

The 2nd Sunday in Lent

March 1, 2026



North Riverdale Lutheran Church

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Welcome to North Riverdale Lutheran Church!

We are honored by your presence with us this morning. A few notes about our service:

- *If you are joining us live, please sign the red “Welcome Pad” found in your pew.*
- *We invite you to take an active part in our worship service:*
 - ** marks the places to stand in body or in spirit.*
 - *The Congregation’s spoken parts are **printed in bold print**.*
 - *Hymns and songs are found in the cranberry Evangelical Lutheran Worship hymnal (**ELW**) or the Praise and Worship Songbook (**PWS**) – both in the pew rack in front of you or at the end of your pew.*

INTRODUCTION TO THE DAY

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.

GATHERING

PRELUDE

WELCOME

CONFESSION 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.

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 disdainning 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.

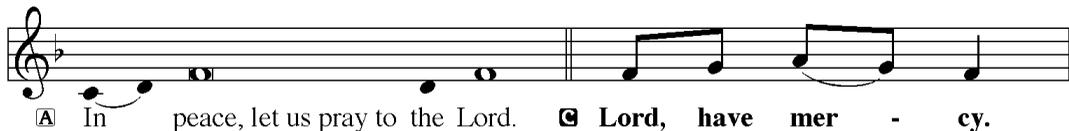
Amen.

*** GATHERING SONG *What Wondrous Love Is This* (ELW 666)**

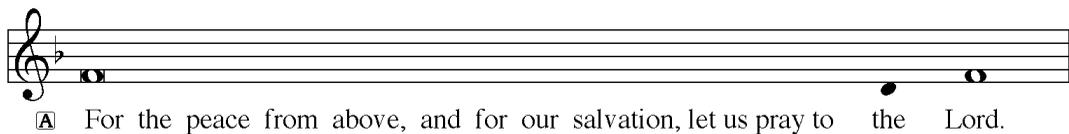
*** GREETING**

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.**

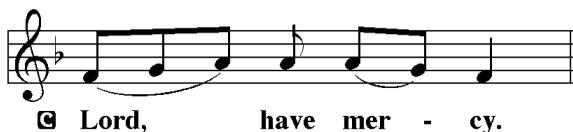
KYRIE



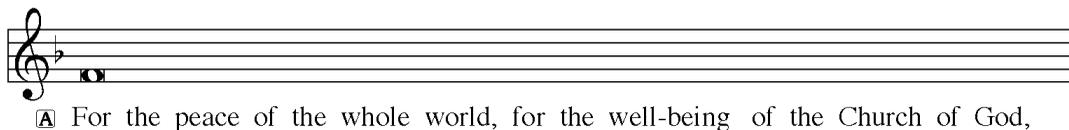
A In peace, let us pray to the Lord. **G** Lord, have mer - cy.



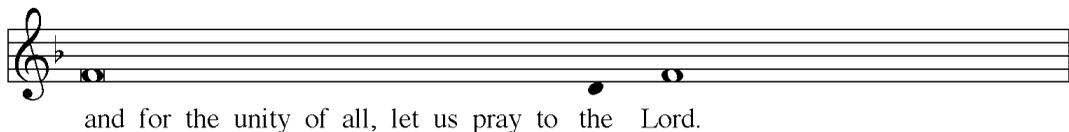
A For the peace from above, and for our salvation, let us pray to the Lord.



G Lord, have mer - cy.



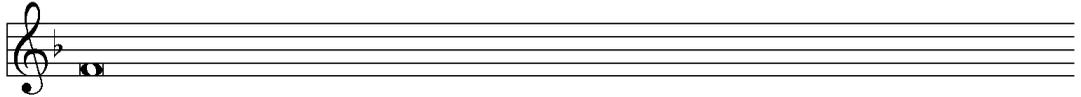
A For the peace of the whole world, for the well-being of the Church of God,



and for the unity of all, let us pray to the Lord.



G Lord, have mer - cy.



Ⓐ For this holy house, and for all who offer here their worship and praise,



let us pray to the Lord.

Ⓒ Lord, have mer - cy.



Ⓐ Help, save, comfort, and defend us, gra - cious Lord.

Ⓒ A - men

* PRAYER OF THE DAY

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.

Amen.

WORD

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.

A reading from the 12th chapter of Genesis.

¹ 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. ² 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. ³ 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.”

^{4a} So Abram went, as the LORD had told him, and Lot went with him.
The word of the Lord.

Thanks be to God.

PSALM: Psalm 121

- ¹ I lift up my eyes to the hills;
from where is my help to come?
- ² **My help comes from the LORD,
the maker of heaven and earth.**
- ³ The LORD will not let your foot be moved
nor will the one who watches over you fall asleep.
- ⁴ **Behold, the keeper of Israel
will neither slumber nor sleep;**
- ⁵ the LORD watches over you;
the LORD is your shade at your right hand;
- ⁶ **the sun will not strike you by day,
nor the moon by night.**
- ⁷ The LORD will preserve you from all evil
and will keep your life.
- ⁸ **The LORD will watch over your going out and your coming in,
from this time forth forevermore.**

SECOND READING: Romans 4:1-5, 13-17 (MSG)

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.

A reading from the fourth chapter of Romans.

¹⁻³ So how do we fit what we know of Abraham, our first father in the faith, into this new way of looking at things? If Abraham, by what he *did* for God, got God to approve him, he could certainly have taken credit for it. But the

story we're given is a God-story, not an Abraham-story. What we read in Scripture is, "Abraham entered into what God was doing for him, and *that* was the turning point. He trusted God to set him right instead of trying to be right on his own."

⁴⁻⁵ If you're a hard worker and do a good job, you deserve your pay; we don't call your wages a gift. But if you see that the job is too big for you, that it's something only *God* can do, and you trust him to do it—you could never do it for yourself no matter how hard and long you worked—well, that trusting-him-to-do-it is what gets you set right with God, *by* God. Sheer gift.

¹³⁻¹⁵ That famous promise God gave Abraham—that he and his children would possess the earth—was not given because of something Abraham did or would do. It was based on God's decision to put everything together for him, which Abraham then entered when he believed. If those who get what God gives them only get it by doing everything they are told to do and filling out all the right forms properly signed, that eliminates personal trust completely and turns the promise into an ironclad *contract!* That's not a holy promise; that's a business deal. A contract drawn up by a hard-nosed lawyer and with plenty of fine print only makes sure that you will never be able to collect. But if there is no contract in the first place, simply a *promise*—and God's promise at that—you can't break it.

¹⁶ This is why the fulfillment of God's promise depends entirely on trusting God and his way, and then simply embracing him and what he does. God's promise arrives as pure gift. That's the only way everyone can be sure to get in on it, those who keep the religious traditions *and* those who have never heard of them. For Abraham is father of us all. He is not our racial father—that's reading the story backward. He is our *faith* father.

¹⁷⁻¹⁸ We call Abraham "father" not because he got God's attention by living like a saint, but because God made something out of Abraham when he was a nobody. Isn't that what we've always read in Scripture, God saying to Abraham, "I set you up as father of many peoples"? Abraham was first named "father" and then *became* a father because he dared to trust God to do what only God could do: raise the dead to life, with a word make something out of nothing. When everything was hopeless, Abraham

believed anyway, deciding to live not on the basis of what he saw he *couldn't* do but on what God said he *would* do. And so he was made father of a multitude of peoples. God himself said to him, "You're going to have a big family, Abraham!"

The word of the Lord.

Thanks be to God.

*** GOSPEL ACCLAMATION**



☪ 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.



☪ Al - le - lu - ia. Lord, to whom shall we go? You have the



words of e - ter - nal life. Al - le - lu - ia. Al - le - lu - ia.

*** 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.

The holy gospel according to John, the third chapter.

Your mercy is great.

Ruling One, you bless us to be a blessing. Open the hearts of all leaders to seek the flourishing of every person and lend your help to all who wait for justice, deliverance, and peace. Hear us, O God.

Your mercy is great.

Compassionate One, you send your Son to save. Declare your word of acceptance to any who feel condemned and lift up any brought low by hatred and exclusion. Tend to all who are struggling with illness or loss, especially those on our list of Joys & Concerns: _____.
Hear us, O God.

Your mercy is great.

Guiding One, you watch over our going out and coming in. Bless newcomers and new members in this assembly and accompany those who have recently left this community to journey elsewhere. Hear us, O God.

Your mercy is great.

Eternal One, you neither slumber nor sleep. Be our keeper in life and in death. Thank you for our beloved who have died, and for your promise which saves this whole world by your love. Hear us, O God.

Your mercy is great.

Receive our prayers, O God, through Jesus Christ, our strength and salvation.

Amen.

*** SHARING OF THE PEACE**

The peace of Christ be with you always.

And also with you.

Let us take a moment to share the peace of Christ with those seated near you. After that, please be seated for the offering.

OFFERING

*OFFERTORY



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

* OFFERING PRAYER

O God, maker of heaven and earth,
your steadfast love embraces all creation.
You send rain and sunshine to nourish the earth
and bring forth its bounty.
Through these gifts of bread and wine,
draw us into the death and life of your Son,

who calls us to bear witness to his saving work.
We ask this in Jesus' name. **Amen.**

***THANKSGIVING FOR THE WORD**

Let us pray. Praise and thanks to you, holy God, for by your Word you made all things: you spoke light into darkness, called forth beauty from chaos, and brought life into being. For your Word of life, O God,
we give you thanks and praise.

By your Word you called your people Israel to tell of your wonderful gifts: freedom from captivity, water on the desert journey, a pathway home from exile, wisdom for life with you. For your Word of life, O God,
we give you thanks and praise.

Through Jesus, your Word made flesh, you speak to us and call us to witness forgiveness through the cross, life to those entombed by death, the way of your self-giving love. For your Word of life, O God,
we give you thanks and praise.

Send your Spirit of truth, O God; rekindle your gifts within us: renew our faith, increase our hope, and deepen our love, for the sake of a world in need. Faithful to your Word, O God, draw near to all who call on you; through Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord, to whom, with you and the Holy Spirit, be honor and glory 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.

Save us from the time of trial and deliver us from evil.

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

***FINAL BLESSING**

Receive the blessing of the holy Trinity:
God, who calls all things into existence,
Jesus Christ, who redeems us,
and the Holy Spirit, whose breath sustains creation,
✠ bless you now and always.
Amen.

*** SENDING SONG** *When I Survey the Wondrous Cross* (ELW 803)

*** FINAL SENDING**

Go in peace. Believe the good news.
Thanks be to God.

POSTLUDE

