ST. PETER'S LUTHERAN CHURCH and ELEMENTARY SCHOOL
Our Mission: Learn God's Truth, Share Spirit's Healing, Follow Jesus' Ways
Fourth Sunday in Lent, March 15, 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.
Lamb of God, **hear our prayer.** *A brief silence.* Bend your ear to our prayers, Lord Christ, and come among us. By your gracious life and death for us, bring light into the darkness of our hearts, and anoint us with your Spirit, for you live and reign with the Father and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. **Amen**

GOD'S WORD

READING: Ephesians 5:8-14

Because we now live in the divine light which is Jesus Christ, we conduct our lives in ways that reflect the light of Christ, so that our activity is truly pleasing to God.

This is a reading from Paul's letter to the Ephesians, the 5th chapter.
Once you were darkness, but now in the Lord you are light. Walk as children of light, for the fruit of the light is found in all that is good and right and true. Try to find out what is pleasing to the Lord. Take no part in the unfruitful works of darkness; rather, expose them. For it is shameful even to mention what such people do secretly, but everything exposed by the light
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becomes visible, for everything that becomes visible is light. Therefore it says,

"Sleeper, awake!
Rise from the dead,
and Christ will shine on you."

This is holy Wisdom, God's holy Word.

HOLY GOSPEL: John 9:1-4

Jesus heals a man born blind, provoking a hostile reaction that he regards as spiritual blindness to the things of God.

This is the Holy Gospel as the Word was given to John, the 9th chapter.

As Jesus walked along, he saw a man blind from birth. His disciples asked him, "Rabbi, who sinned, this man or his parents, that he was born blind?"

Jesus answered, "Neither this man nor his parents sinned; he was born blind so that God's works might be revealed in him. We must work the works of the One who sent me while it is day; night is coming, when no one can work. As long as I am in the world, I am the light of the world." When he had said this, he spat on the ground and made mud with the saliva and spread the mud on the man's eyes, saying to him, "Go, wash in the pool of Siloam" (which means Sent). Then he went and washed and came back able to see.

The neighbors and those who had seen him before as a beggar began to ask, "Is this not the man who used to sit and beg?" Some were saying, "It is he." Others were saying, "No, but it is someone like him."

He kept saying, "I am he."

But they kept asking him, "Then how were your eyes opened?"

He answered, "The man called Jesus made mud, spread it on my eyes, and said to me, 'Go to Siloam and wash.' Then I went and washed and received my sight."

They said to him, "Where is he?"

He said, "I do not know."

They brought to the Pharisees the man who had formerly been blind. Now it was a Sabbath day when Jesus made the mud and opened his eyes. Then the Pharisees also began to ask him how he had received his sight. He said to them, "He put mud on my eyes. Then I washed, and now I see."

Some of the Pharisees said, "This man is not from God, for he does not observe the Sabbath." Others said, "How can a man who is a sinner perform such signs?" And they were divided. So they said again to the blind man, "What do you say about him? It was your eyes he opened."

He said, "He is a prophet."

The Judeans did not believe that he had been blind and had received his sight until they called the parents of the man who had received his sight and asked them, "Is this your son, who you say was born blind? How then does he now see?"

His parents answered, "We know that this is our son and that he was born blind, but we do not know how it is that now he sees, nor do we know who opened his eyes. Ask him; he is of age. He will speak for himself." His parents said this because they were afraid of the Judeans, for the leaders had already agreed that anyone who confessed Jesus to be the Messiah would be put out of the synagogue. Therefore his parents said, "He is of age; ask him."

So for the second time they called the man who had been blind, and they said to him, "Give glory to God! We know that this man is a sinner."

He answered, "I do not know whether he is a sinner. One thing I do know, that though I was blind, now I see."

They said to him, "What did he do to you? How did he open your eyes?"

He answered them, "I have told you already, and you would not listen. Why do you want to hear it again? Do you also want to become his disciples?"

Then they reviled him, saying, "You are his disciple, but we are disciples of Moses. We know that God has spoken to Moses, but as for this man, we do not know where he comes from."

The man answered, "Here is an astonishing thing! You do not know where he comes from, yet he opened my eyes. We know that God does not listen to sinners, but God does listen to one who worships him and obeys his will. Never since the world began has it been heard that anyone opened the eyes of a person born blind. If this man were not from God, he could do nothing."

They answered him, "You were born entirely in sins, and are you trying to teach us?" And they drove him out.

Jesus heard that they had driven him out, and when he found him he said, "Do you believe in the Son of Humanity?"

He answered, "And who is he, sir? Tell me, so that I may believe in him."

Jesus said to him, "You have seen him, and the one speaking with you is he."

He said, "Lord, I believe." And he worshiped him.

Jesus said, "I came into this world for judgment, so that those who do not see may see and those who do see may become blind."

Some of the Pharisees who were with him heard this and said to him, "Surely we are not blind, are we?"

Jesus said to them, "If you were blind, you would not have sin. But now that you say, 'We see,' your sin remains."

This is the Good News of Christ's Victory.

HYMN of the DAY: *# 779 "Amazing Grace, How Sweet the Sound"*

1 Amazing grace! how sweet the sound
that saved a wretch like me!
I once was lost, but now am found;
was blind, but now I see.

2 'Twas grace that taught my heart to fear,
and grace my fears relieved;
how precious did that grace appear
the hour I first believed!

3 Through many dangers, toils, and snares
I have already come;
'tis grace has brought me safe thus far,
and grace will lead me home.

4 The Lord has promised good to me;
his word my hope secures;
he will my shield and portion be
as long as life endures.

5 When we've been there ten thousand years,
bright shining as the sun,
we've no less days to sing God's praise
than when we'd first begun.

Text: John Newton, 1725-1807, alt., sts. 1-4; anonymous, st. 5

MESSAGE: ***Sight*** *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.*

God, our shepherd, we pray that you guide the church. Lead Christians in our community and across the globe in right paths for your name's sake. Hear us, O God.

Your mercy is great.

God our provider, we cry out for this planet and the life it holds. Rescue endangered animals and plants, preserve threatened ecosystems, and save creatures from natural disasters. Hear us, O God.

Your mercy is great.

God our sovereign, we plead for your peace on earth. Bring an end to war and violence, and raise up leaders in governments, courts, businesses, schools, and community organizations who seek goodness and mercy. Hear us, O God.

Your mercy is great.

God our friend, we praise you for the diversity of people among us. Awaken us to share and receive the gifts we each possess, and stir up a spirit of understanding, celebration, and welcome for all. Hear us, O God.
Your mercy is great.

God our friend, we praise you for the diversity of people among us. Awaken us to share and receive the gifts we each possess, and stir up a spirit of understanding, celebration, and welcome for all. We pray for all people in need. Take away the stone of poverty that weighs down so many. Console any who weep, heal all who are sick, and protect all in danger in our community. 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.
God our home, we thank you for all who have died and completed their baptismal journeys. Grant us faith to live until we too dwell in your house forever. 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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Today's Sponsorships

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

In Honor of my daughter, Susan Johnson's March 14th birthday,
and Ellie Tanasescu's March 25th birthday.
Given by Linda Heinbaugh.

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

In Honor of my Godmother, Lois Volz,
on her March 18th birthday.
Given with love from Donna.

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Attendance for Sunday, March 8, 2026: 24

Learning, Serving, and Fellowship Opportunities

St. Peter's Annual Meeting: Sunday, March 15th between services.

Easter Flowers: Help decorate St. Peter's Easter "garden" on the altar! Please return the completed order form to the CHURCH OFFICE no later than March 15th. Order forms are available from the church office.

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 5th 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 2nd – April 10th. 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 21st at 1 pm. at St. Luke (7001 Harford Rd., 21234). They will be showing the animated move, *The King of Kings*. Popcorn and prizes also.

Camp Day at Mar-Lu-Ridge: Sunday, March 22nd 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 28th 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 28th 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.

Community Health & Wellness Fair: Saturday, April 25th 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, nrobinson@cityneighbors.org, or call 410-325-2627.

Rest & Recharge on the Ridge: Sunday, April 26th 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 to RSVP.

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

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

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

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