



"Nicodemus came to Jesus by night" John 3:2

Second Weekend in Lent

February 28, 2026 at 5:00 p.m.

March 1, 2026 at 8:15 & 10:30 a.m.

First Lutheran Church
Decorah, IA

WELCOME TO FIRST LUTHERAN CHURCH

Whatever your country of origin or ancestry, your race or ethnic heritage, and whether you are religious or not, Christian or not, or Lutheran or not, you are welcome here.

Whether you are male, female or transgender, young or old, straight, gay, lesbian or bisexual, you are welcome here.

Whether you are single or partnered, married, widowed or divorced, you are welcome here.

Whether you are wealthy or poor, own a home or rent, live at home or are homeless, you are welcome here.

Whatever your political views - whether to the right, to the left or to the center, you are welcome here.

Whatever your strengths or weaknesses, gifts or challenges, they will be honored, for you are welcome here.

First Lutheran Church is committed to being a loving and welcoming community centered in the Good News of Jesus Christ. In faithfulness to the Christian Gospel, in reflection of our Lutheran emphasis on grace, and in celebration of our shared baptismal journey, we promise to enter into ministry with all who seek God here.

We invite you to join us for worship and take up your place with us in ministry for you are welcome at First Lutheran Church.

NOTES ABOUT WORSHIP:

This **bulletin** contains the prayers, readings, some music, and responses that you will need to participate in worship.

Hymnals can be found in the pews for most congregational songs. We use both the red Evangelical Lutheran Worship (ELW) and purple All Creation Sings (ACS) hymnals.

The **communion meal** is open to all who desire to participate, of any age. Gluten-free wafers and juice are available. Individual communion kits are also available as you enter the worship space for those who wish to remain in the pews.

Children are welcome at all of our worship services. A play area, where you'll also find quiet bags, is available for families in sanctuary. Feel free to nurse or feed your child in the sanctuary. We also have a staffed nursery during Sunday worship. Ask an usher for directions or follow the signs out the door at the northeast corner of the sanctuary.

Are you visiting? We invite you to fill out a yellow connection card found in your pew. Please also introduce yourself to Pr. Mike and Pr. David on your way out! Consider yourself welcome and invited to participate in the activities and worship life of this congregation!

TODAY'S THEME *Conversations in the dark—bringing our questions to God.*

GATHERING

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

PRELUDE 5:00 p.m. - How Deep the Father's Love for Us - Stuart Townend
8:15 a.m. - Adoration - Florence Price (1887-1953)

***GATHERING SONG** Open the Eyes Of My Heart - Paul Baloche (*see purple insert*)
10:30 a.m. only Peace Like A River (*see purple insert*)

WELCOME *Everyone is invited to share their prayer requests on the yellow cards found in the pews. If you are new to worship, please also include your contact information.*

***GATHERING HYMN** 8:15 a.m. only - ELW 666 What Wondrous Love is This

***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 in the presence of God and of one another.

Silence is kept for reflection.

Most merciful God,

we confess that we are captive to sin and cannot free ourselves. We have sinned against you in thought, word, and deed, by what we have done and by what we have left undone. We have not loved you with our whole heart; we have not loved our neighbors as ourselves. For the sake of your Son, Jesus Christ, have mercy on us. Forgive us, renew us, and lead us, so that we may delight in your will and walk in your ways, to the glory of your holy name. Amen.

God, who is rich in mercy, loved us even when we were dead in sin, and made us alive together with Christ. By grace you have been saved. In the name of † Jesus Christ, your sins are forgiven.

Almighty God strengthen you with power through the Holy Spirit, that Christ may live in your hearts through faith. **Amen.**

***KYRIE**

Refrain



Ky-ri - e e - lei - son, on our world and on our way.



Ky-ri - e e - lei - son, ev-'ry day.



1 For peace in the world, for the health of the church, for the
2 That we may live out your im - passioned re - sponse to the
3 For peace in our hearts, . . . for peace in our homes, . . . for
4 For your Spir - it to guide; that you cen - ter our lives in the



u - ni - ty of all; for
hun - gry and the poor; that
friends and fam - i - ly; for
wa - ter and the word; that you



this ho - ly house, for all who wor-ship and praise,
we may live out truth and jus - tice and grace,
life and for love, for our work and our play,
nour-ish our souls . . . with your bod - y and blood,



Refrain
let us pray to the Lord, let us pray to the Lord.

***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.**

***PRAYER OF THE DAY**

After we pause to breathe and for personal prayer, the presiding minister will pray.

O God, our leader and guide, in the waters of baptism you bring us to new birth to live as your children. Strengthen our faith in your promises, that by your Spirit we may lift up your life to all the world 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.

* Please rise in body or spirit.

WORD

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

CHILDREN'S MESSAGE Sunday only

PSALM Psalm 139:1, 7, 11-18

¹ O LORD, you have searched me and known me.

⁷ Where can I go from your spirit?

or where can I flee from your presence?

¹¹ If I say, "Surely the darkness shall cover me,
and night wraps itself around me,"

**¹² even the darkness is not dark to you;
the night is as bright as the day,
for darkness is as light to you.**

¹³ For it was you who formed my inward parts;
you knit me together in my mother's womb.

¹⁴ I praise you, for I am fearfully and wonderfully made.

**Wonderful are your works;
that I know very well.**

¹⁵ My frame was not hidden from you,
when I was being made in secret,
intricately woven in the depths of the earth.

¹⁶ Your eyes beheld my unformed substance.

**In your book were written
all the days that were formed for me,
when none of them as yet existed.**

¹⁷ How weighty to me are your thoughts, O God!
How vast is the sum of them!

**¹⁸ I try to count them—they are more than the sand;
I come to the end—I am still with you.**

GOSPEL ACCLAMATION During Lent we will remain seated for the acclamation and reading of the gospel.



Let your stead-fast love come to us, O Lord.



Let your stead-fast love come to us, O Lord.



Save us as you prom-ised; we will trust your word.



Let your stead-fast love come to us, O Lord.

* Please rise in body or spirit.

GOSPEL CONVERSATION The Holy Gospel according to John. **Glory to you, O Lord.**

A curious Pharisee visits Jesus by night to learn from the teacher his friends reject. Jesus speaks to him about life in the Spirit and the kingdom of God.

John 3:1–17

Now there was a Pharisee named Nicodemus, a leader of the Jews. He came to Jesus by night.

The Tempter: If you are the Son of God, command these stones to become loaves of bread.

Nicodemus: Rabbi, we know that you are a teacher who has come from God, for no one can do these signs that you do unless God is with that person.

Jesus: Very truly, I tell you, no one can see the kingdom of God without being born from above.

Nicodemus: How can anyone be born after having grown old? Can one enter a second time into the mother's womb and be born?

Jesus: Very truly, I tell you, no one can enter the kingdom of God without being born of water and Spirit. What is born of the flesh is flesh, and what is born of the Spirit is spirit. Do not be astonished that I said to you, 'You must be born from above.' The wind blows where it chooses, and you hear the sound of it, but you do not know where it comes from or where it goes. So it is with everyone who is born of the Spirit.

Nicodemus: How can these things be?

Jesus: Are you the teacher of Israel, and yet you do not understand these things? Very truly, I tell you, we speak of what we know and testify to what we have seen, yet you do not receive our testimony. If I have told you about earthly things and you do not believe, how can you believe if I tell you about heavenly things?

No one has ascended into heaven except the one who descended from heaven, the Son of Man. And just as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, so must the Son of Man be lifted up, that whoever believes in him may have eternal life.

For God so loved the world that he gave his only Son, so that everyone who believes in him may not perish but may have eternal life. Indeed, God did not send the Son into the world to condemn the world but in order that the world might be saved through him.

The Gospel of our Lord. **Praise to you, O Christ.**

SERMON Pr. David Severtson

How do you feel when someone raises a question you were afraid to ask? What question would you like to ask God?

***HYMN OF THE DAY** 5:00 p.m. & 8:15 a.m. - ACS 1049 Before the Waters Nourished Earth
10:30 a.m. - ACS 955 Come to the Water of Life

***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 power of the Holy Spirit,
born of the Virgin Mary,
suffered under Pontius Pilate,
was crucified, died, and was buried;
he descended to hell.**
**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** God's love has been poured into our hearts through the Holy Spirit that has been given to us. Let us pray in Jesus' name for the church, the human family, and all the world. After each dialogue we will pause for silent prayer.

A brief silence.

For all people in their daily life and work; **For our families, friends and neighbors, and for those who are alone.**

Silent prayer

For this community, the nation and the world;
For all who work for justice, freedom, and peace.

Silent prayer

For the just and proper use of your creation;
For the victims of hunger, fear, injustice, and oppression.

Silent prayer

For all who are in danger, sorrow, or any kind of trouble; **For those who minister to the sick, the friendless, and the needy.**

Silent prayer

For the peace and unity of the Church of God;
For all who proclaim the Gospel, and all who seek the Truth.

Silent prayer

For those on our prayer list . . .and for all our special needs and concerns, both the prayers of our hearts and those we now say aloud. . .

Hear us, Lord; **For your mercy is great.**

Into your hands we commend all for whom we pray, trusting in your mercy through Jesus Christ, our Lord. **Amen.**

***PEACE** The peace of Christ be with you always. **And also with you.**



MINISTRY ANNOUNCEMENTS

Prayers, announcements, and updates can be found in the weekly AfterWord. Contact the church office if you are not receiving this publication and would like to subscribe. To view the AfterWord online, visit firstlutherandecorah.org/afterword or scan the QR code to the left.

MEAL

God feeds us with the presence of Christ.

OFFERING

Give online at firstlutherandecorah.org/give, text "GIVE" to (563) 412-2243, or scan the QR code.

5:00 p.m. - The Lord's My Shepherd - Jessie Irvine/William Bradbury/Lloyd Larson

8:15 a.m. - First Lutheran Handbell Choir: Jesus Walked this Lonesome Valley, arr. Kristine Johaneck

10:30 a.m. - Holy Time (see purple insert)

Give online at firstlutherandecorah.org/give, text "GIVE" to (563) 412-2243, or scan the QR code.



***OFFERING PRAYER** God our provider, you have not fed us with bread alone, but with words of grace and life. Bless us and these your gifts, which we receive from your bounty, through Jesus Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

***GREAT THANKSGIVING** The Lord be with you. **And also with you.**
Lift up your hearts. **We lift them to the Lord.**

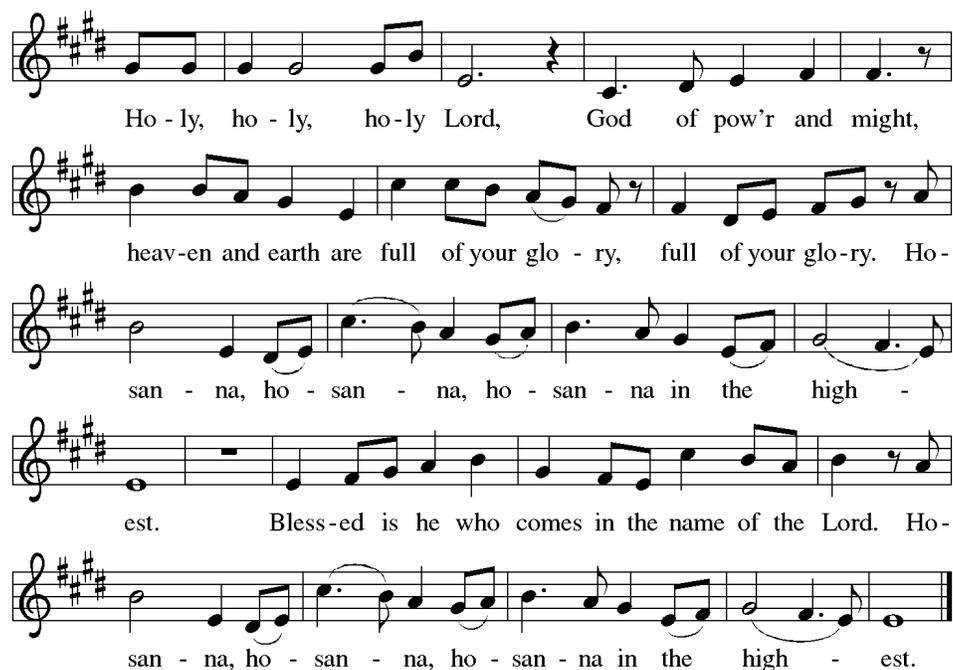
Let us give thanks to the Lord our God.

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. In these forty days, you bring us back to your generous heart through prayer, fasting, and acts of loving-kindness. 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:

* Please rise in body or spirit.

*HOLY, HOLY, HOLY



Ho - ly, ho - ly, ho - ly Lord, God of pow'r and might,
heav-en and earth are full of your glo - ry, full of your glo-ry. Ho -
san - na, ho - san - na, ho - san - na in the high -
est. Bless-ed is he who comes in the name of the Lord. Ho -
san - na, ho - san - na, ho - san - na in the high - est.

*THANKSGIVING AT THE TABLE WITH WORDS OF INSTITUTION

You are holy, O God of majesty, and holy is your Son, Jesus Christ our Lord. He lived as one of us, and knew our joy, our pain and sorrow, and our death. By his death on the cross you revealed that your love has no limit. By raising him from death you conquered the last enemy, crushed all evil powers, and gave new life to the world.

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 your gracious acts in Jesus Christ, we take from your creation this bread and wine and joyfully celebrate his death and resurrection, as we await the day of his coming.

Let us proclaim the mystery of faith:

Christ has died. Christ is risen. Christ will come again.

Gracious God, pour out your Holy Spirit upon us, and upon these gifts of bread and wine, that the bread we break and the cup we bless may be the communion of the body and blood of Christ.

By your Spirit unite us with the living Christ and with all who follow in his way.

Bring us into your eternal joy and light, together with all who have died in the peace of Christ; through whom, and with whom, and in whom, in the unity of the Holy Spirit, all glory and honor is yours, almighty God, now and forever. **Amen.**

***LORD'S PRAYER** Make us bold, merciful God, to pray as Jesus taught.
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** *We believe Jesus Christ is present when we share this meal. Here God nourishes our faith, forgives our sin, and calls us to share God's love. Adults and children of any age are welcome to receive communion.*

COMMUNION MUSIC 5:00 p.m. - It It Well with My Soul - Philip Bliss/Mark Hayes
8:15 a.m. - ELW 353 Were You There (v. 1 & 3) &
ACS 927 Christ is the Life
10:30 a.m. - How Deep the Father's Love For Us - Stuart Townsend
Only by Our Lonesome - Nate Crary (*see purple insert*)

***PRAYER AFTER COMMUNION** We give you thanks, almighty God, that you have revived us through the healing power of this gift of life. In your mercy, strengthen us through this gift, in faith toward you and in fervent love toward one another; for the sake of Jesus Christ our Lord.
Amen.

SENDING

God blesses us and sends us in love to serve.

***BLESSING** The LORD bless you and keep you. The LORD's face shine on you with grace and mercy. The LORD look upon you with favor and + give you peace. **Amen.**

***SENDING HYMN** 5:00 p.m. & 8:15 a.m. - W&P 25 By Grace We Have Been Saved



1 By grace we have been saved through faith and
 2 For all have sinned and fall - en short. God's
 3 God gave to earth a per - fect love through
 4 We know the wage of sin is death; thank
 5 Set free, we now have peace with God. Sal -



not by keep - ing law. God's saints be - lieved by
 plan, not one o - beyed. Christ has for all ful -
 Je - sus on the cross. While we were foes, Christ
 God, we shall re - vive. For just as Je - sus
 va - tion is se - cured. How beau - ti - ful the



what they heard and not by what they saw.
 filled the law. Be - lieve, con - fess, be saved.
 died for us. We gained by God's own loss.
 rose a - gain, we too are made a - live.
 feet of those who share this gos - pel word.

Refrain



Oh, how I love Je - sus! Oh, how I love Je - sus!



Oh, how I love Je - sus, be - cause he first loved me!

10:30 a.m. - Jesus Loves Me Rock (see purple insert)

***DISMISSAL** Go in peace. Love your neighbor.
Thanks be to God.

***POSTLUDE** 5:00 p.m. - There Is a Balm in Gilead - traditional spiritual/Mark
 Hayes
 8:15 a.m. - Ich ruf zu dir, Herr Jesu Christ, BWV 639 - J.S. Bach
 (1685-1750)

5:00 P.M. WORSHIP PARTICIPANTS:

Pr. David Severtson, preaching & presiding minister
Sandra Bohach, reader & communion assistant
Rodney & Sandra Bohach, worship welcome team
Mike Ellingsen, piano



8:15 A.M. WORSHIP PARTICIPANTS:

Pr. David Severtson, preaching minister
Pr. Mike Wilker, presiding minister
Larry Monson, assisting minister
Seth Semmler, reader
Dennis Tack, communion assistant
Alex Meszler, organ
First Lutheran Handbell Choir
Mark Potvin
Jake Nimrod, stream team
Clarence Nimrod, stream team
Kara Franke, nursery
Larry & Diane Grimstad, worship welcome team
Jeanette Lietz, worship welcome team
Lane Schwarz, worship welcome team

10:30 A.M. WORSHIP PARTICIPANTS:

Pr. David Severtson, preaching minister
Pr. Mike Wilker, presiding minister
Eric Albjerg, assisting minister
Johanna Bergan, reader & communion assistant
Mandy Severtson, lead musician
Jayce Hingtgen, lead musician
Audrey Zielstra, lead musician
Kara Franke, nursery
Jonathan & Sarah Carlson and Kennedy, Knute, & Keaton, worship welcome team
Paul Pasche, worship welcome team