

March 1, 2026

SECOND SUNDAY IN LENT

## Late Night Catechism

Many of us experienced religious education that was based on questions and answers. That's what a catechism is. Who is God? What has God done for us? What does this mean?

Nicodemus has heard about Jesus and comes to him with questions. He comes to Jesus by night, a time of day representing mystery, ignorance, and hiding. It would be risky--even dangerous --for this religious leader to come to Jesus in the light of day with his spiritual questions.

Nicodemus thinks he is coming for information, like getting answers to questions in a catechism. What he finds is a teacher who speaks the language of symbol, spirit, and experience. While a befuddled Nicodemus tries to wrap his analytical and literal mind around Jesus' strange talk about being born from above, Jesus patiently points him toward the Spirit. Can a person so far along in life have a new beginning? Yes! In baptism we are born again of water and Spirit, a birth that shapes the rest of our lives.

Jesus' use of birth imagery suggests that sometimes we would rather stay in the warmth, darkness, and safety of the womb, than take any risks in life. The season of Lent gives us spiritual encouragement for our birthing. At times it may seem like we don't get any answers to our questions, or that nothing is clear-cut and simple anymore. But the Spirit is brooding and the wind is blowing where it will. We may not always know what is happening to us or where we are going, but we trust that God is leading us and guiding us.

Nicodemus' late night catechism leads him to a new kind of faith. In baptism we begin a lifelong journey of renewal and transformation. Jesus, our teacher, leads the way.

**First St. John Lutheran Church**

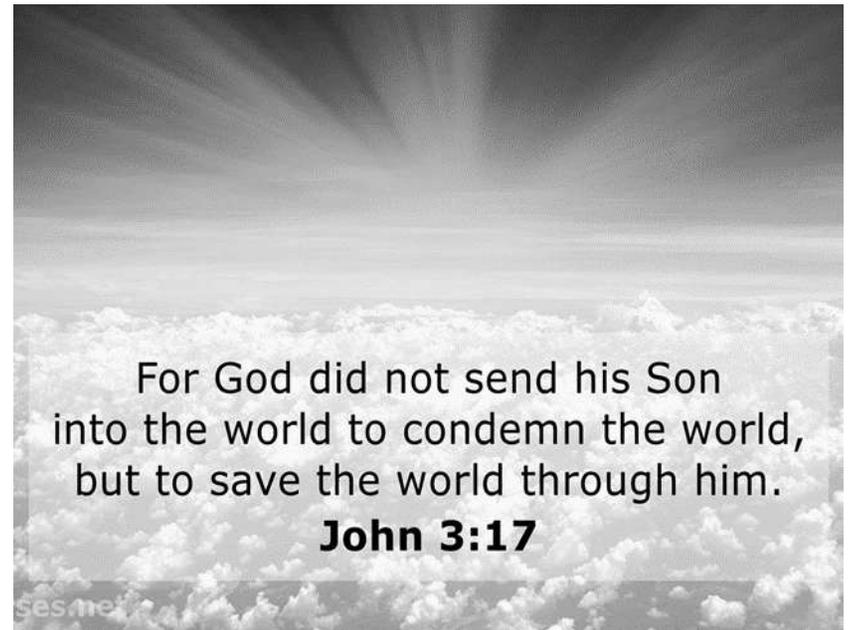
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Rev. Jerald K. Rayl, Pastor

Dr. Anthony Pattin, Church Musician  
Jo-Anne Chrysochoos, Director of Music  
Cheri Sergent, Bell Choir, Director  
Jessica Miller, Office Manager



**Called through faith; Gathered in worship; Serving the community**

**March 1, 2026 - 10:30 am**

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**Second Sunday in Lent**

Welcome to First St. John Lutheran Church! We offer two services with Sunday School for youth and adults and catechism (starting soon). Our regular Sunday schedule is:

8:00 am	Early Worship
9:15 am	JAM Sunday School
9:15 am	Adult Sunday School
10:30 am	Late Worship
2:00 pm	Chapel Communion

*(2nd Sunday of the month)*

**LIVESTREAM AND RECORDED WORSHIP:** We livestream the service on our church website at [www.firststjohn.com](http://www.firststjohn.com). Also, the service will be recorded and published to the website

**SMILE! YOU'RE ON CAMERA:** Please remember you may be on camera during the livestream and the recording of the service.

**IMPORTANT REMINDER:** Please remember to silence your cell phone before church begins. Thanks!

**SUNDAY SCHOOL & CATECHISM** JAM Sunday School (church basement) and Adult Sunday School (lounge) meet each Sunday at 9:15 am. First year catechism will start soon! If you have a child in 6-7th grade interested please let Pastor Rayl know.

**NURSERY** is in the church basement and is now available during 2nd Service each week; you are welcome to sit with your child as well. A diaper changing table is available in the ladies restroom in the basement of the church.

**RESTROOMS** are in the church basement. Go to the Narthex (lobby) and take either set of steps to the basement hallway. The ladies room is at one end, and the men's room is at the other.

**FLOWERS:** If you would like to sign up for altar flowers, there is a book in the lounge. Or, you can call the church office during the week to check on availability.

**MEMORIALS:** If you wish to give a memorial in honor or memory of a loved one, you may mail it in or pick up a memorial card in the church office.

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## 2026 EASTER FLOWER SALE

SPONSORED BY THE ALTAR GUILD



It's time to order the flowers that will decorate the church on Easter morning, April 5<sup>th</sup>. The price is \$15.00 per plant. You can choose a lily, daffodil, hyacinth, or tulip. Fill out the order blank below and place it in the offering plate or mail it to the church office. The final Sunday to order will be March 22<sup>nd</sup>. Payment must accompany your order. Make checks out to: **First St. John Lutheran.**

***Deadline for placing orders is Sunday, March 22<sup>nd</sup>.***

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Number of plants @ \$15.00 each \_\_\_\_\_

Enclosed: \$ \_\_\_\_\_

Type of plant: \_\_\_\_\_  
*(lily, daffodil, hyacinth, tulip)*

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

City \_\_\_\_\_ Zip Code \_\_\_\_\_

Phone \_\_\_\_\_

In Loving Memory of (Deceased) \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

In Honor of (Living) \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

**ORDER OF WORSHIP—10:30 am**

Prelude Dr. Anthony Pattin

Ringling of the Bell

**Opening Hymn**      *“What Wondrous Love is This”*      No. 666

**Invocation**

*All may make the sign of the cross, the sign marked at baptism, as the presiding minister begins.*

P: Blessed be the holy Trinity, (+) one God, Wonderful Counselor, Mighty Savior, Prince of Peace.

**C: Amen.**

**Confession and Forgiveness**

P: Trusting in God’s steadfast love and faithfulness, let us confess our sin.

*Silence for reflection and self-examination.*

P: Mighty God, lover of justice,

**C: you call us to life in community, but we have served our own interests at the expense of our neighbors. We have sown deceit where honesty was needed. We say the right words, but our hearts are far from you. Turn us to seek your face. Knit us together and give us the mind of Christ, that we may do justice, love mercy, and walk humbly with you, our God. Amen.**

P: The former things have passed away, and new things God now declares: Like a spring of water that never fails, God covers you in the righteousness of Christ, and forgives your sin in † Jesus’ name. May the Spirit give you strength to live for others, and bless you with the gift of peace.

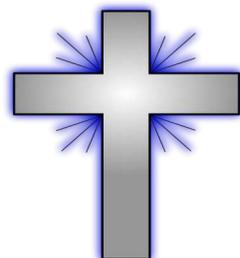
**C: Amen.**

P: The peace of the Lord be with you all.

**C: And also with you.**

P: Let us share the peace of the Lord.

*The congregation may greet one another by shaking hands, fist bumping, or any other form of greeting with the words, “Peace be with you.” We conclude the sharing of the peace by singing:*



**LENTEN & HOLY WEEK SERVICES**

Here is the schedule for our upcoming Lent services.

Feb 18 <sup>th</sup>	Ash Wednesday	11:00 am, 7:00 pm
Feb 25 <sup>th</sup>	Lenten Services	11:00 am, 7:00 pm
Mar 4 <sup>th</sup>	Lenten Services	11:00 am, 7:00 pm
Mar 11 <sup>th</sup>	Lenten Services	11:00 am, 7:00 pm
Mar 18 <sup>th</sup>	Lenten Services	11:00 am, 7:00 pm
Mar 25 <sup>th</sup>	Lenten Services	11:00 am, 7:00 pm
Mar 29 <sup>th</sup>	Palm Sunday	8:00 am, 10:30 am
April 2 <sup>nd</sup>	Maundy Thursday	11:00 am, 7:00 pm
April 3 <sup>rd</sup>	Good Friday	12:00 pm
April 5 <sup>th</sup>	Easter Sunday	8:00 am, 10:30 am

**Grant us grace to see thee, Lord,  
present in thy holy word;  
grace to imitate thee now  
and be pure, as pure art thou;  
that we might become like thee  
at thy great epiphany,  
and may praise thee, ever blest,  
God in flesh made manifest.**

- Songs of Thankfulness and Praise ELW 310 (verse 4)

### **Prayer of the Day**

P: Let us pray. O God, our leader and guide, in the waters of baptism you bring us to new birth to live as your children. Strengthen our faith in your promises, that by your Spirit we may lift up your life to all the world through 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.**

*(Please be seated)*

### **Announcements**

#### **Introduction**

During Lent we journey with all those around the world who will be baptized at the Easter Vigil. In today's gospel Jesus tells Nicodemus that he must be born of water and Spirit. At the font we are given a new birth as children of God. As God made a covenant with Abraham, in baptism God promises to raise us up with Christ to new life. From worship we are sent forth to proclaim God's love for all the world.

#### **FIRST READING: Genesis 12:1-4a**

*God's call of Abram and Sarai has a clear purpose—that through them all the families of the earth would gain a blessing. As they set out on their journey, they are accompanied by promises of land, nation, and a great reputation.*

<sup>1</sup>The Lord said to Abram, "Go from your country and your kindred and your father's house to the land that I will show you. <sup>2</sup>I will make of you a great nation, and I will bless you and make your name great, so that you will be a blessing. <sup>3</sup>I will bless those who bless you, and the one who curses you I will curse, and in you all the families of the earth shall be blessed."

<sup>4a</sup>So Abram went, as the Lord had told him, and Lot went with him.

Reader: Word of God. Word of Life.

**C: Thanks be to God.**

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### ***PARTICIPANTS IN TODAY'S SERVICE***

#### **ELDERS**

Bill Nelson  
Matt Miller

#### **READER**

Ross Church

#### **SOUND BOARD**

Amy Nelson

### **Offering Prayer**

P: Let us pray. God of majesty, no eye has seen, no ear has heard what you have prepared for those who love you, yet in this meal you reveal the wideness of your mercy. Use what we have gathered to feed us with the reign of God come near, Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord.

**C: Amen.**

### **Pastoral Prayer** *(Each petition concludes with this response)*

P: Hear us, O Lord,

**C: your mercy is great.**

P: Hear us as we pray:

### **The Lord's Prayer** *(prayed by all)*

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.

### **Blessing**

P: May the triune God, who has put a new song in your mouth and tuned your heart for praise (+) bless you now and forever.

**C: Amen.**

### **Closing Hymn**

*"Lift High the Cross"*

No. 660

### **Dismissal**

P: Go in peace. Do justice. Love mercy.

**C: Thanks be to God.**

### **Postlude**

Dr. Anthony Pattin

### **PSALM: Psalm 121**

<sup>1</sup> I lift up my eyes to the hills—

from where will my help come?

<sup>2</sup> **My help comes from the Lord,  
who made heaven and earth.**

<sup>3</sup> He will not let your foot be moved;  
he who keeps you will not slumber.

<sup>4</sup> **He who keeps Israel  
will neither slumber nor sleep.**

<sup>5</sup> The Lord is your keeper;  
the Lord is your shade at your right hand.

<sup>6</sup> **The sun shall not strike you by day  
nor the moon by night.**

<sup>7</sup> The Lord will keep you from all evil;  
he will keep your life.

<sup>8</sup> **The Lord will keep  
your going out and your coming in  
from this time on and forevermore.**

### **SECOND READING: Romans 4:1-5, 13-17**

*In the person and example of Abraham we discover that a right relationship with God does not involve earning a reward from God but entails trusting God's promises. Abraham is the forebear and model for both Jews and Gentiles, because we too trust that ours is a God who gives life to the dead.*

<sup>1</sup> What then are we to say was gained by Abraham, our ancestor according to the flesh? <sup>2</sup> For if Abraham was justified by works, he has something to boast about, but not before God. <sup>3</sup> For what does the scripture say? "Abraham believed God, and it was reckoned to him as righteousness." <sup>4</sup> Now to one who works, wages are not reckoned as a gift but as something due. <sup>5</sup> But to one who does not work but trusts him who justifies the ungodly, such faith is reckoned as righteousness.

<sup>13</sup> For the promise that he would inherit the world did not come to Abraham or to his descendants through the law but through the righteousness of faith. <sup>14</sup> For if it is the adherents of the law who are to be the heirs, faith is null and the promise is void. <sup>15</sup> For the law brings wrath, but where there is no law, neither is there transgression.

<sup>16</sup> For this reason the promise depends on faith, in order that it may rest on grace, so that it may be guaranteed to all his descendants, not only to the adherents of the law but also to those who share the faith of Abraham (who is the father of all of us, <sup>17</sup> as it is written, "I have made you the father of many nations"), in the presence of the God in whom he believed, who gives life to the dead and calls into existence the things that do not exist.

Reader: Word of God. Word of Life.

**C: Thanks be to God.**

(Please stand)

**Lenten Verse (sung in unison)**

Re - turn to the Lord, your God, for he is gra - cious and  
mer - ci - ful, slow to an - ger, and a - bound - ing in  
stead - fast love, and a - bound - ing in stead - fast love.

**Gospel Announcement**

P: The Gospel according to St. John, Chapter 3.

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

**GOSPEL: John 3:1-17**

*A curious Pharisee visits Jesus by night to learn from the teacher his friends reject. Jesus speaks to him about life in the Spirit and the kingdom of God.*

<sup>1</sup> Now there was a Pharisee named Nicodemus, a leader of the Jews. <sup>2</sup> He came to Jesus by night and said to him, “Rabbi, we know that you are a teacher who has come from God, for no one can do these signs that you do unless God is with that person.” <sup>3</sup> Jesus answered him, “Very truly, I tell you, no one can see the kingdom of God without being born from above.” <sup>4</sup> Nicodemus said to him, “How can anyone be born after having grown old? Can one enter a second time into the mother’s womb and be born?” <sup>5</sup> Jesus answered, “Very truly, I tell you, no one can enter the kingdom of God without being born of water and Spirit. <sup>6</sup> What is born of the flesh is flesh, and what is born of the Spirit is spirit. <sup>7</sup> Do not be astonished that I said to you, ‘You must be born from above.’ <sup>8</sup> The wind blows where it chooses, and you hear the sound of it, but you do not know where it comes from or where it goes. So it is with everyone who is born of the Spirit.” <sup>9</sup> Nicodemus said to him, “How can these things be?” <sup>10</sup> Jesus answered him, “Are you the teacher of Israel, and yet you do not understand these things?”

<sup>11</sup> “Very truly, I tell you, we speak of what we know and testify to what we have seen, yet you do not receive our testimony. <sup>12</sup> If I have told you about earthly things and you do not believe, how can you believe if I tell you about

heavenly things? <sup>13</sup> No one has ascended into heaven except the one who descended from heaven, the Son of Man. <sup>14</sup> And just as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, so must the Son of Man be lifted up, <sup>15</sup> that whoever believes in him may have eternal life.

<sup>16</sup> “For God so loved the world that he gave his only Son, so that everyone who believes in him may not perish but may have eternal life.

<sup>17</sup> “Indeed, God did not send the Son into the world to condemn the world but in order that the world might be saved through him.”

**Gospel Response**

P: This is the Gospel of the Lord.

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

(Please be seated)

**SERMON**

Pastor Rayl

**Sermon Hymn** “When I Survey the Wondrous Cross” No. 803

(Please stand)

**Apostles’ Creed**

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, 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.

(Please be seated)

**The Offering**

**Musical Offertory**

“The Crucifixion” Jo-Anne Chrysochoos