

FIFTH SUNDAY IN LENT

MARCH 22, 2026



ST. PAUL'S

Evangelical Lutheran Church

WELCOME

Welcome! We are glad you are joining our community of faith for worship today. Whether you are a long-time Lutheran, or you come from another Christian tradition, or you're wandering or wondering about faith and the church, you are welcome to participate in worship in whatever ways are comfortable for you. If you are new to St. Paul's you can request more information on our web site contact page here:

www.stpaulsbrenham.org/contact

Our worship liturgy is rooted in the ancient church's practice of gathering on Sundays to celebrate the resurrection of Jesus through hearing God's Word and sharing the communion meal in the presence of Christ. We welcome all baptized Christians to receive communion. Children who are communing in other churches are invited to commune here. All who are not receiving are invited to come forward for a blessing—you may indicate you want a blessing by holding your hands together or crossing your arms in front of you.

This bulletin is a helpful guide to our worship liturgy, as are ushers and friendly people gathered here with you to worship God together.

ST. PAUL'S STAFF

Michael Coffey	Lead Pastor
Donna Krueger	Pastor of Care Ministry
Diane Garrett	Organist
Larry Smith	Choir Director
Dr. Sarah Burke	Director of Contemporary Music
Lisa Eben	Financial Director
Thomas Johnson	Communications Coordinator
Anne Briggs	Membership Coordinator
Sarah Zwahr	Director of Youth and Family
Julie Guiberteau	Media Technician
Sandra Ehlinger	Head of Christian Day School

CONTACT US

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*St. Paul's is a congregation of
the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America.
Learn more at www.elca.org*

FIFTH SUNDAY IN LENT

In today's gospel Jesus reveals his power over death by raising Lazarus from the dead. The prophet Ezekiel prophesies God breathing new life into dry bones. To those in exile or living in the shadows of death, these stories proclaim God's promise of resurrection. In baptism we die with Christ that we might also be raised with him to new life. At the Easter Vigil we will welcome the newly baptized as we remember God's unfailing promise in our baptism.

HEALING PRAYER

Once a month we offer healing prayer, a ministry that has been a part of the church's practice since ancient times. The early church described Jesus as the Great Physician, who is both the doctor and the medicine, giving the remedy of himself to those with whom he is in relationship. In the completeness of Christ's nature, including both humanity and divinity, Jesus enacts for us both physical and spiritual healing. Those who wish to receive healing prayer with laying on of hands and anointing with oil may come to the altar rail at any time during the communion distribution.

OFFERING

Offering plates are on the welcome table in the narthex. Feel free to leave your offering there. The offering will be presented during the worship liturgy. You can also make an offering online at www.stpaulsbrenham.org/give

FIRST AID

A First Aid Kit and AED (defibrillator) are located in the closet of the usher room in the Narthex.

GATHERING

PRELUDE

Jesus Still Lead On

David Cherwien

SOUNDING OF THE BELL

When the bell sounds, please stand as you are able and face the procession.

KYRIE PROCESSION

ELW 153

The cantor sings each line and the congregation repeats it.

Nko - si, Nko - si, yi - ba nen - ce - ba.
Lord, have mer - cy, have mer - cy up - on us.

Kres - tu, Kres - tu, yi - ba nen - ce - ba.
Christ, have mer - cy, have mer - cy up - on us.

Nko - si, Nko - si, yi - ba nen - ce - ba.
Lord, have mer - cy, have mer - cy up - on us.

CONFESSON AND FORGIVENESS

Blessed be the holy Trinity, † one God,
who forgives all our sin, whose mercy endures forever.

Amen.

Let us confess our sin before God, who removes our guilt and blots out all offenses.

You may kneel or sit. Silence is kept for reflection.

Gracious God,
have mercy on us according to your steadfast love.

For seeking worldly delights that deceive us and dishonor you: Gracious God,
have mercy on us according to your steadfast love.

For desiring self-reliance instead of hungering for your word: Gracious God,
have mercy on us according to your steadfast love.

For failing to recognize your coming reign,
and for hindering the work of the Spirit: Gracious God,
have mercy on us according to your steadfast love.

For drawing from the well of self-serving ambition,
and for disdain the living water Christ offers: Gracious God,
have mercy on us according to your steadfast love.

For disregarding voices from the margin,
and for distrusting signs of your healing and hope in the world: Gracious God,
have mercy on us according to your steadfast love.

For dwelling in tombs of self-pity and discontent,
and for disregarding Christ's call to come forth to life: Gracious God,
have mercy on us according to your steadfast love.

God's steadfast love, grace, and forgiveness abound.
Through faith, the free gift of God,
you have been clothed in the righteousness of Christ.
In the name of † Jesus Christ, your sins are forgiven.
The Spirit of the One who raised Christ from the dead dwells in you,
pours God's love into your hearts, and gives you life and peace.
Amen.

Please stand as you are able.

GATHERING SONG

ELW 629 *Abide with Me*

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

Almighty God, your Son came into the world to free us all from sin and death. Breathe upon us the power of your Spirit, that we may be raised to new life in Christ and serve you in righteousness all our days, through Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. **Amen.**

Please be seated.

WELCOME

(10:30) DISMISSAL FOR CHILDREN'S CHURCH

WORD

FIRST READING

Ezekiel 37:1-14

Ezekiel's vision of the valley of dry bones is a promise that Israel as a nation, though dead in exile, will live again in their land through God's life-giving spirit. Three times Israel is assured that through this vision they will know that "I am the LORD."

¹ The hand of the LORD came upon me, and he brought me out by the spirit of the LORD and set me down in the middle of a valley; it was full of bones. ² He led me all around them; there were very many lying in the valley, and they were very dry. ³ He said to me, "Mortal, can these bones live?" I answered, "O Lord God, you know."

⁴ Then he said to me, "Prophesy to these bones and say to them: O dry bones, hear the word of the LORD. ⁵ Thus says the Lord God to these bones: I will cause breath to enter you, and you shall live. ⁶ I will lay sinews on you and will cause flesh to come upon you and cover you with skin and put breath in you, and you shall live, and you shall know that I am the LORD."

⁷ So I prophesied as I had been commanded, and as I prophesied, suddenly there was a noise, a rattling, and the bones came together, bone to its bone. ⁸ I looked, and there were sinews on them, and flesh had come upon them, and skin had covered them, but there was no breath in them. ⁹ Then he said to me, "Prophesy to the

breath, prophesy, mortal, and say to the breath: Thus says the Lord God: Come from the four winds, O breath, and breathe upon these slain, that they may live."¹⁰ I prophesied as he commanded me, and the breath came into them, and they lived and stood on their feet, a vast multitude.

¹¹ Then he said to me, "Mortal, these bones are the whole house of Israel. They say, 'Our bones are dried up, and our hope is lost; we are cut off completely.'

¹² Therefore prophesy and say to them: Thus says the Lord God: I am going to open your graves and bring you up from your graves, O my people, and I will bring you back to the land of Israel. ¹³ And you shall know that I am the LORD when I open your graves and bring you up from your graves, O my people. ¹⁴ I will put my spirit within you, and you shall live, and I will place you on your own soil; then you shall know that I, the LORD, have spoken and will act, says the LORD."

The word of the Lord.

Thanks be to God.

PSALM

Psalm 130

The psalm is sung responsively.

¹ Out of the depths

I cry to you, O LORD;

² O LORD, I hear my voice!

Let your ears be attentive to the voice of my supplication.

- ³ If you were to keep watch | over sins,
O LORD, | who could stand?
- ⁴ **Yet with you | is forgiveness,
in order that you | may be feared.**
- ⁵ I wait for you, O LORD; | my soul waits;
in your word | is my hope.
- ⁶ **My soul waits for the Lord more than those who keep watch | for the morning,
more than those who keep watch | for the morning.**
- ⁷ O Israel, wait for the LORD, for with the LORD there is | steadfast love;
with the LORD there is plen- | teous redemption.
- ⁸ **For the LORD shall | redeem Israel
from | all their sins.**

SECOND READING

Romans 8:6-11

For Paul, Christian spirituality entails living in the reality of the Holy Spirit. The driving force behind our actions and values is not our sinful desire for self-satisfaction but the very Spirit by which God raised Jesus from the dead and will also raise us from the dead.

⁶ To set the mind on the flesh is death, but to set the mind on the Spirit is life and peace. ⁷ For this reason the mind that is set on the flesh is hostile to God; it does not submit to God's law—indeed, it cannot, ⁸ and those who are in the flesh cannot please God.

⁹ But you are not in the flesh; you are in the Spirit, since the Spirit of God dwells in you. Anyone who does

not have the Spirit of Christ does not belong to him.

¹⁰ But if Christ is in you, then the body is dead because of sin, but the Spirit is life because of righteousness. ¹¹ If the Spirit of him who raised Jesus from the dead dwells in you, he who raised Christ Jesus from the dead will give life to your mortal bodies also through his Spirit that dwells in you.

The word of the Lord. **Thanks be to God.**

Please stand as you are able for the Gospel

GOSPEL ACCLAMATION

ELW 177

*The cantor sings the acclamation and the congregation repeats it.
The cantor sings the verse and the congregation sings the acclamation again.*



Cantor: I am the resurrection | and the life;
whoever believes in me will | never die. (John 11:25, 26)*

GOSPEL

John 11:1-45

The holy gospel according to John. **Glory to you, O Lord.**

Due to the length of the reading, please be seated.

¹ Now a certain man was ill, Lazarus of Bethany, the village of Mary and her sister Martha. ² Mary was the one who anointed the Lord with perfume and wiped his feet with her hair; her brother Lazarus was ill. ³ So the sisters sent a message to Jesus, “Lord, he whom you love is ill.”

⁴ But when Jesus heard it, he said, “This illness does not lead to death; rather, it is for God’s glory, so that the Son of God may be glorified through it.” ⁵ Accordingly, though Jesus loved Martha and her sister and Lazarus, ⁶ after having heard that Lazarus was ill, he stayed two days longer in the place where he was.

⁷ Then after this he said to the disciples, “Let us go to Judea again.” ⁸ The disciples said to him, “Rabbi, the Jews were just now trying to stone you, and are you going there again?” ⁹ Jesus answered, “Are there not twelve hours of daylight? Those who walk during the day do not stumble because they see the light of this world.

¹⁰ But those who walk at night stumble because the light is not in them.” ¹¹ After saying this, he told them, “Our friend Lazarus has fallen asleep, but I am going there to awaken him.” ¹² The disciples said to him, “Lord, if he has fallen asleep, he will be all right.” ¹³ Jesus, however, had been speaking about his death, but they thought that he was referring merely to sleep. ¹⁴ Then Jesus told them plainly, “Lazarus is dead. ¹⁵ For your sake I am glad I was not there, so that you may believe. But let us go to him.”

¹⁶ Thomas, who was called the Twin, said to his fellow disciples, “Let us also go, that we may die with him.”

¹⁷ When Jesus arrived, he found that Lazarus had already been in the tomb four days. ¹⁸ Now Bethany was near Jerusalem, some two miles away, ¹⁹ and many of the Jews had come to Martha and Mary to console them about their brother. ²⁰ When Martha heard that Jesus was coming, she went and met him, while Mary stayed at home. ²¹ Martha said to Jesus, “Lord, if you had been here, my brother would not have died. ²² But even now I know that God will give you whatever you ask of him.”

²³ Jesus said to her, “Your brother will rise again.”

²⁴ Martha said to him, “I know that he will rise again in the resurrection on the last day.” ²⁵ Jesus said to her, “I am the resurrection and the life. Those who believe in

me, even though they die, will live, ²⁶ and everyone who lives and believes in me will never die. Do you believe this?” ²⁷ She said to him, “Yes, Lord, I believe that you are the Messiah, the Son of God, the one coming into the world.”

²⁸ When she had said this, she went back and called her sister Mary and told her privately, “The Teacher is here and is calling for you.” ²⁹ And when she heard it, she got up quickly and went to him. ³⁰ Now Jesus had not yet come to the village but was still at the place where Martha had met him. ³¹ The Jews who were with her in the house consoling her saw Mary get up quickly and go out. They followed her because they thought that she was going to the tomb to weep there. ³² When Mary came where Jesus was and saw him, she knelt at his feet and said to him, “Lord, if you had been here, my brother would not have died.” ³³ When Jesus saw her weeping and the Jews who came with her also weeping, he was greatly disturbed in spirit and deeply moved. ³⁴ He said, “Where have you laid him?” They said to him, “Lord, come and see.” ³⁵ Jesus began to weep. ³⁶ So the Jews said, “See how he loved him!” ³⁷ But some of them said, “Could not he who opened the eyes of the blind man have kept this man from dying?”

³⁸ Then Jesus, again greatly disturbed, came to the tomb. It was a cave, and a stone was lying against it. ³⁹ Jesus said, “Take away the stone.” Martha, the sister of the dead man, said to him, “Lord, already there is a stench because he has been dead four days.” ⁴⁰ Jesus said to her, “Did I not tell you that if you believed you would see the glory of God?” ⁴¹ So they took away the stone. And Jesus looked upward and said, “Father, I thank you for having heard me. ⁴² I knew that you always hear me, but I have said this for the sake of the crowd standing here, so that they may believe that you sent me.” ⁴³ When he had said this, he cried with a loud voice, “Lazarus, come out!” ⁴⁴ The dead man came out, his hands and feet bound with strips of cloth and his face wrapped in a cloth. Jesus said to them, “Unbind him, and let him go.”

The Gospel of the Lord.

Praise to you, O Christ.

SERMON

Pastor Michael Coffey

Please stand as you are able.

HYMN OF THE DAY

ELW 582

Holy Spirit, Ever Dwelling

The creed is omitted during Lent.

Please kneel or sit for the prayers of intercession.

PRAYERS OF INTERCESSION

ELW 751 O Lord, Hear My Prayer

The congregation sings the song at the beginning and after each petition.

O Lord, hear my prayer, O Lord, hear my prayer: when I call, answer me.

O Lord, hear my prayer, O Lord, hear my prayer: come and listen to me.

Please stand for the Peace.

PEACE

The peace of the Lord be with you always. **And also with you.**

Greet one another with the peace of Christ. After the Peace, please be seated.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

INSTALLATION OF CHURCH COUNCIL

MEAL

OFFERING

An offering is gathered for the mission of the church, including the care of those in need.

Offering plates are on the welcome table in the narthex before and after the service.

MUSICAL OFFERING

(8:00) Children of the Heavenly Father M. Rostermund

(10:30) O Love Elaine Hagenberg

Please stand as you are able.

OFFERING SONG

ELW 182 Let the Vineyards Be Fruitful



Let the vine - yards be fruit - ful, Lord, and fill to the brim our cup of



bles - sing. Gath - er a har - vest from the seeds that were sown, that we may be



fed with the bread of life. Gath - er the hopes and the dreams of all; u -

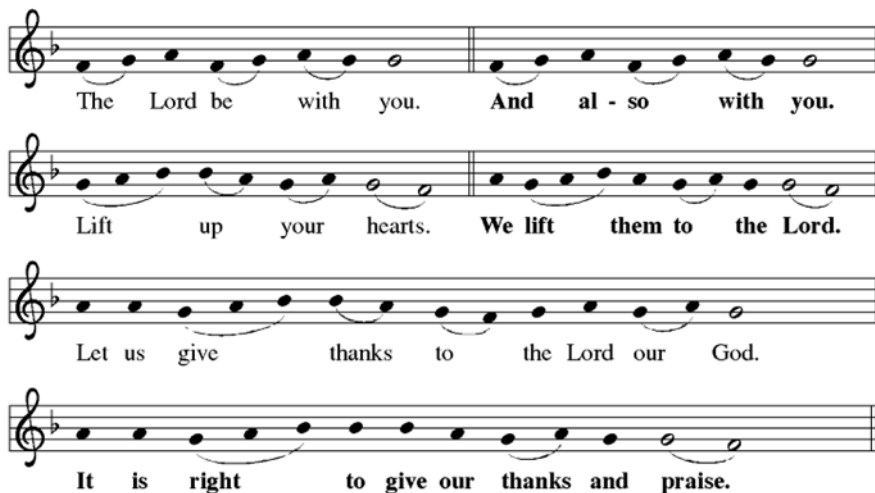


nite them with the prayers we of - fer now. Grace our ta - ble with your



pres - ence, and give us a fore - taste of the feast to come.

DIALOGUE AND PREFACE

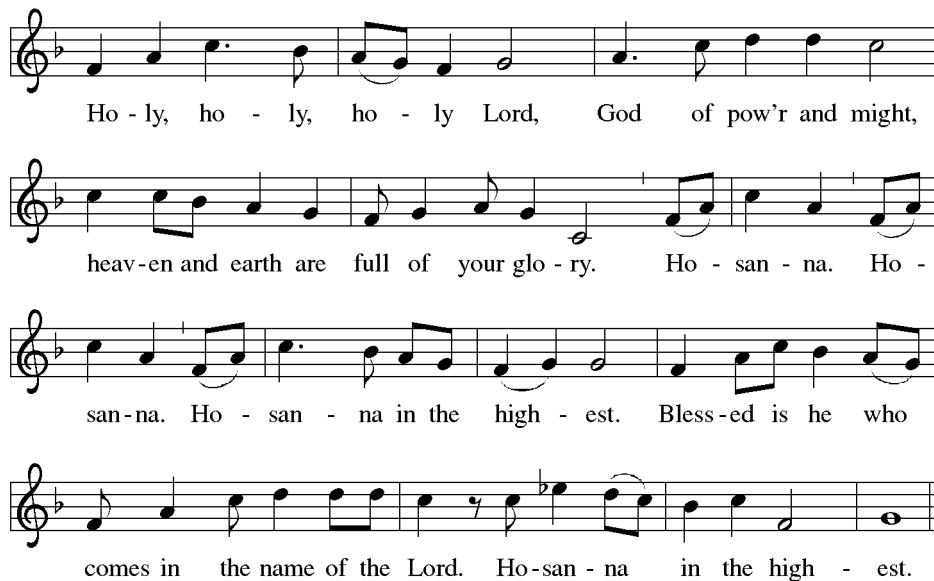


The Lord be with you. And al - so with you.
Lift up your hearts. We lift them to the Lord.
Let us give thanks to the Lord our God.
It is right to give our thanks and praise.

It is indeed right... we praise your name and join their unending hymn:

HOLY, HOLY, HOLY

ELW Setting Three p. 144 *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. 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.

THANKSGIVING AT THE TABLE

Blessed are you, O God...

As often as we eat this bread and drink this cup,
we proclaim the Lord's death until he comes.

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

Pour out your Holy Spirit... now and forever.

Amen.

LORD'S PRAYER

ELW Setting Five p. 163

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



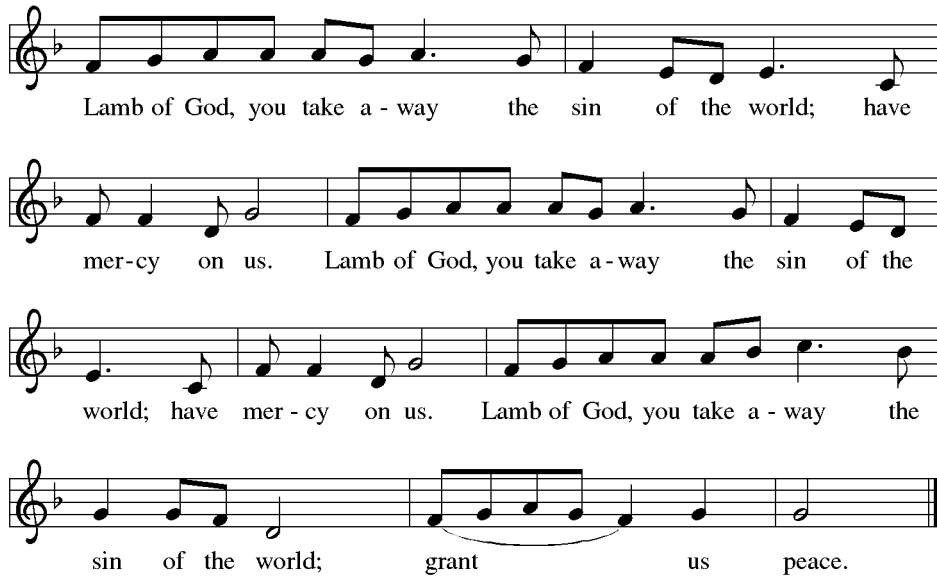
Our Fa-ther in heav-en, hal-lowed be your name,
your king-dom come, your will be done, on earth as in heav-en.
Give us to-day our dai-ly bread. For-give us our sins as we
for-give those who sin a-against us. Save us from the time of tri-al
and de-liv-er us from e-vil. For the king-dom, the pow'r,
and the glo-ry are yours, now and for-ev-er. A-men.

INVITATION

We welcome all baptized Christians to receive communion. Children who are communing in other churches are invited to commune here. All who are not receiving are invited to come forward for a blessing—you may indicate you want a blessing by holding your hands together or crossing your arms in front of you. Please follow the guidance from the ushers. Gluten-free wafers are available on request. Wine is red; grape juice is white. Those unable to come forward, remain seated and communion will be brought to you.

LAMB OF GOD

ELW Setting Three p. 146



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.

Please be seated.

HEALING PRAYER

Anyone seeking healing on body, mind, or soul may come to the altar rail during the communion distribution for healing prayer with laying on of hands and anointing with oil.

MUSIC DURING COMMUNION

MUSIC

Ah, Holy Jesus W. Pelz

SONG

ELW 781 Children of the Heavenly Father

Please stand as you are able.

TABLE BLESSING

May Christ, who is present with you now in this meal,
journey with you on your path of discipleship. **Amen.**

SONG AFTER COMMUNION

ELW 545 stanza 1 *Lord, Dismiss Us with Your Blessing*

Lord, dismiss us with your blessing, fill our hearts with joy and peace; let us each, your love possessing, triumph in redeeming grace. Oh, refresh us; oh, refresh us, trav'ling through this wilderness.

SENDING

BLESSING

Be of good courage; hold fast to that which is good; render to no one evil for evil;
strengthen the fainthearted; support the weak; help the afflicted; honor all people;
love and serve God, rejoicing in the power of the Holy Spirit. The blessing of our merciful God,
Father, † Son, and Holy Spirit, be with you now and always. **Amen.**

DISMISSAL

Go forth into the world to serve God with gladness. Care for others as God cares for you.

Thanks be to God.

POSTLUDE

Come to Calvary's Holy Mountain M. Burkhardt

GOSPEL MESSAGE

Roll the Stone Away

You can understand why they don't want to roll the stone away. "Already there is a stench," Martha says (John 11:39). Why open the grave? Why let out that smell? There could be no purpose. After all, Lazarus is dead.

This is not unbelief. "I believe that you are the Messiah," Martha says (v. 27), confident that her brother would one day rise again. But it is a faith that desperately wants God to provide an escape from suffering and struggle: "If you had been here," both sisters say, "my brother would not have died" (vv. 21, 32). The presence of Jesus, they think, should protect them from pain and death.

What they don't understand, though, is that the places of pain and suffering are exactly where Jesus goes. He enters dead places to bring hope to life. He transforms the stench of decay into an aroma of thriving. He summons Lazarus out of the tomb to walk into freedom.

This is why Jesus tells them to take away the stone. He wants to open the place that they are convinced holds only grief, and to expose what they believe to be a shameful smell. Yes, it is difficult to face. However, only when the grave is opened can Lazarus respond to Jesus' call. Martha and Mary must remove the stone that hides what they do not want to bear, so that new life can emerge from the tomb.

What are the stone-covered places in your life? What are the places in your heart that you are convinced hold only pain, decay, and fear? In the tender love of Jesus, you do not need to hide them. Jesus is calling you to open them. He will enter these places with resurrection power, transforming death into life and shame into glory. Facing these tombs takes courage. But you can trust that Jesus will bring healing to your brokenness. He is in the business of calling the dead back to life. Let the stones be rolled away.

COMMEMORATIONS

Jonathan Edwards, teacher, missionary to American Indians, died 1758

Sunday, March 22, 2026

A Puritan minister in Connecticut, Edwards is remembered as being a great preacher. Though his most famous sermon talks at length about hell, he was more concerned with God's love. He served both as missionary to the Housatonic people in Massachusetts, and as president of the future Princeton University.

Oscar Arnulfo Romero, Bishop of San Salvador, martyr, died 1980

Tuesday, March 24, 2026

Romero was deeply concerned with injustices evident toward the poor and powerless in El Salvador, and worked forthrightly against political repression. He was assassinated while presiding at the eucharist in a chapel near the cathedral in San Salvador.

Annunciation of Our Lord

Wednesday, March 25, 2026

Nine months before Christmas we celebrate the annunciation, in which the angel Gabriel announced to Mary that she would give birth to the Son of God. The ancient church believed that this was also the date of the world's creation and of Jesus' death on the cross.