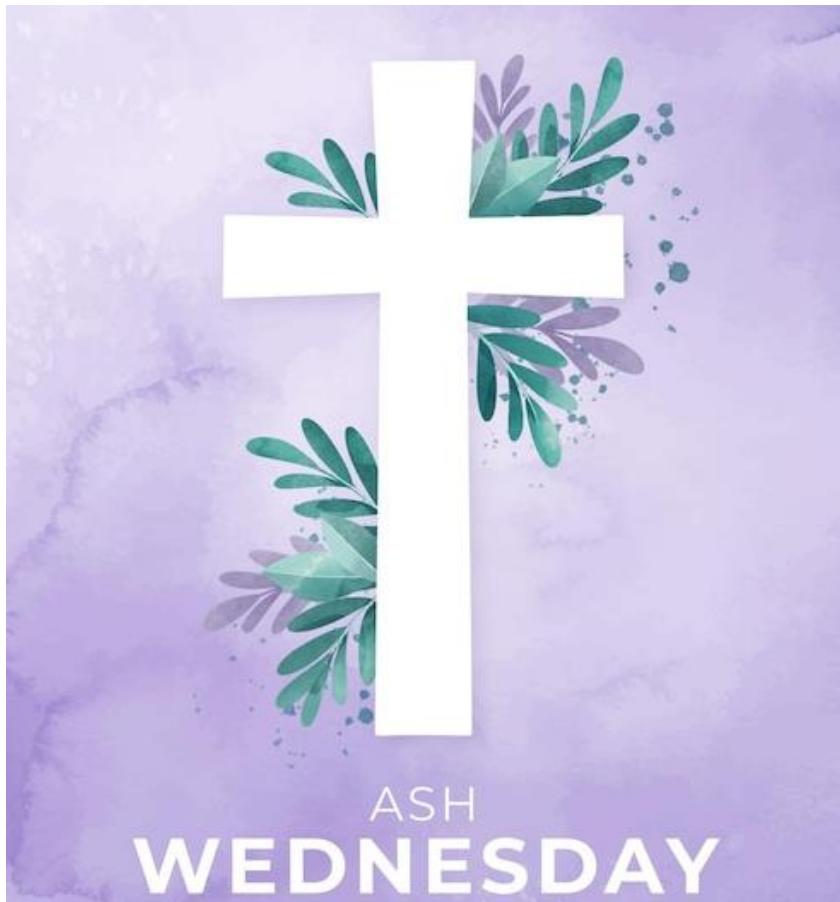


# Welcome to Worship

## St. John's Evangelical Lutheran Church



ASH  
**WEDNESDAY**

*February 18, 2026*

CHURCH: 419-293-3445

[SJLCMcComb@gmail.com](mailto:SJLCMcComb@gmail.com)

Pastor: SAM Paul Brooks - 419-722-8625

and Rev. Ken Pollitz

**Ash Wednesday**

**February 18, 2026**

**Welcome:** Thank you to those who join us for Worship. We hope you will be blessed as we pray and sing together, as we hear God's Word read and proclaimed. We gather as equals in the sight of God, who loves us, forgives us, and is WITH US. Peace be with you.

**Serving at Worship Today:**

READER: Linda Ross

ACCOMPANIST: Linda Ross

*Worship  
Assistants*

**Your Servant Leaders:**

Worship Leader: SAM Paul Brooks

COUNCIL PRESIDENT: Dave Sharninghouse, 419-293-2322 Hm.

419-429-2391 Cell

NWOS BISHOP: The Rev. Daniel Beaudoin

ELCA BISHOP: The Rev. Yehiel Curry

**St. John's email address:** [SJLCMcComb@gmail.com](mailto:SJLCMcComb@gmail.com)

**St. John's Facebook page:** <https://facebook.com/SJLCMcComb>

**Attendance Last Sunday: 10**

**Offering Last Sunday: \$411.00**

**Direct Deposit: \$320.00**

**Mile of Pennies: \$5.00**

**Memorial Money: \$0.00**

**Food Pantry for February:** We will be asking for Soup and Crackers in response to Souper Bowl Sunday.



**tacklehunger.org**

# Order of Worship

Ash Wednesday, February 18, 2026

*God is glad you have joined us for worship today. At the symbol ✕ assembly members may make the sign of the cross, the sign marked upon us at baptism.*

*\*please stand, sit, or kneel as you feel comfortable.*

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## THE GREETING

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

## \*GATHERING HYMN #606

OUR FATHER, WE HAVE WANDERED

## \*PRAYER OF THE DAY

Leader: Please join me in the Prayer of the Day. Almighty and ever-living God,

**ALL: you hate nothing you have made, and you forgive the sins of all who are penitent. Create in us new and honest hearts, so that, truly repenting of our sins, we may receive from you, the God of all mercy, full pardon and forgiveness through your Son, Jesus Christ, who came, and like a good shepherd, gave his life for your sheep. Receive our humble gratitude for this act of sacrifice and courage. Amen.**

## FIRST READING

(responsively)

ISAIAH 40:9-18

Reader: Get you up to a high mountain, O Zion, herald of good news; lift up your voice with strength, O Jerusalem, herald of good news; lift it up, do not fear; say to the cities of Judah, "Here is your God!"

**ALL: See, the Lord God comes with might, and his arm rules for him; his reward is with him and his recompense before him. He will feed his flock like a shepherd; he will gather the lambs in his arms and carry them in his bosom and gently lead the mother sheep.**

Reader: Who has measured the waters of the sea in the hollow of his hand and marked off the heavens with a span, enclosed the dust of the earth in a measure and weighed the mountains in scales and the hills in a balance?

**ALL: Who has directed the spirit of the Lord or as his counselor has instructed him? Whom did he consult for his enlightenment, and who taught him the path of justice?**

Reader: Who taught him knowledge and showed him the way of understanding? Even the nations are like a drop from a bucket and are accounted as dust on the scales; see, he takes up the isles like fine dust.

**ALL: Lebanon would not provide fuel enough, nor are its animals enough for a burnt offering. All the nations are as nothing before him; they are accounted by him as less than nothing and emptiness.**

Reader: To whom, then, will you liken God, or what likeness compare with him?

Reader: Word of God, word of life. **ALL: Thanks be to God.**

## **PSALM READING**

*(unison)*

## **PSALM 23**

**ALL: The Lord is my shepherd; I shall not want. He makes me lie down in green pastures; he leads me beside still waters; he restores my soul.**

**He leads me in right paths for his name's sake. Even though I walk through the darkest valley, I fear no evil, for you are with me; your rod and your staff, they comfort me.**

**You prepare a table before me in the presence of my enemies; you anoint my head with oil; my cup overflows. Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me all the days of my life, and I shall dwell in the house of the Lord my whole life long.**

Reader: Word of God, word of life. **ALL: Thanks be to God.**

## \*GOSPEL ACCLAMATION

ELW pg 142 Setting 3



Re - turn to the Lord, your God, for he is gra - cious and  
mer - ci - ful, slow to an - ger, and a - bound - ing in  
stead - fast love, and a - bound - ing in stead - fast love.

## \*GOSPEL READING

JOHN 10:1-18

Leader: There is good news for us this day and it comes to us from the Gospel of John chapter 10. **ALL: Glory to you, O Lord.**

Leader: “Very truly, I tell you, anyone who does not enter the sheepfold by the gate but climbs in by another way is a thief and a bandit. <sup>2</sup>The one who enters by the gate is the shepherd of the sheep. <sup>3</sup>The gatekeeper opens the gate for him, and the sheep hear his voice. He calls his own sheep by name and leads them out. <sup>4</sup>When he has brought out all his own, he goes ahead of them, and the sheep follow him because they know his voice. <sup>5</sup>They will not follow a stranger, but they will run from him because they do not know the voice of strangers.” <sup>6</sup>Jesus used this figure of speech with them, but they did not understand what he was saying to them.

<sup>7</sup>So again Jesus said to them, “Very truly, I tell you, I am the gate for the sheep. <sup>8</sup>All who came before me<sup>[a]</sup> are thieves and bandits, but the sheep did not listen to them. <sup>9</sup>I am the gate. Whoever enters by me will be saved and will come in and go out and find pasture. <sup>10</sup>The thief comes only to steal and kill and destroy. I came that they may have life and have it abundantly.

<sup>11</sup> “I am the good shepherd. The good shepherd lays down his life for the sheep. <sup>12</sup> The hired hand, who is not the shepherd and does not own the sheep, sees the wolf coming and leaves the sheep and runs away, and the wolf snatches them and scatters them. <sup>13</sup> The hired hand runs away because a hired hand does not care for the sheep. <sup>14</sup> I am the good shepherd. I know my own, and my own know me, <sup>15</sup> just as the Father knows me, and I know the Father. And I lay down my life for the sheep. <sup>16</sup> I have other sheep that do not belong to this fold. I must bring them also, and they will listen to my voice. So there will be one flock, one shepherd. <sup>17</sup> For this reason the Father loves me, because I lay down my life in order to take it up again. <sup>18</sup> No one takes<sup>[b]</sup> it from me, but I lay it down of my own accord. I have power to lay it down, and I have power to take it up again. I have received this command from my Father.”

Leader: The gospel of the Lord. **ALL: Praise to you, O Christ.**

## THE MESSAGE

### HYMN OF THE DAY #323

GOD LOVED THE WORLD

### \*CONFESSİON OF SIN

Leader: Let us confess our sin in the presence of God and of one another.

Leader: Most holy and merciful God,

**ALL: we confess to you and to one another, and before the whole company of heaven, that we have sinned by our fault, by our own fault, by our own most grievous fault, in thought, word, and deed, by what we have done and by what we have left undone.**

Leader: We have not loved you with our whole heart, and mind, and strength. We have not loved our neighbors as ourselves. We have not forgiven others as we have been forgiven. **ALL: Have mercy on us, O God.**

Leader: We have shut our ears to your call to serve as Christ served us. We have not been true to the mind of Christ. We have grieved your Holy Spirit. **ALL: Have mercy on us, O God.**

Leader: Our past unfaithfulness, the pride, envy, hypocrisy, and apathy that have infected our lives, we confess to you. **ALL: Have mercy on us, O God.**

Leader: Our self-indulgent appetites and ways, and our exploitation of other people, we confess to you. **ALL: Have mercy on us, O God.**

Leader: Our negligence in prayer and worship, and our failure to share the faith that is in us, we confess to you. **ALL: Have mercy on us, O God.**

Leader: Our neglect of human need and suffering, and our indifference to injustice and cruelty, we confess to you. **ALL: Have mercy on us, O God.**

Leader: Our false judgments, our uncharitable thoughts toward our neighbors, and our prejudice and contempt toward those who differ from us, we confess to you. **ALL: Have mercy on us, O God.**

Leader: Our waste and pollution of your creation, and our lack of concern for those who come after us, we confess to you. **ALL: Have mercy on us, O God.**

Leader: Restore us, O God, and let your anger depart from us.

**ALL: Hear us, O God, for your mercy is great.**

## \*IMPOSITION OF ASHES

Leader: Let us pray, almighty God, you have created us out of the dust of the earth. May these ashes be a sign of our mortality and penitence, reminding us that only by the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ are we given eternal life; through the same Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord. **Amen.**

*You are invited to come forward to receive the ashes.*

Leader: Accomplish in us, O God, the work of your salvation,

**ALL: that we may show forth your glory in the world.**

Leader: By the cross and passion of your Son, our Savior,

**ALL: bring us with all your saints to the joy of his resurrection**

Leader: Let us pray, almighty God have mercy on us, forgive us all our sins through our Lord Jesus Christ, strengthen us in all goodness, and by the power of the Holy Spirit keep us in eternal life. **ALL: Amen.**

## **\* PRAYERS OF THE PEOPLE INTRODUCTION**

Prayer Leader: Heavenly Father, on this Ash Wednesday, we come before You with humble hearts, mindful of our mortality and our need for Your grace.

## **\* PRAYERS OF THE PEOPLE**

Prayer Leader: For the holy catholic Church, gathered this day under the sign of the cross and ashes, that we may repent of our sins, return to you with all our heart, and live in the freedom of your forgiveness through Christ our Savior. Lord in your mercy, **ALL: hear our prayer.**

Prayer Leader: For the people of Tumbler Ridge, British Columbia, and all affected by the mass shooting on February 10 that took the lives of young students, a teacher, family members, and others—leaving deep wounds of grief, trauma, and fear in that small community and across Canada. Comfort those who mourn, especially parents, siblings, classmates, and friends; heal the injured in body and spirit; and grant wisdom and compassion to first responders. Lord in your mercy, **ALL: hear our prayer.**

Prayer Leader: For our congregation and all who gather in worship today, that the ashes on our foreheads may mark not only mortality but also our baptismal identity as children of God, called to love our neighbors and bear one another's burdens in Christ's name. Lord in your mercy, **ALL: hear our prayer.**

Prayer leader: For an end to violence, for healing of mental anguish and despair, and for wisdom to protect the vulnerable and foster peace in our world. Lord in your mercy, **ALL: hear our prayer.**

Prayer leader: We lift up to You those who are suffering, those who are grieving, and those who are in need of healing. We pray today for John, Gary, Sue, Betty, David, LuAnn, Colene, Eva, Eric, Lisa, Don, Ashley, Brandt, Mary, Pat, Gordon, Vicki, Jim, Josh, Linda, Ruth, Steve, Karen, Lisa, Bertha, Eloise, Rose Marie, Mike, Nancy, John, JoLynn, Emily, Carl, Jim, Kolton, Ron, Cheryl, Bob, Caroline, Marilyn, Barb, Granger, Owen, Mike, Diana, Sean, Judy, Christina, Mike, Riley, Dennis, Anita, Amy, Nickie, Eli, Mr. Doherty, Ron, Chase, Cheryl, A.J., Mavery, Caroline, Ethan, Brent, Richard, Michael, and Cindy. We pray for the brokenhearted, that they may find comfort in Your presence. We pray for the weary, that they may find rest and renewal. Lord in your mercy, **ALL: hear our prayer.**

Prayer leader: We also lift up our community and the world, that during this season of Lent, we may grow closer to You, reflect deeply on our faith, and be transformed by Your love. Guide us in acts of compassion, mercy, and justice. Lord in your mercy, **ALL: hear our prayer.**

Prayer leader: Into your hands, O Lord, we commend all for whom we pray, trusting in your mercy; through Jesus Christ our Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. Amen.

## \***THE GREAT THANKSGIVING**

Leader: The Lord be with you. **ALL: And also with you.**

Leader: Lift up your hearts. **ALL: We lift them to the Lord.**

Leader: Let us give thanks to the Lord our God. **ALL: it is right to give our thanks and praise.**

Leader: And so, with all creatures and the hosts of heaven, we praise your name and sing:

## \*HOLY, HOLY, HOLY

SETTING 3 HYMNAL PAGE 144

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. 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 in the high - est.

## \*THE WORDS OF INSTITUTION

Blessed are you, O God of the universe. Your mercy is everlasting and your faithfulness endures from age to age.

Praise to you for creating the heavens and the earth.

Praise to you for saving the earth from the waters of the flood.

Praise to you for bringing the Israelites safely through the sea.

Praise to you for leading your people through the wilderness to the land of milk and honey.

Praise to you for the words and deeds of Jesus, your anointed one.

Praise to you for the death and resurrection of Christ.

Praise to you for your Spirit poured out on all nations.

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.

With this bread and cup we remember our Lord's passover from death to life as we proclaim the mystery of faith:

**ALL: Christ has died. Christ is risen. Christ will come again.**

O God of resurrection and new life: Pour out your Holy Spirit on us and on these gifts of bread and wine. Bless this feast. Grace our table with your presence. **ALL: Come, Holy Spirit.**

Reveal yourself to us in the breaking of the bread. Raise us up as the body of Christ for the world. Breathe new life into us. Send us forth, burning with justice, peace, and love. **ALL: Come, Holy Spirit.**

## \* THE PRAYER OUR LORD TAUGHT US

**All: 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**

## \*THE INVITATION TO COMMUNION

Leader: The joy of the Lord is our strength. Come, eat this meal of gladness.

## DISTRIBUTION

## \*PRAYER AFTER COMMUNION

Leader: Please join with me in prayer. God of our salvation,

**ALL: we give you thanks for this meal that restores our souls, reconciles us to you, and strengthens us for the journey. Through the body and blood of your Son, may we become Christ's body in the world, bearing witness to your love for all creation, through Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord. Amen.**

## \*HYMN AFTER COMMUNION LAMB OF GOD Setting 2, hymnal pg. 235



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

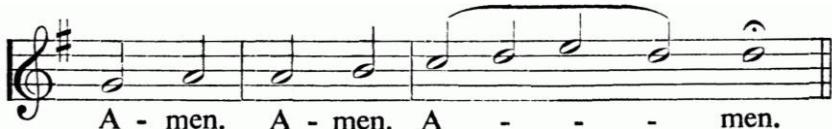
Lamb of God, you take a-way the sin of the world; have mer - cy on us.

Lamb of God, you take a - way the sin of the world; grant us peace.

## \*BLESSING

Leader: Receive the blessing of the holy Trinity: God, who calls all things into existence, Jesus Christ, who redeems us, and the Holy Spirit, whose breath sustains creation, ☩ bless you now and always.

## \*The Amen



## \*SENDING HYMN #629

ABIDE WITH ME

## \*DISMISSAL

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

**ALL: Thanks be to God.**

**PLEASE LEAVE IN SILENCE.**



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*"Our Father, We Have Wandered"* TEXT: Kevin Nichols, 1929-2006 © 1981 International Committee on English in the Liturgy, Inc.  
Music: Hans Leo Hassler, 1564-1612; arr. Johann Sebastian Bach, 1685-1750

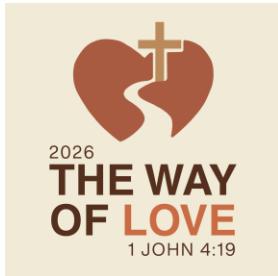
*"God Loved the World"* TEXT: *Gesangbuch*, Bollhagen, 1797; tr. August Crull, 1846-1923, alt. Music: Edward Miller, 731-1807, adapt  
*"Abide with Me"* TEXT: Henry F. Lyte, 1793-1847 Music: William H. Monk, 1823-1889 PUBLIC DOMAIN

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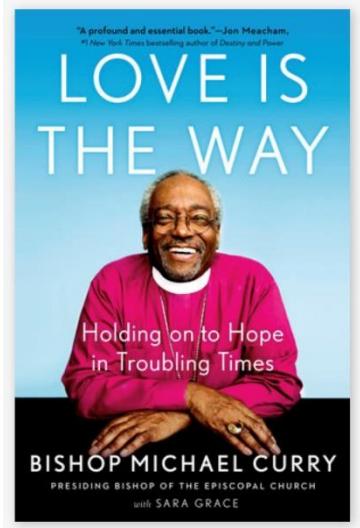


# The Way of Love!



Welcome to **2026: The Way of Love!** As our scripture verse for this year reminds us, **“We love because he first loved us.” (1 John 4:19)**. As we journey together with Jesus, we have the great opportunity to encourage each other to grow in both our appreciation for, and reflection of, the love of God.

A 12-session collection of devotions written by leaders from across Northwestern Ohio is available on the Synod website. These 15 to 20 minute devotions are ideal for when church council gathers, when committees or staff meet, or for use at any regular gathering. Each devotional highlights one of the questions addressed by the twelve chapters of our Book of the Year, ***Love is the Way: Holding on the Hope in Troubling Times*** by Bishop Michael Curry, the Presiding Bishop of the Episcopal Church.



## Wednesday Lent Bible Study

You are invited to join St. Luke's Lutheran on the Wednesdays of Lent (beginning February 25) as we explore what love is, how it is manifested and what our part is in the world. Dinner will begin at 6 p.m. with discussion to follow. Hope to see you there!

**“We love because he first loved us.” (1 John 4:19)**

### **Calendar of Events:**

**Sun. Feb. 22 - 8:00 A.M. – Worship Service**

**Sun. Feb. 22 - 9:30 A.M. – Sunday School**

**Sun. Mar. 1 – 8:00 A.M. Worship Service w/Holy Communion**

**Sun. Mar 1 – 9:30 A.M. Sunday School**

**Wed. Mar. 11 – 3:00 P.M. Church Council Meeting**

### **Readers for January**

**Feb. 22 – Jerry McCullough**

**Mar. 1 - David Sharninghouse**

**Mar. 8 - Lori McDaniel**

**Mar. 15 – Carol Cary**

**Mar. 22 – Linda Ross**

**In Our Prayers:** John Sharninghouse, Gary Kern, Sue Maki, Carol & David Cary, Betty Hornbeck, LuAnn Beverly, Colene Shoop, Eva George, Teri Zent, Eric & Lisa Kreh, Kris, Don Edler, Ashley Edler, Brandt Edler, Mary Scroll, Pat Newell, Gordon Myers, Vicki Shoop, Jim Cary, Josh, Linda Hoops & Ellery Paige Robinson. Please pray for the victims of all natural disasters, our shut-ins, others absent from our worship this morning, all who grieve, and all others with special needs.

**FYI:** The new bathroom is finished, and it looks fabulous. Our new front doors will be done as soon as the weather gets a little warmer. They will be painted RED, like the ones we have now. We want to help our church grow. We can all help with this; you can do your part by inviting family and friends to come and join us on Sunday mornings. If we all just ask one person, it could make a big difference in our growth. God be with us and guide us in this task. Amen

**Celebration of Life:** For Paul Maki will take place closer to Paul's birthday, which would have been April 8<sup>th</sup>. We provide more information as the time gets closer.

**FYI: Don't forget to Direct your Choice Dollars before March 31, 2026.**

# Our Journey Begins ....



On Ash Wednesday we begin our forty-day journey toward Easter with a day of fasting and repentance. Marking our foreheads with dust, we acknowledge that we die and return to the earth. At the same time, the dust traces the life-giving cross indelibly marked on

our foreheads at baptism. While we journey through Lent to return to God, we have already been reconciled to God through Christ. We humbly pray for God to make our hearts clean while we rejoice that “now is the day of salvation.” Returning to our baptismal call, we more intentionally bear the fruits of mercy and justice in the world.



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