



# OPEN DOOR POLICIES

**A Lent Series**

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**Shepherd of the Bay Lutheran Church**

*Growing Together in Faith*

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Pastor Nathan Wong

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# Welcome!

March 30, 2025 – Fourth Sunday in Lent

Thank you for joining us today for worship. In our service we gather before our almighty God to offer him our worship and praise. We also gather to strengthen ourselves through the study of God's holy and powerful word. We pray your time with us is edifying and enjoyable. May God bless our worship together this day!

For your assistance:

- **Restrooms** are located down the hallway opposite the entrance to classroom 1, on the right.
- **Ushers** are here to help. Please don't hesitate to ask them if you have any questions.
- We ask guests to sign the **worship register** on the pedestal by the front door so that we might have record of who joined us and invite you to upcoming events. Thank you!
- If you have a young one who gets restless during worship, a **Family Room** is available for parents in the church office. A live feed of the service is available in the room.
- Pastor Wong is available and willing to meet with you anytime. Please give him a call at church, 410-231-2075 or on his cell phone, 507-995-5978. He can also be reached via email, [lusbypastor@gmail.com](mailto:lusbypastor@gmail.com). He would be happy to answer any questions or concerns you might have.

## ***OPEN DOOR POLICIES - God's Surprising Strategies for Getting Sinners Back Home***

### ***Today's Theme: GRACE INSTEAD OF CONDEMNATION***

We assume people get what they deserve. We assume that what goes around comes around. We assume God helps those who help themselves. Those assumptions are false. God does not operate on the principle of merit but of grace. No one is beyond the reach of God's grace. God never turns it off. At the entrance of God's open door is not a Father looking to condemn us, but a Father who has eagerly longed for our return. When we do, he takes us in his loving arms and assures us we are still his child. When the weight of our sin makes us fearful of God's condemnation, he reveals his grace yet again.

## Opening Hymn: 579 His Mercy Is More

CW 579

*The choir will introduce stanza 1 and first refrain; congregation will join for the remainder.*



1 What love could re - mem - ber no wrongs we have done?  
2 What pa - tience would wait as we con - stant - ly roam,  
3 What rich - es of kind - ness he lav - ished on us;



Om - ni - scient, all - know - ing, he counts not their sum;  
what Fa - ther so ten - der is call - ing us home!  
his blood was the pay - ment, his life was the cost.



thrown in - to a sea with - out bot - tom or shore,  
He wel - comes the weak - est, the vil - est, the poor;  
We stood 'neath a debt we could nev - er af - ford;



our sins they are man - y, his mer - cy is more.  
our sins they are man - y, his mer - cy is more.  
our sins they are man - y, his mer - cy is more.



*Praise the Lord! His mer - cy is more!*



Strong - er than dark - ness, new ev - 'ry morn; our



sins they are man - y, his mer - cy is more!

*The refrain for stanza 3 is sung three times (twice, with no break between, then a final time).*

Text: Matt Boswell, b. 1979; Matt Papa, b. 1983 Tune: Matt Boswell, b. 1979; Matt Papa, b. 1983

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In the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit.

**Amen.**

## **Confession**

Blessed are they whose transgressions are forgiven, whose sins are covered.

**Blessed are they whose sin the Lord does not count against them.**

Let us confess our sins to the Lord.

**Almighty and merciful Father,**

**we have strayed from your ways like lost sheep.**

**We have followed what we have devised and desired in our hearts.**

**We have offended you and sinned against your holy law.**

**We have done those things that we should not have done,**

**and we have not done those things that we should have done.**

**Have mercy on us, Lord!**

**Spare us, forgive us, and restore us,**

**according to your promises in Christ Jesus.**

*Silence for meditation and reflection*

Our gracious Father in heaven has been merciful to us. He sent his only Son, Jesus Christ, who gave his life as the atoning sacrifice for the sins of the whole world. Therefore, as a called servant of Christ and by his authority, I forgive you all your sins in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit.

**Amen.**

## **THE WORD**

The Lord be with you.

**And also with you.**

## Prayer of the Day

Let us pray. Almighty God, our heavenly Father, your mercies are new every morning; and though we deserve only punishment, you receive us as your children and provide for all our needs of body and soul. Grant that we may heartily acknowledge your merciful goodness, give thanks for all your benefits, and serve you in willing obedience; through your Son, Jesus Christ our Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever.

**Amen.**

## First Reading

*Isaiah 12:1-6*

<sup>1</sup>In that day you will say:

“I will praise you, LORD.

Although you were angry with me,  
your anger has turned away  
and you have comforted me.

<sup>2</sup>Surely God is my salvation;  
I will trust and not be afraid.

The LORD, the LORD himself, is my strength and my defense;  
he has become my salvation.”

<sup>3</sup>With joy you will draw water  
from the wells of salvation.

<sup>4</sup>In that day you will say:

“Give praise to the LORD, proclaim his name;  
make known among the nations what he has done,  
and proclaim that his name is exalted.

<sup>5</sup>Sing to the LORD, for he has done glorious things;  
let this be known to all the world.

<sup>6</sup>Shout aloud and sing for joy, people of Zion,  
for great is the Holy One of Israel among you.”

The Word of the Lord.

**Thanks be to God.**

## Psalm of the Day

Psalm 32

*Cantors will sing the Psalm tone; congregation sings the Refrains and the 'Glory be'*

*Refrain*



Re - mem - ber your mer - cy, O Lord;  
re - mem - ber your mer - cy and love.

*Psalm tone*



*Refrain*

Blessed is he whose transgressions are forgiven,\*  
whose sins are covered.

When I kept silent, your hand was heavy upon me;\*  
my strength was sapped as in the heat of summer.

Then I acknowledged my sin to you\*  
and did not cover up my iniquity.

I said, "I will confess my transgressions to the LORD,"\*  
and you forgave the guilt of my sin. *Refrain*

You are my hiding place;\*  
you will protect me from trouble.

Many are the woes of the wicked,\*  
but the LORD'S unfailing love surrounds those who trust in him.

**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. *Refrain***

## Second Reading

*Romans 8:1–10*

<sup>1</sup>Therefore, there is now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus, <sup>2</sup>because through Christ Jesus the law of the Spirit who gives life has set you free from the law of sin and death. <sup>3</sup>For what the law was powerless to do because it was weakened by the flesh, God did by sending his own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh to be a sin offering. And so he condemned sin in the flesh, <sup>4</sup>in order that the righteous requirement of the law might be fully met in us, who do not live according to the flesh but according to the Spirit.

<sup>5</sup>Those who live according to the flesh have their minds set on what the flesh desires; but those who live in accordance with the Spirit have their minds set on what the Spirit desires. <sup>6</sup>The mind governed by the flesh is death, but the mind governed by the Spirit is life and peace. <sup>7</sup>The mind governed by the flesh is hostile to God; it does not submit to God's law, nor can it do so. <sup>8</sup>Those who are in the realm of the flesh cannot please God.

<sup>9</sup>You, however, are not in the realm of the flesh but are in the realm of the Spirit, if indeed the Spirit of God lives in you. And if anyone does not have the Spirit of Christ, they do not belong to Christ. <sup>10</sup>But if Christ is in you, then even though your body is subject to death because of sin, the Spirit gives life because of righteousness.

The Word of the Lord.

**Thanks be to God.**

## Gospel Acclamation

*Luke 15:10*

There is rejoicing in the presence of the angels of God over one sinner who repents.

**Glory, praise, and honor to you, Lord Jesus Christ.**

## Gospel Reading

*Luke 15:1–3,11–32*

<sup>1</sup>Now the tax collectors and sinners were all gathering around to hear Jesus. <sup>2</sup>But the Pharisees and the teachers of the law muttered, "This man welcomes sinners and eats with them."

<sup>3</sup>Then Jesus told them this parable:

<sup>11</sup>Jesus continued: "There was a man who had two sons. <sup>12</sup>The younger one said to his father, 'Father, give me my share of the estate.' So he divided his property between them.

<sup>13</sup>"Not long after that, the younger son got together all he had, set off for a distant country and there squandered his wealth in wild living. <sup>14</sup>After he had spent everything, there was a severe famine in that whole country, and he began to be in need. <sup>15</sup>So he went and hired himself

out to a citizen of that country, who sent him to his fields to feed pigs. <sup>16</sup>He longed to fill his stomach with the pods that the pigs were eating, but no one gave him anything.

<sup>17</sup>"When he came to his senses, he said, 'How many of my father's hired servants have food to spare, and here I am starving to death! <sup>18</sup>I will set out and go back to my father and say to him: Father, I have sinned against heaven and against you. <sup>19</sup>I am no longer worthy to be called your son; make me like one of your hired servants.' <sup>20</sup>So he got up and went to his father.

"But while he was still a long way off, his father saw him and was filled with compassion for him; he ran to his son, threw his arms around him and kissed him.

<sup>21</sup>"The son said to him, 'Father, I have sinned against heaven and against you. I am no longer worthy to be called your son.'

<sup>22</sup>"But the father said to his servants, 'Quick! Bring the best robe and put it on him. Put a ring on his finger and sandals on his feet. <sup>23</sup>Bring the fattened calf and kill it. Let's have a feast and celebrate. <sup>24</sup>For this son of mine was dead and is alive again; he was lost and is found.' So they began to celebrate.

<sup>25</sup>"Meanwhile, the older son was in the field. When he came near the house, he heard music and dancing. <sup>26</sup>So he called one of the servants and asked him what was going on. <sup>27</sup>'Your brother has come,' he replied, 'and your father has killed the fattened calf because he has him back safe and sound.'

<sup>28</sup>"The older brother became angry and refused to go in. So his father went out and pleaded with him. <sup>29</sup>But he answered his father, 'Look! All these years I've been slaving for you and never disobeyed your orders. Yet you never gave me even a young goat so I could celebrate with my friends. <sup>30</sup>But when this son of yours who has squandered your property with prostitutes comes home, you kill the fattened calf for him!'

<sup>31</sup>" 'My son,' the father said, 'you are always with me, and everything I have is yours. <sup>32</sup>But we had to celebrate and be glad, because this brother of yours was dead and is alive again; he was lost and is found.' "

The Gospel of the Lord.

**Praise be to you, O Christ!**

## Hymn of the Day: 576 Amazing Grace

CW 576

1 A - maz - ing grace— how sweet the sound— that  
2 The Lord has prom - ised good to me, his  
3 Through man - y dan - gers, toils, and snares I  
4 When we've been there ten thou - sand years, bright

saved a wretch like me! I once was lost but  
Word my hope se - cures; he will my shield and  
have al - read - y come; 'tis grace has brought me  
shin - ing as the sun, we've no less days to

now am found, was blind but now I see.  
por - tion be as long as life en - dures.  
safe thus far, and grace will lead me home.  
sing God's praise than when we'd first be - gun.

Text (sts. 1–3): John Newton, 1725–1807, alt.; (st. 4): A Collection of Sacred Ballads, Richmond, 1790

Tune: Columbian Harmony, Cincinnati, 1829, ed. Benjamin Shaw; ed. Charles H. Spilman

Text and tune: Public domain

## Sermon

## **Apostles' Creed**

**I believe in God, the Father Almighty,  
maker of heaven and earth.**

**I believe in Jesus Christ, his 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 into hell.**

**The third day he rose again from the dead.**

**He ascended into heaven**

**and is seated at the right hand of God the Father Almighty.**

**From there he will come to judge the living and the dead.**

**I believe in the Holy Spirit,  
the holy Christian Church,  
the communion of saints,  
the forgiveness of sins,  
the resurrection of the body,  
and the life everlasting. Amen.**

## **Prayer of the Church**

Heavenly Father, you loved the world and gave your Son to free us from sin and death by his obedient death on the cross.

**We confess that without your love we are lost.**

Lord of the Church, we thank you for the treasure of the gospel. By your Spirit, keep our eyes fixed on Jesus, the pioneer and perfecter of our faith.

**Strengthen our determination to do what pleases you, no matter what the danger or the cost.**

Guard and guide those who carry a cross in the name of Christ and face ridicule and persecution for the sake of the kingdom: missionaries and chaplains, young people who stand up for what is right in the face of pressure to do what is wrong, and all who pay a high price for their faith and values as Christians.

**By your Spirit, O Lord, grant them patience and endurance.**

Keep in your care those who carry heavy burdens in life: the sick and the chronically ill, the depressed and the lonely, those torn by conflict in personal relationships, and those victimized by war and injustice. Comfort all who face the terrors of life with a heavy heart.

**Grant them peace, O Lord, and in your mercy, be their guardian and friend, their comfort and hope.**

Watch over those who care for others: pastors and counselors; physicians and nurses; social workers and caring friends; all who feed the hungry, comfort the hurting, and stand beside the dying.

**Strengthen them in their work, O Lord, and do not let them become weary in doing good.**

Hear us as we pray in silence.

*Silent prayer*

Help us run with perseverance the race marked out for us. Keep us faithful even to the point of death, that we may receive the crown of life, through Jesus Christ, our Lord.

**Amen.**

## Thank Offering

*The members of Shepherd of the Bay Lutheran Church have joined together to do the Lord's work in this community and around the world. Visitors need not feel obligated to participate in this offering which supports our ministry. If you prefer to give electronically, open your camera app and use the QR code.*



## Prayer

Almighty God, we thank you for teaching us the things you want us to believe and do. Help us by your Holy Spirit to keep your Word in pure hearts that we may be strengthened in faith, guided in holiness, and comforted in life and in death, through Jesus Christ our Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever.

**Amen.**

## **Lord's Prayer**

**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.**

**Lead us not into temptation,  
but deliver us from evil.**

**For the kingdom, the power,  
and the glory are yours  
now and forever. Amen.**

## **Blessing**

**The Lord bless you and keep you.**

**The Lord make his face shine on you and be gracious to you.**

**The Lord look on you with favor and give you peace.**

**Amen.**

## Closing Hymn: 523 How Deep the Father's Love for Us

CW 523

*The choir will introduce stanza 1; the congregation will join for the remainder.*



1 How deep the Fa - ther's love for us, how vast be-yond all  
2 Be - hold the Man up - on a cross, my sin up - on his  
3 I will not boast in an - y - thing: no gifts, no pow'r, no



mea - sure, that he should give his on - ly Son to  
shoul - ders. A - shamed, I hear my mock-ing voice call  
wis - dom. But I will boast in Je - sus Christ: his



make a wretch his trea - sure. How great the pain of sear-ing loss.  
out a - mong the scot - fers. It was my sin that held him there  
death and res - ur - rec - tion. Why should I gain from his re - ward?



The Fa - ther turns his face a - way as wounds which mar the  
un - til it was ac - com - plished; his dy - ing breath has  
I can - not give an an - swer. But this I know with



Cho - sen One bring man - y sons to glo - - ry.  
brought me life. I know that it is fin - - ished.  
all my heart: his wounds have paid my ran - - som.

Text: Stuart Townend, b. 1963

Tune: Stuart Townend, b. 1963

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# *Sunday Hosts*

	<b>Today</b>	<b>Next Week</b>
<b>Councilman:</b>	Sean Case	Terry Johnson
<b>Greeter:</b>	Clubfeedd	Team Tippett
<b>Usher:</b>	Grant Williams	Dan & Daniel Severson
<b>Acolyte:</b>	Neal Passey	Abel Kassulke
<b>Altar:</b>	Jolene Wagner	Mattie Scicchitano
<b>A/V:</b>	Sam Holcomb	
<b>Flowers:</b>	Happy Birthday Maria Krauss!	
<b>Counters:</b>	Alex Julian & Lynn Severson	Maria Krauss & Chuck Fick
<b>Snack:</b>	Bassett Family	

# *Upcoming Events*

**Choir Practice** *Today at 11:45am*

**Women's Bible Study** *Tuesday, 4/1 at 9:30am*  
Meeting at the Wong home.

**Catechism Class** *Tuesday, 4/1 at 5:15pm*

**Bible Information Class** *Tuesday, 4/1 at 6:30pm*

**Lenten Supper** *Wednesday, 4/2 at 6:00pm*

**Lenten Worship** *Wednesday, 4/2 at 7:00pm*

**Men's Breakfast** *Saturday, 4/5 at 8:30am*

**Bible Study & Sunday School** *Sunday, 4/6 at 9:30am*

**Worship** *Sunday, 4/6 at 10:30*

**Choir Practice** *Sunday, 4/6 at 11:45am*

# *News for You*

## **THANK YOU**

Hearty thanks to all who came out yesterday to beautify both the interior and exterior of our facility. We appreciate all your work!

## **WELS NATIONAL ONLINE TEEN BIBLE STUDY**

Teens are invited to register for the online Bible study on the topic "I am blessed!" The study will be on Sunday, 4/6 at 7:00pm. Register at [wels.net/serving-you/christian-life/discipleship/national-teen-bible-study/](http://wels.net/serving-you/christian-life/discipleship/national-teen-bible-study/).

## **THE POWER OF CONNECTING WOMEN IN CHRIST WEBINAR**

Register for the next WELS Women's Ministry webinar on Thursday, 4/10 at 8:00pm to learn how connections contribute to our encouragement and position us to share Jesus with others. Register at [wels.net/serving-you/christian-life/womens-ministry/womens-ministry-webinars/](http://wels.net/serving-you/christian-life/womens-ministry/womens-ministry-webinars/).

## **EASTER**

Easter is just 3 weeks away. Who are you planning to invite? Studies show the majority of visitors to a church come on the verbal recommendation of a friend or family member. People are looking for a church to attend for Easter – start spreading the word about Shepherd of the Bay and save them a seat!

