, W. Walker, *Southern Harmony*, 1835

**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**

Holy One, **when you speak, we don't want to miss it.**  
**When you bend down and write in the dirt,**  
**when you move through the trees, when you wake with the dawn,**  
**when you tug on our heart, or whisper into our dreams,**  
**we don't want to miss it. So today we pray,**  
**clear out the cobwebs in our ears.**  
**Quiet the steady stream of thoughts marching through our minds.**  
**Open up space in our hearts so that we can receive your word for us today.**  
**With hope we pray. Amen.**

✠ **HEARING GOD'S WORD** ✠

**SCRIPTURE READING**

**John 8:2-11, Matthew 23:23**

The holy gospel according to John  
 These are the stories of grace flowing down. **Glory to you, O Lord.**

<sup>2</sup>Early in the morning he came again to the temple. All the people came to him, and he sat down and began to teach them. <sup>3</sup>The scribes and the Pharisees brought a woman who had been caught in adultery, and, making her stand before all of

them, <sup>4</sup>they said to him, "Teacher, this woman was caught in the very act of committing adultery. <sup>5</sup>Now in the law Moses commanded us to stone such women. Now what do you say?" <sup>6</sup>They said this to test him, so that they might have some charge to bring against him. Jesus bent down and wrote with his finger on the ground. <sup>7</sup>When they kept on questioning him, he straightened up and said to them, "Let anyone among you who is without sin be the first to throw a stone at her." <sup>8</sup>And once again he bent down and wrote on the ground. <sup>9</sup>When they heard it, they went away, one by one, beginning with the elders, and Jesus was left alone with the woman standing before him. <sup>10</sup>Jesus straightened up and said to her, "Woman, where are they? Has no one condemned you?" <sup>11</sup>She said, "No one, sir." And Jesus said, "Neither do I condemn you. Go your way, and from now on do not sin again."]]

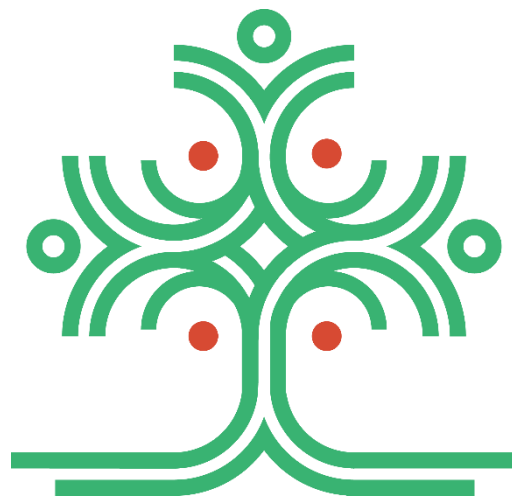
The holy Gospel according to Matthew

23 "Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! For you tithe mint, dill, and cumin and have neglected the weightier matters of the law: justice and mercy and faith. It is these you ought to have practiced without neglecting the others.

These are the stories of grace that cover us. **Praise to you, O Christ.**

**SERMON**

**Reverend Christina Kadelbach**



# Let Us Remember

ADELAIDE 5.4.5.4 D ("Have Thine Own Way")

Words: Anna Strickland (2025)

Music: George C. Stebbins (1907)



What is im - por - tant?      What mat - ters more?  
We've been shown mer - cy      all of our lives  
Fol - low - ing Je - sus,      liv - ing in truth  
What does the Lord re - qui - re of us?



Hu - man con - nec - tion      or keep - ing score?  
By the cre - a - tor      of hu - man - kind  
We re - main faith - ful      to our roots  
To re - main hum - ble,      lov - ing, and just



In our pur - suit of      jus - tice and truth  
So when we're in a po - si - tion to judge  
When those roots lead us out - side the lines  
Keep - ing the heart of the gos - pel in mind



Let us re - mem - ber:      we fall short, too  
Let us re - mem - ber:      they're just like us  
Let us re - mem - ber:      faith is a - live  
Let us re - mem - ber:      do what is right

© 2025 Anna Strickland | Commissioned by A Sanctified Art, LLC

## ✠ SHARING & RECEIVING THE GIFTS OF GOD ✠

### AFFIRMATION OF FAITH

**I believe in the good news of Jesus Christ.  
It sounds like welcome and feels like home.  
It sounds like laughter and feels like mercy.  
It sounds like love and feels like a seat at the table,  
so I believe in the good news of Jesus Christ.  
I have seen it alive in the world.**

**And even when my heart aches, even when wars rage,  
even when mercy feels out of reach, I remember the one who  
welcomed the children and led with nonviolence.  
I remember the one who cared for the vulnerable  
and inspired those around him.  
I remember that the good news really is good news,  
for I have seen it alive in the world. Thanks be to God! Amen.**

## **PRAYERS OF THE PEOPLE**

Loving God, you know all of us. You know our fears and our dreams, our hopes and our longings, our grief and our joy. You know the words that are on our tongue before we can even say them, so today we come to you unfiltered.

**Today, we bring you our full honesty, trusting that you meet us here with grace and love.**

Holy God, we admit that mercy, justice, and faithfulness often get tangled up in our minds.

**We want to do the right thing, which feels like justice. However, sometimes we go about justice with a blunt sword, failing to practice mercy.**

We want to be merciful, but our anger and hurt can get in the way. Too often, we find ourselves casting stones.

**We want to be righteous, but we often forget that righteousness must impact our relationships, not only our words or our actions.**

So like Jesus did with the crowds that day, help us to root ourselves in the best of these practices. Untangle these threads of our faith and show us how to hold them all.

**Spark a fire in our hearts for justice— justice for the oppressed, justice for the overlooked, justice for our neighbors, justice for those not given a voice.**

Spark a fire in our hearts for mercy— mercy for the sinful, which is all of us, mercy for the hurt, mercy for the ones who are doing their best with what they have.

**And spark a fire in our hearts for righteousness. Call us up to a higher moral ground.**

Remind us that our faith invites us to love as you love, and to forgive as you forgive.

**Show us how to put down our stones. Show us how to forgive ourselves for our own wrong. Show us how to empathize with the other, putting ourselves in their shoes.**

If we can do that, then maybe there will be a day when there is less stone throwing, less mob building, less violence toward our neighbor.

**Maybe there will be a day when all can gather at the table. Maybe there will be a day when we can all break bread together.**

Maybe there will be a day when justice, mercy, and righteousness feel like a mighty flowing stream.

**Until that day, we will continue to look for your words in the dirt. We will continue to listen for your deep truth.**

Until that promised day, we will continue to bring you our unfiltered honesty.

**Until that promised day, we will continue to pray for our neighbor.**

Today, we pray for. . .

*The presiding minister offers prayers for our community and for the needs of the world.*

Loving God, set a fire in our hearts for justice, mercy, and righteousness.  
Receive our prayers, O God, through Jesus Christ, our strength and salvation.  
**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 leads the words of institution. The gathering responds:*

Remembering his love for us on the way, at the table, and to the end

We proclaim the mystery of faith.

**Christ has died. Christ is risen. Christ will come again.**

*The presiding minister continues. The gathering responds:*

With your holy ones of all times and places, with the earth and all its creatures,  
with sun and moon and stars, we praise you, O God, blessed and holy Trinity,  
now and forever. **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

*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.

## COMMUNION VIDEO "The Porter's Gate - Blessed Are The Merciful"

Artist: The Porter's Gate Album: Neighbor Songs CCLI# 7133717 Website: <https://www.theportersgate.com>  
Written by: Paul Zach, Orlando Palmer, and Isaac Wardell © 2019 Integrity Worship Music/PG Songs And Hymns/ASCAP  
(adm worldwide at CapitolCMGPublishing.com, excluding the UK & Europe which is adm by Integrity Music), Paul Zach  
Publishing Designee/ASCAP

## PRAYER AFTER COMMUNION

The body and blood of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ strengthen you and keep you in his grace. Let us pray. God of our salvation,  
**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 ✠

## 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.**

# There's a Wideness in God's Mercy

ELW 588



1 There's a wide-ness in God's mer - cy, like the wide - ness of the sea;  
2 There is wel - come for the sin - ner, and a prom - ised grace made good;  
3 For the love of God is broad - er than the mea - sures of our mind;  
4 'Tis not all we owe to Je - sus; it is some - thing more than all:



there's a kind - ness in God's jus - tice which is more than lib - er - ty.  
there is mer - cy with the Sav - ior; there is heal - ing in his blood.  
and the heart of the E - ter - nal is most won - der - ful - ly kind.  
great - er good be - cause of e - vil, larg - er mer - cy through the fall.



There is no place where earth's sor - rows are more felt than up in heav'n.  
There is grace e - nough for thou - sands of new worlds as great as this;  
But we make this love too nar - row by false lim - its of our own;  
Make our love, O God, more faith - ful; let us take you at your word,



There is no place where earth's fail - ings have such kind - ly judg - ment giv'n.  
there is room for fresh cre - a - tions in that up - per home of bliss.  
and we mag - ni - fy its strict - ness with a zeal God will not own.  
and our lives will be thanks - giv - ing for the good - ness of the Lord.

Text: Frederick W. Faber, 1814–1863, alt.  
Music: LORD, REVIVE US, North American, 19th cent.

## DISMISSAL

The good news of the gospel is alive in the world, so go forth speaking.  
For if you won't, then who will? **Thanks be to God for this good, good news.**

*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](http://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. Cover Image: Transfiguration 2000 by Laura James. Copyright © Laura James. All rights reserved. Used by permission of the artist.*

## **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,  
The family and friends of Marilyn Cierzan. The family and friends of Sam Samuelson  
*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 get in touch with 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.

**CHILDREN WELCOME** Children are a gift we celebrate and are welcome at Holy Communion. We trust that worship belongs to people of all ages. A quieter, unstaffed nursery is available through the double doors to the left when exiting the sanctuary. Children's bulletins and activity bags are available in the narthex.

**WELCOME NOTEBOOK** Please take a moment to sign the friendship notebook in the black folder at the end of your pew. Passing it along is a simple act of hospitality that helps us learn one another's names and extend the warmth of Christ's welcome to all.

**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.

**PASTORAL CARE** Caring for one another is part of who we are. If you are hospitalized or going through a difficult time, please let Pastor Christina or one of our parish nurses know. We would be honored to support you.

**COFFEE HOSPITALITY** Coffee and conversation are part of how we care for one another. If you'd like to help serve coffee or share a treat, your presence makes a difference. Sign-up information is available, and contributions for the freezer are always welcome.

**LECTORS** Thank you to those who share their voices in the reading of Scripture. Newly updated readings for the upcoming weeks are available on the table in the narthex.

**COMMUNION ASSISTANTS** The ministry of serving Holy Communion is shared by many. If you are interested in serving at the table, Pastor Christina would love to visit with you. Please contact the church office to begin the conversation.

**COME SING WITH US** If you enjoy singing, consider joining the choir as we begin again in April. Whether you've sung for years or simply love music, there is a place for you. Choir is a joyful way to participate in worship, build community, and share in the gift of song together. We would be delighted to welcome your voice. All Voices Welcome.

### **LENTEN WORSHIP & FORMATION OPPORTUNITIES**

- **Wednesday Midweek Lenten Worship at Noon** Wednesdays through March 25<sup>th</sup> 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 and Daily Devotional Cards are available. These 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.

- **Maundy Thursday Worship with Holy Communion at noon.** Potluck lunch to follow.
- **Good Friday Worship at Noon**
- **Easter Sunday Worship with Holy Communion 9:00 am**

**MILLE LACS AREA LENTEN CANTATA** "Come to the Cross and Remember"

Friday, April 3<sup>rd</sup> at 7:30 pm.at Faith Lutheran Church, 220 E Lake St, Isle, MN 56342  
A free will offering will support the Isle Area Food Shelf.

**CRAFT SWAP & SUPPLY DRIVE** Spring is the perfect time to organize and declutter those craft bins! Consider donating your gently used art and craft supplies to our upcoming Craft Swap and Supply Drive. Items will be collected the week before the event. On April 11, 9:00 am - Noon, join us for a community gathering where creativity meets generosity, share what you no longer need, and discover new-to-you supplies to inspire your next project.

**Women of the ELCA HEARTLAND CONFERENCE SPRING GATHERING**

"*Steeped in Kindness*" Saturday, April 18, 2026 | 8:30 am – 1:00 pm

Bethesda Lutheran Church of Malmo. All are warmly invited to a morning of fellowship, worship, and joy. Guest speaker: Jason Kempthorne from Salem West. Cost: \$12 (includes lunch). Bring a friend and join us for a meaningful and uplifting time together.

**RESPONSE TO GOD'S WORD**

From Sunday, March 8<sup>th</sup>, In person: 54 Online: 21

**THIS WEEK AT BETHESDA**

**Monday, March 23<sup>rd</sup>**

11:30 am Pinochle

7:00 pm AA/Alanon

**Tuesday, March 24<sup>th</sup>**

9:00 am Chair Yoga

9:00 am Quilters

**Wednesday, March 25<sup>th</sup>**

9:00 am Women's Bible Study

12:00 pm Holden Evening Prayer Service, Potluck following

**Thursday, March 26<sup>th</sup>**

8:00 am ROMEOS (Men's fellowship & Study)

9:15 am Chair Yoga

**Friday, March 27<sup>th</sup>**

**Saturday, March 28<sup>th</sup>**

11:00 am Celebration of Life for Timothy Dooley

**Sunday, March 29<sup>th</sup>, Palm/Passion Sunday**

9:00 am Worship with Holy Communion

**Bethesda Lutheran Church blcmalmo.org**

Office: 320-684-2123 (1-877-684-2123)

Fax: 320-684-2836

E-mail address: blcmalmo@gmail.com

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

**Ministers:** All People of Bethesda Lutheran Church

**Pastoral Ministries:** Reverend Christina Kadelbach

[blc.reverend@gmail.com](mailto:blc.reverend@gmail.com) 218-213-6731

**Church Secretary:** Mary Braun

**Music & Sound Technician:** Jim Christensen

**Parish Nurses:** Darlene Christensen, RN, Kathy Berland RN ANP

**Prayer Chain Contacts:** Char Berg 320-684-2102 or

Darlene Christensen 320-279-0097

**Ushers:** Barry & Donna Ansell

**Greeters:** Char Berg & Caroline Morris

**Lector:** Karen Elias

**Hospitality:**

**March Altar Care:** Elsa Carlson, Kat Carlson

**April Altar Care:** Linda Southworth and Carol Pantsari

**Serving on March 29<sup>th</sup>, Palm/Passion Sunday**

**Ushers:** Darrel Kelly, Dick Stebbins

**Greeters:** David & Libby Brown

**Lector:**

**Hospitality:** Dick & Sue Stebbins, Sylvia Tapat