

LENTEN MIDWEEK SERVICE
MARCH 4, 2026

IN THE NAME OF JESUS, WELCOME TO ST. PAUL'S!

VESPERS

7:00 p.m.



PRELUDE

ENTRANCE VERSE (Stand)

LSB 229

O Lord, open my lips,
and my mouth will declare Your praise.

Make haste, O God, to deliver me;
make haste to help me, O Lord.

**Glory be to the Father and to the Son and to the Holy Spirit;
as it was in the beginning, is now, and will be forever. Amen.
Praise to You, O Christ, Lamb of our salvation.**

PSALMODY

Psalms 62:1-6

For God alone my soul waits in silence;
from him comes my salvation.
He only is my rock and my salvation,
my fortress;
I shall not be greatly shaken.

How long will all of you attack a man
to batter him,
like a leaning wall, a tottering fence?
They only plan to thrust him down from his high position.
They take pleasure in falsehood.
They bless with their mouths,
but inwardly they curse.

For God alone, O my soul, wait in silence,
for my hope is from him.

He only is my rock and my salvation,
my fortress;
I shall not be shaken.

**Glory be to the Father and to the Son and to the Holy Spirit;
as it was in the beginning, is now, and will be forever. Amen.
Praise to You, O Christ. Alleluia.**

FIRST READING (Be seated)

Hebrews 2:11-18

For he who sanctifies and those who are sanctified all have one origin. That is why he is not ashamed to call them brothers, saying,

“I will tell of your name to my brothers;
in the midst of the congregation I will sing your praise.”

And again,

“I will put my trust in him.”

And again,

“Behold, I and the children God has given me.”

Since therefore the children share in flesh and blood, he himself likewise partook of the same things, that through death he might destroy the one who has the power of death, that is, the devil, and deliver all those who through fear of death were subject to lifelong slavery. For surely it is not angels that he helps, but he helps the offspring of Abraham. Therefore he had to be made like his brothers in every respect, so that he might become a merciful and faithful high priest in the service of God, to make propitiation for the sins of the people. For because he himself has suffered when tempted, he is able to help those who are being tempted.

This is the Word of the Lord.

Thanks be to God.

RESPONSORY (Stand)

LSB 231



- L** 1 Deliver me, O Lord, my God, for You are
the God of my sal - va - tion.
2 In You, O Lord, do I put my trust, leave me not, O Lord, my God.
3 Deliver me, O Lord, my God, for You are
the God of my sal - va - tion.



- C** Rescue me from my en - e - mies, protect me
from those who rise a - gainst me.

GOSPEL READING

Mark 1:9-13

In those days Jesus came from Nazareth of Galilee and was baptized by John in the Jordan. And when he came up out of the water, immediately he saw the heavens opening and the Spirit descending on him like a dove. And a voice came from heaven, "You are my beloved Son; with you I am well pleased."

The Spirit immediately drove him out into the wilderness. And he was in the wilderness forty days, being tempted by Satan. And he was with the wild animals, and the angels were ministering to him.

This is the Gospel of the Lord.

Praise to You, O Christ.

HYMN

O Love, How Deep Sts. 1, 3, 7

LSB 544

- 1** O love, how deep, how broad, how high,
Beyond all thought and fantasy,
That God, the Son of God, should take
Our mortal form for mortals' sake!
- 3** For us baptized, for us He bore
His holy fast and hungered sore;
For us temptation sharp He knew;
For us the tempter overthrew.

**△ 7 All glory to our Lord and God
For love so deep, so high, so broad;
The Trinity whom we adore
Forever and forevermore.**

SERMON (Be seated)

Grace, mercy and peace be to you from God our Father and from our Lord and Savior Jesus. Amen. Dear friends in Christ:

Tonight, as we continue looking at the ancient hymn *O Love, How Deep, How Broad, How High* and think about God's great acts of love being done "for us," we've gotten to the hymn's third stanza. This stanza communicates God's love by mentioning certain events in the life of Jesus

Before we look at these, let's remember that the essence of God's character is self-giving. God does nothing for himself. His nature is not that of serving his own end or pursuing purposes that are hidden away in his desires alone. Rather, God is always about helping his creation. To put it simply: God is love.

This is why our hymn repeats the phrase "for us" so many times. God's love is shown in the things he does for us. The phrase is used four times in today's stanza, and thirteen times total throughout the hymn.

I mentioned this repetition of the phrase at our Ash Wednesday service. And at that time, I also pointed out its inclusion in the Nicene Creed, where it says: "Who for us men and for our salvation came down from heaven." God's coming to us as Jesus is the greatest thing God has done for us.

For the rest of this evening's meditation, we will look at the four things Christ did for us that are mentioned in the hymn stanza. And as we do so, we'll point out the selflessness of God as he seeks out his beloved ones.

The first of these mentions is that Jesus was “baptized for us.” We tend to think that baptism is only about what is given “to” us. And yes, this is the primary understanding of what happens when we are baptized. In our Baptism, such great things as the Holy Spirit, the forgiveness of sins, and eternal salvation are all given to us.

Jesus, being God in the flesh, needed none of these gifts. So, when Jesus came to be baptized, he explained that it was to be done “to fulfill all righteousness.” This phrase points to Jesus’ actions of completing the demands of the Law – demands which are best summarized by the scriptural verses: “*You shall love the LORD your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your might; and love your neighbor as yourself*” (Mark 12:30–31).

In the Old Testament, the Law included many ritual actions as well. However, baptism was not one of them. When Jesus, then, says he is being baptized to fulfill all righteousness, he is pointing ahead to his New Testament teaching on righteousness.

This New Testament version includes Christ’s righteousness being given to his followers. Jesus’ baptism fulfilled the Law’s demands, therefore all those who are baptized into his name are given what he has earned. This includes payment for sins and life with God beyond the grave. Paul points to this in Romans chapter six where he says: “*We were buried therefore with him by baptism into death, in order that, just as Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, we too might walk in newness of life*” (6:4).

Through our baptism, we are declared holy and innocent in God’s sight because of Christ’s righteousness. Christ’s death means our forgiveness; and Christ’s resurrection means our eternal life.

Jesus did not need to be baptized. But he received baptism for us, so that we would receive life in his name.

A second event in the life of Jesus that is mentioned in the hymn is his time of fasting in the wilderness. This is seen in the words: “For us he bore, his holy fast and hungered sore.”

Jesus’ time of fasting was instigated by the Holy Spirit. Matthew’s Gospel says the Spirit “led” him into the wilderness and Mark’s said the Spirit “drove” him. Both words teach us that his time there was a necessity.

Jesus needed a time of fasting to prepare for his ministry, just as we have a need to endure times of struggle to become a tested and toughened worker. Fasting is a struggle that can help one be better prepared.

Jesus also needed to endure a time of fasting as a witness to us. We all know that life brings times of want, and Jesus’ fast shows us that such times can be endured and overcome.

As the hymn indicates, Jesus bears his hunger for us. He undergoes this trial not out of weakness or inability but because he has chosen to take our burdens upon himself. His fasting was a further reflection of his great love.

A third event in the life of Jesus mentioned in the hymn is his temptation. The hymn states it this way: “For us temptation sharp he knew.”

We all face temptations every day. And these temptations prompt struggles on our part – the mental and emotional energy to consider the choice, and the shame and guilt that come when we make a sinful one.

Jesus knows about this struggle. The author of Hebrews explains this when he says of Jesus: *“Therefore he had to be made like his brothers in every respect, so that he might become a merciful and faithful high priest in the service of God, to make propitiation for the sins of the people. For because he himself has suffered when tempted, he is able to help those who are being tempted”* (Hebrews 2:17–18).

As these words remind us, Jesus' knowledge about temptation comes from the fact that he has taken on our human flesh and blood. It is because of his human nature that he can sympathize with us in our weaknesses and suffer just as we do.

Jesus knows the pain, the sorrow, and the anguish that surrounds the temptation to sin just like you do. And his knowledge is not just a mere intellectual one either, but rather one in body and soul, because he has lived it.

The fourth and final event mentioned in today's hymn stanza comes out of the temptations just mentioned. Jesus may have been tempted like we are, but he did not give in. Jesus resisted the assaults of the devil. He resisted those assaults that took place at the beginning of his ministry and those in the days and years to come.

This resistance resulted in the devil's ultimate defeat. And this defeat is mentioned in our hymn stanza, where it says: "For us the tempter overthrew."

Life's temptations are not mere abstractions – meaning ideas that we simply think about. No, temptations come in real situations involving real choices.

Temptations also come from a tempter. And much more could be said about the voice of the great Tempter and how his messages get incorporated into our own thoughts and speech. Instead, let us simply note at this time the importance of listening to God's messages and shunning those others which tempt us.

The scriptures make clear that Jesus overcame his temptations not by being God but by listening to the will of the Father. His strength came in knowing the Law of God and meditating upon it day and night.

These choices led to his victory over evil. And these same choices can lead us to important victories too. And that's because we can

grow in our ability to overcome temptation, even as we understand that we will never be perfect.

The only one who lived perfectly was Jesus. And his perfect living reflects his perfect love – a love which comes from the essence of his character and nature. As God, Jesus is pure, unadulterated love, which means that his love for us knows no bounds. It is a love that extends all the way into the grave, for he will raise us out of death to life everlasting. That is what “for us” really means.

May God then keep us in this faith and strengthen us according to his great love. In the holy name of Jesus. Amen.

CANTICLE (Magnificat) (Stand)

LSB 231

My soul magnifies the Lord, and my spirit rejoices in God, my Savior;

for He has regarded the lowliness of His handmaiden.

For behold, from this day all generations will call me blessed.

For the Mighty One has done great things to me, and holy is His name;

and His mercy is on those who fear Him from generation to generation.

He has shown strength with His arm; He has scattered the proud in the imagination of their hearts.

He has cast down the mighty from their thrones and has exalted the lowly.

He has filled the hungry with good things, and the rich He has sent empty away.

He has helped His servant Israel in remembrance of His mercy as He spoke to our fathers, to Abraham and to his seed forever.

Glory be to the Father and to the Son and to the Holy Spirit; as it was in the beginning, is now, and will be forever. Amen.

**Lord, have mercy;
Christ, have mercy;
Lord, have mercy.**

LORD'S PRAYER

**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.**

COLLECT

O Lord, hear my prayer.
And let my cry come to You.

O God, You see that of ourselves we have no strength. By Your mighty power defend us from all adversities that may happen to the body and from all evil thoughts that may assault and hurt the soul; through Jesus Christ, Your Son, our Lord, who lives and reigns with You and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever.

COLLECT FOR PEACE

O God, from whom come all holy desires, all good counsels, and all just works, give to us, Your servants, that peace which the world cannot give, that our hearts may be set to obey Your commandments and also that we, being defended from the fear of our enemies, may live in peace and quietness; through Jesus Christ, Your Son, our Lord, who lives and reigns with You and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever.

Amen.

Stand

BENEDICAMUS

LSB 234

Let us bless the Lord.

Thanks be to God.

BENEDICTION

LSB 234

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

Amen.

EVENING HYMN

Abide with Me

LSB 878

- 1 Abide with me, fast falls the eventide.
The darkness deepens; Lord, with me abide.
When other helpers fail and comforts flee,
Help of the helpless, O abide with me.**
- 2 I need Thy presence ev'ry passing hour;
What but Thy grace can foil the tempter's pow'r?
Who like Thyself my guide and stay can be?
Through cloud and sunshine, O abide with me.**
- 3 Come not in terrors, as the King of kings,
But kind and good, with healing in Thy wings;
Tears for all woes, a heart for ev'ry plea.
Come, Friend of sinners, thus abide with me.**

- 4 **Swift to its close ebbs out life's little day;
Earth's joys grow dim, its glories pass away;
Change and decay in all around I see;
O Thou who changest not, abide with me.**
- 5 **I fear no foe with Thee at hand to bless;
Ills have no weight and tears no bitterness.
Where is death's sting? Where, grave, thy victory?
I triumph still if Thou abide with me!**
- 6 **Hold Thou Thy cross before my closing eyes;
Shine through the gloom, and point me to the skies.
Heav'n's morning breaks, and earth's vain shadows flee;
In life, in death, O Lord, abide with me.**

POSTLUDE

THOSE SERVING:

Greeter: Steve Berg

Reader: Dave Oaks

Offerings support the church's mission work – both here and through our many partners. Offerings may be placed in the box at the sanctuary entrance or sent to the church through our website or the mail. Fellowship Cards help us welcome new people and track participation. Please fill one out and place it in the offering box following the service.

Acknowledgments

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**ST. PAUL'S LUTHERAN CHURCH
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