



**Christ Lutheran Church – St. Catharines Ontario**

**The First Sunday in Lent**

**February 18, 2024**

140 Russell Avenue  
St. Catharines, Ontario L2R 1W1  
Church: 905-685-8294  
[www.christlutheransc.ca](http://www.christlutheransc.ca)

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**Office Hours:** Thursday to Friday—9 a.m. – 12 noon

**Bulletin Announcements:** Please send to [secretary@christlutheransc.ca](mailto:secretary@christlutheransc.ca).

Deadline for submission is Thursday at 9 a.m.

<b>Pastor:</b>	Pastor Todd Hoefts	(289-362-0113)	<a href="mailto:sr.pastor@christlutheransc.ca">sr.pastor@christlutheransc.ca</a>
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<b>Bulletin by email:</b>			<a href="mailto:chairman.outreach@christlutheransc.ca">chairman.outreach@christlutheransc.ca</a>

A recording of Sunday's service will be uploaded to YouTube at:

[https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCpING\\_TKT19c\\_OIBbMqGwLw](https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCpING_TKT19c_OIBbMqGwLw)

**Prayer:** O Almighty and eternal God, we implore You to direct, sanctify, and govern our hearts and bodies in the ways of Your laws and the works of Your commandments that through Your mighty protection, both now and ever, we may be preserved in body and in soul; through Jesus Christ, Your Son, our Lord, who lives and reigns with You and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. Amen.

**DAILY SCRIPTURE MEDITATIONS:**

Monday: Jas.4: 1-10

Wed.: Heb. 4: 14-16

Friday: Matt. 16: 21-28

Tuesday: Jas. 1: 13-18

Thurs: Heb. 12: 1-7

Saturday: Matt. 12: 38-42

**Musicians:** Praise Band

**Reader:** Don Fretz

**Greeters:** Don & Lois Fretz



<b>4</b>	<b>11</b>	<b>18</b>	<b>25</b>
5 <sup>th</sup> Epiphany Morning Praise	Transfig. of Jesus Creative Communion	1 <sup>st</sup> Lent Word & Prayer service The Band	2 <sup>nd</sup> Lent Holy Communion LSB Setting 1
<b>February 2024</b>			

**COVER ART:** *"The Desert Cross"* is a copy of a cross found under the sand in the Judean Desert in the 1300s. Its pointed Trinitarian extensions on the beams are said to keep the devil and his demons at a distance since Jesus overcame them all by His suffering. This cross is made of wire, pearls and gold beads.

**EVENTS THIS WEEK:**

Today: 9:00 – 9:50 a.m. – Sunday School, Youth Chat, Coffee Hour  
10:00 a.m. – Worship – The First Sunday in Lent with The Band  
Monday: 10:00 - 11:00 a.m. – NO Luther Manor Pastor Talk (Family Day)  
1:00 p.m. – Sewing for Haiti and beyond.  
7:30 p.m. – Choir  
Tuesday: 9:30-11:00 a.m. – Precious Moments  
7:00 p.m. - Mary Martha  
Wednesday: 7:00 p.m. – Lenten Study  
Thursday: 10:00 -11:30 a.m. – SOUL  
Saturday: 4:00 p.m. – Family Night Uno & Supper—everyone welcome *(please sign up)*



**YOU ARE INVITED!! EVERY SUNDAY!!**

Hope to see you downstairs *for*

**COFFEE, TEA & TREATS !**

9:00 a.m. – 9:45 a.m.  
(during Sunday School & CHAT)

Anyone willing to help serve or bring treats, please contact:

*Judy Mason 905-641-7546*

**SUNDAY SCHOOL:** In Sunday School today Jairus, a synagogue ruler, comes to Jesus, begging Him to heal his critically ill daughter. Along the way, servants come with news of his daughter’s death. Taking along Peter, James, and John, Jesus ignores the mourners, takes the young girl by the hand and tells her, “Arise.” And rise she does, demonstrating Jesus’ power over death itself. Our Bible Verse: **“Jesus Christ heals you”**. Acts 9:34

LEARNING TO LOVE OUR LOSING  
PHILIPPIANS 3:7

**2024 LENTEN STUDY & SIMPLE SERVICE**  
THEME GOSPEL: LUKE 9:22-26  
BEGINS WEDNESDAY, FEBRUARY 21<sup>ST</sup> @ 7 PM

- 1) LOSE & WIN
- 2) REGRESS & LEARN
- 3) INDIFFERENCE & LOVE
- 4) GRATITUDE & ANGER
- 5) LIFE BEYOND NOW & LATER

**CONFIRMAND & YOUTH CHAT:** Today with youth leader Dan Figueroa. We will meet in the youth room February 18, March 10 & 24 from 9:00 - 9:50 a.m. Hope to see you there!!

**SEWING FOR THE NEEDY:** Monday, Feb. 19, 1:00 p.m. -- Sewing for the women of Haiti and beyond. There's always cutting to do as well. *Come and lend a hand!!*



## FAMILY NIGHT UNO & SUPPER

Singing & Devotions  
Saturday, February 24, 4:00 p.m.

The Parish Ed Committee will provide a meal of TACOS and Drinks  
Please bring a dessert OR munchies to share!!

Whether you are a family of 1 or 10 we hope you will join us!

PLEASE SIGN UP IN NARTHEX

**WOMEN'S BIBLE STUDY:** Thursday, February 29, 7:15 at Lia's (22 Rampart). We will continue our study of "The Chosen". Please bring your Bible!



### **LWML-C/MARY MARTHA EVENTS:**

**Tuesday, February 20, 7:00 p.m.:** Bible study with Pastor Todd and/or Fieldworker Vijay. Making Easter cards.

**Tuesday, March 19, 7:00 p.m.:** Cooking Demonstration.

**"How to make Phyllo Pastry Hor d'Oeuvres" by Derrick Smith.**

**Tuesday, April 16, 7:00 p.m.:** Mission Service night –  
Quilt Tying and cutting stamps.

**Tuesday, May 21, 7:00 p.m.:** Speaker / TBA.

**Tuesday, June 18, 5:30 pm:** Summer Pot Luck. More details to follow!

**COUNCIL MEETING:** Monday, March 11, 7:00 p.m.

**CLTS CALL SERVICE:** Saturday, May 25, 3:00 pm here at Christ followed by a reception.

**12th Regular Convention of Lutheran Women's Missionary League-Canada:** July 11-14, 2024, at the Four Points by Sheraton in London, ON.

**The convention theme is based on Psalm 149:1 'Sing to the Lord a new song'**

Keynote Speaker will be Deb Burma who is a Christian author and LWML seminar leader. Special Interest Speakers will also tell of their cross-cultural ministry with the use of singing and music. The mites gathered throughout the past three years provided such great blessings to people around the world, from local support for a Bethlehem Walk in BC to International support of deaconesses in Nicaragua and Cambodia. Rev. Mark Smith will bring news of the work that is happening through those missions. Mission Grants for the next triennium will be voted on.

*If you would be interested in attending, either in person or online, speak to Lorraine Kaija.*

*Registration forms will be available in the coming months. You can also check out the LWML web site [lutheranwomen.ca](http://lutheranwomen.ca)*

**Last Sunday Attendance: 10 a.m. – 88 Feb.14 - Ash Wed: 47 SOUL: 36**

	<u>Budget</u>	<u>Weekly Need</u>	<u>Last Sunday</u>	<u>Year To Date</u>	<u>+ or – (--)</u>
Current	303,899.00	5,844.21	3,291.00	29,158.61	62.45
LCC Missions	17,500.00	336.54	402.00	2,266.00	583.31
Property Improvement:			97.00	756.00	

**2023 DONATION TAX RECEIPTS:** Are available for pick up in your mailbox. Please save the Church some postage expense and pick yours up!

**A DONATION** has been given by Lynn Jerchel in loving honour of her mother, Rhoda Lipischak, on the occasion of her 92nd birthday. Happy Birthday, Rhoda!

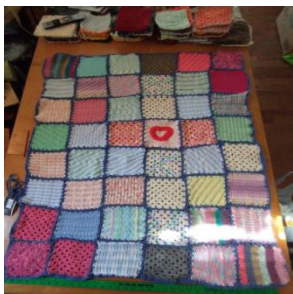
**LENTEN DEVOTIONALS:** Lenten Devotionals are in the Narthex. Please help yourself!

**2023 ANNUAL REPORT:** The Church Council would like to make an Annual Report this year. If you are in charge of a committee, group or event, please get your report for last year in to Pat by Feb. 28<sup>th</sup> so that it can be done by March 15<sup>th</sup>. Please send reports to: [secretary@christlutheransc.ca](mailto:secretary@christlutheransc.ca)

**USED STAMPS:** Start saving and collecting your used stamps now! They will be gathered at the LWML-C Convention and donated to a charity who will in turn use them to purchase spiritual resources like Bibles.

**SURVEY: CHRISTMAS EVE SERVICE TIMES:** The Worship Committee is investigating optimal times for Christmas Eve services. Our 10 pm service attendance numbers are not what we historically have seen. Please participate in a quick survey at the back of the church February 4, 11 & 18<sup>th</sup>. Look at the chart on the bulletin board at the back of the church; get 1 sticky dot and place it on the time slot you and your family would prefer to attend Christmas Eve services. One per person. If you have any questions or wish to email your choice, please speak to or email either Judy Slingerland or Kathy Kuhl.

**TECHNOLOGY ENTHUSIASTS** – The Worship Committee is seeking individuals who would be interested in learning how to operate the recording equipment used for our worship services. Training will be provided. Should you have any questions or require more information please speak to either Tom Kuhl, Theresa Mason or Pastor Todd.



**Granny Squares still needed:** This is an ongoing project we will gratefully accept more completed 6 inch knitted or crocheted Granny Squares in any pattern or colour. We would also appreciate any yarn that you may have, leftover yarn or full balls of yarn. In the narthex there is a white cube with yarn and hooks that you are welcome to take (or donate). There is another basket for completed squares. It has been about 6 months that we have been able to show Christ's love in our Caring Squares blankets. (23 blankets to date!) Thank you for donating yarn or completed squares as we continue with this project! Praise

God! If you have any questions, call Lorraine at 905 964 5837)

**TAPESTRY** is an **LWML-C Publication** available to anyone. For 2024 it will publish (3) three times a year with the possibility of a digital issue in the summer. The cost for a paper copy is \$18 for the 24/25 subscription year. Deadline for renewal has been moved up to March 15 this year. Please contact Wendy Hyatt for more information or to start or renew your paper subscription. A sample issue is available.

## SHARING THE PEACE

Apostle Paul began this practice by taking to heart Jesus' reconciling hope for the world and sharing the peace in the church. "Greet each other with a holy kiss of peace". By 100 AD the greeting of peace was shared without kissing.

The important part is the greeting of reconciliation. We say, "peace be with you." We are called to prepare ourselves to go to the altar and receive God's forgiveness; and then to be reconciled, one with another, as a gesture of our new life in Christ.

There are many acceptable forms of sharing the peace with each other:

**Fist- bumps**



**Head - nods**



**Handshakes**



**Smiling and waving**



**a pat on the back**



Peace is desired. Please be assured contactless greetings are as worshipful and God-pleasing as hugging! Peace be with you all!

# SERVICE OF THE WORD & PRAYER

THE 1<sup>ST</sup> SUNDAY IN LENT

February 18, 2024 + 10 AM Worship

GATHERING SONG: "Jesus Refuge of the Weary" LSB # 423

**Jesus, Refuge of the weary, Blest Redeemer, whom we love,  
Fountain in life's desert dreary, Saviour from the world above,  
Often have your eyes, offended, Gazed upon a sinner's fall!  
Yet, upon the cross extended, You have borne the pain of all.**

**Do we pass that cross unheeding, Breathing no repentant vow,  
Though we see you wounded, bleeding, See your thorn-encircled brow?  
Yet your sinless death has brought us Life eternal, peace, and rest,  
Only what your grace has taught us Calms the sinner's deep distress.**

**Jesus, may our hearts be burning With more fervent love for you!  
May our eyes be ever turning To behold your cross anew,  
Till in glory, parted never From the blessed Savior's side,  
Graven in our hearts forever, Dwell the cross, the Crucified!**

*Words: G. Savonarola, 1735, public domain. <http://www.lutheran-hymnal.com/lyrics/tlh145.htm>*

## LENTEN SEASON SCRIPTURE RESPONSES

In the name of the Father and of the Son + and of the Holy Spirit. **Amen.**

The Word is near you,

**On your lips and in your heart.**

If you confess with your lips that Jesus is Lord --

**And believe in your heart that God raised Him from the dead, you will be saved**

Faith comes by hearing,

**And hearing, that Word of Christ. (Romans 10)**

## PSALM 25:1-10:

Lord, I give myself to you.

**My God, I trust you.**

Do not let me be disgraced.

**Do not let my enemies laugh at me.**

No one who trusts you will be disgraced.

**But those who sin without excuse will be disgraced.**

Lord, tell me your ways.

**Show me how to live.**

Guide me in your truth.

**Teach me, my God, my Saviour. I trust you all day long.**

Lord, remember your mercy and love.

**You have shown them since long ago.**

Do not remember the sins

**and wrong things I did when I was young.**

But remember to love me always

**because you are good, Lord.**

The Lord is good and right.

**He points sinners to the right way.**

He shows those who are not proud how to do right.

**He teaches them his ways.**

All the Lord's ways are loving and true

**for those who follow the way of his teachings.**

The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, the love of God the Father and the Communion of the Holy Spirit, be with you all. **And also with you.**

## SCRIPTURE SONG

*Leviticus 20:26*

1. Pu ri - fy my heart, let me be as gold and  
2. Pu ri - fy my heart, cleanse me from with - in and

pre - cious sil - ver. Pu - ri - fy my heart, let me be as gold,  
make me ho - ly. Pu - ri - fy my heart, cleanse me from my sin,

pure gold. Re - fin - er's fire: My heart's one de - sire is to be  
deep with - in.

ho - ly, set a - part for You, Lord. I choose to be ho - ly,

set a - part for You, my Mas - ter; Read - y to do Your will.

Read - y to do Your will.



## **GREETING & PRAYER OF THE CHURCH:**

Let us pray to the Lord: **Lord have mercy --**

O Lord God, You led Your people through the wilderness and brought them to the promised land. Guide us now, so that following Your Son, we may safely walk through the wilderness of this world toward the life You alone can give. We pray through Jesus Christ our Lord, Who lives and reigns with You and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. **Amen.**

## **SCRIPTURE**

**Old Testament:**    *Genesis 22: 1-18*

After these things God tested Abraham's faith. God said to him, "Abraham!" And he answered, "Here I am." Then God said, "Take your only son, Isaac, the son you love. Go to the land of Moriah. There kill him and offer him as a whole burnt offering. Do this on one of the mountains there. I will tell you which one." Early in the morning Abraham got up and saddled his donkey. He took Isaac and two servants with him. He cut the wood for the sacrifice. Then they went to the place God had told them to go. On the third day Abraham looked up and saw the place in the distance. He said to his servants, "Stay here with the donkey. My son and I will go over there and worship. Then we will come back to you." Abraham took the wood for the sacrifice and gave it to his son to carry. Abraham took the knife and the fire. So, Abraham and his son went on together. Isaac said to his father Abraham, "Father!" Abraham answered, "Yes, my son." Isaac said, "We have the fire and the wood. But where is the lamb we will burn as a sacrifice?" Abraham answered, "God will give us the lamb for the sacrifice, my son." So Abraham and his son went on together. They came to the place God had told him about. There, Abraham built an altar. He laid the wood on it. Then he tied up his son Isaac. And he laid Isaac on the wood on the altar. Then Abraham took his knife and was about to kill his son. But the angel of the Lord called to him from heaven. The angel said, "Abraham! Abraham!" Abraham answered, "Yes." The angel said, "Don't kill your son or hurt him in any way. Now I can see that you respect God. I see that you have not kept your son, your only son, from me." Then Abraham looked up and saw a male sheep. Its horns were caught in a bush. He went and took the sheep and killed it. He offered it as a whole burnt offering to God. Abraham's son was saved, and he named that place "The Lord Gives". Even today people say, "On the mountain of the Lord it will be given." The angel of the Lord called to Abraham from heaven a second time. The angel said, "The Lord says, 'You did not keep back your son, your only son, from me. Because you did this, I make you this promise by my own name: I will surely bless you and give you many descendants. They will be as many as the stars in the sky and the sand on the seashore. And they will capture the cities of their enemies. Through your descendants all the nations on the earth will be blessed. This is because you have kept my Word.'"

This is the Word of the Lord. **Thanks be to God.**

**Epistle:** *James 1: 12-18*

When a person is tempted and still continues strong, he should be happy. After he has proved his faith, God will reward him with life forever. God promised this to all people who love him. When someone is being tempted, he should not say, "God is tempting me." Evil cannot tempt God, and God himself does not tempt anyone. It is the evil that a person wants that tempts him. His own evil desire leads him away and holds him. This desire causes sin. Then the sin grows and brings death. My dear brothers, do not be fooled about this. Every good action and every perfect gift is from God. These good gifts come down from the Creator of the sun, moon, and stars. God does not change like their shifting shadows. God decided to give us life through the word of truth. He wanted us to be the most important of all the things he made. This is the Word of the Lord. **Thanks be to God.**

**GOSPEL VERSE**

**"To God Be The Glory"**

[www.hymnary.org](http://www.hymnary.org)AGPS

To God be the glo - ry, to God be the  
glo - ry, to God be the glo - ry for the things He has  
done. With His blood He has saved me; with His pow'r He has  
raised me; to God be the glo - ry for the things He has done.

**Holy Gospel:** *St. Mark 1: 9-15*

The Holy Gospel, according to St. Mark, the 1<sup>st</sup> chapter: **Glory to You, O Lord.**

In those days Jesus came from Nazareth of Galilee and was baptized by John in the Jordan. And just as he was coming up out of the water, he saw the heavens torn apart and the Spirit descending like a dove on him. And a voice came from heaven, 'You are my Son, the Beloved; with you I am well pleased.' And the Spirit immediately drove him out into the wilderness. He was in the wilderness for forty days, tempted by Satan; and he was with the wild beasts; and the angels waited on him. Now after John was arrested, Jesus came to Galilee, proclaiming the good news of God, and saying, 'The time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God has come near: repent, and believe in the good news.'

This is the Gospel of the Lord: **Praise to You, O Christ!**

## THE APOSTLES' CREED:

God has made us His people through our Baptism into Christ. Living together in trust and hope, we confess the faith.

**I believe in God, the Father Almighty, Maker of Heaven and earth. And in Jesus Christ, His 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 into hell. The third day He rose again from the dead. He ascended into Heaven and sits at the right hand of God the Father Almighty. From thence He will come to judge the living and the dead. I believe in the Holy Spirit, the holy Christian Church, the communion of saints, the forgiveness of sins, the resurrection of the body, and the life everlasting. Amen.**

## CHILDREN'S MESSAGE

### HYMN RESPONSE TO THE WORD:

### "Jesus Is"

Judy Grande, Regina, SK © 1991

1. Je - sus is my Lord and Mas - ter; Je - sus is the One I love.  
2. Je - sus is my sure de - fend - er; In the dark He is my Light.  
3. Je - sus is my one foun - da - tion; He's the rock on which I build.  
4. Je - sus is my on - ly Sav - iour; He's the one that I a - dore.

He's my Priest and King for - ev - er; He's the Son of God a - bove.  
He's my guide; He shows the way, and He pro - tects me through the night.  
When the storms of life as - sail me, He is peace and all is still.  
He's cre - a - tor and pre - serv - er; He's my hope for - ev - er - more.

And my Je - sus, He's my Shep - herd; He's the keep - er of my soul.  
He's my bread when I am hun - gry; When I thirst He quen - ches me.  
He's my rest when I am wear - y; He's my com - fort in dis - tress.  
Je - sus is my true Re - deem - er; He's the one who set me free.

When in sor - row I am bro - ken, He will make me whole.  
He is Al - pha and O - me - ga, First and last to be.  
And when I am sad or lone - ly, He's my hap - pi - ness.  
Je - sus is my res - ur - rec - tion; He is life to me.

## **CONFESSION & FORGIVENESS:**

But you, beloved, build yourselves up in your most holy faith -

**praying in the Holy Spirit.**

*(Jude 20)*

Keep yourselves in the love of God,

**waiting for the mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ, that leads to eternal life**

*(Jude 21)*

Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, they are a new creation.

**The old has passed away; behold, the new has come!** *(2 Cor. 5:17)*

Let us confess our sins in the presence of God and of one another:

*(Brief silence for reflection and self-examination)*

**Most Gracious Father, we are by nature sinful and unclean. We have sinned against You in our thoughts, words and deeds. We have committed sins against our neighbour and against You, O Father. Have mercy upon us. In Your compassion forgive us our sins. Those sins which are known to us, and those which are unknown. Grant us Your Holy Spirit that by faith we may be sorry for our sins, repent of them and serve You in newness of life to the honour and glory of Your Holy Name; through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.**

In the stead and by the command of my Lord Jesus Christ, I forgive you all of your sins in the name of the Father and of the Son + and of the Holy Spirit. **Amen.**

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

## SHARING OF THE PEACE

**THE OFFERINGS** *are gathered.*

## **THE PRAYERS**

With confidence and trust let us pray to the Father through Jesus Christ our Lord in the unity of the Blessed Holy Spirit: For the one holy church on earth here and around the globe, wrestling in the wilderness of our existence, that we find provision in the Bread of Life;

Lord of compassion, **in Your mercy hear us.**

For the mission of the Church, that in faithful witness she may live out and speak the Gospel to the ends of the earth, and by speaking, helping, visioning and acting, all may be drawn to the Saviour we trust for all we need;

Lord of compassion, **in Your mercy hear us.**

For peace in the world, that a true faithful spirit of respect and reconciliation may Grow among nations and all peoples from all background and locations;

Lord of compassion, **in Your mercy hear us.**

For the poor, the persecuted, the homeless and homebound, for refugees, prisoners and all in danger; for people and places enduring natural disasters, harsh weather

and war torn regions where terrorism is prevalent; for all who suffer, the chronically sick and ill, especially [names added here] that all may be relieved and protected, restored, relieved and blest;

Lord of compassion, **in Your mercy hear us.**

For those whom we have injured or offended, for those we have isolated or discouraged, that our Gospel inspired words and deeds may encourage and uplift those who call upon us for aid;

Lord of compassion, **in Your mercy hear us.**

For grace to amend our lives and to repent with the grace You shower upon us, in communion with all those who have walked in the way of faith and live in hope all the days of our lives;

Lord of compassion, **in Your mercy hear us.**

God our Father, in your love and kindness you have taught us to pray to You in faith, Receive our thanks and praise and whenever we stumble please revive us with the Living Water of Your Son, our Saviour Jesus Christ, in Whose name we pray. **Amen.**

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

**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. 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 & BENEDICTION:**

Let us praise the Lord: **Thanks be to God.**

The blessing of Almighty God, the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit, + be with you all. **Amen**



1 You who dwell in the shel-ter of the Lord, Who a -  
 2 snare of the fowl - er will nev - er cap - ture you, And  
 3 You need not fear the ter - ror of the night, Nor the  
 4 For to His an - gels He's giv - en a com - mand To



bide in His shad - ow for life,  
 fam - ine will bring you no fear;  
 ar - row that flies by day; Though  
 guard you in all of your ways; Up -



Say to the Lord: "My ref - uge, My  
 Un - der His wings your ref - uge, His  
 thou - sands fall a - bout you,  
 on their hands they will bear you up, Lest you



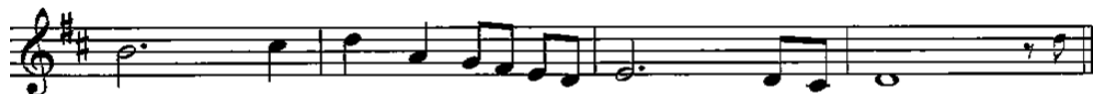
rock in whom I trust!"  
 faith - ful - ness your shield.  
 Near you it shall not come.  
 dash your foot a - gainst a stone.

*Refrain*

And He will raise you up on ea - gles' wings,



Bear you on the breath of dawn, Make you to shine like the



sun, And hold you in the palm of His hand. 2 The

*Testing available in hymn accompaniment edition.*

**Text:** Michael Joncas, b. 1951  
**Music:** Michael Joncas, b. 1951

**Text and tune:** © OCP Publications

ON EAGLES' WINGS  
 Irregular meter

Ps. 91:1-12; 103:5

THE SERVICE OF THE WORD AND PRAYER is an adapted version which is contained in the "With One Voice" Hymnal Supplement to the Lutheran Book of Worship. Published by Augsburg Fortress in 1998. The SCRIPTURE SONG & OFFERING SONG are reprinted with limited permission from [www.hymnary.org](http://www.hymnary.org).

**REV. TODD HOEFFS**

**LENT 1**

**SCRIPTURE: Mark 1:12-32**

**February 18, 2024**

I worked as a Sears Jewellery clerk while attending the Seminary. Our merchandise was pretty basic and inexpensive. Lots of watches and tennis bracelets. We also had about 15 really nice quality diamonds in 14 K gold. Very hard to sell. Store marketers made us watch monthly videos on temptation. Lure them in with a cheaper version and then show the better one and snag the sale. Play to their sentimentalities. "If they really love their fiancé, they'll buy this \$2,000 solitaire" – I just couldn't do it. I knew the client base. Why would you sell an expensive ring to someone who can barely afford the \$200 sale ring? I never played the temptation card. Sold them what they needed, the best value, and hopefully a return customer. Management tolerated it but was not pleased. Once I got hauled into their office, showing me my sales record. Asking me about the customers. "You didn't get them a Sears charge card." [Well, I knew they didn't need it, wouldn't use it, but trusted me to take their cash.] "You sold them the cheapest ring". [I knew that's all they could afford.] My manager stepped in – "BUT, Todd has the lowest return rate on sales. And most come back to buy other things". The meeting was over. Temptation sales has been going on since the dawn of advertising. It only works in the short term. And it's dishonest. Temptation is subtle and crafty. We expect temptation marching right through the front door, dressed like a criminal, announcing itself loudly. But temptation often prefers the back door, quiet, unassuming. Temptation relies on deception and surprise, on ignorance and naivete. To trust in the victory, it's best to see temptation as a war already fought and won by Jesus. And also it's a present day spiritual war raging on until the end comes. Jesus immediately faces temptation after His Baptism. That's important. Baptism creates a target for the forces of evil. I've yet to meet anyone baptized and sailing into easy street. The Holy Spirit drives Jesus into the wilderness – This is with force and purpose. The work of transforming the world is beginning. The Spirit just descended as a dove at the Jordan River and the Father spoke His approval on His beloved Son. Know He's bait for the devil. This place is the Judean Wilderness. It's located in the West Bank east of Jerusalem toward the Dead Sea. Average temperature is plus 40, hot and dry. This place acted as a shield protecting David while fleeing from Saul. The children of God wandered around in the wilderness for 40 years. Jesus is here 40 days and nights. Fulfilling the work left undone by every generation prior. He's surrounded by wild animals. It's desolate, scary, with poisonous plants and scorpions. Yet, Jesus is not harmed. The Lamb lies down with the Lion. The weaned child puts his hand over the snake's hole and a little child shall lead them. Harmony is coming to the world in conflict with sin and temptation. Sin gets a lot of attention, but temptation is just as deadly because its relentless. Temptation is of the evil realm and has a mission: to ruin your soul and rob you of God. No temptation is innocent or trivial. *All* temptation schemes and plots desire your never-ending misery. Temptation will please you to abuse you, seduce you to undo you, distract you to destroy you. Temptation lures you in, making you believe what you have is not good; You need more, improved, greater, the best. Pleasure, power, money, success, all at the heart of the tempting lies. God promises true, lasting JOY not short-lived thrills of lust, or greed, or laziness, or envy. The power of temptation relies on us believing that sin is better than *full and forever with God*. It rests on us being tired or bored of God,

Who is the deepest, strongest most loving presence we could ever know.

The other reason we may give into the tempting lies is we're shamed in to believing the bad we do is just who we are. We can't change so why try. If Satan's lies can convince you that you're still that same old person — enslaved to power or control, consumed with envy, enraged with anger, defenceless before manipulation, tired and stressed out— he can convince you to do almost anything. Human shame and self-pity are Satan's food.

Without them he, and all his schemes, will starve and expire. It's also very fatiguing living this way. We're good on our self-control diet until Saturday when we binge eat and drink.

A list of dos and don'ts won't fix this either. God tried that with the 10 Commandments.

So enters our Lord Jesus, into the desert for Satan's trap. Jesus is both God and Man.

The 2<sup>nd</sup> person of the Holy Trinity. Yet born of Mary and parented by Joseph with siblings.

He looks like you and me. A young rabbi alone in the strange place, claiming He's God's Son. Satan I'm sure thinks this is easy. This Gospel account doesn't dive into the details of Satan's threats. Only that while this takes place for 40 days, Satan tempts Him. Pierazo is the Greek word used. Ancient way of testing to see if something is real. See if a diamond cuts glass. Bite into gold to see how easy it bends. Kick a used car's tires to see if they're flat. Place metal into a fire to see its purity. But this word is used in Scripture only for Satan's testing And the evil motivation for the religious leaders testing Jesus. God knows Jesus His Son will overcome Satan's tempts. God knows we can't. God knows we have a lot of trouble trusting Him. God also wants us with Him in Heaven forever. That's God's original design for this world. Human rebellion tore that connection apart. The serpent's tempting tongue made Adam and Eve doubt their paradise God made. That original gift has to be restored. Human generations passed until the seed from the woman Comes and stomps on the serpent's head. This is beginning in the wilderness. He is separated from God and fellow man. He is ALONE. He is the ONLY ONE Who could. We can't We can't lift one finger to help our salvation along. Even when you either feel alone or are alone or cast aside,

You are never alone. God remains with you because of Jesus. 40 days removes this desolate and lonely tempting sinful life we face. It cannot consume and devour us. It will plague us, try to ruin us, but God makes sure it doesn't win. Jesus rescues us. He fills us so full of His Holy Life that our little projects at being good all on our won fall apart. It's more than just feeling bad or hiding in the shadows or brewing in anger over being caught in a mess; Jesus' rescue creates a new life of gratitude. [Prayer of one of our SOUL people about gratitude]

It's not all about poor me, why me, why can't I do as I please? It's about Christ in me. His strength within my weakness. His fullness taking up our emptiness. His vulnerability within our insecurities. Lead us not into temptation we pray. He doesn't. He's all about saving. This is why He is tended by angels and shouting out to the world That God's Kingdom has broken into this one. In His name. Satan is finished. Completely when Jesus says IT IS FINISHED. Finished on the cross. Finished in His death. Finished in His resurrection. Satan never knew what hit him---Until Jesus descended to His realm to say YOU LOSE. Every baptism screams loudly, Satan, you lose. Jesus wins. This is why we face trials, temptations, problems, stress, aggravation – Baptism targets us. We are sacred like Jesus. All He has is ours. Including suffering. Including a cross. And the nest of all, glorious life with God every time we overcome. Wild beasts may nip at our heals, but sin and death have been swallowed up by the jaws of life. The time is come. The Gospel gives life. Grace covers us up in Christ. Gratitude leads to repentance because we believe. With believing, we trust. Trust helps us love and live in confident hope. Trust helps us be Christ in who we are and what we do each day. Temptation is real. But Jesus' victory rescue is even more real.

Amen.



# LENTEN WORD SEARCH

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GIVE  
LENT  
PRAY  
FAST  
CROSS

JESUS  
SACRIFICE  
FORTY DAYS  
ASH WEDNESDAY  
PREPARE

PURPLE  
FISH  
HOLY  
EASTER

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

# Acts 9

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J M A A W P U Z A L I G H T O K P  
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Jesus

tarsus

eyes

light

Disciples

sight

Ananias

speechless

Jerusalem

Saul

vision

blind

lord

way

praying

Damascus

persecute

Synagogues