

Palm Sunday/Passion Sunday

Bethlehem Lutheran Church
1050 Peninsula Dr.
Traverse City, MI 49686

Sunday, March 29, 2026, 10:00 am

Evangelical Lutheran Worship—Setting 3, page 138

Bell Ringing



GATHERING

(Worship begins in the Gathering Space. Please take a palm before the service begins and congregate by the front doors of the church.)

P: Blessed is the one who comes in the name of the Lord.

C: Hosanna in the highest.

Processional Gospel

Matthew 21:1-11

1 When they had come near Jerusalem and had reached Bethphage, at the Mount of Olives, Jesus sent two disciples, 2 saying to them, "Go into the village ahead of you, and immediately you will find a donkey tied and a colt with her; untie them and bring them to me. 3 If anyone says anything to you, just say this, 'The Lord needs them.' And he will send them immediately." 4 This took place to fulfill what had been spoken through the prophet: 5 "Tell the daughter of Zion, Look, your king is coming to you, humble and mounted on a donkey, and on a colt, the foal of a donkey." 6 The disciples went and did as Jesus had directed them; 7 they brought the donkey and the colt and put their cloaks on them, and he sat on them. 8 A very large crowd spread their cloaks on the road, and others cut branches from the trees and spread them on the road. 9 The crowds that went ahead of him and that followed were shouting, "Hosanna to the Son of David! Blessed is the one who comes in the name of the Lord! Hosanna in the highest heaven!" 10 When he entered Jerusalem, the whole city was in turmoil, asking, "Who is this?" 11 The crowds were saying, "This is the prophet Jesus from Nazareth in Galilee."

P: The Gospel of the Lord.

C: Praise to you, O Christ.

Blessing of Palms (*Please raise your branches*)

P: The Lord be with you. **C: And also with you.**

P: Let us pray. We praise you, O God, for redeeming the world through our Savior Jesus Christ. Today he entered the holy city in triumph and was proclaimed messiah and king by those who spread garments and branches along his way. Bless these branches and those who carry them. Grant us grace to follow our Lord in the way of the cross, so that, joined to his death and resurrection, we enter into life with you; through the same Jesus Christ, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, One God, now and forever.

C: Amen.

PROCESSION

(The procession into the church begins, following the Pastor.)

Processional Hymn

All Glory, Laud, and Honor

ELW 344

Refrain: All glory, laud, and honor to you, redeemer, king,
to whom the lips of children made sweet hosannas ring.

You are the king of Israel and David's royal Son,
now in the Lord's name coming, our King and Blessed One. ***Refrain***

The company of angels are praising you on high;
creation and all mortals in chorus make reply. ***Refrain***

The multitude of pilgrims with palms before you went;
our praise and prayer and anthems before you we present. ***Refrain***

To you, before your passion, they sang their hymns of praise.
To you, now high exalted, our melody we raise. ***Refrain***

Their praises you accepted; accept the prayers we bring,
great author of all goodness, O good and gracious King. ***Refrain***

+++++

P: Blessed is the one who comes in the name of the Lord.

C: Hosanna in the highest.

Please be seated.

Confession and Forgiveness

P: Blessed be the holy Trinity, † one God, who forgives all our sin, whose mercy endures forever.

C: Amen.

P: Let us confess our sin before God, who removes our guilt and blots out all offenses.

Silence is kept for reflection.

P: Gracious God,

C: have mercy on us according to your steadfast love.

P: For desiring self-reliance instead of hungering for your word: Gracious God,

C: have mercy on us according to your steadfast love.

P: For failing to recognize your coming reign, and for hindering the work of the Spirit: Gracious God,

C: have mercy on us according to your steadfast love.

P: For drawing from the well of self-serving ambition, and for disdain the living water Christ offers: Gracious God,

C: have mercy on us according to your steadfast love.

P: For disregarding voices from the margin, and for distrusting signs of your healing and hope in the world: Gracious God,

C: have mercy on us according to your steadfast love.

P: For dwelling in tombs of self-pity and discontent, and for disregarding Christ's call to come forth to life: Gracious God,

C: have mercy on us according to your steadfast love.

P: 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.

C: Amen.

Please rise

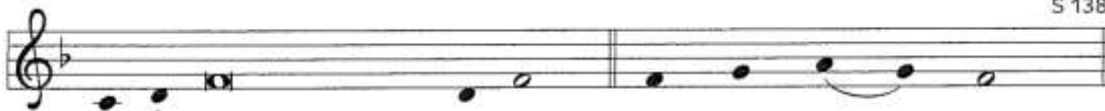
Greeting

A: The grace of our Lord, Jesus Christ, the love of God, and the communion of the Holy Spirit be with you all.

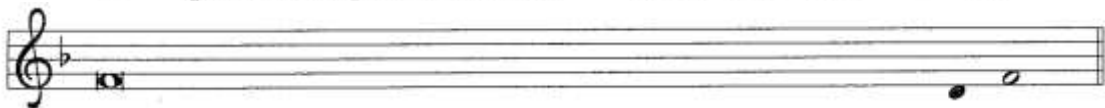
C: **And also with you.**

Kyrie

S 138



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



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



Lord, have mer - cy.



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.



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

A: The Lord be with you. **C: And also with you.**

A: Let us pray together...

C: Everlasting God, in your endless love for the human race you sent our Lord Jesus Christ to take on our nature and to suffer death on the cross. In your mercy enable us to share in his obedience to your will and in the glorious victory of his resurrection, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. Amen.

Children's Message

Pr. Paul

WORD

First Lesson

Isaiah 50:4-9a

The servant of the Lord expresses absolute confidence in his final vindication, despite the fact that he has been struck and spit upon. This characteristic of the servant played an important role in the early church's understanding of the suffering, death, and resurrection of Jesus.

⁴The Lord God has given me the tongue of a teacher, that I may know how to sustain the weary with a word. Morning by morning he wakens—wakens my ear to listen as those who are taught. ⁵The Lord God has opened my ear, and I was not rebellious, I did not turn backward. ⁶I gave my back to those who struck me, and my cheeks to those who pulled out the beard; I did not hide my face from insult and spitting. ⁷The Lord God helps me; therefore I have not been disgraced; therefore I have set my face like flint, and I know that I shall not be put to shame; ⁸he who vindicates me is near. Who will contend with me? Let us stand up together. Who are my adversaries? Let them confront me. ^{9a}It is the Lord God who helps me; who will declare me guilty?

L: The Word of the Lord. **C: Thanks be to God.**

⁹ Have mercy on me, O Lord, for I am in trouble; my eye is consumed with sorrow, and also my throat and my belly.

¹⁰ **For my life is wasted with grief, and my years with sighing; my strength fails me because of affliction, and my bones are consumed.**

¹¹ I am the scorn of my enemies, a disgrace to my neighbors, a dismay to my acquaintances; when they see me in the street they avoid me.

¹² **Like the dead I am forgotten, out of mind; I am as useless as a broken pot.**

¹³ For I have heard the whispering of the crowd; fear is all around; they put their heads together against me; they plot to take my life.

¹⁴ **But as for me, I have trusted in you, O Lord. I have said, "You are my God.**

¹⁵ My times are in your hand; rescue me from the hand of my enemies, and from those who persecute me.

¹⁶ **Let your face shine upon your servant; save me in your steadfast love."**

Second Lesson

Philippians 2:5-11

Paul uses an early Christian hymn to help us comprehend Jesus' obedient selflessness on the cross and how God has made Christ lord over all reality. The perspective of the cross becomes the way we rightly understand God, Christ, our own lives, and fellowship within the community of Christ.

⁵ Let the same mind be in you that was in Christ Jesus, ⁶ who, though he was in the form of God, did not regard equality with God as something to be exploited ⁷ but emptied himself, taking the form of a slave, being born in human likeness. And being found in human form, ⁸ he humbled himself and became obedient to the point of death—even death on a cross.

⁹ Therefore God also highly exalted him and gave him the name that is above every name,

¹⁰ so that at the name of Jesus every knee should bend, in heaven and on earth and under the earth, ¹¹ and every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.

L: The Word of the Lord.

C: Thanks be to God.

Gospel Acclamation

Return to the Lord



S 142b

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

Matthew 27:11-54

In fulfillment of scripture and obedience to God's will, Jesus goes to the cross so that a new covenant in his blood may bring forgiveness of sins. Even the soldiers who crucify him recognize him to be the Son of God.

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

11 Now Jesus stood before the governor, and the governor asked him, "Are you the king of the Jews?" Jesus said, "You say so." 12 But when he was accused by the chief priests and elders, he did not answer. 13 Then Pilate said to him, "Do you not hear how many accusations they make against you?" 14 But he gave him no answer, not even to a single charge, so that the governor was greatly amazed. 15 Now at the festival the governor was accustomed to release a prisoner for the crowd, anyone whom they wanted. 16 At that time they had a notorious prisoner called Jesus Barabbas. 17 So after they had gathered, Pilate said to them, "Whom do you want me to release for you, Jesus Barabbas or Jesus who is called the Messiah?" 18 For he realized that it was out of jealousy that they had handed him over. 19 While he was sitting on the judgment seat, his wife sent word to him, "Have nothing to do with that innocent man, for today I have suffered a great deal because of a dream about him." 20 Now the chief priests and the elders persuaded the crowds to ask for Barabbas and to have Jesus killed. 21 The governor again said to them, "Which of the two do you want me to release for you?" And they said, "Barabbas." 22 Pilate said to them, "Then what should I do with Jesus who is called the Messiah?" All of them said, "Let him be crucified!" 23 Then he asked, "Why, what evil has he done?" But they

shouted all the more, "Let him be crucified!" 24 So when Pilate saw that he could do nothing but rather that a riot was beginning, he took some water and washed his hands before the crowd, saying, "I am innocent of this man's blood; see to it yourselves." 25 Then the people as a whole answered, "His blood be on us and on our children!" 26 So he released Barabbas for them, and after flogging Jesus he handed him over to be crucified. 27 Then the soldiers of the governor took Jesus into the governor's headquarters, and they gathered the whole cohort around him. 28 They stripped him and put a scarlet robe on him, 29 and after twisting some thorns into a crown they put it on his head. They put a reed in his right hand and knelt before him and mocked him, saying, "Hail, King of the Jews!" 30 They spat on him and took the reed and struck him on the head. 31 After mocking him, they stripped him of the robe and put his own clothes on him. Then they led him away to crucify him. 32 As they went out, they came upon a man from Cyrene named Simon; they compelled this man to carry his cross. 33 And when they came to a place called Golgotha (which means Place of a Skull), 34 they offered him wine to drink, mixed with gall, but when he tasted it, he would not drink it. 35 And when they had crucified him, they divided his clothes among themselves by casting lots; 36 then they sat down there and kept watch over him. 37 Over his head they put the charge against him, which read, "This is Jesus, the King of the Jews." 38 Then two rebels were crucified with him, one on his right and one on his left. 39 Those who passed by derided him, shaking their heads 40 and saying, "You who would destroy the temple and build it in three days, save yourself! If you are the Son of God, come down from the cross." 41 In the same way the chief priests also, along with the scribes and elders, were mocking him, saying, 42 "He saved others; he cannot save himself. He is the King of Israel; let him come down from the cross now, and we will believe in him. 43 He trusts in God; let God deliver him now, if he wants to, for he said, 'I am God's Son.' "

44 The rebels who were crucified with him also taunted him in the same way. 45 From noon on, darkness came over the whole land until three in the afternoon. 46 And about three o'clock Jesus cried with a loud voice, "Eli, Eli, lema sabachthani?" that is, "My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?" 47 When some of the bystanders heard it, they said, "This man is calling for Elijah." 48 At once one of them ran and got a sponge, filled it with sour wine, put it on a stick, and gave it to him to drink. 49 But the others said, "Wait, let us see whether Elijah will come to save him." 50 Then Jesus cried again with a loud voice and breathed his last. 51 At that moment the curtain of the temple was torn in two, from top to bottom. The earth shook, and the rocks were split. 52 The tombs also were opened, and many bodies of the saints who had fallen asleep were raised. 53 After his resurrection they came out of the tombs and entered the holy city and appeared to many. 54 Now when the centurion and those with him, who were keeping watch over Jesus, saw the earthquake and what took place, they were terrified and said, "Truly this man was God's Son!"

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

Sermon

Pastor Paul Busekist

Hymn of the Day

My Song is Love Unknown (V. 1-4)

ELW 343

Nicene Creed

We believe in one God, the Father, the Almighty, maker of heaven and earth, of all that is, seen and unseen.

We believe in one Lord, Jesus Christ, the only Son of God, eternally begotten of the Father, God from God, Light from Light, true God from true God, begotten, not made, of one Being with the Father; through him all things were made. For us and for our salvation he came down from heaven, was incarnate of the Holy Spirit and the virgin Mary and became truly human. For our sake he was crucified under Pontius Pilate; he suffered death and was buried. On the third day he rose again in accordance with the scriptures; he ascended into heaven and is seated at the right hand of the Father. He will come again in glory to judge the living and the dead, and his kingdom will have no end.

We believe in the Holy Spirit, the Lord, the giver of life, who proceeds from the Father and the Son, who with the Father and the Son is worshiped and glorified, who has spoken through the prophets. We believe in one holy catholic and apostolic church. We acknowledge one baptism for the forgiveness of sins. We look for the resurrection of the dead, and the life of the world to come. Amen.

Prayers of Intercession: response after each petition, **"Your mercy is great."**

A: (Before prayer) *Reconciled by God's mercy and sustained by God's presence, let us pray for the world and its needs.* P: (Conclusion) *Receive our prayers, O God, through Jesus Christ, our strength and salvation.* **C: Amen.**

Sharing the Peace

P: The peace of Christ be with you always.

C: And also with you.

MEAL

Offering / Offering Song

Zeke Clemons



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: Let us pray together.

C: 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.

Great Thanksgiving

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 our thanks and praise.

P: It is indeed right, our duty and joy...we praise your name and join their unending hymn.

Preface

Holy, Holy, Holy

S 144b

Ho - ly, ho - ly, ho - ly Lord, God of pow'r and might,
heav-en and earth are full of your glo - ry. Ho - san - na. Ho -
san-na. 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.

Words of Institution

The 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.

P: All who are hungry, come! The feast of grace is spread.

***Please note: Gluten-free wafers and white grape juice are available.*

Communion

Lamb of God

S 146

Lamb of God, you take a - way the sin of the world; have

mer-cy on us. Lamb of God, you take a-way the sin of the world; have mer - cy on us. Lamb of God, you take a - way the sin of the world; grant us peace.

Communion Hymns

*Let Us Break Bread Together
Beneath the Cross of Jesus*

*ELW 471
ELW 338*

Post Communion Blessing

P: The body and blood of our Lord Jesus Christ strengthen you and keep you in his grace.
C: **Amen.**

Post Communion Canticle

Thankful Hearts

Thank-ful hearts and voic - es raise; tell ev-'ry-one what God has done.
Let all who seek the Lord re - joice and bear Christ's ho - ly name.



Send us with your prom-is - es and lead your peo-ple forth in joy with



shouts of thanks-giv - ing. A-a-----a-----men A--a---a-----a-----men

Prayer after Communion

A: Let us pray. God of our salvation, we give you thanks for this meal that restores our souls, reconciles us to you, and strengthens us for the journey. Through the body and blood of your Son, may we become Christ's body in the world, bearing witness to your love for all creation, through Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord

C: Amen.

Announcements

SENDING

Blessing

P: 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. **C: Amen.**

Sending Song

Christ, the Life of All the Living

ELW 339

Dismissal

A: Go in peace. Believe the good news. **C: Thanks be to God.**

Postlude



Holy Week services – all services are Live Streamed except Easter 8:00am

March 29 – Palm Sunday, 10:00am

April 2 – Maundy Thursday, 7:00pm

April 3 – Good Friday, 7:00pm

April 4 –Easter Vigil, 7:00pm

April 5—Easter Brunch 9:00am

April 5 – Easter Sunday 8:00am and 10:00am (*only 10:00am Live Streamed*)

**Easter Brunch
Sunday, April 5, 9:00am**

The Fellowship Committee will supply beverages.
Please consider donating food to be shared at the meal.

Suggested items: Breakfast casseroles, hardboiled eggs, deviled eggs, quiche, pastries, rolls, bread, muffins, bagels, fruit, yogurt.

A sign-up sheet will be located in the Narthex
All food must be pre-cooked.

Ovens will available to keep food warm as needed.

We hope to
see you there!





Bethlehem March 29, 2026
LUTHERAN CHURCH

1050 Peninsula Drive
Traverse City, MI 49686
(231) 947-9880
www.bethlehemtc.org

HAPPY BIRTHDAY

3/29—Betsy Morley

4/1—Haven Hill

4/4—Danny Vipond

3/30—Erin Word

4/3—Caleb Kelly

4/5—Britney Jones

3/31—April Kurkowski

4/3—Nancy Pflasterer

Worship Servants for March 29

Preaching & Presiding—Pr. Paul Busekist

Assisting Minister—Barbara Wright

Lector—Makena Dohm

Musicians: Linda Midura, Zeke Clemons, Phil & Denice Bossardet, Pr Paul

Today's altar flowers are donated: **NO ALTAR FLOWERS DURING LENT**

Hospitality: Dan & Laura Hahn

A/V—Acker Family

Cookies/Coffee—Diane Cunningham / Mary Ann Tanis

Welcome Table— Volunteer

Bell Ringer— Gail Goldsmith

Front Door Monitor—Tina Dohm

Altar Guild—Mary Ann Tanis / Gail Goldsmith

Counters: Laura Hahn / Laura Okimi

Social Ministry/Outreach update Due to the cancellation of the March 15th church service, our meeting has been rescheduled for **TODAY** after the service. Hope to conclude the meeting by noon so you can all enjoy your Sunday meal plans. Those planning to volunteer at Grace on April 26 will be asked to stay an extra 10 minutes so we can plan our first meal.

Sunday School and Sunday's Adult Education hold their classes at 9:15am on Sunday. **The Wednesday Zoom Book/Bible Study** meets at 1:30pm with a study a new book, *Mary's Memoirs The Hidden Years*, which will start on April 15th. See Pr. Paul or Barbara if you have any questions.

There are no flowers on the altar during Lent. Please sign up for a Sunday beginning with Easter Sunday, April 5th. Please sign up for future Sundays/

Join Your Creation Care Team on our next hike. We are scheduled for April 19 at 12Noon at Timber Ridge Campground. Plan to pack a picnic as weather permits. They have a pavilion on site. God's creation is plentiful.

SPRING FLING: Sunday, April 26th at Noon. Potluck lunch: salad and fixins', rolls & butter and beverages will be provided. Please bring a dish to pass. **THEME:** "Pampered: Inner & Outer Beauty". Speaker is from the GT Beauty Academy who will focus on skin, hair and nail care and she will provide us with a couple of surprises. There will be a signup sheet in the Narthex. Please sign up by April 19th. **Join us for a fun day of pampering!**

A NOISY OFFERING is coming!! We have not had one for years. Our synod is requesting that all participating congregations make an offering of coins to bring to the synod assembly May 15-16. From April 12 thru May 10 we will be collecting coins which will be divided between Lutheran Disaster Response Ukraine and Samaritans-New Americans. So search those pockets, purses, cushions etc. and bring in any coins you can spare. (Bills and checks also accepted even though they don't jingle-jangle). Any questions can be directed to BLC's voting delegates, Peggy Burns, Jim Monroe, and Cindy Monroe.

Creation Care Team update: our next Creation Care core team meeting will be Monday, May 4th at 6pm in the Youth Room. Subcommittee members may be meeting before as needed. Contact Paul Wiemerslage, Tina Dohm or Pastor Paul for any updates.

Voices for Food Access: Thanks to all who voted, but Bethlehem did not win \$1,000. The 2 winning adult entries were the final drawing and the one in which fresh veggies covered the face of a woman and man. Bethlehem will receive a free entry to the Food Bowls event and \$50 to be spent on fruits and veggies. Thanks again if you took the time to vote.

Let's Celebrate! Bethlehem paid off the mortgage to the church in November, so let's celebrate. Our Congregational meeting will be on June 14th, so after the meeting we will have a party and burn the old mortgage (copy). We can use a few people to be on the planning committee. Please sign up in the Narthex if you would like to help out.

Grief Group meets the 1st and 3rd Monday of the month from 3:30-4:30 in the gathering space, unless the TC schools are closed. Any questions contact Peggy Burns 232-392-6913.

Spotlight on Zeke: So many of us enjoy Zeke's talents with religious music, but did you know that he plays other kinds of music at various locations in the Traverse City area? Here is a list of his engagements in the next month that are close to TC:

4/01, 4/08 – The Pub TC, TC 7:00pm 4/03—Middle Coast, TC 7:00pm

Today's Prayer Recipients: Please send any changes or additions by email to admin@bethlehemtc.org

Harper Wiemerslage,
Jerry Hill,
John Block,
Roy DuMond,
Mary Woodring,
Norm Fred,
Lynn,
Steve,
Sherry,
Bob,
Ron Hellenga,
John Stretlien,
Judy Fenton,
Cindy Hitesman,

Richard Fernholz,
Julie Lapeer,
Lee,
Chris,
Dale and Cheryl,
Leroy,
Julie Barrett,
Patti,
Sharon,
Kyle,
Christine,
Janet,
Cheryl
Pat,

Jan Schmidt,
Pat Burton,
Gretchen
Shelley Miller

