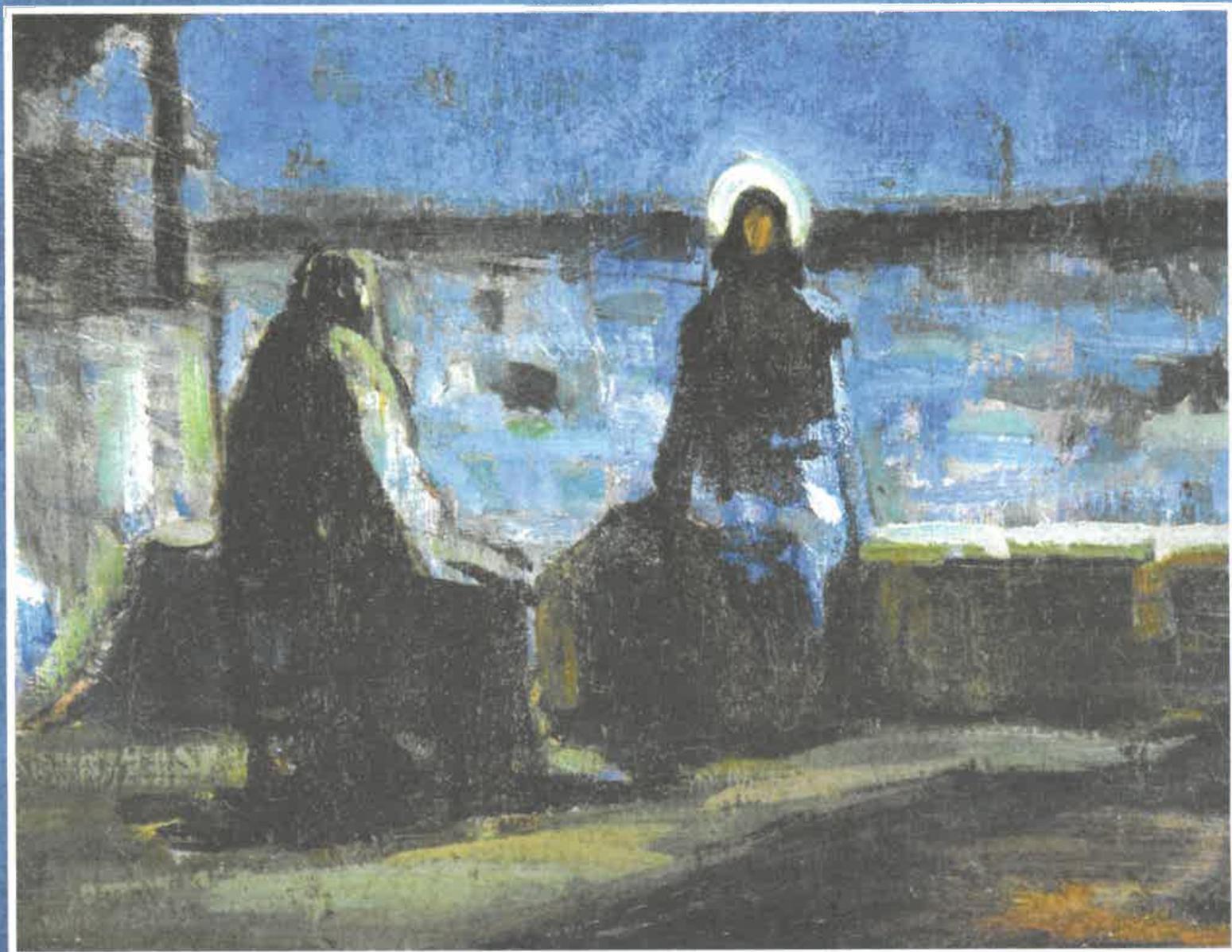


Nicodemus came
to
Jesus
BY NIGHT



JOHN 3:2

Second Sunday in Lent

March 1 2026 at 10:00 a.m.

Welcome to people new to this church or faith, long time Lutherans, and Christians from every tradition. Welcome to all who have no church home, want to follow Christ, have doubts, or do not believe. Welcome to new visitors and old friends. Welcome to people of every age and size, color and culture, sexual orientation and marital status, ability and challenge. Welcome to believers and questioners and questioning believers. This is a place where you are welcome to celebrate and sorrow, rejoice and recover. This is a place where lives are made new. Welcome on this day.

Music

The Gathering



the news is...

Luke 7:36-50; Matthew 25:35-40

great love for God and neighbor

Call to worship

Tell me something good!

God loves you more than you could imagine.

Tell me something good!

God loves *all* of creation more than you could imagine.

Tell me something good!

God's love meets us in this service of worship. We are not alone.

This is good news indeed!

Let us worship our compassionate God.

Call to confession

Family of faith,

we long to love others as God loves us,

but that work is easier said than done.

We lose our way.

We become distracted.

We grow fearful.

We *need* God's grace.

Fortunately for us, God's grace is freely and abundantly given.

So join me in the Prayer of Confession.

Join me in being transformed.

Prayer of confession

Merciful God,

did we see you hungry and give you something to eat?

Did we see you thirsty and give you something to drink?

Did we see you alone and offer you compassion?

Or did we cross the street?

Did we avert our eyes?

Did we come up with every excuse in the book?

**God, we long to be people who love our neighbors
with the same overwhelming love that you have for them.**

But we must admit, we have a long way to go.

**Forgive us for the times when we let bias, scarcity, or fear
get in the way of love.**

Wash us clean and give us the courage to try again.

With hope for a better tomorrow we pray, amen.

Words of forgiveness

Faith family,

even when we act with judgment,

even when we are guided by fear,

even when we turn our back on a neighbor in need,

God does not turn God's back on us.

So join me in this good-news declaration:

We are seen.

We are forgiven.

We are invited to try again.

Thanks be to God for this unending love.

*Opening Hymn "O God of Mercy, God of Light" Red #714

1 O God of mercy, God of light,
in love and mercy infinite,
teach us, as ever in your sight,
to live our lives in you.

2 You sent your Son to die for all,
that our lost world might hear your call;
oh, hear us lest we stray and fall!
We rest our hope in you.

3 Teach us the lesson Jesus taught:
to feel for those his blood has bought,
that ev'ry deed and word and thought
may work a work for you.

4 For all are kindred, both far and wide,
since Jesus Christ for all has died;
grant us the will, and grace provide,
to love them all in you.

5 In sickness, sorrow, want, or care,
may we each other's burdens share;
may we, where help is needed, there
give help as though to you.

6 And may your Holy Spirit move
all those who live to live in love,
till you receive in heav'n above
all those who live in you.

* Greeting

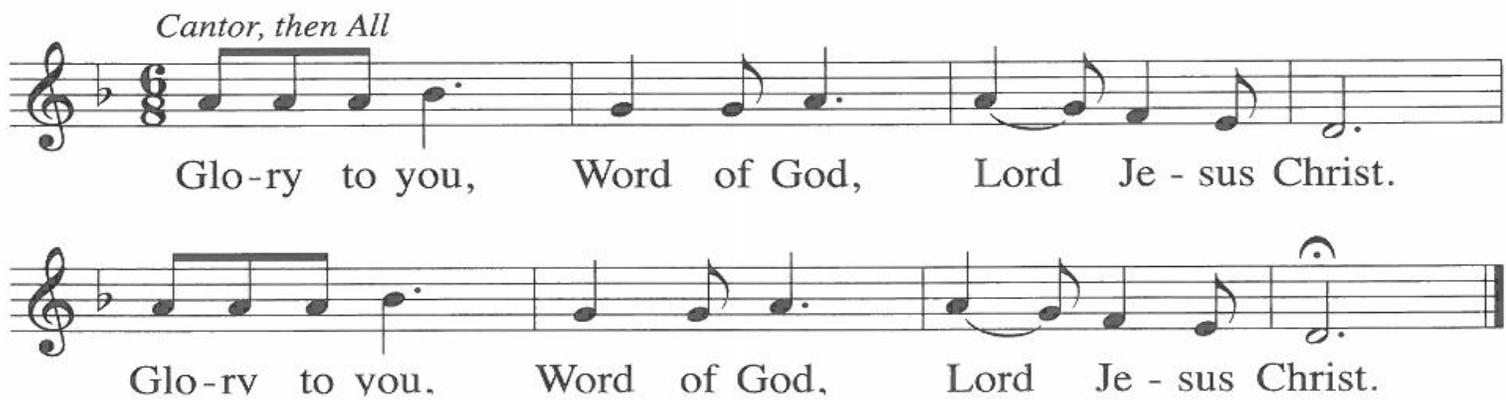
*P: The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, the love of God,
and the communion of the Holy Spirit be with you all.

C: And also with you.

*Gospel Acclamation

GOSPEL

Cantor, then All



Glo-ry to you, Word of God, Lord Je - sus Christ.

Glo-ry to you, Word of God, Lord Je - sus Christ.

P: (Sung by Pastor) One does not live by bread alone, but by every word that comes forth from the mouth of God.

C: (Sing: “**Glory to you..**” **twice**)

P: The Holy Gospel according to St. John the 3rd Chapter

C: **Glory to you O God.**

*Gospel Reading

John 3:1-17

Celebrate pg. 3

P: The Gospel of the Lord.

C: **Thanks be to God**

Sermon

Rev. James P. Lapp

*Hymn of the Day

“Beautiful Things” BLUE #925

All this pain; I wonder if I'll ever find my way.
I wonder if my life could really change at all.

REFRAIN

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

All this earth; ... could all that is lost ever be found?
...Could a garden come up from this ground at all?

REFRAIN

All around, ... hope is springing up from this old ground.
...Out of chaos, life is being found in you.

REFRAIN

An 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.**

(Please offer a petition out loud from where you are.)

*Passing of the Peace

P: May the peace of God be with you always.

C: And also with you.

The Communion Meal

Offering — We honor and worship God by returning some of the gifts with which we have been blessed.

Music

*Offering Prayer

P: Let us pray.

**C: Gracious Provider,
You have set your immense treasures among us,
Opening your heart to the world.
As we prepare to feast on your bountiful love,
Deepen our commitment
To sharing those treasures with others.
Through our Savior, Jesus Christ. Amen.**

*Great Thanksgiving

P: May God be with you.

C: And also with you.

P: Lift up your hearts.

C: We lift them up to God.

P: Let us give thanks to the Lord our God.

C: It is right to give our thanks and praise.

Eucharistic Prayer

P: It is indeed right, our duty and our joy.....

*Words of Institution

*Lord's Prayer

**C: 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.
Save us from the time of trial,
and deliver us from evil.
For the kingdom, the power,
and the glory are yours,
now and forever. Amen**

Invitation to Communion

P: All who are hungry, come! The feast of grace is spread.

Holy Communion

ALL, Yes — EVERYONE IS WELCOME!

Communion is by intinction, we dip the bread into either the wine (red) or grape juice (white).

AGNUS DEI

Lamb of God, you take a - way the sins of the world,
have mer - cy on us. *Repeat as needed* *Last time* Lamb of God,
you take a - way the sins of the world, grant us peace.

Hymn "Mothering God, You Gave Me Birth" Red #735

Mothering God, you gave me birth,
in the bright morning of this world.
Creator, source of ev'ry breath, you are my rain,
My wind, my sun.

Mothering Christ, you took my form,
Offering me your food of light,
Grain...of life, and grape of love, your very body
For my peace.

Mothering spirit, nurt'ring one,
In arms of patience hold me close,
So that in faith I root and grow until I flow'r,
Until I know.

*Communion Blessing

P: May this Holy Communion of our Lord Jesus Christ
strengthen us and keep us in God's grace now and forever.

C: Amen.

*Prayer after Communion

P: Generous Host, You have shared your feast with us
and made us new. Send us now to set tables of love
and grace in our communities, that your liberating love
might nourish the world into freedom,
in the name of the crucified one, Jesus Christ our Lord.

C: Amen

The Sending

*Blessing

P: 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.
So go forth speaking. For if you won't, then who will?
Thanks be to God for this good, *good* news.

C: Amen

*Closing Hymn “Blessed Assurance” Red #638

Blessed assurance, Jesus is mine!
Oh, what a foretaste of glory divine!
Heir of salvation, purchase of God,
Born of his Spirit, washed in his blood.

REFRAIN:

*This is my story, this is my song,
praising my Savior all the day long:
this is my story, this is my song,
praising my Savior all the day long.*

Perfect submission, perfect delight,
Visions of rapture now burst on my sight;
Angels descending bring from above
Echoes of mercy, whispers of love.

REFRAIN

Perfect submission, all is at rest;
I in my Savior am happy and blest,
Watching and waiting, looking above,
Filled with his goodness, lost in his love.

REFRAIN

*Dismissal

P: Go in peace. Care for others as God cares for you.
C: **Thanks be to God.**

Music

Serving Today

Reader: Elke spires
Altar Guild: Candace Anderson
Coffee Host : Margaret Schraft
Office Help: Candace, Sheila & Sherilyn

* Sign up to Read, Host Coffee & Dedicate Altar Flowers *



*Missing a pew buddy?
A phone call to someone who is not here
goes a long way.*



SHORT TERM Family of Pr. Herb Schmidt, Family of Marc Northcott, Camryn, Corbin, Marilyn, Nathan, Dorothy Ronning, Bob Holzwarth, Amanda, Mary Robe & Family, Renee, Family of Laura Gates, Sina & Bella, Chad Fields, Laura, Ayla, Beth Stiles, Margaret Schraft, Laura & twin babies, James, Don & Taiyo, Pr. Gary & Corinne Stevenson, Family of Bobbie Erickson, Kevin, Beth, Liz, Sam, Florence, Tom Williams, Tim Oldfield, Kathy M., Nancy, Corrine & Daniel, Connie Garcia & Family, Family & friends of Rev. Jim Carr, Grey, Levi, James, Galahad, Debbie, Sam, Nate Barker, Robbin, Keith, Noelle, Ensley, Middle East Peace, Tom Dawson, Dustin, Father Jack Davis, Adolfo, Elida, Jeannie, Anetta, Jane, Barbara Allen, Gary & Marjie Toops, Rachel B., Anne & Chloe Johnston, Isaac & Marissa, Mateo & Lina, Atlas, Sal, Katarina.

LONG TERM Those suffering with Mental Illness, James Sheehan, Biergiel—Colclough family, Eric Utto-Galarneau, Beth UG, Brian Utto, Kathy Brooks, Joel Hurtgamm, Dawit & family (Ethiopia), Miller, April, Aaron Johnson, Shelby, Ashley, Frank, Joe, Lisa & Beau, Linda Johnson, Jan Shadle, Vi Olly, Mike, Susan Anderson, Brouse Family, Janet Baker, Sandy Godvine, Janelle Yung, Karin, Will, Chris & John B., Immigrant families, The Homeless, People of Ukraine, People of Palestine/Israel, Our Nation's leaders, Mt. Cross, St. Stephen's Child Development Ctr, S.S. Senior Housing, Pastor Jim & Our Church Family, men & women of Armed Forces, and the Youth of today.

** Please notify when to remove **



The good news is...

great love for God and neighbor

If God Lived Next Door

If God lived next door,
I'd drop off a loaf of bread.
I'd use my mom's best recipe.
I'd wrap it in parchment and ribbon
and place it on the front stoop.
If God lived next door,
I'd leave a note with my phone number.
Call anytime you need anything!
I'm always happy to help!
If God lived next door,
I'd keep sugar on the shelf,
just in case she needed a cup.
I'd put a picnic table in the front yard
and begin taking my coffee there.
Whenever God passed by with their gaggle of rescue dogs,
I could say, *Want to sit for a moment? Want to rest your legs?*
I'd keep a jar of dog treats and water by the mailbox
and change my doormat to one that says:
All are welcome here.
I'd invite God over for dinner.
She'd bring bread and juice.
I'd host a block party,
so that everyone could meet her.
I'd start a community garden
so that the kids could run between rows of squash and tomatoes
while we adults put our hands in the dirt.
We'd share stories while we weeded,
and eat harvest meals at the end of the season.
If God lived next door,
I'd want to build something beautiful.
Then again,
who says she doesn't?

Trinity Tuesday

(Pub Theology / Discussion)

March 3 at 6:30pm

(First Tuesday of the month)

Place: Discretion Brewing 2703 41st Ave.

1 HOUR

1 QUESTION

1 DRINK

(3-in-1)

Join us for an evening of honest conversation and genuine community. Bring your questions about faith, life, and everything in between. No question is off limits, and no judgment—just real talk in a relaxed atmosphere.

Whether you're a longtime member or exploring faith for the first time, pull up a chair and let's talk. All are welcome.

Previous discussions include: How do we see God? How are we called? Why do bad things happen to good people? Recognizing our God-given talents. How do we forgive?

**NOTE: We are gathering on the patio.
Please dress for the weather!**

Kathy Allen 430-6359 for more info.

LENT is about BECOMING,
DOING,
and CHANGING,

WHATEVER IT IS
THAT IS BLOCKING THE FULLNESS OF LIFE
IN US RIGHT NOW.

Sister Joan Chittister, OSB

+ + + + + + + + + + + + +

*“Lent offers us the practical and effective
weapons of fasting and almsgiving
as a means of combating
an excessive attachment to money.
Giving not only from our abundance,
but sacrificing something more
in order to give to the needy,
fosters that self-denial which is essential
to authentic Christian living.”*

Pope John Paul II



Lenten Wednesdays
6:00 pm
(Worship 7:00pm)



March 4, 11, 18 & 25

Lent invites us into a unique season of slowing down, listening deeply, and opening our hearts to spiritual renewal. Instead of focusing only on what we give up, Lent encourages us to let go of what weighs us down and make space for grace, strength, and hope. As a church family, we walk through these 40 days together—praying, supporting one another, and trusting God’s guidance. With this spirit of reflection and renewal, we invite you to join us for the services that will shape our Lenten journey.

Other Giving Options

We are now able to receive donations made by:
credit card, debit card, PayPal, Venmo & Zelle.

There are three choices:

- 1) **Vanco**, our regular electronic giving provider;
- 2) **PayPal / Venmo / Zelle** for single one-time gifts;
- 3) **PayPal** with the possibility of recurring donations and an option to cover the fees. All are available at <https://ststephenslutheran.org>





PANCAKE BREAKFAST & EASTER CELEBRATION

Sunday, April 5

- Apply for a Thrivent Action Team Grant.
Contact Leslie or Tina **ASAP**.
- Set up, servers & clean up. See sign up sheet.
- Help with Childrens activities during worship
& egg hunt after
- Sign up to order an Easter Lily to help
decorate the sanctuary.
- Plan ahead and invite folks.
Let them see “our light shine”.

Upcoming Events:

February Benevolence Offering = Association of Faith Communities Rotating Shelter & Safe Spaces

- March 3 Trinity Tuesday 6:30 pm Discretion Brewery
come for honest conversation and genuine community
- March 3 Scouts 6:00 pm
- March 4 Preschool Chapel 10:15 am
- March 4 Lenten Wednesday
Souper 6:00 pm (Hosts: Tina G. & Zelma F.)
Worship 7 pm
- March 5 Men's A.A. Group 7:00 pm
- March 6 A. A. Group 7:00 pm
- March 10 TBD - Beati Quorum Choir rehearsal
- March 10 Church Council 6:30 pm
- March 12 Women's Circle of Promise 10:30 am
- March 13-15 Mt. Cross Women's Retreat
- March 29 Palm Sunday Dramatic Worship
Readers needed
- April 2 Maundy Thursday worship 11 & lunch 12:00
Worship 7 pm
- April 3 Good Friday worship 7pm
- April 4 Easter Set up 10 am
- April 18 Pr. Herb Schmidt Memorial 1:00 Messiah, High St.

Pastor's Office Hours Wednesdays 10 to 1:00

Our Mission Statement

St. Stephen's is a welcoming, healing community who worship God in Christ, nurture people growing in faith, serve others with acceptance and love, invite people to share the joy of the spirit.

Reconciling in Christ

“We welcome all who are seeking God's love and grace. We welcome all because God welcomes all, regardless of race or culture, sexual orientation, gender identity, gender expression, or relationship status.

We welcome all without regard to addictions, physical or mental health, imprisonment, socio-economic circumstances, or anything that too often divides us. Our unity is in Christ.”

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831/476-4700 FAX 831/476-3918
email: office@ststephenslutheran.org
Web Address: www.ststephenslutheran.org
Office Hours: Mon.—Friday. 12:00 —5:00 pm

Ministers: The People of St. Stephen's
Pastor: Rev. James P. Lapp
Church Administrator: Leslie Lapp
Church Musician: Gary Roberts
Sunday School: Leslie Lapp
Pre-School Director: Kathy Berens
Custodian: John Hopping
Videographers: Jay Johnston, Kent Madsen & Barb Rice

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