

ST. PETER'S LUTHERAN CHURCH and ELEMENTARY SCHOOL
Our Mission: Learn God's Truth, Share Spirit's Healing, Follow Jesus' Ways
Fifth Sunday in Lent, March 22, 2026
Virtual Prayer and Preaching Worship

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**The CHURCH'S GATHERING**

**CONFESSION and FORGIVENESS**

We bless the holy Trinity, † one God, who forgives all our sin,  
whose mercy endures forever. **Amen**

We confess our sin before God, who removes our guilt  
and blots out all our offenses. *Silence is kept for reflection.*

To you, O God, **all hearts are open, to you all desires known.**

**We come to you, confessing our sins. Forgive us in your  
mercy, and remember us in your love. Show us your ways;  
teach us your paths; and lead us in justice and truth, for the sake of  
your goodness in Jesus Christ our Savior. Amen**



God's steadfast love, grace, and forgiveness abound. Through faith, the free gift of God, you have been clothed in the righteousness of Christ. In the name of † Jesus Christ, your sins are forgiven. The Spirit of the One who raised Christ from the dead dwells in us, pours God's love into our hearts, and gives us life and peace. **Amen**

**GREETING and PRAYER of the DAY**

Grace, mercy, and peace from God Almighty,  
Sovereign, Son, and Spirit, are always with you.

**And also with you.** *A brief silence.*

Lamb of God, **hear our prayer.** Almighty God, your Son came into the world to free us all from sin and death. Breathe upon us the power of your Spirit, that we may be raised to new life in Christ and serve you in righteousness all our days, through Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever.

**Amen**

**GOD'S WORD**

**FIRST READING: Ezekiel 37:1-14**

*Ezekiel's vision of the valley of dry bones is a promise that Israel as a nation, though dead in exile, will live again in their land through God's life-giving spirit. Three times Israel is assured that through this vision they will know that "I am the Lord."*

This is a reading from Ezekiel, the 37<sup>th</sup> chapter.

The hand of the LORD came upon me, and he brought me out by the spirit of the LORD and set me down in the middle of a valley; it was full of bones. God led me all around them; there were very many lying in the

valley, and they were very dry. God said to me, "Mortal, can these bones live?"

I answered, "O LORD God, you know."

Then God said to me, "Prophecy to these bones and say to them: O dry bones, hear the word of the LORD. Thus says the Lord GOD to these bones: I will cause breath to enter you, and you shall live. I will lay sinews on you and will cause flesh to come upon you and cover you with skin and put breath in you, and you shall live, and you shall know that I am the LORD."

So I prophesied as I had been commanded, and as I prophesied, suddenly there was a noise, a rattling, and the bones came together, bone to its bone. I looked, and there were sinews on them, and flesh had come upon them, and skin had covered them, but there was no breath in them. Then God said to me, "Prophecy to the breath, prophecy, mortal, and say to the breath: Thus says the Lord GOD: Come from the four winds, O breath, and breathe upon these slain, that they may live." I prophesied as God commanded me, and the breath came into them, and they lived and stood on their feet, a vast multitude.

Then God said to me, "Mortal, these bones are the whole house of Israel. They say, 'Our bones are dried up, and our hope is lost; we are cut off completely.' Therefore prophecy and say to them: Thus says the Lord GOD: I am going to open your graves and bring you up from your graves, O my people, and I will bring you back to the land of Israel. And you shall know that I am the LORD when I open your graves and bring you up from your graves, O my people. I will put my spirit within you, and you shall live, and I will place you on your own soil; then you shall know that I, the LORD, have spoken and will act, says the LORD."

This is holy Wisdom, God's holy Word.

**SECOND READING: Romans 8:6-11** *Contemporary English Version*  
*For Paul, Christian spirituality entails living in the reality of the Holy Spirit. The driving force behind our actions and values is not our sinful desire for self-satisfaction but the very Spirit by which God raised Jesus from the dead and will also raise us from the dead.*

This is a reading from Paul's letter to the Romans, the 8<sup>th</sup> chapter.

If our minds are ruled by our desires, we will die. But if our minds are ruled by the Spirit, we will have life and peace. Our desires fight against God, because they do not and cannot obey God's laws. If we follow our desires, we cannot please God.

You are no longer ruled by your desires, but by God's Spirit, who lives in you. People who don't have the Spirit of Christ in them don't belong to him. But Christ lives in you. So you are alive because God has accepted you, even though your bodies must die because of your sins. Yet God raised Jesus to life! God's Spirit now lives in you, and God will raise you to life by his Spirit.

This is holy Wisdom, God's holy Word.

## **HOLY GOSPEL: John 11:1-45**

*Jesus is moved to sorrow when his friend Lazarus falls ill and dies. Then, in a dramatic scene, he calls his friend out of the tomb and restores him to life.*

This is the Holy Gospel as the Word was given to John, the 11<sup>th</sup> chapter.

Now a certain man was ill, Lazarus of Bethany, the village of Mary and her sister Martha. Mary was the one who anointed the Lord with perfume and wiped his feet with her hair; her brother Lazarus was ill. So the sisters sent a message to Jesus, "Lord, he whom you love is ill." But when Jesus heard it, he said, "This illness does not lead to death; rather, it is for God's glory, so that the Son of God may be glorified through it." Accordingly, though Jesus loved Martha and her sister and Lazarus, after having heard that Lazarus was ill, he stayed two days longer in the place where he was.

Then after this he said to the disciples, "Let us go to Judea again." The disciples said to him, "Rabbi, the people were just now trying to stone you, and are you going there again?" Jesus answered, "Are there not twelve hours of daylight? Those who walk during the day do not stumble because they see the light of this world. But those who walk at night stumble because the light is not in them." After saying this, he told them, "Our friend Lazarus has fallen asleep, but I am going there to awaken him." The disciples said to him, "Lord, if he has fallen asleep, he will be all right." Jesus, however, had been speaking about his death, but they thought that he was referring merely to sleep. Then Jesus told them plainly, "Lazarus is dead. For your sake I am glad I was not there, so that you may believe. But let us go to him." Thomas, who was called the Twin, said to his fellow disciples, "Let us also go, that we may die with him."

When Jesus arrived, he found that Lazarus had already been in the tomb four days. Now Bethany was near Jerusalem, some two miles away, and many of the Judeans had come to Martha and Mary to console them about their brother. When Martha heard that Jesus was coming, she went and met him, while Mary stayed at home. Martha said to Jesus, "Lord, if you had been here, my brother would not have died. But even now I know that God will give you whatever you ask of him."

Jesus said to her, "Your brother will rise again."

Martha said to him, "I know that he will rise again in the resurrection on the last day."

Jesus said to her, "I am the resurrection and the life. Those who believe in me, even though they die, will live, and everyone who lives and believes in me will never die. Do you believe this?"

She said to him, "Yes, Lord, I believe that you are the Messiah, the Son of God, the one coming into the world."

When she had said this, she went back and called her sister Mary and told her privately, "The Teacher is here and is calling for you." And when she

heard it, she got up quickly and went to him. Now Jesus had not yet come to the village but was still at the place where Martha had met him. The people who were with her in the house consoling her saw Mary get up quickly and go out. They followed her because they thought that she was going to the tomb to weep there. When Mary came where Jesus was and saw him, she knelt at his feet and said to him, "Lord, if you had been here, my brother would not have died." When Jesus saw her weeping and the people who came with her also weeping, he was greatly disturbed in spirit and deeply moved.

He said, "Where have you laid him?"

They said to him, "Lord, come and see." Jesus began to weep. So the people said, "See how he loved him!" But some of them said, "Could not he who opened the eyes of the blind man have kept this man from dying?"

Then Jesus, again greatly disturbed, came to the tomb. It was a cave, and a stone was lying against it. Jesus said, "Take away the stone."

Martha, the sister of the dead man, said to him, "Lord, already there is a stench because he has been dead four days."

Jesus said to her, "Did I not tell you that if you believed you would see the glory of God?" So they took away the stone. And Jesus looked upward and said, "Father, I thank you for having heard me. I knew that you always hear me, but I have said this for the sake of the crowd standing here, so that they may believe that you sent me." When he had said this, he cried with a loud voice, "Lazarus, come out!" The dead man came out, his hands and feet bound with strips of cloth and his face wrapped in a cloth. Jesus said to them, "Unbind him, and let him go." Many of the people, therefore, who had come with Mary and had seen what Jesus did believed in him.

This is the Good News of Christ's Victory.

### **HYMN of the DAY: # 773 "Precious Lord, Take My Hand"**

- 1 Precious Lord, take my hand, lead me on, let me stand,  
I am tired, I am weak, I am worn.  
Through the storm, through the night, lead me on to the light.  
Take my hand, precious Lord, lead me home.
- 2 When my way grows drear, precious Lord linger near,  
when my life is almost gone,  
hear my cry, hear my call, hold my hand lest I fall.  
Take my hand, precious Lord, lead me home.
- 3 When the darkness appears and the night draws near,  
and the day is past and gone,  
at the river I stand, guide my feet, hold my hand.  
Take my hand, precious Lord, lead me home.

Text: Thomas A. Dorsey, 1899-1993

Music: George N. Allen, 1812-1877, adapt. Thomas A. Dorsey

Text and music: ©1938, 1966 Unichappell Music, Inc., admin. Hal Leonard Corp.

**MESSAGE:**            **Wake**                            *silence for reflection follows*

**The CHURCH PRAYS**

**PRAYERS of the PEOPLE**

Reconciled by God's mercy and sustained by God's presence, let us pray for the world and its needs. *A brief silence.*

We pray for the church. Grant life and peace to all who gather in your name. Breathe into us so that we may share your message of forgiveness, hope, and love. Hear us, O God.

**Your mercy is great.**

We pray for creation. Renew landscapes that have dried up, prosper the work of those who restore homes and habitats after natural disasters, and sustain places where biodiversity thrives. Hear us, O God.

**Your mercy is great.**

We pray for the nations. Unbind leaders trapped by fear to act boldly for justice, free all who live in places of war and violence, and guide refugees and asylum seekers to safety. Hear us, O God.

**Your mercy is great.**

We pray for this assembly. Ready the hearts and spirits of all preparing to be baptized. Deepen our wonder at the mystery of your resurrection and life. Hear us, O God.

**Your mercy is great.**

We pray for all people in need. Take away the stone of poverty that weighs down so many. Console any who weep and heal all who are sick. We pray for ELCA Bishop Yehiel Curry, Bishop Bill Gohl, Ebenezer Grace Worship, those hospitalized or recuperating at home, Greg, John, Lori, Mary Lue, Lynn, Will, Bea, Kathy, our at-home worshippers, ... Hear us, O God.

**Your mercy is great.**

*Here other intercessions may be offered.*

We offer our thanksgiving for Jonathan Edwards and all people who have died in faith. Give us faith to trust in your power to redeem and save, and bring us up from our graves to life in you. Hear us, O God.

**Your mercy is great.**

Receive our prayers, O God, through Jesus Christ, our strength and salvation. **Amen**

**LORD'S PRAYER**

We pray for Christ's forgiveness, as he taught us.

**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**

**SPIRIT'S SENDING**

**PRAYER for MISSION**

Holy One, hear our prayer. *A brief silence.* O God, maker of heaven and earth, your steadfast love embraces all creation. You send rain and sunshine to nourish the earth and bring forth its bounty. Through the Word of God sent into this world, draw us into the death and life of your Son, who calls us to bear witness to his saving work. We ask this in Jesus' name. **Amen**

**BLESSING**

God, who calls all things into existence, Jesus Christ, who redeems us, & the Holy Spirit, whose breath sustains creation, bless us † now & always. **Amen**

Forgiven and freed in Christ, we share his peace  
with neighbors & strangers, the poor & outcast – all God's children.  
The peace of Christ is with you always. **And also with you.**

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**Jonathan Edwards, teacher, missionary to American Indians,
died 1758**

Edwards was a minister in Connecticut and described as the greatest of the New England Puritan preachers. One of Edwards's most notable sermons found its way into contemporary anthologies of literature. In this sermon, "Sinners in the Hands of an Angry God," he spoke at length about hell. However, throughout the rest of his works and his preaching he had more to say about God's love than God's wrath. His personal experience of conversion came when he felt overwhelmed with a sense of God's majesty and grandeur, rather than a fear of hell. Edwards served a Puritan congregation, where he believed that only those who had been fully converted ought to receive communion; his congregation thought otherwise. Edwards left that congregation and carried out mission work among the Housatonic Indians of Massachusetts. He became president of the College of New Jersey, later to be known as Princeton University.

Today's Sponsorships

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*Today's Altar Flowers are Given to the Glory of God*

In Loving Memory of my mother, May LeBrun's March 26<sup>th</sup> birthday.  
Given by Patty Read.

In Honor of our granddaughter, Abby's 1<sup>st</sup> birthday.  
Given by Cathy and Mark McQuade.

In Loving Memory of Ruth Diepold on her March 20<sup>th</sup> birthday.  
Given by her daughter, Sharyn Diepold.

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Today's Worship Folders are Given to the Glory of God

In Honor of Joey Mills' Christian birthday.
Love, Aunt Kathy and Uncle Steve.

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Attendance for Sunday, March 15, 2026: 30

## ***Learning, Serving, and Fellowship Opportunities***

**Lent at St. Peter's:** Pr. Lans will be presenting *The Small Catechism* via Zoom on Thursdays at 7 pm. Contact the church office for the link.

### **Holy Week Worship:**

Sunday of the Passion (3/29): On-site at 8:45 & 10:15 am.

Maundy Thursday (4/2) and Good Friday (4/3): On-site at 7 pm.

Resurrection Sunday (4/5): On-site at 7:00, 8:45 & 10:15 am.

**Easter Pancake Breakfast:** Sunday, April 5<sup>th</sup> at 7:45 am. in the lower level open area. All are welcome!

**Easter Holiday Closures:** The church office and SPES will be closed from April 2<sup>nd</sup> – April 10<sup>th</sup>. We hope that you have a blessed Easter holiday!

**Secretary Position Available:** Part time, 20 hr./week, 4 days/week. Applicants must demonstrate proficiency in Word and PowerPoint. Applicants must also have good organizational skills, be able to work independently and with others as well as have good communication skills. Interested parties should call St. Matthew Lutheran Church office (410-335-4210).

**Family Easter Movie:** Saturday, March 21<sup>st</sup> at 1 pm. at St. Luke (7001 Harford Rd., 21234). They will be showing the animated movie, *The King of Kings*. Popcorn and prizes also.

**Camp Day at Mar-Lu-Ridge:** Sunday, March 22<sup>nd</sup> from 1-4 pm. at the pavilion (3200 Mar Lu Ridge Rd., Jefferson, MD 21755). Everyone is welcome to join us for an afternoon of games, camp tours, snacks, crafts and activities for all ages. This day is for campers and families, or anyone interested in seeing what we have been up to recently! No RSVP necessary, just come join the fun.

**Easter Egg Hunt:** Saturday, March 28<sup>th</sup> at 10 am. at St. Peter's. Meet the Easter Bunny, treats and drinks, and crafts and activities. For more information, call 410-665-4521.

**Spring Work Day at Mar-Lu-Ridge:** Saturday, March 28<sup>th</sup> from 8 am.- 3pm. (3200 Mar Lu Ridge Rd., Jefferson, MD 21755). It's that time of year again! Join us for projects and chores as we ready the camp for a busy spring and summer season. All ages and abilities welcome! Breakfast served at 8am in Agape Hall. Lunch served at noon. Please RSVP to [mlr@mar-lu-ridge.org](mailto:mlr@mar-lu-ridge.org).

**Community Health & Wellness Fair:** Saturday, April 25<sup>th</sup> from 10a-2p at Epiphany (4301 Raspe Ave., 21206). The fair offers free resources and information to support healthy living for the entire family; including nutrition, mindfulness, physical activity, and community supports. For more information or vendor interest, contact [cphillips@cityneighbors.org](mailto:cphillips@cityneighbors.org), [nrobinson@cityneighbors.org](mailto:nrobinson@cityneighbors.org), or call 410-325-2627.

**Rest & Recharge on the Ridge:** Sunday, April 26<sup>th</sup> from 2-5:30 pm. Hiking, mindfulness, yoga, hymn singing, arts & crafts, hammocks, nature activity guides, and a light meal at 4:30. Mar-Lu-Ridge (3200 Mar Lu Ridge Rd., Jefferson, MD 21755) is hosting this free event for you to find a quiet space to reconnect with nature, engage in a favorite creative hobby & recharge your soul. Email [mlr@mar-lu-ridge.org](mailto:mlr@mar-lu-ridge.org) to RSVP.

**Save the Date:** St. Luke (7001 Harford Rd., 21234) will be hosting their annual Summer Music & Arts Camp July 27<sup>th</sup>-August 4<sup>th</sup> from 9 am.-3 pm. Registration will be open in mid-late May.

**Sponsorships Available:** Bulletins on 4/19 (contact the church office).

**St. Peter's Family Goods Center:** If you are interested in volunteering for the Family Goods Center, please contact Bill Lauer. This is a great opportunity for service hours for your middle or high school student, and volunteer hours for SPES families. Please place donations in the shopping cart in the Narthex.

**Give to St. Peter's On-line!** Did you know that you can make offering donations and sponsorship payments on-line through PayPal?? Login to your PayPal account and search for our tag: @Spl367 or St. Peter's Lutheran Church and Christian Day School. When submitting your donation or payment, you can note what it's for. It's THAT easy!

### ***News from St. Peter's Elementary School and PACE***

Contact the office at 410-665-4521 if you have questions or want to schedule a tour. Open enrollment for 2026-27 continues. Referrals are always welcome!

**Upcoming:** Open Houses on March 25<sup>th</sup> from 5-6 pm., April 18<sup>th</sup> from 12-2 pm., and May 7<sup>th</sup> from 6:30-7:30 pm. NEW THIS YEAR: Shadow Day on Wednesday, April 22<sup>nd</sup> from 9 am.-3 pm. Contact the school to RSVP for these events.