

Shepherd of the Desert Evangelical Lutheran Church of Sun City, AZ



February 18, 2026

Mission Statement

"To be a congregation that puts the Love of Christ into action from one generation to another and from our community to our world".

Prelude

Words of Welcome Pastor John Maroni

✠ Gathering Hymn Abide with Me

ELW # 629

✠ Prayer of the Day

A The Lord be with you.

C **And also with you.**

A Gracious God, out of your love and mercy you breathed into dust the breath of life, creating us to serve you and our neighbors. Call forth our prayers and acts of kindness, and strengthen us to face our mortality with confidence in the mercy of your Son, 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: Joel 2:1-2, 12-17

Because of the coming Day of the LORD, the prophet Joel calls the people to a community lament. The repentant community reminds God of his gracious character and asks God to spare the people, lest the nations doubt God's power to save.

¹Blow the trumpet in Zion; sound the alarm on my holy mountain! Let all the inhabitants of the land tremble, for the day of the LORD is coming, it is near—²a day of darkness and gloom, a day of clouds and thick darkness! Like blackness spread upon the mountains a great and powerful army comes; their like has never been from of old, nor will be again after them in ages to come.

¹²Yet even now, says the LORD, return to me with all your heart, with fasting, with weeping, and with mourning; ¹³rend your hearts and not your clothing. Return to the LORD, your God, for he is gracious and merciful, slow to anger, and abounding in steadfast love, and relents from punishing.

¹⁴Who knows whether he will not turn and relent, and leave a blessing behind him, a grain offering and a drink offering for the LORD, your God?

¹⁵Blow the trumpet in Zion; sanctify a fast; call a solemn assembly;

¹⁶gather the people. Sanctify the congregation; assemble the aged; gather the children, even infants at the breast. Let the bridegroom leave his room, and the bride her canopy.

¹⁷Between the vestibule and the altar let the priests, the ministers of the LORD, weep.

Let them say, "Spare your people, O LORD, and do not make your heritage a mockery, a byword among the nations. Why should it be said among the peoples, 'Where is their God?' "

L The word of the Lord.

C **Thanks be to God.**

Psalm of the Day: Psalm 51:1-17

- ¹Have mercy on me, O God, according to your | steadfast love;
in your great compassion blot out | my offenses.
- ²**Wash me through and through | from my wickedness,
and cleanse me | from my sin.**
- ³For I know | my offenses,
and my sin is ev- | er before me.
- ⁴**Against you only have I sinned and done what is evil | in your sight;
so you are justified when you speak and right | in your judgment.**
- ⁵Indeed, I was born | steeped in wickedness,
a sinner from my | mother's womb.
- ⁶**Indeed, you delight in truth | deep within me,
and would have me know wisdom | deep within.**
- ⁷Remove my sins with hyssop, and I | shall be clean;
wash me, and I shall be pur- | er than snow.
- ⁸**Let me hear | joy and gladness;
that the body you have broken | may rejoice.**
- ⁹Hide your face | from my sins,
and blot out | all my wickedness.
- ¹⁰**Create in me a clean | heart, O God,
and renew a right spir- | it within me.**
- ¹¹Cast me not away | from your presence,
and take not your Holy Spir- | it from me.
- ¹²**Restore to me the joy of | your salvation
and sustain me with your boun- | tiful Spirit.**
- ¹³Let me teach your ways | to offenders,
and sinners shall be re- | stored to you.
- ¹⁴**Rescue me from bloodshed, O God of | my salvation,
and my tongue shall sing | of your righteousness.**
- ¹⁵O Lord, o- | pen my lips,
and my mouth shall pro- | claim your praise.
- ¹⁶**For you take no delight in sacrifice, or | I would give it.
You are not pleased | with burnt offering.**
- ¹⁷The sacrifice of God is a | troubled spirit;
a troubled and broken heart, O God, you will | not despise.

Second Reading: 2 Corinthians 5:20b--6:10

The ministry of the gospel endures many challenges and hardships. Through this ministry, God's reconciling activity in the death of Christ reaches into the depths of our lives to bring us into a right relationship with God. In this way, God accepts us into the reality of divine salvation.

^{20b}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.

^{6:1}As we work together with him, we urge you also not to accept the grace of God in vain. ²For he says, "At an acceptable time I have listened to you, and on a day of salvation I have helped you."

See, now is the acceptable time; see, now is the day of salvation! ³We are putting no obstacle in anyone's way, so that no fault may be found with our ministry, ⁴but as servants of God we have commended ourselves in every way: through great endurance, in afflictions, hardships, calamities, ⁵beatings, imprisonments, riots, labors, sleepless nights, hunger; ⁶by purity, knowledge, patience, kindness, holiness of spirit, genuine love, ⁷truthful speech, and the power of God; with the weapons of righteousness for the right hand and for the left; ⁸in honor and dishonor, in ill repute and good repute. We are treated as impostors, and yet are true; ⁹as unknown, and yet are well known; as dying, and see—we are alive; as punished, and yet not killed; ¹⁰as sorrowful, yet always rejoicing; as poor, yet making many rich; as having nothing, and yet possessing everything.

L The word of the Lord.

C **Thanks be to God.**

Choral Anthem "The Old Rugged Cross"

Shepherd's Choir

Gospel: Matthew 6:1-6, 16-21

In the Sermon on the Mount, Jesus commends almsgiving, prayer, and fasting, but emphasizes that spiritual devotion must not be done for show.

[Jesus said to the disciples:] ¹⁴"Beware of practicing your piety before others in order to be seen by them; for then you have no reward from your Father in heaven.

²"So whenever you give alms, do not sound a trumpet before you, as the hypocrites do in the synagogues and in the streets, so that they may be praised by others. Truly I tell you, they have received their reward. ³But when you give alms, do not let your left hand know what your right hand is doing, ⁴so that your alms may be done in secret; and your Father who sees in secret will reward you.

⁵"And whenever you pray, do not be like the hypocrites; for they love to stand and pray in the synagogues and at the street corners, so that they may be seen by others. Truly I tell you, they have received their reward. ⁶But whenever you pray, go into your room and shut the door and pray to your Father who is in secret; and your Father who sees in secret will reward you.

¹⁶"And whenever you fast, do not look dismal, like the hypocrites, for they disfigure their faces so as to show others that they are fasting. Truly I tell you, they have received their reward. ¹⁷But when you fast, put oil on your head and wash your face, ¹⁸so that your fasting may be seen not by others but by your Father who is in secret; and your Father who sees in secret will reward you.

¹⁹"Do not store up for yourselves treasures on earth, where moth and rust consume and where thieves break in and steal; ²⁰but store up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust consumes and where thieves do not break in and steal. ²¹For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also."

P The Gospel of the Lord.

C **Praise to you, O Christ.**

Message

✠ **Hymn of the Day** A Lamb Goes Uncomplaining Forth

ELW # 340

Invitation to Lent

Friends in Christ, today with the whole church we enter the time of remembering Jesus' Passover from death to life, and our life in Christ is renewed. We begin this holy season by acknowledging our need for repentance and for God's mercy. We are created to experience joy in communion with God, to love one another, and to live in harmony with creation. But our sinful rebellion separates us from God, our neighbors, and creation, so that we do not enjoy the life our creator intended.

As disciples of Jesus, we are called to a discipline that contends against evil and resists whatever leads us away from love of God and neighbor. I invite you, therefore, to the discipline of Lent—self-examination and repentance, prayer and fasting, sacrificial giving and works of love—strengthened by the gifts of word and sacrament. Let us continue our journey through these forty days to the great Three Days of Jesus' death and resurrection.

Confession of Sin

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

Most holy and merciful God,

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

P We have not loved you with our whole heart, and mind, and strength. We have not loved our neighbors as ourselves. We have not forgiven others as we have been forgiven.

C Have mercy on us, O God.

P We have shut our ears to your call to serve as Christ served us. We have not been true to the mind of Christ. We have grieved your Holy Spirit.

C Have mercy on us, O God.

P Our past unfaithfulness, the pride, envy, hypocrisy, and apathy that have infected our lives, we confess to you.

C Have mercy on us, O God.

P Our self-indulgent appetites and ways, and our exploitation of other people, we confess to you.

C Have mercy on us, O God.

P Our negligence in prayer and worship, and our failure to share the faith that is in us, we confess to you.

C Have mercy on us, O God.

P Our neglect of human need and suffering, and our indifference to injustice and cruelty, we confess to you.

C Have mercy on us, O God.

P Our false judgments, our uncharitable thoughts toward our neighbors, and our prejudice and contempt toward those who differ from us, we confess to you.

C Have mercy on us, O God.

P Our waste and pollution of your creation, and our lack of concern for those who come after us, we confess to you.

C Have mercy on us, O God.

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

C Hear us, O God, for your mercy is great.

Imposition of Ashes

- P Almighty God, you have created us out of the dust of the earth.
May these ashes be a sign of our mortality and penitence, reminding us
that only by the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ are we given eternal life;
through the same Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord.
- C **Amen.**
- P Remember that you are dust, and to dust you shall return.
- P Accomplish in us, O God, the work of your salvation,
C **that we may show forth your glory in the world.**
- P By the cross and passion of your Son, our Savior,
C **bring us with all your saints to the joy of his resurrection.**
- P Almighty God have mercy on us, forgive us all our sins through our Lord Jesus Christ, strengthen
us in all goodness, and by the power of the Holy Spirit keep us in eternal life.
- C **Amen.**

Prayers of Intercession

- A Hear us, O God.
- C **Your mercy is great.**
- P Into your hands, gracious God, we commend all for whom we pray,
trusting in your mercy; through Jesus Christ, our Savior.
- C **Amen.**

✠ Share the Peace

- P The peace of Christ be with you always.
- C **And also with you**

Offering Music



Cre - ate in me a clean heart, O God, and re - new a right
 spir - it with - in me. Cast me not a - way from your pres - ence, and take
 not your Ho - ly Spir - it from me. Re - store to me the joy of
 your sal - va - tion, and up - hold me with your free Spir - it.

Offering Prayer

- A God of mercy and grace,
 C **the eyes of all wait upon you, and you open your hand in blessing. Fill us with good things at your table, that we may come to the help of all in need, through Jesus Christ, our redeemer and Lord. Amen.**

⦿ Prayer at the Table

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

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:

Ho - ly, ho - ly, ho - ly Lord, God of pow-er and might,
 heav'n and earth are full of your glo-ry. 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, ho - san - na in the high - est.

Thanksgiving at the Table

P We praise you for the heart of Jesus, so filled with your love for this earth.
 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.

⌌ Lord's Prayer

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.

Invitation to Communion

P There's a place for everyone at the table. All are welcome here.



1 O Lamb of God, you bear the sin of all the world a - way;
 2 O Lamb of God, you bear the sin of all the world a - way;
 3 O Lamb of God, you bear the sin of all the world a - way;



you suf-fered death our lives to save: have mer-cy now, we pray.
 you set us free from guilt and grave: have mer-cy now, we pray.
 e - ter-nal peace with God you made: give us your peace, we pray.

Special Music

✠ Prayer after Communion

A Merciful God,
 accompany our journey through these forty days. Renew us in the gift of baptism, that
 we may provide for those who are poor, pray for those in need, fast from self-
 indulgence, and above all that we may find our treasure in the life of your Son, Jesus
 Christ, our Savior and Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God,
 now and forever.
 C Amen.

✠ 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.

✠ Sending Hymn The Glory of These Forty Days

ELW # 320

✠ Dismissal

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

Postlude

Announcements

Midweek Lenten February 25th. Soup Supper starts at 6 p.m. This week we will have a representative from Lutheran Social Services of the Southwest. One of our recipients of Mission of the Month.

Organ Stop Pizza Outing Sunday Feb. 22nd. We are going to Organ Stop! We will meet at the church to carpool. You can also meet us there if you would like to drive on your own. We will leave the church at 2 pm. Make sure to sign up so we can plan on rides if needed. Join us for a fun outing!

Monday Morning Bible Study 10:00 a.m. in the Founders Room. Remember to bring your Bible and a beverage. We will be reading the lessons for the upcoming weekend services.

Ladies Book Club Wednesday at 9:00 a.m. The Book they are reading is The Story of Ruth by Liz Curtis Higgs. The cost is \$5.00. Please reach out to Nancy Fisher if you need a book.

Game Night February 27th at 6:00 p.m. in the Founders Room. We will have Trivia Night for this Game Night. Snacks provided but bring a beverage of your choice.

Pancake Breakfast February 28th 8:00 a.m. to 10:00 a.m. in Walton Hall. The price is right FREE!!! This is a free breakfast for the community and S.O.D.

Mission of the Month - February - Lutheran Social Services of the Southwest. They respond to Arizona's changing needs by compassionately offering quality services and resources that contribute to a stronger healthier Arizona for all people.



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Musicians: (Sunday) Kevin DeYager (Saturday) Linda McClentic (1&3) Tony Lake (2&4)

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