

**Midweek Lent Worship**  
**March 18, 2026**  
**Making Change**

*Change of Heart*



**Gloria Dei Lutheran Church**  
Neenah, Wisconsin  
[www.gloriadeilc.org](http://www.gloriadeilc.org)  
*A congregation of the ELCA*

Ministers  
Pastor

Everyone at Gloria Dei  
Pastor Doug Holtz

## **Making Change**

*Change is a constant in our lives. Some changes mark gradual transitions, as when daytime shifts toward twilight or winter turns to spring. Others happen in the blink of an eye, separating time into “before” and “after”. We choose to undergo some changes after carefully considering our options, while others are forced upon us.*

*In the weeks, days, and hours before Jesus’ crucifixion, the disciples also experienced change: a change of venue as the gates of Jerusalem approached; a change of plans as their long-awaited Messiah was arrested and tried; a change of circumstance as the crowds shouted “Crucify!”*

*Change is hard. We long for the expected and familiar, but all too often find ourselves in the midst of uncertainty and the unknown. We cannot predict how things will turn out. The hymnwriter Joachim Neander proclaimed God’s steadfast love in the midst of life’s inevitable changes: “All my hope on God is founded who will all my trust renew, who through change and chance will guide me, only good and only true. God unknown, God alone, call my heart to be thine own” (ELW 757).*

*Link to Sunday worship: The gospel readings for the Sundays in Lent this year are filled with stories where Jesus creates the possibility of change and new life. He challenges Nicodemus to be born from above (Lent 2, John 3:1-17). He offers the Samaritan woman the living water that quenches all thirst (Lent 3, John 4:5-42). Jesus gives sight to the blind man (Lent 4, John 9:1-41), and raises Lazarus from the grave (Lent 5, John 11:1-45).*

### **Week 4 of Lent: Change of Heart**

Jesus' words to the Pharisees give us pause: "You honor me with your lips, but your hearts are far from me." Jesus invites us to experience a change of heart that will in fact change every part of our lives.

### **Opening Litany**

L Beloved, set me as a seal upon your heart,  
as a seal upon your arm.

For love is strong as death;  
passion fierce as the grave.

C **O God, search me and know my heart;  
test me and know my thoughts.  
See if there is any wicked way in me,  
and lead me in the way everlasting.**

**Holden Evening Prayer - Evening Hymn**



1. Joy-ous light of heav-'nly glo - ry, lov - ing  
 2. In the stars that grace the dark - ness, in the  
 3. You who made the heav-en's splen - dor, ev - 'ry



glow of God's own face, you who sing cre - a - tion's  
 blaz - ing sun of dawn, of the light of peace and  
 danc - ing star of night, make us shine with gen - tle



sto - ry, shine on ev 'ry land and race. Now as  
 wis - dom, we can hear your qui - et song. Love that  
 jus - tice, let us each re - flect your light. Might - y



eve - ning falls a - round us, we shall raise our songs to  
 fills the night with won - der, love that warms the wea - ry  
 God of all cre - a - tion, gen - tle Christ who lights our



you, God of day - break, God of shad - ows, come and  
 soul, Love that bursts all chains a - sun - der, set us  
 way, Lov - ing Spir - it of sal - va - tion, lead us



light our hearts a - new. \_\_\_\_\_  
 free and make us whole. \_\_\_\_\_  
 on to end - less day. \_\_\_\_\_

### **Greeting**

L 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.**

### **Prayer**

L O God of our longing, strengthen us and dwell in our hearts, that we be rooted and grounded in your love. Help us to comprehend the breadth and length and height and depth of your mercy shown to us on the cross. Fill our hearts with your grace, that we lead lives that radiate your love to all. In Jesus' name we pray.

**C Amen.**

### **Reading: Ezekiel 36:22-28**

<sup>22</sup>Therefore say to the house of Israel, Thus says the Lord GOD: It is not for your sake, O house of Israel, that I am about to act, but for the sake of my holy name, which you have profaned among the nations to which you came. <sup>23</sup>I will sanctify my great name, which has been profaned among the nations, and which you have profaned among them; and the nations shall know that I am the LORD, says the Lord GOD, when through you I display my holiness before their eyes. <sup>24</sup>I will take you from the nations, and gather you from all the countries, and bring you into your own land. <sup>25</sup>I will sprinkle clean water upon you, and you shall be clean from all your uncleannesses, and from all your idols I will cleanse you. <sup>26</sup>A new heart I will give you, and a new spirit I will put within you; and I will remove from your body the heart of stone and give you a heart of flesh. <sup>27</sup>I will put my spirit within you, and make you follow my statutes and be careful to observe my ordinances. <sup>28</sup>Then you shall live in the land that I gave to your ancestors; and you shall be my people, and I will be your God.

L The Word of the Lord.

**C Thanks be to God.**

### **\*The Gospel: Mark 7:1-8, 14-15**

Now when the Pharisees and some of the scribes who had come from Jerusalem gathered around him, <sup>2</sup>they noticed that some of his disciples were eating with defiled hands, that is, without washing them. <sup>3</sup>(For the Pharisees, and all the Jews, do not eat unless they thoroughly wash their hands, thus observing the tradition of the elders; <sup>4</sup>and they do not eat anything from the market unless they wash it and there are also many other traditions that they observe, the washing of cups, pots, and bronze

kettles.) <sup>5</sup>So the Pharisees and the scribes asked him, "Why do your disciples not live according to the tradition of the elders, but eat with defiled hands?" <sup>6</sup>He said to them, "Isaiah prophesied rightly about you hypocrites, as it is written, 'This people honors me with their lips, but their hearts are far from me; <sup>7</sup>in vain do they worship me, teaching human precepts as doctrines.' <sup>8</sup>You abandon the commandment of God and hold to human tradition."

<sup>14</sup>Then he called the crowd again and said to them, "Listen to me, all of you, and understand: <sup>15</sup>Nothing outside of a person can make them 'unclean' by going into them. It is what comes out of them that makes them 'unclean.' "

L The Word of the Lord

C **Thanks be to God.**

### Children's Message

#### Reflection

#### The Prayers of the People

L O God our help, you walk with us through all of life's changes.

C **Grant us strength, patience, wisdom and understanding.**

L O God our hope, you come to us in the life, death and resurrection of Christ.

C **Show us your salvation, and lead us in the way of the cross.**

L O God our shelter, you enfold us like a mother hen gathering her chicks.

C **watch over all who are sick, grieving, lonely and in need this day.**

L O God our home, you claim us as your beloved.

C **Lord, remember us when you come into your kingdom.**

L All this we ask through the one who gave himself for us, Jesus Christ, our Lord.

C **Amen.**

#### The Lord's Prayer *(adaptation from hymn "Salvation Onto Us Has Come")*

L Let us pray together

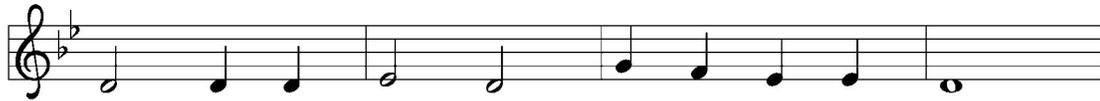
C **O Triune God in heaven above, your blessed name we hallow. Your kingdom come, your will be done in this world as in heaven; give bread for each new day begun; our sins be all forgiven, as we forgive what others do; in every trial see us through; from evil save us. Amen.**

#### Blessing

L The Lord of peace give you peace at all times and in all ways. In the name of the Father, + Son, and Holy Spirit.

C **Amen.**

**Sending Song      "Spirit of God, Descent Upon My Heart"      ELW #800**



1 Spir - it of God, de - scend up - on my heart;  
 2 I ask no dream, no proph - et ec - sta - sies,  
 3 Have you not bid me love you, God and King;  
 4 Teach me to love you as your an - gels love,



wean it from earth, through all its puls - es move;  
 no sud - den rend - ing of the veil of clay,  
 all, all your own, soul, heart, and strength, and mind?  
 one ho - ly pas - sion fill - ing all my frame:



stoop to my weak - ness, strength to me im - part,  
 no an - gel vis - i - tant, no op - 'ning skies;  
 I see your cross; there teach my heart to cling.  
 the bap - tism of the heav'n - de - scend - ed dove,



and make me love you as I ought to love.  
 but take the dim - ness of my soul a - way.  
 Oh, let me seek you and, oh, let me find!  
 my heart an al - tar, and your love the flame.

**Dismissal**

**L** Go now in peace, for nothing can separate you from the love of God in Christ Jesus.

**C** **Thanks be to God.**

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No Soup Supper on March 25 due to new flooring being installed in fellowship hall. There still will be the Lenten Worship service at 6:30 p.m. on March 25.

**Lenten Devotionals:** Please check out the table in the narthex for a variety of Lenten Devotionals for you to use at home during this season of Lent. You'll find materials for adults and families to use.