The Fourth Sunday in Lent March 30, 2025

10:30 a.m. Worship

We ask that all present sign our Friendship Sheet. After you add your name to the sheet, please pass it toward the center aisle. Then return it to the outside aisle so that you become familiar with our family in Christ. These sheets help our pastor and

congregation with our ministry. If you are looking for a church home, we invite you to join us here at St. Matthew to worship and serve Christ together!

ANNOUNCEMENTS

PRELUDE

On A Rugged Hill

Composer, Keith Whitford

*CONFESSION AND FORGIVENESS

- P: Let us return to God, confessing our sin in the assurance of God's abiding love.
- P: Compassionate One,
- C: 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.
- P: 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. C: Amen.

***OPENING HYMN**

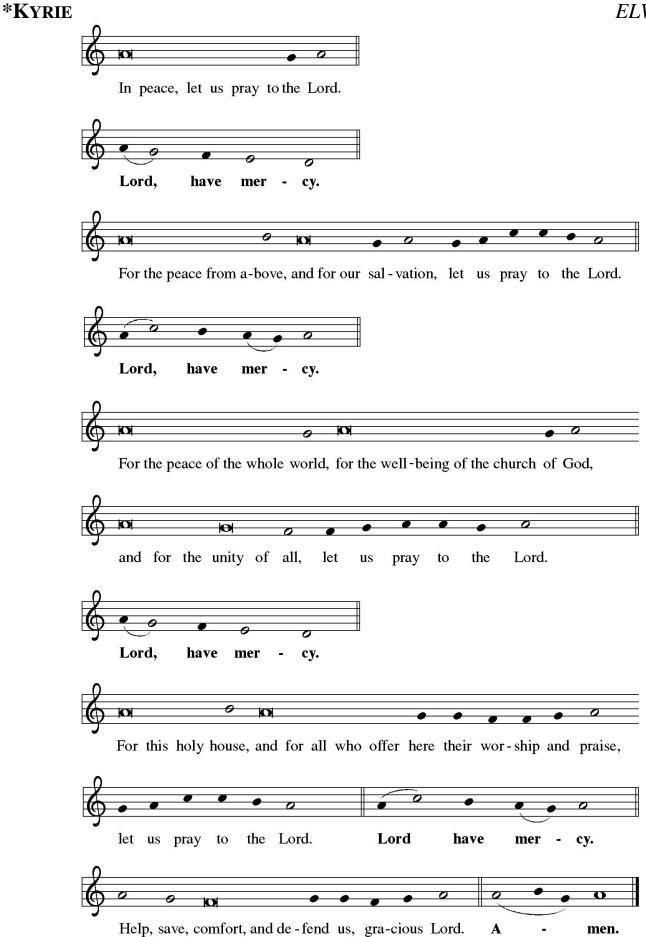
Softly and Tenderly Jesus Is Calling ELW # 608

*GREETING

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



ELW # S147





*PRAYER OF THE DAY

P: Let us pray ... God of compassion, you welcome the wayward, and you embrace us all with your mercy. By our baptism clothe us with garments of your grace, and feed us at the table of your love, through Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. *C:* Amen.

FIRST READING: Joshua 5:9-12

⁹ The Lord said to Joshua, "Today I have rolled away from you the disgrace of Egypt." And so that place is called Gilgal to this day.

¹⁰ While the Israelites were camped in Gilgal they kept the passover in the evening on the fourteenth day of the month in the plains of Jericho. ¹¹ On the day after the passover, on that very day, they ate the produce of the land, unleavened cakes and parched grain. ¹² The manna ceased on the day they ate the produce of the land, and the Israelites no longer had manna; they ate the crops of the land of Canaan that year.

L: The word of the Lord. C: Thanks be to God.

PSALM 32 (read responsively)

- ¹ Happy are they whose transgressions are forgiven, and whose sin is put away!
- ² Happy are they to whom the Lord imputes no guilt, and in whose spirit there is no guile!
- ³ While I held my tongue, my bones withered away, because of my groaning all day long.

⁴ For your hand was heavy upon me day and night; my moisture was dried up as in the heat of summer.

⁵ Then I acknowledged my sin to you, and did not conceal my guilt.

I said, "I will confess my transgressions to the Lord." Then you forgave me the guilt of my sin.

⁶ Therefore all the faithful will make their prayers to you in time of trouble; when the great waters overflow, they shall not reach them.

⁷ You are my hiding-place; you preserve me from trouble;

you surround me with shouts of deliverance.

⁸ "I will instruct you and teach you in the way that you should go; I will guide you with my eye.

⁹ Do not be like horse or mule, which have no understanding;

who must be fitted with bit and bridle, or else they will not stay near you."

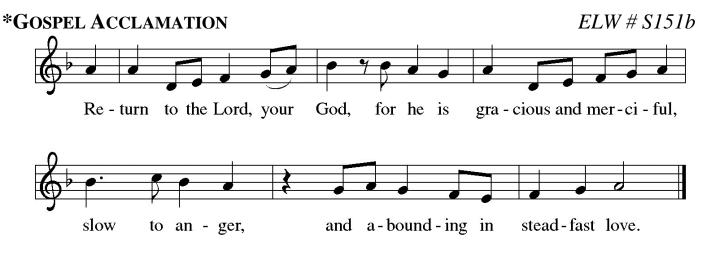
¹⁰ Great are the tribulations of the wicked; but mercy embraces those who trust in the Lord.

¹¹ Be glad, you righteous, and rejoice in the Lord; shout for joy, all who are true of heart.

SECOND READING: 2 Corinthians 5:16-21

¹⁶From now on, therefore, we regard no one from a human point of view; even though we once knew Christ from a human point of view, we know him no longer in that way. ¹⁷So if anyone is in Christ, there is a new creation: everything old has passed away; see, everything has become new! ¹⁸All this is from God, who reconciled us to himself through Christ, and has given us the ministry of reconciliation; ¹⁹ that is, in Christ God was reconciling the world to himself, not counting their trespasses against them, and entrusting the message of reconciliation to us. ²⁰So we are ambassadors for Christ, since God is making his appeal through us; we entreat you on behalf of Christ, be reconciled to God. ²¹For our sake he made him to be sin who knew no sin, so that in him we might become the righteousness of God.

L: The word of the Lord. *C*: Thanks be to God.



*Gospel: Luke 15:1-3, 11b-32

The holy gospel according to Luke.

Glory to you, O Lord.

¹Now all the tax collectors and sinners were coming near to listen to [Jesus.] ²And the Pharisees and the scribes were grumbling and saying, "This fellow welcomes sinners and eats with them."

³ So he told them this parable: ^{11b} "There was a man who had two sons. ¹² The younger of them said to his father, 'Father, give me the share of the property that will belong to me.' So he divided his property between them. ¹³ A few days later the younger son gathered all he had and traveled to a distant country, and there he squandered his property in dissolute living. ¹⁴ When he had spent everything, a severe famine took place throughout that country, and he began to be in need.

¹⁵ So he went and hired himself out to one of the citizens of that country, who sent him to his fields to feed the pigs. ¹⁶He would gladly have filled himself with the pods that the pigs were eating; and no one gave him anything. ¹⁷But when he came to himself he said, 'How many of my father's hired hands have bread enough and to spare, but here I am dying of hunger! ¹⁸I will get up and go to my father, and I will say to him, "Father, I have sinned against heaven and before you; ¹⁹I am no longer worthy to be called your son; treat me like one of your hired hands." ²⁰So he set off and went to his father. But while he was still far off, his father saw him and was filled with compassion; he ran and put his arms around him and kissed him. ²¹Then the son said to him, 'Father, I have sinned against heaven and before you; I am no longer worthy to be called your son.' ²²But the father said to his slaves, 'Quickly, bring out a robe—the best one—and put it on him; put a ring on his finger and sandals on his feet. ²³And get the fatted calf and kill it, and let us eat and celebrate; ²⁴ for this son of mine was dead and is alive again; he was lost and is found!' And they began to celebrate.

²⁵ "Now his elder son was in the field; and when he came and approached the house, he heard music and dancing. ²⁶ He called one of the slaves and asked what was going on. ²⁷ He replied, 'Your brother has come, and your father has killed the fatted calf, because he has got him back safe and sound.' ²⁸ Then he became angry and refused to go in. His father came out and began to plead with him. ²⁹ But he answered his father, 'Listen! For all these years I have been working like a slave for you, and I have never disobeyed your command; yet you have never given me even a young goat so that I might celebrate with my friends. ³⁰ But when this son of yours came back, who has devoured your property with prostitutes, you killed the fatted calf for him!' ³¹ Then the father said to him, 'Son, you are always with me, and all that is mine is yours. ³² But we had to celebrate and rejoice, because this brother of yours was dead and has come to life; he was lost and has been found.'"

P: The Gospel of the Lord. C: Praise to you, O Christ.

HOMILY

Pastor Traci ELW # 606

***HYMN OF THE DAY** *Our Father, We Have Wandered ELW* ***APOSTLES' CREED**

P: Let us confess our faith through the words of the Apostles' Creed.

C: 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 THE CHURCH**

- *A:* Led by the Spirit, let us turn to God in prayer for the church, the world, and all those in need.
- A: God of faithful promise, make your church a new creation in Christ. As you reconcile us to yourself, guide us also in your way of reconciliation, that through confession and forgiveness, repentance and reparations, your church may bear witness to your love. God, in your mercy, *C:* receive our prayer.
- *A:* God of new beginnings, restore balance to the earth. Send rain to places of drought and sunshine to places of flooding, that the produce of the land may again support life. God, in your mercy, *C:* receive our prayer.
- A: God of prodigal grace, unite the nations as fellow members of the human family. Give leaders the courage to put aside pride and ego, to cease squandering lives and time, and to work for the well-being of all. God, in your mercy, *C*: receive our prayer.
- *A:* God of boundless love, receive with open arms any in need of compassion. Embrace all who are far from home or estranged from loved ones, and all who live with regret. Embolden your people to offer and to seek forgiveness. God, in your mercy, *C:* receive our prayer.
- *A:* God of radical inclusion, widen human circles to welcome all who are excluded. Bless the work of disability ministries, ministries by and with neurodivergent people, and multicultural and ethnic-specific ministries; that the welcome of Jesus be extended to all. God, in your mercy, *C:* receive our prayer.
- *A:* God of resurrection life, welcome home all who have died. We thank you for their lives and entrust them into your keeping, where true reconciliation and eternal peace are found. God, in your mercy, *C:* receive our prayer.
- *P*: 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. *C*: Amen.

***THE PEACE**

P: The peace of the LORD be with you always.

C: And also with you.

Please share the peace with those around you using a greeting that is comfortable for both you and them.

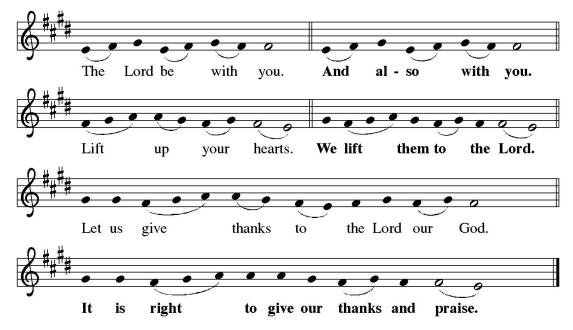
***Offertory Prayer**

An offering plate is located near the entrance to the nave; we offer thanks for the abundance God has first shown us:

A: Let us pray... 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. C: Amen.

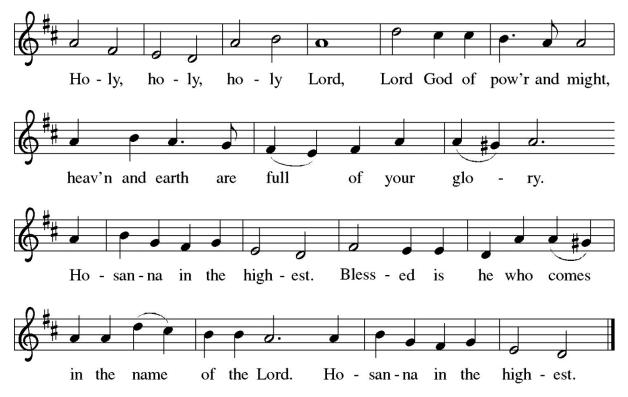
*GREAT THANKSGIVING

ELW # S152



*PROPER PREFACE

- *P*: 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:



*EUCHARISTIC PRAYER & WORDS OF INSTITUTION

P: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:

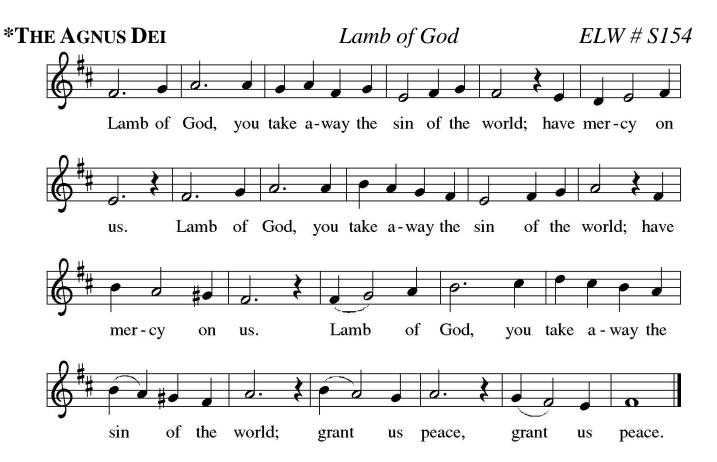
This cup is the new covenant in my blood, shed for you and for all people for the forgiveness of sin. Do this for the remembrance of me.

O God of resurrection and new life: Pour out your Holy Spirit on us and on these gifts of bread and wine. Grace our table with your presence. 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. *C:* Amen.

*LORD'S PRAYER

P: Lord, remember us in your kingdom, and teach us to pray:





*INVITATION

P: All who are hungry, come! The feast of grace is spread. C: Thanks be to God.

*BLESSING

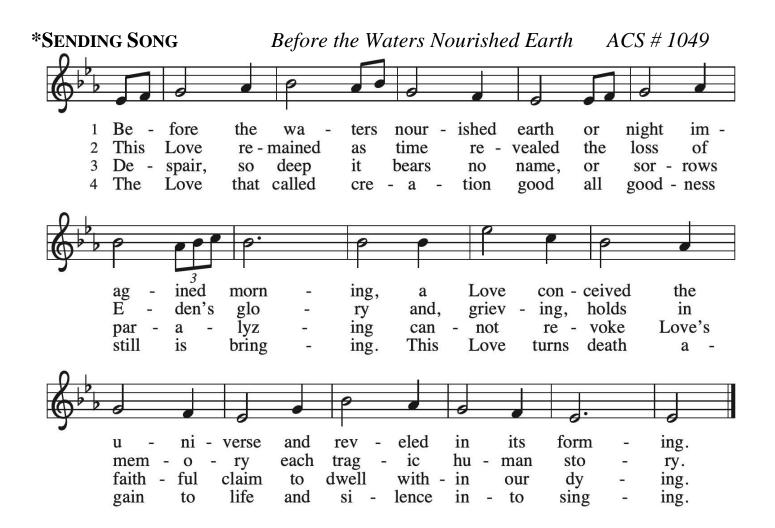
P: May the body and blood of our LORD Jesus Christ strengthen you and keep you in his grace. *C*: Amen.

***PRAYER AFTER COMMUNION**

A: Let us pray... 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. *C*: Amen.

***BENEDICTION**

P: God our tender parent, God the crucified one, God the reconciling Spirit, + bless you now and forever. *C*: Amen.



Text: Jeannette M. Lindholm, b. 1961 Music: ST. COLUMBA, Irish melody Text © 1996 Jeannette M. Lindholm, admin. Augsburg Fortress

*DISMISSAL

P: Go in peace. Care for others as God cares for you. C: Thanks be to God!

POSTLUDE

Room at the Cross for You

Composer, Ira F. Stanphill

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Serving God and Us

Our Ministers - the People of St. Matthew Our Pastor – Rev. Traci Marriott Our Organists – Mary Nelson, DeAnna Cree Our Missionary Family – Robin Abrol, On Eagle's Wings Our Administrative Assistant – Jen Ripka Our Assistant Administrative Assistant – Laura Orczeck Our Sexton – Phil Claar Our Assisting Minister – Stacy Kuster Our Lector – Lori Tremmel Our Acolyte – Norah Kuster Our Usher – Dennis Smith Our Altar Guild – Jeannie Smith, Cindy Snyder Our Audio/Video Tech – Camden Kuster Our Offering Counters – Jim Barley, Beth Garner First Quarter Ventures in Faith to "Local Needs"

This Week at St. Matthew:

814-793-2413: Office Hours

Pastor Traci – Wed. 2:00-5:00 p.m. Jen – Mon. – Fri. 9:00 a.m. - 12:00 p.m.

This Week Events

4 th Sunday in Lent
Sunday School 9:30 a.m.
Worship Service 10:30 a.m.
Social Ministry Meeting, Zoom 6:30 p.m.
Meager Meal, Fellowship Hall 6:00 p.m.
Lenten Service, Fellowship Hall 6:45 p.m.
Food Pantry, Allegheny St. 9:00-11:00 a.m.
5 th Sunday in Lent
Sunday School 9:30 a.m.
Worship Service 10:30 a.m.

Prayers are needed for our homebound: Mary Jane Allision, Fred Brandenburg, Linda Claar, Mary Creps, Gerry Girolami, Betty Helsel, Ruth Johnson, Audrey & Dan Kensinger.

So we can give special attention to those with pressing needs, names will be removed at the end of the month. Please let the office know if a name should remain longer or be removed sooner.

Prayer Concerns: Amy & Family, Avery, Randy Barrett, Barb Beach, Greta Buchart, Doug Bush, Dr. Ramon Burket, Caleb, Warren Campbell, Phillip Claar, Dave Clayton, Greg Comer, Terry Creek, Brian Fleck, Jim Fritz, Betty Helsel, Marilyn Horton, Don Hosterman, Baby James, Ruth Johnson, Joe Keller, Darren Kreutzer, Connie Lamborn, Linda Lehman, Bill Lively, Kristen Malloy, Karrie McCall & Family, Betty McDowell, Rick McIntyre, Aunt Mica, Carl Miner, Nathan, Olga Perlov, Deb Peters, Bekah Ross, Dan Ross, John Russell, Paul Ruth, Dan Sinal, Margie Smith, Jean Stonerook, Cindy Thomas, Tiffany Townsend, Drew Wenzel, Susan Werner, Jean White, Joel Widmann, Pete Williams, Jody Zelanko, and for our **Missionaries: Robin Abrol, On Eagle's Wings.**

Away at School: Max Baker, Christopher Bush, Olivia Day, Jeff Hoenstine, Lacey Ripka.

Those Serving in our Armed Forces: Bradley Buchart, Melody Estep, Colin Guyer, Nathan Smith (Germany).

Church Messenger

The April 2025 *Messenger* is now available at the St. Matthew **Website** (stmatthewlc.com), and on your recent **Email** message from St. Matthew by using the link listed in the body of the message. A paper copy of the *Messenger* is available in the news rack in the church Narthex. By calling the church office at (814-793-2413), you can request a paper copy to be sent by mail to your home or provide an email address and a copy can be emailed to you each month as soon as it is published. Do not hesitate to call the church office if you need help in securing a copy of the *Messenger*. Your readership and articles are always appreciated.

Altar Flowers



The 2025 Altar Flower chart is posted on the Narthex bulletin board. Altar Flowers are a perfect way to remember loved ones or to honor loved ones. There are plenty of dates available. Please sign up now for the Sunday you wish to place flowers on the Altar. Price: \$40.00



LENTEN WEDNESDAYS

Road to Jericho

6:00 Supper

6:45 Holden Evening Prayer With a weekly photo journey to the locations featured in scripture... See where the stories of the Bible took place

Dinner & Worship in the Fellowship Hall



We are offering a variety of flowers to enhance our sanctuary on Easter Sunday.

If you wish to place flowers in the church for Easter Sunday, please complete the bulletin insert and return it to Margie Smith by placing in her mail box OR, place the form in an envelope and then in the offering plate. Extra order forms are available at the usher station.

Your check should be made **<u>payable</u>** to: "St. Matthew Flower Fund."

Deadline for ordering is TODAY, Sunday, March 30, 2025.

Good Friday Prayer Vigil



Scheduled at St. Matthew Lutheran Church on Friday, April 18^{th} , from 6:00 a.m. – 6:00 p.m. Members are asked to commit one half hour to pray for any concerns of a personal, church, or worldwide nature. We hope to have enough participation to fill a twelve-hour time period with continuous prayer. The sign-up sheet is located on the **bulletin board in the Narthex**. This is an excellent way for you to enrich your spiritual

and prayer life. <u>You may pray at home</u>. **Please sign up by Monday, April 14th**. If you would like to participate and can't come to the church to sign up please call the church office at 814-793-2413.

Living Lutheran

Sign up for the print magazine

We heard you—and listened. We have found a way to bring back the magazine's print publication in a quarterly fashion. Each issue (spring, summer, winter and fall) will feature the stories you know and love, along with updates on the church and your ELCA community.

You can sign up today on the sign-up sheet on the Narthex bulletin board or call the church office to let us know you would like to subscribe to the magazine.

The first expected issue to be mailed is Summer 2025. We will keep you updated.

Martinsburg Food Pantry



Volunteers from Clover Creek Church of the Brethren will be assisting with the regular volunteers to distribute items on Thursdays, April 3 and April 17. The Food Pantry will be open from 9:00 until 11:00a.m. and other times by appointment.



Following is the "Wish List" for April: Cereal, Baked Beans, Mashed Potatoes, Chicken Broth, Cleaning Supplies.

These or any other donations can be placed in the basket at the church marked "Food Pantry".

Thank You! Linda Smith

Community Mending Ministry at St. Matthew

Favorite clothing in need of repair?

Bring laundered clothes that need mending to work on yourself or get help from our sewers. Materials, machines, & expertise provided. *And we'll have snacks!*

Feel free to stay for supper at 6PM and/or Lenten Worship at 6:45PM

Wednesday, April 9th from 2PM to 4PM St. Matthew Lutheran Martinsburg Fellowship Hall 115 E Penn Street (Maple Street Parking Lot)





Preparing for Death & Planning a Funeral

Sunday, May 18th, After Worship St. Matthew Fellowship Hall

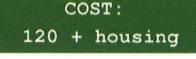
Presentations & Time for Questions with Financial, Legal, Spiritual & Mortuary Professionals Lunch is Provided





Weekend Themes

- Self-care
- Food & Health
- Arts & Media
- Environment
- Music & Dance
- Spiritual Life



Register today



sequanota.com/tendfest

Come to Tend to share in intentional time of faith discussions, good music, art, worship, ecology, and fellowship. This event will have an open schedule allowing participants the freedom to pick what is right for them. It will include options for multiple workshops, open recreation & hiking, food and time to refresh yourself and the family. Softly and Tenderly Jesus Is Calling



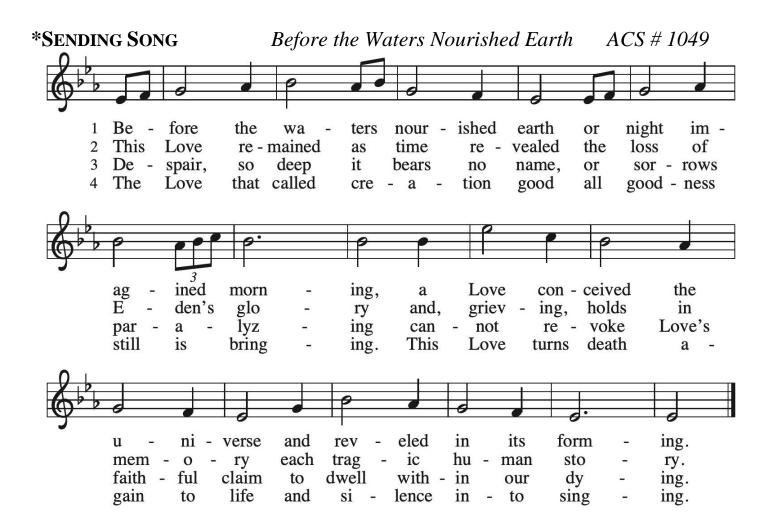
Text: Will L. Thompson, 1847–1909 Music: THOMPSON, Will L. Thompson



Text: Kevin Nichols, 1929–2006

Music: HERZLICH TUT MICH VERLANGEN, Hans Leo Hassler, 1564–1612

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Text: Jeannette M. Lindholm, b. 1961 Music: ST. COLUMBA, Irish melody Text © 1996 Jeannette M. Lindholm, admin. Augsburg Fortress