

# First Sunday in Lent

## Holy Communion

9:00 a.m., March 9, 2025



### Welcome to worship this morning!

We are glad you're here! Please know that **children** are welcome to remain in worship; they are also welcome to take a break in our "Kid's Korner" in the Gathering Space where the service audio is played through speakers. **Bathrooms** are located down the hall, past the church office. **Hymns** are printed in the red book (ELW) available in the pew rack.

We practice **open communion** at St. Matthew, meaning all who desire the sacrament of Holy Communion are welcome. If you prefer, you may also come forward for a blessing. During the distribution of Holy Communion, ushers will direct the congregation forward to receive communion in a **continuous line**. The pastor will distribute communion wafers, which you may intinct (dip) into red wine, or white grape juice, held by communion assistants. Please do not drink from the chalices. Gluten free wafers are also available. The pastor will deliver the sacrament to anyone unable to come forward. You may also use a pre-filled communion kit, available at the usher's table.

All are welcome!

PRELUDE: *Erhalt uns, Herr, bei deinem Wort*

Johann Gottfried Walther

WELCOME

CONFESSION AND FORGIVENESS

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

**Amen.**

Let us return to God, confessing our sin in the assurance of God's abiding love.  
*Silence is kept for reflection.*

Compassionate One,  
you are slow to anger and abounding in steadfast love,  
but our lives do not always reflect you  
and your love for the world.  
We do not show others the tender compassion  
you have shown to us.  
We do not welcome others with the radical hospitality  
you grant to all people.  
We oppress others,  
even though you have set us free again and again.  
We squander the abundant gifts of the earth.  
Transform our lives  
and guide us again in the way of the cross.  
Amen.

Beloved in Christ,  
God's arms are always stretched open wide  
to welcome the wandering ones home.  
In ✝ Christ your sins are forgiven.  
You have a place in God's house forever.  
Amen.

OPENING HYMN: *Christ, the Life of All the Living*

ELW 339

## GREETING

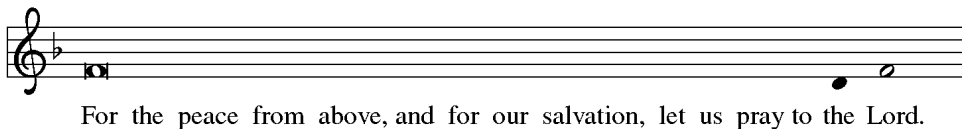
The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, the love of God,  
and the communion of the Holy Spirit be with you all.  
And also with you.

# KYRIE

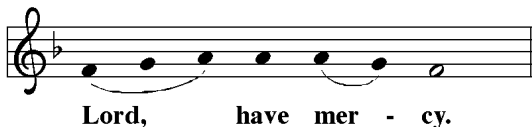
# ELW Setting 3



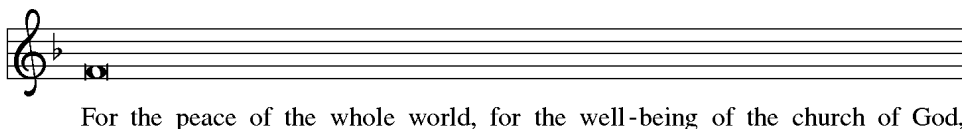
In peace, let us pray to the Lord. **Lord, have mer - cy.**



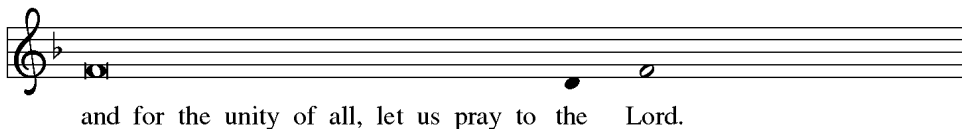
For the peace from above, and for our salvation, let us pray to the Lord.



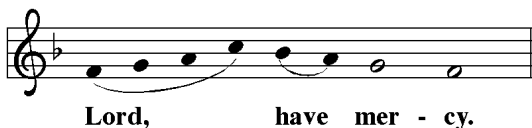
**Lord, have mer - cy.**



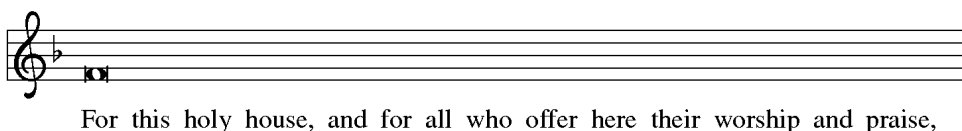
For the peace of the whole world, for the well-being of the church of God,



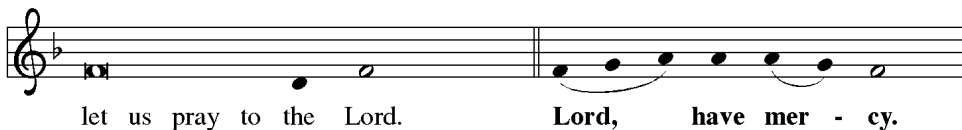
and for the unity of all, let us pray to the Lord.



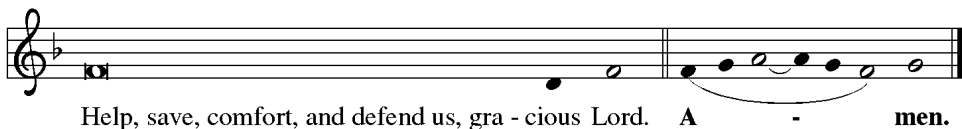
**Lord, have mer - cy.**



For this holy house, and for all who offer here their worship and praise,



let us pray to the Lord. **Lord, have mer - cy.**



Help, save, comfort, and defend us, gra - cious Lord. **A - men.**

## PRAYER OF THE DAY

O Lord God, you led your people through the wilderness and brought them to the promised land. Guide us now, so that, following your Son, we may walk safely through the wilderness of this world toward the life you alone can give, through Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. **Amen.**

*The congregation may be seated.*

## FIRST READING: Deuteronomy 26:4-11

*The annual harvest festival, called the Feast of Weeks, provides the setting for this reading. This festival celebrates the first fruits of the produce of the land offered back to God in thanks. In this text, worshipers announce God's gracious acts on behalf of Israel.*

A reading from the book of Deuteronomy:

<sup>4</sup> When the priest takes the [first fruit offering] from your hand and sets it down before the altar of the Lord your God, <sup>5</sup> you shall make this response before the Lord your God: “A wandering Aramean was my ancestor; he went down into Egypt and lived there as an alien, few in number, and there he became a great nation, mighty and populous. <sup>6</sup> When the Egyptians treated us harshly and afflicted us, by imposing hard labor on us, <sup>7</sup> we cried to the Lord, the God of our ancestors; the Lord heard our voice and saw our affliction, our toil, and our oppression. <sup>8</sup> The Lord brought us out of Egypt with a mighty hand and an outstretched arm, with a terrifying display of power, and with signs and wonders; <sup>9</sup> and he brought us into this place and gave us this land, a land flowing with milk and honey. <sup>10</sup> So now I bring the first of the fruit of the ground that you, O Lord, have given me.” You shall set it down before the Lord your God and bow down before the Lord your God. <sup>11</sup> Then you, together with the Levites and the aliens who reside among you, shall celebrate with all the bounty that the Lord your God has given to you and to your house.

The Word of the Lord.

**Thanks be to God.**

## GOSPEL ACCLAMATION

ELW Setting 5



Glo - ry and praise to you, O Lord Je - sus Christ.

### HOLY GOSPEL: Luke 4:1-13

*After being filled with the Holy Spirit at his baptism, Jesus is led in the wilderness. Through his responses to the temptations of the devil, he defines what it means to be called “the Son of God.”*

The Holy Gospel according to Luke.

**Glory to you, O Lord.**

<sup>1</sup>Jesus, full of the Holy Spirit, returned from the Jordan and was led by the Spirit in the wilderness, <sup>2</sup>where for forty days he was tempted by the devil. He ate nothing at all during those days, and when they were over, he was famished. <sup>3</sup>The devil said to him, “If you are the Son of God, command this stone to become a loaf of bread.” <sup>4</sup>Jesus answered him, “It is written, ‘One does not live by bread alone.’”

<sup>5</sup>Then the devil led him up and showed him in an instant all the kingdoms of the world. <sup>6</sup>And the devil said to him, “To you I will give their glory and all this authority; for it has been given over to me, and I give it to anyone I please. <sup>7</sup>If you, then, will worship me, it will all be yours.” <sup>8</sup>Jesus answered him, “It is written, ‘Worship the Lord your God, and serve only him.’”

<sup>9</sup>Then the devil took him to Jerusalem, and placed him on the pinnacle of the temple, saying to him, “If you are the Son of God, throw yourself down from here, <sup>10</sup>for it is written,

‘He will command his angels concerning you, to protect you,’

<sup>11</sup>and

‘On their hands they will bear you up, so that you will not dash your foot against a stone.’”

<sup>12</sup>Jesus answered him, “It is said, ‘Do not put the Lord your God to the test.’” <sup>13</sup>When the devil had finished every test, he departed from him until an opportune time.

The Gospel of the Lord.

**Praise to you, O Christ.**

SERMON:

Pastor Brian

HYMN OF THE DAY: *O Lord, throughout These Forty Days*

ELW 319

### APOSTLES' 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.

### PRAYERS OF INTERCESSION

Led by the Spirit, let us turn to God in prayer for the church, the world, and all those in need. I invite you into a prayerful posture of kneeling, standing, or sitting.

*A brief silence.*

Gracious God, speak your word anew among your church. Strengthen it to withstand the temptation to turn inward in fear or complacency. Embolden church institutions to turn from self-preservation toward the self-giving love of Jesus.

God, in your mercy, **receive our prayer.**

Wonderful Creator, speak the word of life into wilderness places and fertile fields. Grant wisdom to your people, that we may quell the urge to strip lands of their resources and instead preserve first fruits for future generations. God, in your mercy, **receive our prayer.**

Almighty God, speak a word of wisdom to people in positions of power: mayors, governors, legislators, judges and juries, presidents, and monarchs. Help them discern your voice and follow your guidance to care for the poor and vulnerable, resisting the temptations of the evil one. God, in your mercy, **receive our prayer.**

Steadfast God, speak words of courage to your people in the wilderness. Protect migrants and refugees on perilous journeys, that they find safe refuge and a portion in the bounty you have given humanity to share. Bring just and lasting peace to all who suffer the terror of war. God, in your mercy, **receive our prayer.**

Loving God, speak inspiration to this congregation of St. Matthew. Bless our fellowship and evangelism ministries. Guide our Christian education programs: Sunday School, adult forum, and Bible study. And we especially pray for our confirmation class as they attend confirmation camp at Camp Calumet this weekend. Bless them as they grow closer to each other and to you. God, in your mercy, **receive our prayer.**

Receive the prayers of your people and draw all things together in your love, in the name of Jesus, who leads us from death to life. **Amen.**

## **PEACE**

The Peace of Christ be with you always.

**And also with you.**

*The congregation may be seated.*

## **OFFERING**

*At this time, ushers will pass the offering plate if you desire to give a financial gift. Donations may also be given online at [stmatthewavon.org/give](http://stmatthewavon.org/give), using the QR code in this bulletin, or mailed directly to the church. Thank you for your continued generosity and faithfulness!*

**OFFERTORY: *Jesu, meines Lebens Leben***

**Friedrich Wilhelm Zachau**

## PRESENTATION HYMN: *As the Grains of Wheat*

ELW 465

*All rise as the gifts are brought forward.*

*Refrain*



As the grains of wheat once scat-tered on the hill were  
gath-ered in - to one to be - come our bread; so may all your peo-ple from  
all the ends of earth be gath-ered in - to one in you.  
As this cup of bless - ing is shared with - in our midst,  
*Refrain*  
may we share the pres - ence of your love.

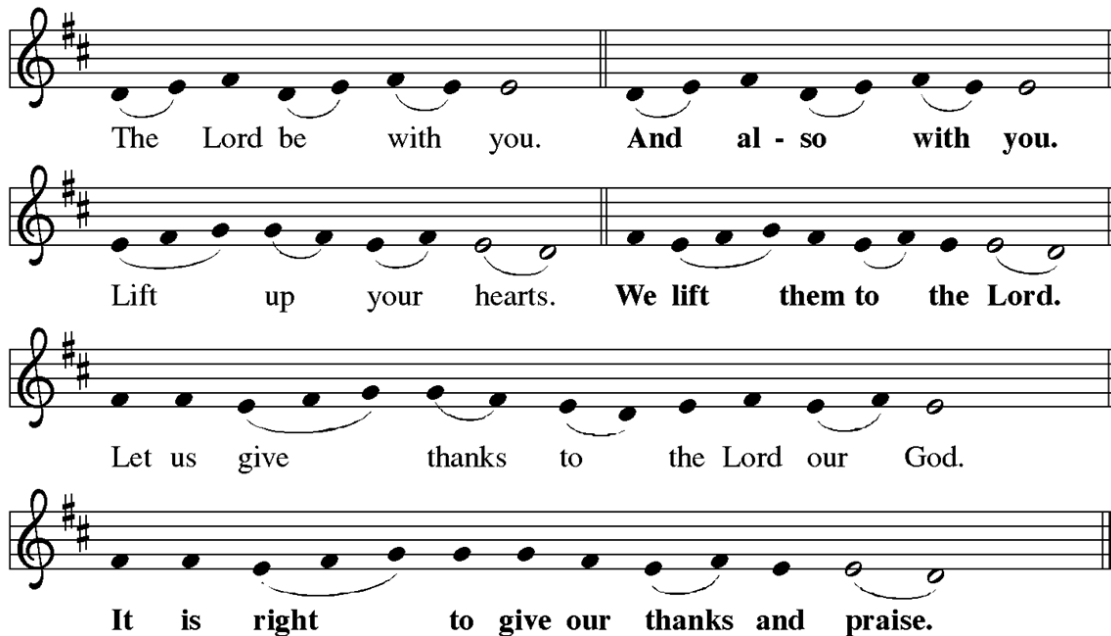
Text: Didache, 2nd cent.; Marty Haugen, b. 1950; Music: Marty Haugen; Text and Music © 1990 GIA Publications, Inc.

## OFFERING PRAYER

Gracious Provider,  
you 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.**



## HOLY COMMUNION



The Lord be with you. And al - so with you.

Lift up your hearts. We lift them to the Lord.

Let us give thanks to the Lord our God.

It is right to give our thanks and praise.

It is indeed right, our duty and our joy,  
that we should at all times and in all places  
give thanks and praise to you, almighty and merciful God,  
through our Savior Jesus Christ.

You call your people to cleanse their hearts  
and prepare with joy for the paschal feast,  
that, renewed in the gift of baptism,  
we may come to the fullness of your grace.

And so, with all the choirs of angels,  
with the church on earth and the hosts of heaven,  
we praise your name and join their unending hymn:

# SANCTUS

ELW Setting 5



Ho - ly, ho - ly, ho - ly Lord, God of pow'r and might,



heav - en and earth are full of your glo - ry.



Ho - san - na in the high - est.



Bless - ed is he who comes in the name of the Lord.



Ho - san - na in the high - est.

Holy, mighty, and merciful Lord,  
heaven and earth are full of your glory.  
In great love you sent to us Jesus, your Son,  
who reached out to heal the sick and suffering,  
who preached good news to the poor,  
and who, on the cross, opened his arms to all.

In the night in which he was betrayed,  
our Lord Jesus took bread, and gave thanks;  
broke it, and gave it to his disciples, saying:  
Take and eat; this is my body, given for you.  
Do this for the remembrance of me.

Again, after supper, he took the cup, gave thanks,  
and gave it for all to drink, saying:  
This cup is the new covenant in my blood,  
shed for you and for all people for the forgiveness of sin.  
Do this for the remembrance of me.  
Remembering, therefore, his death, resurrection, and ascension,  
we await his coming in glory.

Pour out upon us the Spirit of your love, O Lord,  
and unite the wills of all who share this heavenly food,  
the body and blood of Jesus Christ, our Lord;  
to whom, with you and the Holy Spirit,  
be all honor and glory, now and forever.  
**Amen.**

### **LORD'S PRAYER**

Gathered into one by the Holy Spirit, 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**

*At this time, ushers will direct the congregation to approach the altar where you may kneel or stand. You will receive a communion wafer from the pastor, which you are invited to intinct (dip) into the red wine or white grape juice held by the communion assistant. Please do not sip from the chalices. You may also use a pre-filled communion kit in your seat or the pastor will deliver the sacrament to your seat.*

Come to the banquet, for all is now ready.

### **THE DISTRIBUTION**

The body of Christ, given for you.

The blood of Christ, shed for you.

# AGNUS DEI

ELW Setting 5

Lamb of God, you take a - way the sin of the world; have mer - cy on us. Lamb of God, you take a - way the sin of the world; have mer - cy on us. Lamb of God, you take a - way the sin of the world; grant us peace. A - men.

## COMMUNION HYMN: *Chief of Sinners Though I Be*

ELW 609

### BLESSING AFTER COMMUNION

May the body and blood of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ strengthen you and keep you in his grace. **Amen.**

### PRAYER AFTER COMMUNION

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.  
**Amen.**

## BENEDICTION

As you go on your way may Christ go with you.  
May he go before you to show you the way,  
Behind you to encourage you,  
Beside you to befriend you,  
Above you to watch over,  
And within you to give you peace. † Amen.

CLOSING HYMN: *Bless Now, O God, the Journey*

ELW 326

## DISMISSAL

Go in peace. Care for others as God cares for you.

Thanks be to God.

## POSTLUDE

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Today's Altar Flowers are provided by Mj Bennett-Sandell in memory of Elizabeth Wilson.

## TODAY'S ADULT FORUM

This morning Pastor Brian will lead Adult Forum on the life and ministry of the Rev. Howard Thurman, whose book *Jesus and the Disinherited* is the focus of our midweek Lenten book study. Come today to learn more about Howard Thurman and join us Thursday evening for our first discussion of his book!

## MANY THANKS FOR TODAY'S VOLUNTEER WORSHIP LEADERS

**Altar Guild:** Mj Bennett-Sandell & Paula Cunningham

**Assisting Minister:** Kathy Alsgaard

**Live Stream:** Ben Wright

**Lector:** Anne Fenn

**Ushers:** Kevin Reichler

**Coffee Hour:** Kathy Kurtich

**Cantor:** Roy Zurell

## STAFF

**Pastor:** The Rev. Dr. Brian R. Rajcok – [pastorbrian@stmatthewavon.org](mailto:pastorbrian@stmatthewavon.org)  
**Associate Pastor:** The Rev. Ryan Heckman – [revryan@stmatthewavon.org](mailto:revryan@stmatthewavon.org)  
**Director of Music:** Sarah Schiener-Redenz – [music@stmatthewavon.org](mailto:music@stmatthewavon.org)  
**Office Administrator:** Paul Martin – [office@stmatthewavon.org](mailto:office@stmatthewavon.org) or (860) 673-3301  
**Sexton:** Roy Zurell – contact the office

## VISIT US ONLINE

**Website:** [www.stmatthewavon.org](http://www.stmatthewavon.org)      **YouTube:** @StMatthewAvon  
**Facebook.com/SaintMatthewLutheranChurch**    **Instagram:** @stmatthewlutheranavon

## THE WEEK AHEAD

<b>Sunday</b>	9am: Sanctuary Worship w/ Holy Communion		10:20am: Sunday School & Adult Forum		
<b>Tuesday</b>	10am: A.A. (Open to All)	12:30-2pm: Women’s Fellowship	2pm: Choir Rehearsal	7pm: Avon Land Trust	7pm: Finance Committee Mtg.
<b>Wednesday</b>	9:30am & 5:15pm: W.W				
<b>Thursday</b>	2pm: Centering Prayer	6pm: Midweek Lenten Service	Following Service: Lenten Book Discussion		
<b>Saturday</b>	8:30am: Men’s Breakfast				
<b>Sunday</b>	9am: Sanctuary Worship w/ Holy Communion		10:20am: Sunday School & Adult Forum		

## ANNOUNCEMENTS

### SMLC WOMEN'S FELLOWSHIP

**Tues. March 11th, 12:30 - 2pm**

The March 11 Women’s Fellowship will be led by Ellen Ericson and Doreen O’Leary. They will present attendees with samples of homemade solutions that can help our ecology and ultimately, our planet. Please join us for a thoughtful and educational gathering beginning at 12:30pm.

## LENTEN MIDWEEK BOOK DISCUSSION SIGN-UP

### **Beginning next Thursday, following midweek service**

Throughout the 2025 Lenten season, Pastor Brian and Rev Ryan will lead a study of Howard Thurman's *Jesus and the Disinherited*, a short treatise on Jesus's ministry to the poor and oppressed. The book cover describes the book like this: "Thurman lifts Jesus up as a partner in the pain of the oppressed, and the gospel as a manual of resistance for the poor and disenfranchised. In this view, the example of [Jesus's] life shows us that hatred does not empower—it decays. Only by recognizing fear, deception, contempt, and love of one another can God's justice prevail."

We will meet Thursday evenings after our 6:00pm Lenten midweek prayer service with the songs of Taizé on 3/13, 3/20, 3/27, 4/3, and 4/10. **If you ordered a book, please see Pastor Brian after service so he can give you your copy.** We hope to see many of you there!

## GRIEF SUPPORT GROUP

### **Starting Sunday, March 16th Following Worship**

Grief Support Group will begin meeting on Sunday, March 16 at 10:15am following the Service. If you have experienced loss and want to receive support or help others by sharing your experience, please join us. **We will meet in the Conference Room for four weeks: March, 16, 23, 30 and April 6.** This is support, not counseling, If you have any questions, please call or text Ellen Ericson at 860-305-4996, or [eegregory3@sbcglobal.net](mailto:eegregory3@sbcglobal.net).

## MUSIC AT GREENWOOD: SAVE THE DATE!

### **Saturday, March 22nd, 4:00 p.m.**

We are excited to commence our 2025 concert season with a Bach Birthday Bash! In celebration of J.S. Bach's 340th birthday, various instruments and small ensembles, both traditional and unconventional, will play a selection of the great composer's music. After the program, the celebration will continue with a reception of birthday cake and light appetizers. An offering will be received at the door (suggested donation: \$10). We hope to see you there!

## THRIVENT ACTION TEAM SIGNUP

Thrivent Financial provides two action team cards of \$250 to members for charitable activities every year. If you are a Thrivent member you have access to this member benefit! We invite Thrivent members to check out the events list on the church bulletin board, and to sign your name next to an event you would like sponsor with a \$250 action team. We will help you with applying for the action team card if you do not know how. Thank you for your support of St. Matthew's ministry activities!

## ONLINE GIVING

Make a one-time gift, or set-up recurring donations, via Vanco! You may use the QR code below to access the website, or visit: [stmatthewavon.org/online-giving](http://stmatthewavon.org/online-giving)

*We ask those that wish to set-up recurring donations, please select the "GENERAL OPERATING FUND" and choose withdrawals to take place on either the 1st or 15th of the month. Thank you! If you have any difficulty, please contact the church office or see one of the Pastors after service!*



### *St. Matthew Mission Statement:*

*St. Matthew Lutheran Church is a worshipping community called to proclaim God's love for all and to grow spiritually together. Challenged by Jesus' example, we strive to connect people of all ages, abilities, and needs, and to nurture them to be disciples of Christ. Guided by the Holy Spirit, we reach out to the wider community and welcome our neighbors to a life of worship, preaching, teaching, Christian care, service, and spiritual growth.*

***In Christ, We Are Digging Deep, Reaching Out, Changing Lives.***