



St. Paul's Evangelical Lutheran Church
Wilton, WI
First Sunday in Lent
February 22, 2026
10:15 AM

**Inviting People to Journey with Christ's
Family In Spreading God's Love and Mercy**

Today's gospel tells of Jesus' temptation in the desert. His forty-day fast becomes the basis of our Lenten pilgrimage. In the early church Lent was a time of intense preparation for those to be baptized at the Easter Vigil. This catechetical focus on the meaning of faith is at the heart of our Lenten journey to the baptismal waters of Easter. Hungry for God's mercy, we receive the bread of life to nourish us for the days ahead.

**(Indicates the people should stand as they are able.)*

*Welcome and Announcements

PEACE

The peace of Christ be with you always.

And also with you.

Let us greet one another with a sign of Christ's peace.

Gathering

The Holy Spirit calls us together as the people of God.

Hymn "Lord, Let My Heart Be Good Soil" ELW #512

***CONFESSION AND FORGIVENESS**

Blessed be the holy Trinity, † one God,
who forgives all our sin,
whose mercy endures forever.

Amen.

Let us confess our sin before God, who removes our guilt and blots out all offenses.

Gracious God,
(have mercy on us according to your steadfast love.)

For seeking worldly delights that deceive us and dishonor you:
Gracious God,

For desiring self-reliance instead of hungering for your word:
Gracious God,

For failing to recognize your coming reign,
and for hindering the work of the Spirit: Gracious God,

For drawing from the well of self-serving ambition,
and for disdain the living water Christ offers: Gracious God,

For disregarding voices from the margin,
and for distrusting signs of your healing and hope in the world:
Gracious God,

For dwelling in tombs of self-pity and discontent,
and for disregarding Christ's call to come forth to life:
Gracious God,

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 you, pours God's love into your hearts,
and gives you life and peace.

We ask that all members join the Women of ELCA and pray this prayer as you rise in the morning, and as you prepare to retire each evening.

Lord, Jesus Christ, I bring to you:
Jada, Myles, & Conner Garske; Britain Hahn; Amara Brandau;
Chase Brandau; Avery Brueggen; Riley, Aria & Hudson Brueggen;
Nolan & Logan Buchholz; Thadyn & Ayawyn Conner; Vanessa & Elliott Ornes; Lailah Eckes, Maevis Shock; Lena Ornes; Porter Sorenson; Josie Ornes; Brooklyn, Madelyn, Kaylin, Emma, Bryce, Marah, Bria, Ava, Katie, & Benjamin Gruen; Braylee Zimmerman; MaKenzie & Cooper Powell; Wesson & Arden Mayne; Vanessa, Mia, & Brek Anderson; Carlee, Collin, & Camden Neidfeldt; Morgan Speicher; Krista & Sierra Cook; Franklin & Douglas Wildes; Sophia, Derek & Deacon Erdman; Kody Tormoen; Callie Fleming; Miranda, Daphne & Linus Arndt; Emma Elder; Bryson Lamb, Elizabeth Wildes; Alaina & Braxton Holthaus; Jayda Leis; David, Sam & Zachary Ross; Gannon & Ellory Tormoen; Jase & Margo Picha; Watson and Duke Sebranek, Violet Ford, Hunter and Jaxson Puhl; Eason Kelbel; Cole, Caleb & Connor Redding; Luke and Joelle Kroeger; Peyton Oelson, Greyson Resop; Kendall Christopherson, Hudson Birkholz, Alayna, Alivia & Levi Wyttenbach . Brooke, Claire, Grace & Bree Olson; Dominic Young; Avilynn McNamer; Ayla Arndt; Lainey Myers.

That your spirit will dwell with them according to your will. That they will grow in the knowledge of you and know that they are dearly loved by you. I pray that you will protect them from deception by the evil one and all his darts that would lead them astray. May they do well in school, learning and discerning what direction you have in mind for them. I also pray for children throughout the world, that you would keep them in your care.
In Jesus name I pray. Amen

travels around the state to educate the public, businesses, and law enforcement on common scams & fraud, privacy protection, data security, identity theft, and other areas of consumer protection. Jeff has over 12 years of experience as a police officer and is a prior Consumer Protection Investigator for the Bureau of Consumer Protection.

Jeff will discuss the details of common scams, the warning signs of a scam, and what to do if you or someone you know falls victim to a scam or fraud. Helpful factsheets from The Bureau of Consumer Protection will be available. As Wisconsin's lead agency for consumer protection, the Bureau of Consumer Protection at the Wisconsin Department of Agriculture Trade and Consumer Protection, provides information and education, mediates complaints, investigates cases, and takes enforcement actions to fight fraudulent and deceptive practices that harm consumers and honest businesses.

The presentation will take place in the church basement. Feel free to invite a friend

First Communion Class

Any parents wishing to have their child/children participate in communion, please contact Nalani and we will schedule a time to meet with Karen.

New Members

Interested in becoming a member of St. Paul's? We will be receiving new members either on March 15 or March 22. Please contact Nalani if you would like to join.

Hymn "O Lord, throughout These Forty Days" ELW#319

The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, the love of God,
And the communion of the Holy Spirit be with you all.
And also with you

***PRAYER OF THE DAY**

Lord God, **our strength, the struggle between good and evil rages within and around us, and the devil and all the forces that defy you tempt us with empty promises. Keep us steadfast in your word, and when we fall, raise us again and restore us through your Son, Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever.**
Amen.

WORD

God speaks to us in scripture reading, preaching, and song.

FIRST READING

Human beings were formed with great care, to be in relationship with the creator, creation, and one another. The serpent's promise to the first couple that their eyes would be opened led, ironically, to the discovery only that they were naked.

A Reading from Genesis 2:15-17; 3:1-7

¹⁵The LORD God took the man and put him in the garden of Eden to till it and keep it. ¹⁶And the LORD God commanded the man, "You may freely eat of every tree of

the garden, ¹⁷ but of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil you shall not eat, for in the day that you eat of it you shall die.”

^{3:1} Now the serpent was more crafty than any other wild animal that the LORD God had made. He said to the woman, “Did God say, ‘You shall not eat from any tree in the garden?’” ² The woman said to the serpent, “We may eat of the fruit of the trees in the garden, ³ but God said, ‘You shall not eat of the fruit of the tree that is in the middle of the garden, nor shall you touch it, or you shall die.’” ⁴ But the serpent said to the woman, “You will not die, ⁵ for God knows that when you eat of it your eyes will be opened, and you will be like God, knowing good and evil.” ⁶ So when the woman saw that the tree was good for food and that it was a delight to the eyes and that the tree was to be desired to make one wise, she took of its fruit and ate, and she also gave some to her husband, who was with her, and he ate. ⁷ Then the eyes of both were opened, and they knew that they were naked, and they sewed fig leaves together and made loincloths for themselves.

The word of the Lord. **Thanks be to God.**

Psalm 32

¹ Happy are they whose transgressions are forgiven,
and whose sin is put away!

² **Happy are they to whom the LORD imputes no guilt,
and in whose spirit there is no guile!**

³ While I held my tongue, my bones withered away,
because of my groaning all day long.

⁴ **For your hand was heavy upon me day and night;
my moisture was dried up as in the heat of summer.**

CALENDAR

Sun., Feb. 22	Council Meeting	11:30 am
Wed., Feb. 25	Lenten Service	6:30 pm
Thurs., Feb. 26	Quilting	9:00 am
Sun., March 1	Sunday School	9:00 am
	Worship	10:15 am
	Scamming Presentation	1:00 pm

ANNOUNCEMENTS

Congratulations Thadyn Conner

This spring, Thadyn Conner will graduate from the University of Northwestern Saint Paul, with a double major in Pastoral Ministry and Biblical and Theological Studies. He has been offered a full tuition scholarship to Westminster Theological Seminary just outside of Philadelphia, where he plans to spend the next 4 years earning a Master of Divinity. Westminster’s most comprehensive curriculum includes 111 credit hours, a study of and exegesis in the biblical languages, and practical experience in principles of biblical leadership. Westminster was founded in 1929 by J. Gresham Machen when he resigned his esteemed post of 23 years at Princeton Theological Seminary.

Common Scams & Frauds—March 1 @ 1:00 pm

This presentation will be conducted by Jeff Kersten an Outreach Specialist for the Bureau of Consumer Protection within the Wisconsin Department of Agriculture, Trade and Consumer Protection. As an Outreach Specialist, Jeff

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.
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.
Amen.

Hymn **"Chief of Sinners Though I Be"** **ELW#609**

DISMISSAL

Go in peace. Believe the good news.
Thanks be to God.

THOSE SERVING TODAY

Ministers: All God's People; Synod Authorized Minister:
Karen Sparling; Organist: Nalani Bever; Reader: Lori Arndt;
Acolytes: Confirmation Students

IN OUR PRAYERS

Gloria Meltesen, Linda, Jeremy Munson, Gordy O'Rourke,
Kristy Gwin Solovey, Marilyn O'Rourke, Larry Arndt,
Nick Evans, Collin Niedfeldt, Mark Drews, Carol Lydon
Fronk, Nikki Fronk Lewis, Ben Bender, Jeff Bruce, Brian, Al-
lice Leis, Darlene Diekrager, Jack Arndt, Diane Hornburger,
Mike Escutia, Daniel Paulson, Marie Jacobson, Rick
Brandau, Paul North.

- ⁵ Then I acknowledged my sin to you, and did not conceal
my guilt.
I said, "I will confess my transgressions to the LORD."
Then you forgave me the guilt of my sin.
- ⁶ **Therefore all the faithful will make their prayers to you
in time of trouble;
when the great waters overflow, they shall not reach
them.**
- ⁷ You are my hiding-place; you preserve me from trouble;
you surround me with shouts of deliverance.
- ⁸ **"I will instruct you and teach you in the way that you
should go;
I will guide you with my eye.**
- ⁹ Do not be like horse or mule, which have
no understanding;
who must be fitted with bit and bridle, or else they
will not stay near you."
- ¹⁰ **Great are the tribulations of the wicked;
but mercy embraces those who trust in the LORD.**
- ¹¹ Be glad, you righteous, and rejoice in the LORD;
shout for joy, all who are true of heart.

SECOND READING

*Through Adam's disobedience, humanity came under
bondage to sin and death, from which we cannot free our-
selves. In Christ's obedient death, God graciously showers
on us the free gift of liberation and life.*

A reading from Romans 5:12-19

- ¹² Just as sin came into the world through one man, and
death came through sin, and so death spread to all

because all have sinned ¹³ for sin was indeed in the world before the law, but sin is not reckoned when there is no law. ¹⁴ Yet death reigned from Adam to Moses, even over those who did not sin in the likeness of Adam, who is a pattern of the one who was to come.

¹⁵ But the free gift is not like the trespass. For if the many died through the one man's trespass, much more surely have the grace of God and the gift in the grace of the one man, Jesus Christ, abounded for the many. ¹⁶ And the gift is not like the effect of the one man's sin. For the judgment following one trespass brought condemnation, but the gift following many trespasses brings justification. ¹⁷ If, because of the one man's trespass, death reigned through that one, much more surely will those who receive the abundance of grace and the gift of righteousness reign in life through the one man, Jesus Christ. ¹⁸ Therefore just as one man's trespass led to condemnation for all, so one man's act of righteousness leads to justification and life for all. ¹⁹ For just as through the one man's disobedience the many were made sinners, so through the one man's obedience the many will be made righteous.

The word of the Lord. **Thanks be to God.**

***Gospel Acclamation**



We are turn - ing, Lord, to hear you; you are mer - ci - ful and kind -



slow to an - ger, rich in bless - ing, and with love to us in - clined.

Lord Jesus, Think on Me



1 Lord Je - sus, think on me, and purge a - way my sin;
 2 Lord Je - sus, think on me, by anx - ious thoughts op - pressed;
 3 Lord Je - sus, think on me, nor let me go a - stray;
 4 Lord Je - sus, think on me, that, when the flood is past,



from self - ish pas - sions set me free and make me pure with - in.
 let me your lov - ing ser - vant be and taste your prom - ised rest.
 through dark - ness and per - plex - i - ty point out your cho - sen way.
 I may the e - ter - nal bright - ness see and share your joy at last.

***PRAYER AFTER COMMUNION**

**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

God blesses us and sends us in mission to the world.

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 of gentleness.

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.

Words of Institution

LORD'S PRAYER

Gathered into one, let us pray as Jesus 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.

INVITATION TO COMMUNION

Come to the table.

Feast on God's goodness and mercy.

Everyone who believes in Jesus is welcome at Christ's table.

***GOSPEL READING**

Jesus experiences anew the temptations that Israel faced in the wilderness. As the Son of God, he endures the testing of the evil one.

The holy gospel according to Matthew 4:1-11

Glory to you, O Lord

¹ Jesus was led up by the Spirit into the wilderness to be tested by the devil. ² He fasted forty days and forty nights, and afterward he was famished. ³ The tempter came and said to him, "If you are the Son of God, command these stones to become loaves of bread." ⁴ But he answered, "It is written,

'One does not live by bread alone, but by every word that comes from the mouth of God.' "

⁵ Then the devil took him to the holy city and placed him on the pinnacle of the temple, ⁶ saying to him, "If you are the Son of God, throw yourself down, for it is written,

'He will command his angels concerning you,'

and 'On their hands they will bear you up,

so that you will not dash your foot against a stone.' "

⁷ Jesus said to him, "Again it is written, 'Do not put the Lord your God to the test.' "

⁸ Again, the devil took him to a very high mountain and showed him all the kingdoms of the world and their glory, ⁹ and he said to him, "All these I will give you, if you will fall down and worship me." ¹⁰ Then Jesus said to him,

“Away with you, Satan! for it is written,
‘Worship the Lord your God,
and serve only him.’ ”

¹¹ Then the devil left him, and suddenly angels came and waited on him.

The gospel of the Lord. **Praise to you, O Christ.**

Sermon Karen Sparling
Synod Authorized Minister

Hymn ““A Mighty Fortress Is Our God” ELW#504

***APOSTLE’S CREED**

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

**I believe in Jesus Christ, God’s 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 to the dead.**

**On the third day he rose again;
he ascended into heaven,
he is seated at the right hand of the Father,
and he will come to judge the living and the dead.**

**I believe in the Holy Spirit,
the holy catholic church,
the communion of saints,
the forgiveness of sins,
the resurrection of the body,
and the life everlasting.
Amen.**

***Litany & Prayers (Holden Evening Prayer)**

OFFERING

Offertory Hymn “When I Survey the Wondrous Cross”
**Were the whole realm of na-ture mine,
That were a pres-ent far too small;
Love so a-maz-ing, so di-vine,
Demands my soul, my life, my all.**

OFFERING PRAYER

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 these gifts of bread and wine,
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.

MEAL

God feeds us with the presence of Jesus Christ

The Sacrament of Holy Communion

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.