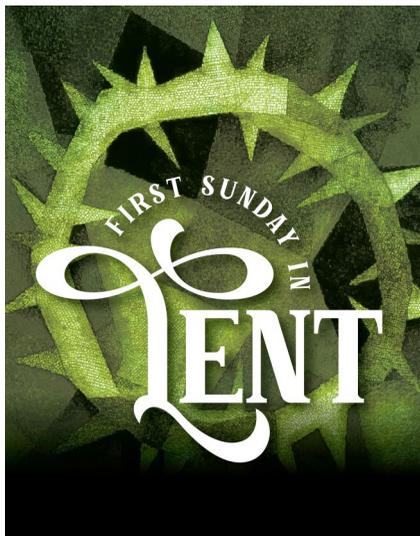


The First Sunday in Lent
Sunday, February 22, 2026
9:30 a.m. Worship



"Be and Make Disciples of Jesus Christ"

Grace Lutheran Church

111 Lutheran Drive, P.O. Box 86

Eaton, Ohio 45320

937.456.6258 — Fax: 937.456.4293

GraceEaton111@gmail.com — www.gracelutheranofeaton.com

Pastor: Dwight Hanson

WELCOME TO WORSHIP!

P - Presiding Minister

A - Assisting minister

C - Congregation

*** - PLEASE STAND**

Please silence electronic devices.

PRELUDE

WELCOME & ANNOUNCEMENTS

***BRIEF ORDER FOR CONFESSION AND FORGIVENESS:**

P In the name of the Father, and of the + Son, and of the Holy Spirit.

C **Amen.**

P Let us pray ...

P God of all mercy and consolation, come to the aid of your people, turning us from our sin to live for you alone. Give us the power of your Holy Spirit that, attentive to your Word, we may confess our sins, receive your forgiveness, and grow into the fullness of your Son, Jesus Christ our Lord.

C **Amen**

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

Please kneel or sit as you are able.

P Gracious God,

C **have mercy on us. In your compassion forgive us our sins, known and unknown, things done and left undone. Uphold us by your Spirit so that we may live and serve you in newness of life, to the honor and glory of your holy name; through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen**

P Almighty God have mercy on you, forgive you all your sins through our Lord Jesus Christ, strengthen you in all goodness, and by the power of the Holy Spirit keep you in eternal life.

C **Amen**

***PEACE:**

P The peace of the Lord be with you always.

C **And also with you.**

***GATHERING SONG: "O Lord, Throughout These Forty Days" (LBW 99)**

***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.**

***KYRIE:**



A Ky - ri - e e - le - i - son: **C** Lord, have mer - cy.
Lord, have mer - cy:



A Chri - ste e - le - i - son: **C** Christ, have mer - cy.
Christ, have mer - cy:



A Ky - ri - e e - le - i - son: **C** Lord, have mer - cy.
Lord, have mer - cy:

Kyrie

***HYMN OF PRAISE:**



☐ Glo-ry to God, glo-ry to God, glo-ry to God in the high - est;



glo-ry to God, glo-ry to God, and peace to God's peo- ple on earth.



☐ Lord God, heav-en - ly king, al-might- y God and Fa- ther, we



wor-ship you, we give you thanks, we praise you for your glo - ry.



☐ Glo-ry to God, glo-ry to God, glo-ry to God in the high - est;



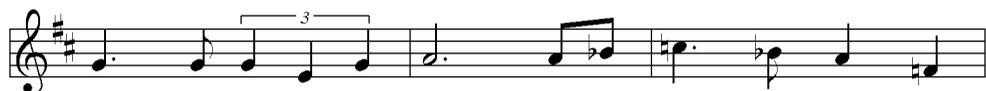
glo-ry to God, glo-ry to God, and peace to God's peo- ple on earth.



☐ Lord Je - sus Christ, on - ly Son of the Fa - ther,



Lord God, Lamb of God, you take a - way the sin of the



world: have mer - cy on us; you are seat - ed at the



right hand of the Fa - ther: re-ceive our prayer.



☩ Glo-ry to God, glo - ry to God, glo - ry to God in the high - est;



glo - ry to God, glo - ry to God, and peace to God's peo - ple on earth.



I
II For you a - lone are the Ho - ly One, you a - lone are the Lord,



you a - lone are the Most High, Je - sus Christ, with the Ho - ly



Spir - it, in the glo - ry of God the Fa - ther, A - men.



☩ Glo-ry to God, glo - ry to God, glo - ry to God in the high - est;



glo - ry to God, glo - ry to God, and peace to God's peo - ple on earth,



and peace to God's peo - ple on earth.

***PRAYER OF THE DAY:**

P Holy One, we are surrounded by temptation and all that would draw us away from you. Save us from the power of sin and death and bring us to the life that comes to us through the death and resurrection of Christ our Lord,

C **we ask this through Jesus Christ, our Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God now and forever. Amen.**

FIRST LESSON: Genesis 3:1-21

A A reading from Genesis:

¹Now the serpent was more crafty than any other beast of the field that the LORD God had made. He said to the woman, “Did God actually say, ‘You shall not eat of any tree in the garden?’” ²And the woman said to the serpent, “We may eat of the fruit of the trees in the garden, ³but God said, ‘You shall not eat of the fruit of the tree that is in the midst of the garden, neither shall you touch it, lest you die.’” ⁴But the serpent said to the woman, “You will not surely die. ⁵For God knows that when you eat of it your eyes will be opened, and you will be like God, knowing good and evil.” ⁶So when the woman saw that the tree was good for food, and that it was a delight to the eyes, and that the tree was to be desired to make one wise, she took of its fruit and ate, and she also gave some to her husband who was with her, and he ate. ⁷Then the eyes of both were opened, and they knew that they were naked. And they sewed fig leaves together and made themselves loincloths. ⁸And they heard the sound of the LORD God walking in the garden in the cool of the day, and the man and his wife hid themselves from the presence of the LORD God among the trees of the garden. ⁹But the LORD God called to the man and said to him, “Where are you?” ¹⁰And he said, “I heard the sound of you in the garden, and I was afraid, because I was naked, and I hid myself.” ¹¹He said, “Who told you that you were naked? Have you eaten of the tree of which I commanded you not to eat?” ¹²The man said, “The woman whom you gave to be with me, she gave me fruit of the tree, and I ate.” ¹³Then the LORD God said to the woman, “What is this that you have done?” The woman said, “The serpent deceived me, and I ate.” ¹⁴The LORD God said to the serpent, “Because you have done this, cursed are you above all livestock and above all beasts of the field; on your belly you shall go, and dust you shall eat all the days of your life. ¹⁵I will put enmity between you and the woman, and between your offspring and her offspring; he shall bruise your head, and you shall bruise his heel.” ¹⁶To the woman he said, “I will surely multiply your pain in childbearing; in pain you shall bring forth children. Your desire shall be contrary to your husband, but he shall

rule over you.” ¹⁷And to Adam he said, “Because you have listened to the voice of your wife and have eaten of the tree of which I commanded you, ‘You shall not eat of it,’ cursed is the ground because of you; in pain you shall eat of it all the days of your life; ¹⁸thorns and thistles it shall bring forth for you; and you shall eat the plants of the field. ¹⁹By the sweat of your face you shall eat bread, till you return to the ground, for out of it you were taken; for you are dust, and to dust you shall return.” ²⁰The man called his wife’s name Eve, because she was the mother of all living. ²¹And the LORD God made for Adam and for his wife garments of skins and clothed them.

A The Word of the Lord.

C **Thanks be to God.**

PSALM 32:1-8

A ¹Happy are they whose transgressions are forgiven, and whose sin is put away!

C ²**Happy are they to whom the LORD imputes no guilt, and in whose spirit there is no guile!**

A ³While I held my tongue, my bones withered away, because of my groaning all day long.

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

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

C ⁶**I said, “I will confess my transgressions to the LORD.” Then you forgave me the guilt of my sin.**

A ⁷Therefore all the faithful will make their prayers to you in time of trouble; when the great waters overflow, they shall not reach them.

C ⁸**You are my hiding place; you preserve me from trouble; you surround me with shouts of deliverance.**

SECOND LESSON: Romans 5:12-19

A A Reading from Romans:

¹²Therefore, just as sin came into the world through one man, and death through sin, and so death spread to all men because all sinned — ¹³for sin indeed was in the world before the law was given, but sin is not counted where there is no law. ¹⁴Yet death reigned from Adam to Moses, even over those whose sinning was not like the transgression of Adam, who was a type of the one who was to come. ¹⁵But the free gift

is not like the trespass. For if many died through one man's trespass, much more have the grace of God and the free gift by the grace of that one man Jesus Christ abounded for many. ¹⁶And the free gift is not like the result of that one man's sin. For the judgment following one trespass brought condemnation, but the free gift following many trespasses brought justification. ¹⁷For if, because of one man's trespass, death reigned through that one man, much more will those who receive the abundance of grace and the free gift of righteousness reign in life through the one man Jesus Christ. ¹⁸Therefore, as one trespass led to condemnation for all men, so one act of righteousness leads to justification and life for all men. ¹⁹For as by the one man's disobedience the many were made sinners, so by the one man's obedience the many will be made righteous.

A The Word of the Lord.

C **Thanks be to God.**

***GOSPEL VERSE:**

Re - turn to the Lord, your God, re - turn to the Lord, your
 God, who is grac - ious and mer - ci - ful, slow to
 an - ger, and a - bound - ing in stead - fast love.

***GOSPEL: Matthew 4:1-11**

P The Holy Gospel according to St. Matthew, the fourth chapter.

C **Glory to you, O Lord.**

¹Then Jesus was led up by the Spirit into the wilderness to be tempted by the devil. ²And after fasting forty days and forty nights, he was hungry. ³And the tempter came and said to him, "If you are the Son of God, command these stones to become loaves of bread." ⁴But he answered, "It is written, 'Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every

word that comes from the mouth of God.”⁵ Then the devil took him to the holy city and set him on the pinnacle of the temple⁶ and said to him, “If you are the Son of God, throw yourself down, for it is written, ‘He will command his angels concerning you,’ and ‘On their hands they will bear you up, lest you strike your foot against a stone.’”⁷ Jesus said to him, “Again it is written, ‘You shall not put the Lord your God to the test.’”⁸ Again, the devil took him to a very high mountain and showed him all the kingdoms of the world and their glory.⁹ And he said to him, “All these I will give you, if you will fall down and worship me.”¹⁰ Then Jesus said to him, “Be gone, Satan! For it is written, ‘You shall worship the Lord your God and him only shall you serve.’”¹¹ Then the devil left him, and behold, angels came and were ministering to him.

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

CHILDREN’S MESSAGE

SERMON: Pastor Dwight Hanson: The Seed of Discontentment

***HYMN OF THE DAY: “*What a Friend We Have in Jesus*” (LBW 439)**

***APOSTLES’ CREED**

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

I believe in Jesus Christ, His only Son, our Lord.

He was conceived by the power of the Holy Spirit and born of the virgin Mary.

He suffered under Pontius Pilate, was crucified, died, and was buried.

He descended into hell.

On the third day He rose again.

He ascended into heaven, and is seated at the right hand of the Father.

He will come again 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 Let us pray: Almighty and everlasting God, we find our way through the wilderness of this world only when we seek your will. Inspire our hearts by the presence of the Holy Spirit. Draw us close to the Good Shepherd, wherever he leads. Strengthen us amid the tests of life. Keep us focused on your Word. And for all who have wandered from the good path, following temptation into trouble, show them the way back. Remind each one of the grace of the Lord Jesus. Lord, in your mercy,

C Hear our prayer.

A As we pray for the needs of the Church, we begin with each local community of faith, congregationally focused. Refresh us in our dedication to serve your purpose in this very place, the redemption of real people in our own neighborhoods. Through the ongoing ministry of the whole Church, make us all into instruments of peace and everlasting hope for the whole world. Lord, in your mercy,

C Hear our prayer.

A As we pray for the many needs of the world, we lift up our civic leaders, near and far. Guide them with wisdom for the good of all. We continue to pray for nations in turmoil and war. We pray for all who serve with honor in harm's way, and their families. Lord, in your mercy,

C Hear our prayer.

A We pray for healing of all kinds. We name before you today: *Jim Carlisle, Mike Coe, Kennedy Giordano, Barb Goebel, Adriane Guinn, Nancy Guthrie, John Hacker, Amy & Bryan Jackson, Richard Lehman, Barb Orr, Brenda Renner, Judy Schamel, George & Barbara Suggs, Wayne Williams*, and others whom we name in our hearts (pause for silent prayer). Into your hands, O Lord, we commend all for whom we pray,

**C Trusting in your mercy, through your Son, Jesus Christ our Lord.
Amen.**

OFFERING

ANTHEM: *“This One Thing I Ask”* *(Choir)*

***OFFERTORY RESPONSE:**

“Doxology”

Praise God from whom all blessings flow; Praise him, all creatures here below; Praise him above, ye heav'nly host; Praise Father, Son, and Holy Ghost. Amen.

Text: Thomas Ken, 1637-1711
Tune: Louis Bourgeois, 1510-1561

OLD HUNDRETH
LM

Reproduced as an active subscriber to SOWeR (Sola Online Worship e-Resource) www.solapublishing.com

***OFFERTORY PRAYER:**

P Let us pray. Blessed are you, O Lord our God, maker of all things.
C **Through your goodness you have blessed us with these gifts. With them we offer ourselves to your service and dedicate our lives to the care and redemption of all that you have made, for the sake of him who gave himself for us, Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.**

***LORD'S PRAYER:**

C **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 BLESSING:**

P The Lord bless you and keep you.
The Lord make His face shine on you and be gracious to you.
The Lord look upon you with favor and + give you peace.
C **Amen.**

***SENDING HYMN: “In the Cross of Christ I Glory” (LBW 104)**

DISMISSAL:

A Go in peace. Serve the Lord.
C **Thanks be to God.**

POSTLUDE

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**Schedule of Midweek Worship for Lent:
Lent 2026: Thirsty for God**



**Five Lenten Wednesdays after Ash Wednesday - (2/18/2026)
Feb. 25—Mar. 25**

Wed., Feb. 25 ~ *The Bitter and the Sweet*
Wed., Mar. 4 ~ *A Stiff Neck at the Fountain of God*
Wed., Mar. 11 ~ *The Wise Consider, Remember, & Proclaim*
Wed., Mar. 18 ~ *Like a Thirsty Deer*
Wed. Mar 25 ~ *The Spring of the Water of Life*
Maundy Thurs., Apr. 2 ~ *This Cup*
Good Fri., Apr. 3 ~ *The Cup that He Drank*

6:00 PM Simple Soup Supper
7:00 PM Vespers

GRACE AT A GLANCE

Grace Lutheran Church

111 Lutheran Dr., P.O. Box 86 - Eaton, OH 45320
Phone: 937-456-6258 Email: GraceEaton111@gmail.com
www.gracelutheranofeaton.com ~ ~ Like us on Facebook

OFFICE HOURS:

Monday -Friday: 10—1, 2—5

TODAY February 22, 2026 — First Sunday in Lent

9:30 a.m. Worship
10:30 a.m. Fellowship & Education for all ages

Monday February 23

Pastor's Day Off
12:30 p.m. Bulletin Production with Sermon from 2/22

Tuesday February 24

5:30 p.m. Mom's Bible Study
6:00 p.m. Wine & the Word
7:00 p.m. Lakeside Fellowship

Wednesday February 25

9:00 a.m. Bible Study
5:30 p.m. Choir
5:30 p.m. Confirmation Class
6:00 p.m. Soup Supper
7:00 p.m. Lenten Midweek Worship

Thursday February 26

8—5 p.m. Lifeline Screening (FH/Kitchen)
7:30 p.m. AA Meeting (FH)

Friday February 27

12:30 p.m. Bulletin Production for 3/1 No Sermon

Saturday February 28

UPCOMING WEEK SPECIAL EVENTS

Sun. 3/1—Worship, Fellowship, Education for all ages, Sunday S'mores
Mon. 3/2—Pastor Off, Bulletin Production w/Sermon from 3/1
Tues. 2/24—Mom's Bible Study, Wine & the Word, Lakeside Fellowship
Wed. 2/25—Bible Study, Choir, Confirmation, Soup Supper, Midweek Worship
Thurs. 2/26—Lifeline Screening, AA Meeting
Fri. 2/27—Bulletin Production (3/1)
Sat. 2/28

ANNOUNCEMENTS

SIGN-UP TO SPONSOR A HOMELESS SHELTER MEAL FOR 2026

There is a **sign-up sheet in the Narthex or you can contact Kelly Mt. Castle to sign up (937-336-1223)**. The board of elders thanks you for helping with this very important ministry.

WORSHIP ASSISTANTS

Altar Guild for February: Becky Lenk & Tiffany Ingram
Offering Counter for February: Carol Perry; 2/25—Janice Barnes

Sunday, February 22—Lent 1

9:30 a.m.

Greeter: Dean & Mary Shetter
Usher: John Kiracofe
Lector: Barb Myers

Wednesday, February 25—Midweek Lent 1

7:00 p.m.

Greeter: Jane & Richard Coggin
Lector: Jane Coggin

Sunday, March 1—Lent 2

9:30 a.m.

Greeter: Debbie McKinney & Dorothy Stoltz
Usher: Jeff Kiracofe
Lector: Tina Ebright
Communion: Debbie McKinney, John Kiracofe

Wednesday, March 4—Midweek Lent 2

7:00 p.m.

Greeter/Usher: Tom & Patty Barnes
Lector: Patty Barnes

Attendance & Stewardship — (\$4,187 needed wkly)

| | | |
|----------|-----------|------------|
| 02.15.26 | 9:30 a.m. | \$6,177.48 |
| 02.18.26 | 7:00 p.m. | \$ 445.00 |

Great Commission Outreach Partners:

World Mission Prayer League—Chris & Emily and family, Lutheran Military Veterans and Families, Abundant Grace, West Chester

Grace Lutheran Mission Endowment Fund: The purpose of this fund is to extend the ministry of Grace Lutheran Church, apart from the general operation of the congregation. To learn more about our Mission Endowment Fund, please contact the church office and we'll give your question to the appropriate person.

IN OUR PRAYERS

After 4 weeks we will remove names from this list. If you would like to keep someone on the list, please note their name on the back of the “Attendance & Communion Registration” form.

URGENT PRAYER LIST:

HEALING: (In Alphabetical Order)

Jim Carlisle: (Healing from hip surgery)

Mike Coe: (As he recovers from knee surgery)

Kennedy Giordano: (Kelly Coffman’s niece—She had surgery to due to an infection and is now recovering well)

Barb Goebel: (she is in the hospital with an infection)

Adriane Guinn: (Owner of Buckeye Jake’s & friend of the Shetter’s & others—she is dealing with serious health issues)

Nancy Guthrie: (Mother of Savannah Guthrie’s (TV broadcaster) & siblings— for their needs)

John Hacker

Amy & Bryan Jackson: (for comfort and healing)

Richard Lehman: (He has returned home still healing)

Barb Orr: (Friend of Debbie McKinney —Dealing with multiple cancers)

Brenda Renner: (Prayers for upcoming biopsy on 2/18)

Judy Schamel: (Prayers for Healing at home)

George & Barbara Suggs: (Dealing with health issues)

Robert & Betsy Taylor: (Dear friends of Shetter’s—Prayers for their well-being)

Wayne Williams

LONG-TERM PRAYER LIST.....Maggie Risko, Sally Mowell, Devin Mays, Connie Martin, Jackie Steiner, Rhonda Paige Atkinson, Amy Jackson, Andy Proeschel, Judy Newkirk, Mike & Judy Schamel, Suzan Pauley, Barb Goebel, Carmen Hasdorff, Tom Schamel, Amanda & Shayla Dell, Susan Root, Fran Kester, Teddi & Mike Watkins, Ruth Hardin, Jenifer Combs, Doug Davis, Pastor Dean & Sandy Haferman, Dave Brumbaugh, Scot Emig, Barbara Worley, Carolyn MacFadyen, Judy Jay, Will Suggs, Earl House, Barbara Lakes, Becky Hoskins, Kayli Johnson, Joe McHenry, Tom Barnes: and those serving in the military: Maj. Love Hartman; Capt. John Kettman; SPC Brandon Mann; Brad Newkirk; Lt. Col. Kyle Hundley, Alex Pollitt, Airman, U.S. Air. Force.

OPPORTUNITIES FOR PRAYER AND BIBLE STUDY: Fellowship & Education

Following Worship—Refreshments for all are served in the Fellowship Hall immediately following worship on Sundays.

- **Youth Sunday School classes** meet @ **10:30 a.m.** — in the Sunday School music room (Education wing) and start with songs and prayer, then go to the adjacent classroom for our lesson. Bring a friend! Parents are always welcome.
- **Adult Education**— Following 9:30 a.m. worship, the adults meet to discuss the lessons of the day. Coffee and snacks provided.
- **Every other Sunday— Sunday S’mores @ 6:00 p.m.** —a Middle School- & High School-aged Youth Sunday Evening Ministry. Friends are welcome. Tina Ebright is the moderator and she can be reached at 937-472-5663.

Adult Bible Studies (during the week)

- **The 2nd Monday of each Month — 7:00 p.m.—The Phoebe Women’s Bible Study.** They are studying— ***“Living with Defiant JOY”*** a six-session study. Contact Kelly Mt. Castle (937-336-1223 or email: kelly.mtcastle@gmail.com).
- **The 2nd & 4th Tuesdays of the Month:**
 - * **6:00 p.m. — Wine & The Word** — this group shares a light meal (at the home of Carol Perry). The next meeting (2/24) they begin a new study **The Acts of the Apostles—Part 1**. If you would like to join them, please contact Carol at 937-456-6683 or cbperry122@embarqmail.com, so that we can order additional books.
 - * **7:00 p.m. — Lakeside Fellowship is held** at the Lakengren home of Dan & Karen Schultz. If you would like to join this group, please contact Karen/Dan at 419-890-7965 or dkschultz52@yahoo.com.
- **The 2nd Tues. of each month — 5:30 p.m. — FOR MOMS . . .** They are studying a 6-session Bible Study for **MOMS — Mom Set Free by: Jeannie Cunnion**.
- **The Wednesday Morning Prayer & Bible Study — 9:00 a.m.** — meets in the Meeting Room off of the Fellowship Hall. They are studying the ***minor prophets***.
- **The 3rd Thursday of each month — 2:00-4:00 p.m. — “Graceful Fiber Guild”** — **meets** in the Fellowship Hall or the adjacent meeting room. Bring a craft you’ve been working on or just come to learn a new craft. Everyone is welcome to join us! Our next meeting is ***Thurs., Mar. 19th***.

These studies are open to any member and our friends. No prior Bible study background is needed. Please bring your Bible.

UPCOMING EVENTS

IN FEBRUARY— MARCH — APRIL

**Schedule of MidWeek Worship for Lent:
Lent 2026: Thirsty for God**



**Five Lenten Wednesdays
Feb. 25—Mar. 25**

Wed., Feb. 25 ~ *The Bitter and the Sweet*

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Wed., Mar. 11 ~ *The Wise Consider, Remember, & Proclaim*

Wed., Mar. 18 ~ *Like a Thirsty Deer*

Wed. Mar 25 ~ *The Spring of the Water of Life*

6:00 PM Simple Soup Supper

7:00 PM Vespers

No Suppers

Maundy Thurs., Apr. 2 ~ *This Cup*

Good Fri., Apr. 3 ~ *The Cup that He Drank*

Easter Breakfast — Apr. 5 ~ 8:00-9:00 a.m.

Easter Sunday, Apr. 5 ~ 9:30 a.m.—Worship with Holy Communion



You're invited to a Life Line Screening event!

Where: Grace Lutheran Church

When: Thursday, February 26, 2026

Life Line Screening is the nation's leader in **Stroke and Cardiovascular Disease Risk** Screenings.

Trusted by over 11 million customers.

Screenings are simple and painless. Get peace of mind or early detection.

Who should attend:
Anyone **age of 40+**

Special Pricing for \$129

- ♥ Carotid Artery Disease Screening
- ♥ Atrial Fibrillation Screening
- ♥ Abdominal Aortic Aneurysm Screening
- ♥ Peripheral Artery Disease Screening

4 ways to book your appointment...

Call 800-324-9458 and use promo code HABC001

Visit  LLSA.SOCIAL/HABC



Text the word "circle" to 216-279-1607

These tests cannot detect all risk factors for all conditions, such as and including the presence of coronary artery disease. Those with abnormal results should discuss possible next steps with their family healthcare provider and ensure they understand the risk and benefits of any additional testing or procedures.

Listening for the Promise

WEEKLY DEVOTIONAL

First Sunday in Lent – February 22, 2026

“¹²Therefore, just as sin came into the world through one man, and death through sin, and so death spread to all men because all sinned — ¹³for sin indeed was in the world before the law was given, but sin is not counted where there is no law. ¹⁵But the free gift is not like the trespass. For if many died through one man’s trespass, much more have the grace of God and the free gift by the grace of that one man Jesus Christ abounded for many.”

- Romans 5:12-13, 15 -

During the summer of 1874, swarms of Rocky Mountain locusts invaded the Great Plains in the United States and Canada. Often referred to as the Locust Plague of 1874, or the Grasshopper Plague of 1874, the locusts swarmed over an estimated 2,000,000 square miles (5,200,000 km²) and caused millions of dollars' worth of damage. Residents described swarms so thick that they covered the sun for up to six hours.

Compared to previous infestations in the region, the 1874 plague was significantly more damaging. A record drought in the Midwest and Great Plains had arrived, which caused the grasshoppers (estimated at 120 billion to 12.5 trillion) to not only thrive but also to swarm when local vegetation was ruined. The arriving locusts would pile up to over a foot high and ate crops, trees, leaves, grass, wool off sheep, harnesses on horses, paint from wagons, even the handles on pitchforks.

The locusts would eat for several days from fields and trees and in some instances also ate food inside the farmers' homes before they moved on. Carpets and clothes were damaged by the locusts in the process. The locust excrement and carcasses polluted ponds and streams. Train tracks "slick with grasshopper guts" caused trains to lose traction, according to the book *It Happened in Nebraska*. The sight must have been ghastly, and it's difficult to imagine for those of us that did not experience the horror.

However, the Grasshopper Plague serves as a good metaphor for Paul's description of sin from Romans, chapter 5. Sin leads to more sin, which leads to more sin. It infests on the human race. It spreads quickly like a plague. It can start off slowly and quietly; it often does. But then, before you know it, sin is widespread and menacing, affecting both the guilty and innocent alike. Really, we are all guilty because we have all sinned and fallen short of God's glory. But the good news is Jesus Christ is the antidote to the plague of sin. Through his blood shed on the cross, we have been forgiven, and by His grace, we are set free from the plague of sin and given new life in Him.

It Is Written

Find the 42 **bold** words from Matthew 4:3-10 (ESV)

G S B E D X N W O R S H I P D
T H T E K E U D N D Y D P P E
C S V O T I A G L O R Y I H W
L I E T N E R R Y T M F N O O
L E I T R E O T E A L O N E H
I R S B S W S M S G N O A M S
W J J T U X P O L E O T C O N
R D O G S L N M O B V N L U A
Y E V R E S O S A D C E E T M
L H T Y J U I A V N W O R H T
O G T P N Y J T E A S X Z Y L
H I M T M X D A S M D D R O L
C H A S L E G N A M E R N O A
C I B E A R T Y D O W N O A F
N S M O D G N I K C W O D W H

And the **tempter** came and said to him, “If you are the **Son of God**, **command** these **stones** to become **loaves of bread**.” But he answered, “It is **written**, ‘**Man** shall not live by bread **alone**, but by **every word** that comes from the **mouth** of God.’” Then the **devil** took him to the **holy city** and set him on the **pinnacle** of the **temple** and said to him, “If you are the Son of God, **throw** yourself down, for it is written, ‘He will command his **angels** concerning you,’ and ‘On their **hands** they will **bear** you up, **lest** you **strike** your **foot** against a stone.’” **Jesus** said to him, “Again it is written, ‘You shall not put the **Lord** your God to the **test**.’” Again, the devil took him to a very **high mountain** and **showed** him all the **kingdoms** of the **world** and their **glory**. And he said to him, “All these I will give you, if you will **fall down** and **worship** me.” Then Jesus said to him, “Be **gone**, **Satan**! For it is written, ‘You shall worship the Lord your God and **him only** shall you **serve**.’”