

Grace Lutheran Church

239 E North St
Hastings MI 49058



Website: www.grace-hastings.org

Facebook: Grace Lutheran Church-ELCA Hastings, MI



Phone: (269) 945-9414
(269) 945-2645

Pastor Ken Scheck II
Ms. Cindy Olson, Minister of Music
March 22, 2026

Fifth Sunday in Lent

March 22, 2026

Lent is a season of preparation and renewal. The color purple has become a symbol of the extravagance of God. The music of the season reflects our need to prepare for God's forgiveness and renewal, which draws us into God's forgiving action toward humanity and all of creation.

WELCOME TO WORSHIP! We are promised new life. We may not sense this new life, especially during these winter days. The cold and harshness of life can seem hopeless, but God is committed to renew our lives. God plants seeds of new life by saving us and removing our sin through Jesus Christ. We are called to allow God's reign of life to sustain us in our times of trial and to stand with God who gives us life, so that others can experience God's grace in their life.

Holy Silence is observed as we enter to worship.

Welcome

Gathering Music

Gentle Rain
Clapper Kids

S. Eithun

Arise in body or spirit.

Greeting

The pastor and the assembly greet each other.

- ☐ The grace and mercy of God, who in Christ bears our burdens and saves us from sin through the Holy Spirit, be with you all.
- ☑ **And also with you.**

Gathering Song

Oh, For a Thousand Tongues to Sing

ELW 886

Dialogue

P Blessed be the holy Trinity, † one God, who gathers us in the wilderness to redeem us, anoint us, and make us new.

C Amen

A Behold, now is the acceptable time;

C now is the day of salvation.

P Let us celebrate that Christ bears our burdens.

C Saving us from sin through the Holy Spirit.

Kyrie

Assistant: In peace, in peace,

Refrain

Assistant: *Congregation:*

Let us pray to the Lord, have mer - cy, Christ, have
mer - cy, Lord, have mer - cy. *to Verses*

Assistant: For the Reign of God, and for peace throughout the world, for the unity of all . . . (to Refrain)

Assistant: For your people here, who have come to give you praise, for the strength to live your Word . . . (to Refrain)

Assistant:

Help, save and de - fend us, O
God. A - men.

Prayer of the Day

- Ⓐ Let us pray,
Almighty God, your Son came into the world to free us all from sin and death.
- Ⓑ **Breathe upon us the power of your Spirit, that we may be raised to new life in Christ and serve you in righteousness all our days, through Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. Amen.**

Special Music

Dry Bones

Traditional Spiritual

Refrain: Ezekiel cried, “Dem dry bones!” (3x) Oh hear the word of the Lord!

Dem bones, dem bones gonna walk around (3x) Oh hear the word of the Lord!

v. 1 - Foot, Leg, Knee, Thigh, Back, Neck, Head - Oh hear the word of the Lord! *Refrain*

v. 2 – Finger, Hand, Wrist, Arm, Shoulder, Back, Head - Oh hear the word of the Lord!

Refrain

Please be seated.

First Reading

Ezekiel 37:1-14

Ezekiel's vision of the valley of dry bones is a promise that Israel as a nation, though dead in exile, will live again in their land through God's life-giving spirit. Three times Israel is assured that through this vision they will know that "I am the Lord."

Ⓔ A reading from **Ezekiel**.

¹ The hand of the LORD came upon me, and he brought me out by the spirit of the LORD and set me down in the middle of a valley; it was full of bones. ² He led me all around them; there were very many lying in the valley, and they were very dry. ³ He said to me, “Mortal, can these bones live?” I answered, “O Lord GOD, you know.” ⁴ Then he said to me, “Prophesy to these bones and say to them: O dry bones, hear the word of the LORD. ⁵ Thus says the Lord GOD to these bones: I will cause breath to enter you, and you shall live. ⁶ I will lay sinews on you and will cause flesh to come upon you and cover you with skin and put breath in you, and you shall live, and you shall know that I am the LORD.”

⁷ So I prophesied as I had been commanded, and as I prophesied, suddenly there was a noise, a rattling, and the bones came together, bone to its bone. ⁸ I looked, and there were sinews on them, and flesh had come upon them, and skin had covered them, but there was no breath in them. ⁹ Then he said to me, “Prophesy to the breath, prophesy, mortal, and say to the breath: Thus says the Lord GOD: Come from the four winds, O breath, and breathe upon these slain, that they may live.” ¹⁰ I prophesied as he commanded me, and the breath came into them, and they lived and stood on their feet, a vast multitude.

Second Reading

Romans 8:6-11

For Paul, Christian spirituality entails living in the reality of the Holy Spirit. The driving force behind our actions and values is not our sinful desire for self-satisfaction but the very Spirit by which God raised Jesus from the dead and will also raise us from the dead.

📖 A reading from **Romans**.

⁶To set the mind on the flesh is death, but to set the mind on the Spirit is life and peace. ⁷For this reason the mind that is set on the flesh is hostile to God; it does not submit to God's law—indeed, it cannot, ⁸and those who are in the flesh cannot please God.

⁹But you are not in the flesh; you are in the Spirit, since the Spirit of God dwells in you. Anyone who does not have the Spirit of Christ does not belong to him. ¹⁰But if Christ is in you, then the body is dead because of sin, but the Spirit is life because of righteousness. ¹¹If the Spirit of him who raised Jesus from the dead dwells in you, he who raised Christ Jesus from the dead will give life to your mortal bodies also through his Spirit that dwells in you.

📖 Word of God. Word of life.

👏 **Thanks be to God.**

Please arise in body or spirit.

Gospel Acclamation

(HS 1991 accomp. ed. pg. 10-11)

Re - turn to God with all your heart, the Source of grace and

mer-cy; Come, seek the ten - der faith-ful-ness of God.

Optional Repeat

Gospel Reading

John 11:1-45

Jesus is moved to sorrow when his friend Lazarus falls ill and dies. Then, in a dramatic scene, he calls his friend out of the tomb and restores him to life.

📖 The Holy Gospel, according to **John**.

👏 **Glory to you, O Lord.**

¹ Now a certain man was ill, Lazarus of Bethany, the village of Mary and her sister Martha. ² Mary was the one who anointed the Lord with perfume and wiped his feet with her hair; her brother Lazarus was ill. ³ So the sisters sent a message to Jesus, "Lord, he whom you love is ill." ⁴ But when Jesus heard it, he said, "This illness does not lead to death; rather, it is for God's glory, so that the Son of God may be glorified through it." ⁵ Accordingly, though Jesus loved Martha and her sister and Lazarus, ⁶ after having heard that Lazarus was ill, he stayed two days longer in the place where he was.

⁷ Then after this he said to the disciples, "Let us go to Judea again." ⁸ The disciples said to him, "Rabbi, the Jews were just now trying to stone you, and are you going there again?" ⁹ Jesus answered, "Are there not twelve hours of daylight? Those who walk during the day do not stumble because they see the light of this world. ¹⁰ But those who walk at night stumble because the light is not in them." ¹¹ After saying this, he told them, "Our friend Lazarus has fallen asleep, but I am going there to awaken him." ¹² The disciples said to him, "Lord, if he has fallen asleep, he will be all right." ¹³ Jesus, however, had been speaking about his death, but they thought that he was referring merely to sleep. ¹⁴ Then Jesus told them plainly, "Lazarus is dead. ¹⁵ For your sake I am glad I was not there, so that you may believe. But let us go to him." ¹⁶ Thomas, who was called the Twin, said to his fellow disciples, "Let us also go, that we may die with him."

¹⁷ When Jesus arrived, he found that Lazarus had already been in the tomb four days. ¹⁸ Now Bethany was near Jerusalem, some two miles away, ¹⁹ and many of the Jews had come to Martha and Mary to console them about their brother. ²⁰ When Martha heard that Jesus was coming, she went and met him, while Mary stayed at home. ²¹ Martha said to Jesus, "Lord, if you had been here, my brother would not have died. ²² But even now I know that God will give you whatever you ask of him." ²³ Jesus said to her, "Your brother will rise again." ²⁴ Martha said to him, "I know that he will rise again in the resurrection on the last day." ²⁵ Jesus said to her, "I am the resurrection and the life. Those who believe in me, even though they die, will live, ²⁶ and everyone who lives and believes in me will never die. Do you believe this?" ²⁷ She said to him, "Yes, Lord, I believe that you are the Messiah, the Son of God, the one coming into the world."

²⁸ When she had said this, she went back and called her sister Mary and told her privately, "The Teacher is here and is calling for you." ²⁹ And when she heard it, she got up quickly and went to him. ³⁰ Now Jesus had not yet come to the village but was still at the place where Martha had met him. ³¹ The Jews who were with her in the house consoling her saw Mary get up quickly and go out. They followed her because they thought that she was going to the tomb to weep there. ³² When Mary came where Jesus was and saw him, she knelt at his feet and said to him, "Lord, if you had been here, my brother would not have died." ³³ When Jesus saw her weeping and the Jews who came with her also weeping, he was greatly disturbed in spirit and deeply moved. ³⁴ He said, "Where have you laid him?" They said to him, "Lord, come and see." ³⁵ Jesus began to weep. ³⁶ So the Jews said, "See how he loved him!" ³⁷ But some of them said, "Could not he who opened the eyes of the blind man have kept this man from dying?"

³⁸ Then Jesus, again greatly disturbed, came to the tomb. It was a cave, and a stone was lying against it. ³⁹ Jesus said, “Take away the stone.” Martha, the sister of the dead man, said to him, “Lord, already there is a stench because he has been dead four days.” ⁴⁰ Jesus said to her, “Did I not tell you that if you believed you would see the glory of God?” ⁴¹ So they took away the stone. And Jesus looked upward and said, “Father, I thank you for having heard me. ⁴² I knew that you always hear me, but I have said this for the sake of the crowd standing here, so that they may believe that you sent me.” ⁴³ When he had said this, he cried with a loud voice, “Lazarus, come out!” ⁴⁴ The dead man came out, his hands and feet bound with strips of cloth and his face wrapped in a cloth. Jesus said to them, “Unbind him, and let him go.”

⁴⁵ Many of the Jews, therefore, who had come with Mary and had seen what Jesus did believed in him.

☐ The Gospel of the Lord.

☑ **Praise to you, O Christ.**

Please be seated.

Children’s Time

All children [including infants] and youth who desire to come forward for the children’s sermon are welcomed and encouraged to do so. Parents/caregivers are welcome to accompany their child during the children’s message. There may be a time of dance and celebration that is offered.

Message

Please arise in body or spirit.

Song of the Day

Lord, Whose Love in Humble Service

ELW 712

Please be seated.

Prayers

*We pray the prayer response after each petition. You will hear, **God, in your mercy.** The assembly prays, **Receive our prayer.***

☐ Reconciled by God’s mercy and sustained by God’s presence, let us pray for the world and its needs.

A brief silence.

☐ We pray for the church. Grant life and peace to all who gather in your name. Breathe into us so that we may share your message of forgiveness, hope, and love. Empower our leaders and partners, *Yehiel and Julie, Assistants Scott and Kate; our synod companion churches, Leer Lutheran Church in Posen; St. Rose of Lima Catholic Church in Hastings; St. Thornapple Valley Church in Hastings; Minister of Music Cindy, and Pastor Ken.* God, in your mercy,

☑ **Receive our prayer.**

A We pray for creation. Renew landscapes that have dried up, prosper the work of those who restore homes and habitats after natural disasters, and sustain places where biodiversity thrives. God, in your mercy,

G **Receive our prayer.**

A We pray for the nations. Unbind leaders trapped by fear to act boldly for justice, free all who live in places of war and violence, and guide refugees and asylum seekers to safety. Be with those who safeguard the world, *including Parker Stancil (Freedlund), Cody and Myrina Crawford (Clements), Cynthia Rudesill (Hansen), Joel Taggart (Varkula), Seth Domke (Domke), Hudson Schick (Markwart) and Leopold Schick (Markwart).* God, in your mercy,

G **Receive our prayer.**

A We pray for all people in need. Take away the stone of poverty that weighs down so many. Console any who weep and heal all who are sick, *especially Jennie Anderson, Bob Bolton, Frank Bolton, Chris Bush, John Charles, Cherie Clements, Pat DePew, Kim Domke, Greg Franks, Lisa Golnek, Larry Griswold, Cynthia Hansen, Walker Heise, Christine Jenkins, Joy Jenks, Martha Klenk, Michelle Luedke, Ed Markwart, Larry Maupin, Linda Melcher, Janet Moomey, Tricia Moredock, Kate Muraski, Jody Neagle, Corey Normandin, Emma Poholski (pregnancy), Edith Rose, Rob Smelker, Payton Stancil, Dan Stanton, Kathy Surratt, Mira Thomas, Al Throop, Claudia Throop, George Ulrich Jr., Jeanette Ulrich, Tom and Kathy.* God, in your mercy,

G **Receive our prayer.**

A We pray for this assembly. Ready the hearts and spirits of all preparing to be baptized (*especially*). Deepen our wonder at the mystery of your resurrection and life God, in your mercy,

G **Receive our prayer.**

Here other intercessions may be offered.

A We offer our thanksgiving for all people who have died in faith. Give us faith to trust in your power to redeem and save, and bring us up from our graves to life in you. God, in your mercy,

G **Receive our prayer.**

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

G **Amen.**

Please arise in body or spirit.

Sharing the Peace of God

P The peace of Christ be with you.

G **And also with you.** (*We share the peace of Christ with one another.*)

Offering Song**Seed That in Earth is Dying**

ELW 330



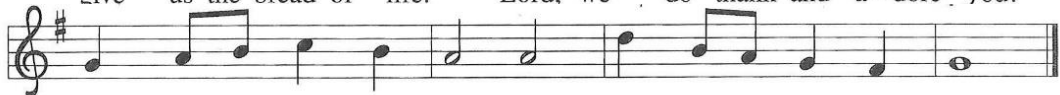
1 Seed that in earth is dy - ing grows in - to ears of
 2 We were bap - tized in Je - sus, in - to his death and
 3 Seed that in earth is dy - ing ris - es to bear much



grain. Grapes that are crushed in the ves - sel
 grave, to res - ur - rec - tion's prom - ise:
 fruit. Christ, as we meet at your ta - ble,



turn in - to gold - en wine. God, through this mys - ter - y grant us
 praise and e - ter - nal life. Heav - en's own prais - es be - gin here
 give us the bread of life. Lord, we do thank and a - dore you!



faith in our deep - est dark - ness, life in our night and death.
 where you your - self are near us, deep in our night and death.
 Un - ceas - ing praise of the a - ges ris - es from night and death.

Offering Prayer

- A** Let us pray....Merciful God, receive the sacrifice of our praise and thanksgiving and the offering of our lives,
- C** that following in the way of the cross, we may know the joy of the resurrection, through Christ our Lord. 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.

The Proper Preface

☐ It is indeed right, our duty and our joy, that we should at all times and in all places give thanks and praise to you, almighty and merciful God, through our Savior Jesus Christ. You call your people to cleanse their hearts and prepare with joy for the paschal feast that, renewed in the waters of baptism, we may come to the fullness of your grace. And so, with all the choirs of angels, with all the faithful of every time and every place, we praise your name.

☑ Amen

The Prayer of Consecration

☐ Blessed are you, Lord of heaven and earth. In mercy for our fallen world you gave your only Son, that all those who believe in him should not perish but have eternal life. We give thanks to you for the salvation you have prepared for us through Jesus Christ. Send now your Holy Spirit into our hearts, that we may receive our Lord with a living faith as Jesus comes to us in his holy supper.

☑ Amen. Come, Lord Jesus.

☐ In the night in which he was betrayed our Lord Jesus took bread, gave thanks; broke it, and gave it to the disciples, saying: Take and eat; this is my body, given for you. Do this for the remembrance of me. Again after supper, he took the cup, gave thanks, and gave it for all to drink, saying: This cup is the new covenant in my blood, shed for you and for all people for the forgiveness of sin. Do this for the remembrance of me.

Lord's Prayer

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

☑ **Our Father in heaven, holy 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.**

Invitation to Communion

☐ All who are hungry, Come! The feast of grace is spread.

☑ **Thanks be to God.**

Please be seated.

Communion Songs:

Alas! And Did My Savior Bleed

arr. J. Krug

Grace Notes

Precious Lord, Take My Hand

ELW 773

I Am the Bread of Life

ELW 485

Prayer after Communion

- Ⓐ Let us pray . . . Generous God, you have shared your feast with us and made us new.
☞ **Send us now to set tables of love and grace in our communities, that your liberating love might nourish the world into freedom, in the name of the crucified one, Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.**

Mission Minutes

Arise in body or spirit.

Blessing

- Ⓐ God, who fills the creation with abundance, Christ, who spreads his arms in forgiveness, Holy Spirit, who draws ever near to us, ☩ bless you and bring you to life everlasting.
☞ **Amen**

Sending Song

We Are Called

ELW 720

Sending

- Ⓐ Go in peace. Care for others as God cares for you.
☞ **Thanks be to God.**

Postlude - Bells

Bell Ringers – Kim Domke, Anita Shaw, Gayle Marsh, Liz Allarding, Alice Allarding, Shayna Gibbons, Raylan Gibbons, Alicia Devroy, Tyler Devroy, Ethan Devroy

9:30 am

Assisting Minister – Vickey Argo

Lector – Dave Neeb

Musician – Cindy Olson

Cantor – Ken Scheck

Pastor – Ken Scheck

Fellowship – None

Usher – Gwen Hansen

Last Wednesday in Lent

March 25 12 noon Green Street Methodist Church Topic: Joy

March 25 6 pm Holden Evening Prayer Meal to follow

Join us this last Wednesday in Lent for Seeking God's Way

Grace Singers will rehearse at 5:15pm on Wednesday night this week. Anyone who likes to sing is welcome!

There are just a few more packages of brats available, \$6.00 for a package of 4. Get them while you can!

Women of Faith will be starting a **new topic** for our **Bible Study in April: Growing Older and Wiser**. We **meet Tuesdays 11:00 am – noon at church**. All women are welcome (and don't worry if you have to miss some weeks)!

The nursery is available weekly during the worship service. Aurora Collins is the Nursery Attendant. She would love to have some little ones visit her. Please spread the word that Grace provides childcare during this worship service.

Brown Bag Bible Study will meet Thursday, March 26, at 12:00 noon – all are welcome to come to communion at the beginning of the study and leave if you cannot stay for the bible study. The time for communion is designed to give those who cannot come on Sunday mornings another opportunity and to deepen the experience for those who can stay for the bible study with Christ's body and blood.

The Easter Bulb Flower Sale is underway. Extra order forms are available in the Gathering Area. Options are Daffodils, Hyacinths, Tulips, and Easter Lilies, \$10 per plant. The flowers will decorate the sanctuary on Easter Sunday, then will be available to take home or donate, as indicated on the order form. **Order forms are due next Sunday, March 29.**

The Hand2Hand Program is under new leadership at Green Street Church (with whom we partner) and suggest the following items for donation. This list will stay the same each month. Due date is the last Sunday of each month. From the Outreach Committee: Thank You so much to all who donate to this program which helps feed local students in need over the weekends. The foods needed are:

SLIM JIMS	FRUIT SNACKS
FRUIT CUPS	CHEEZ-ITS
CEREAL BARS	GRANOLA BARS PROTEIN BARS
INDIVIDUAL APPLESAUCE CUPS	TRAIL MIX
RAMEN NOODLES	RAISINS
INDIVIDUAL MAC AND CHEESE	MICROWAVE POPCORN
INDIVIDUAL OATMEAL OR CEREAL	

Social Activities Committee has two upcoming events planned: **Game and Pizza Day: after worship on Sunday, April 19th**. We hope to see you there for a time of fellowship and fun! There will be a sign-up sheet in the Gathering Area by next week for the purpose of ordering enough pizza for everyone present. Also, an **outing to see "Shrek" at the Dennison Center** is planned for **May 9th, with dinner following**.

Welcome to worship today! We are thrilled that you are here. We hope you find what we have found - a loving Jesus who welcomes all. No matter your background or faith tradition, you will find that Grace Lutheran Church is a place that is full of love, care, and support. We are called to worship the Lord God who gives us life – eternal life. As we walk during these dark and winter days, let us walk with the one who gives us the promise of healing, even in death.

Please use this QR Code to access online giving.

Stewardship Information

Attendance: 37 Views: 182
 Weekly Giving: \$4,240.00 Budget Amount: \$4,363.02



Offerings received to date through February \$130,393.60
 Offerings received in March + \$16,881.57
 Year to date total of offerings \$147,2745.17

Grace Projects Goal \$ 30,000.00 Parking Lot Cement Project
 Received To Date - \$ 3,000.00
Total Needed \$ 27,000.00

Thank you for contributing toward our HVAC repayment.
 Given this week toward Non-Budget Funds: \$50 (ELCA World Hunger)

The Congregation Council invites you to contribute to the Parking Lot Cement Project. We have had a member step forward giving a 3 to 1 match, up to \$7,000, for any monies received April 1st through April 30th. Thank you for considering contributing toward the cement project.

The Hastings Women's Club invites you to join us for our next fundraising event at Culver's, 5-8pm on Tuesday, March 31st. All funds we receive will go to our Scholarship Fund. If you have any questions, please contact Deborah Wilke at 269-953-8216. Thank you for your support!

Parish Administrator is Cindy Olson. Her office hours are 10:00 am to 2:30 pm Mon-Wed.

Pastor Ken's office hours are now 10:00 am to 12:00 pm Mon & Wed.

The next Blood Drive is April 20th. Theme: It's all Fun and Games.
 Bingo – Yahtzee – Uno – Jackpot: No matter how you play it, you can be the Big Winner!
 Tell your family and friends to sign up to donate by calling 1-800-Red-Cross or by going to their app or website.

There will be a Prayer Vigil next Sunday, March 29th, 5:00 pm, at Hope United Methodist Church, 2920 M-37, Hastings.

Reach the Forgotten Jail Ministry is hosting a Barry County Jail Fundraiser at Venue1230 (1230 N. Michigan Ave) on **March 26th**, beginning at 6:00 pm with Fellowship time and dinner at 6:30. You are invited to hear how God is transforming lives in Barry County Jail and celebrate over 60 years of ministry faithfulness. Your support helps bring hope, discipleship, and care to inmates. **Please RSVP by March 19th** at jailministry.org. If you have questions regarding this ministry, you may contact Chaplain Sallie Nyenhuis at SallieN@jailministry.org, or by phone at 616-784-4620 x101. The Winter 2026 Reach the Forgotten/Barry County newsletter is on the bulletin board, which tells of the ministries happening within the jail by volunteers and inmates alike.

Roll the Stone Away

You can understand why they don't want to roll the stone away. "Already there is a stench," Martha says (John 11:39). Why open the grave? Why let out that smell? There could be no purpose. After all, Lazarus is dead.

This is not unbelief. "I believe that you are the Messiah," Martha says (v. 27), confident that her brother would one day rise again. But it is a faith that desperately wants God to provide an escape from suffering and struggle: "If you had been here," both sisters say, "my brother would not have died" (vv. 21, 32). The presence of Jesus, they think, should protect them from pain and death. What they don't understand, though, is that the places of pain and suffering are exactly where Jesus goes. He enters dead places to bring hope to life. He transforms the stench of decay into an aroma of thriving. He summons Lazarus out of the tomb to walk into freedom.

This is why Jesus tells them to take away the stone. He wants to open the place that they are convinced holds only grief, and to expose what they believe to be a shameful smell. Yes, it is difficult to face. However, only when the grave is opened can Lazarus respond to Jesus' call. Martha and Mary must remove the stone that hides what they do not want to bear, so that new life can emerge from the tomb.

What are the stone-covered places in your life? What are the places in your heart that you are convinced hold only pain, decay, and fear? In the tender love of Jesus, you do not need to hide them. Jesus is calling you to open them. He will enter these places with resurrection power, transforming death into life and shame into glory. Facing these tombs takes courage. But you can trust that Jesus will bring healing to your brokenness. He is in the business of calling the dead back to life. Let the stones be rolled away.

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