



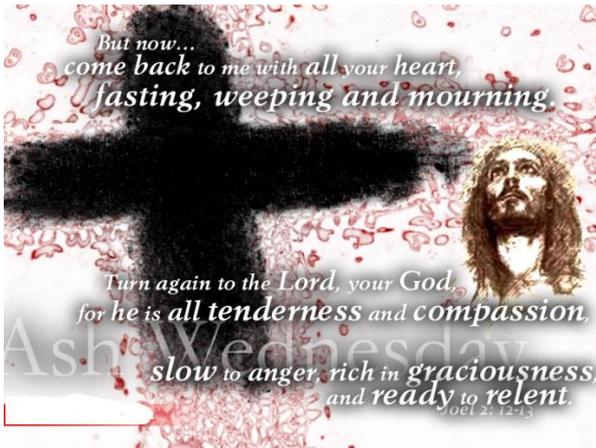
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Pastor Frank Gantt
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March 22, 2026



The greatest of these is LOVE!

Affiliation: Church of the Lutheran Confession
<https://clclutheran.org/>

WELCOME: *To all who are present today, we offer a heart-felt welcome in Jesus' name.*

Mankind's deepest problem is not only behavioral but spiritual—we are born dead in sin, resistant to the truth, and incapable of rescuing the judgment that justly follows. Yet God does not leave man to perish; He provides an unexpected remedy, one that must be received by faith rather than by reason. The cross stands at the center of that remedy, where the Son of God is lifted up so that those who look to Him are not condemned but are given life that we could never achieve by our efforts.

ORDER OF WORSHIP

OPENING PRAYER: *We ask the Lord's blessings on our worship.*

HYMN: #152

When O'er My Sins I Sorrow

**When o'er my sins I sorrow,
Lord, I will look to Thee
And hence my comfort borrow
That Thou wast slain for me;
Yea, Lord, Thy precious blood was spilt
For me, O most unworthy,
To take away my guilt.**

**Oh, what a marv'lous off'ring!
Behold, the Master spares
His servants, and their suff'ring
And grief for them He bears.
God stoopeth from His throne on high;
For me, His guilty creature,
He deigns as Man to die.**

**My manifold transgression
Henceforth can harm me none
Since Jesus' bloody Passion
For me God's grace hath won.
His precious blood my debts hath paid;
Of hell and all its torments
I am no more afraid.**

**Therefore I will forever
Give glory unto Thee,**

O Jesus, loving Savior,
For what Thou didst for me.
I'll spend my breath in songs of thanks
For Thy sad cry, Thy suff'rings,
Thy wrongs, Thy guiltless death.
Amen.

INVOCATION

Pastor: In the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit.

Cong: (spoken) Amen.

CONFESSION & ABSOLUTION

Pastor: Dearly loved by God: We have come to worship the holy God, but we do so as those who have disobeyed His commandments and are therefore deserving of His judgment. So let us draw near with a true heart to confess our sins unto God, our Father, imploring Him in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ to have mercy upon us and to forgive us.

Pastor: Our help is in the name of the Lord.

Cong: The Maker of heaven and earth.

Pastor: I said, "I will confess my transgressions to the Lord."

Cong: And You forgave the iniquity of my sin.

Pastor: Almighty God, our Maker and Redeemer, we poor sinners confess unto You that we are by nature sinful and unclean and that we have sinned against You by thought, word, and deed. For this reason we flee for refuge to Your infinite mercy, seeking and imploring Your grace for the sake of our Lord Jesus Christ.

Cong: O most merciful God, who has given Your only begotten Son to die for us, have mercy upon us and for His sake grant us remission of all our sins, and by Your Holy Spirit increase in us true knowledge of You and of Your will and true obedience to Your Word, so that by Your grace we might come to everlasting life; through Jesus Christ, our Lord. Amen.

Pastor: Almighty God, our heavenly Father, has had mercy upon us and has given His only Son to die for us and for His sake forgives us all our sins. To them that believe on His name He gives the right to become children of God and has promised them His Holy Spirit. He that believes and is baptized shall be saved.

Grant this, Lord, unto us all.

Cong: Amen.

GLORY TO GOD: (TLH 8)

**Father, who the light this day
Out of darkness didst create,
Shine upon us now, we pray,
While within Thy courts we wait.
Wean us from the works of night,
Make us children of the light.**

**Savior, who this day didst break
The dark prison of the tomb,
Bid our slumb'ring souls awake,
Shine thro' all their sin and gloom;
Let us, from our bonds set free,
Rise from sin and live to Thee.**

**Blessed Spirit, Comforter,
Sent this day from Christ on high,
Lord, on us Thy gifts confer,
Cleanse, illumine, sanctify.
All Thy fulness shed abroad;
Lead us to the truth of God.
Amen.**

THE GREETING:

Pastor: The Lord be with you.

Cong: And also with you.

THE PRAYER OF THE DAY:

Pastor: Almighty God, we implore You to look upon Your people with favor and kindness, that by the power of Your grace our lives may be governed, preserved, and protected and that we might boldly live as Your ambassadors in this present evil generation; through Jesus Christ, Your Son, our Lord who lives and reigns with You and the Holy Spirit, one God forever and ever.

Cong: Amen.

FIRST SCRIPTURE LESSON: Numbers 21:4-9

(ESV) From Mount Hor they set out by the way to the Red Sea, to go around the land of Edom. And the people became impatient on the way. (5) And the people spoke against God and against Moses, "Why have you brought us up out of Egypt to die in the wilderness? For there is no food and no water, and we loathe this worthless food." (6) Then the LORD sent fiery serpents among the people, and they bit the people, so that many people of Israel died. (7) And the people came to Moses and said, "We have sinned, for we have spoken against the LORD and against you. Pray

to the LORD, that he take away the serpents from us.” So Moses prayed for the people. (8) And the LORD said to Moses, “Make a fiery serpent and set it on a pole, and everyone who is bitten, when he sees it, shall live.” (9) So Moses made a bronze serpent and set it on a pole. And if a serpent bit anyone, he would look at the bronze serpent and live.

SECOND SCRIPTURE LESSON: Ephesians 2:1-10

(ESV) And you were dead in the trespasses and sins (2) in which you once walked, following the course of this world, following the prince of the power of the air, the spirit that is now at work in the sons of disobedience— (3) among whom we all once lived in the passions of our flesh, carrying out the desires of the body and the mind, and were by nature children of wrath, like the rest of mankind. (4) But God, being rich in mercy, because of the great love with which he loved us, (5) even when we were dead in our trespasses, made us alive together with Christ—by grace you have been saved— (6) and raised us up with him and seated us with him in the heavenly places in Christ Jesus, (7) so that in the coming ages he might show the immeasurable riches of his grace in kindness toward us in Christ Jesus. (8) For by grace you have been saved through faith. And this is not your own doing; it is the gift of God, (9) not a result of works, so that no one may boast. (10) For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand, that we should walk in them.

CONFESSION OF FAITH

The Apostolic Creed

I believe 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 is seated at the right hand of God the Father Almighty. From there 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.

HYMN: #354

Love Divine, All Love Excelling

**In the Cross of Christ I glory,
Tow'ring o'er the wrecks of time.
All the light of sacred story
Gathers round its head sublime.**

**When the woes of life o'ertake me,
Hopes deceive, and fears annoy,
Never shall the Cross forsake me;
Lo, it glows with peace and joy.**

**When the sun of bliss is beaming
Light and love upon my way,
From the Cross the radiance streaming
Adds more luster to the day.**

**Bane and blessing, pain and pleasure,
By the Cross are sanctified;
Peace is there that knows no measure,
Joys that thro' all time abide.
Amen.**

THE SERMON: John 8:45-59

(ESV) But because I tell the truth, you do not believe me. (46) Which one of you convicts me of sin? If I tell the truth, why do you not believe me? (47) Whoever is of God hears the words of God. The reason why you do not hear them is that you are not of God." (48) The Jews answered him, "Are we not right in saying that you are a Samaritan and have a demon?" (49) Jesus answered, "I do not have a demon, but I honor my Father, and you dishonor me. (50) Yet I do not seek my own glory; there is One who seeks it, and he is the judge. (51) Truly, truly, I say to you, if anyone keeps my word, he will never see death." (52) The Jews said to him, "Now we know that you have a demon! Abraham died, as did the prophets, yet you say, 'If anyone keeps my word, he will never taste death.' (53) Are you greater than our father Abraham, who died? And the prophets died! Who do you make yourself out to be?" (54) Jesus answered, "If I glorify myself, my glory is nothing. It is my Father who glorifies me, of whom you say, 'He is our God.' (55) But you have not known him. I know him. If I were to say that I do not know him, I would be a liar like you, but I do know him and I keep his word. (56) Your father Abraham rejoiced that he would see my day. He saw it and was glad." (57) So the Jews said to him, "You are not yet fifty years old, and have you seen Abraham?" (58) Jesus said to them, "Truly, truly, I say to you, before Abraham was, I am." (59) So they picked up

stones to throw at him, but Jesus hid himself and went out of the temple.

“Why the Cross?”

**The Cross Reveals the Sinner’s Rejection of God’s Word
The Cross Confirms the Message of God’s Word
The Cross Assures of God’s Faithfulness to His Word**

OFFERTORY

**Create in me a clean heart, O God,
And renew a right spirit within me.
Cast me not away from Your presence,
And take not Your Holy Spirit from me.
Restore unto me the joy of Your salvation,
And uphold me with Your free Spirit.
Amen.**

GENERAL PRAYER & THE LORD’S PRAYER

HYMN: #721

Cross of Jesus, Cross of Sorrow

**Cross of Jesus, cross of sorrow,
Where the blood of Christ was shed,
Perfect Man on thee did suffer,
Perfect God on thee has bled!**

**Here the King of all the ages,
Throned in light ere worlds could be,
Robed in mortal flesh is dying,
Crucified by sin for me.**

**O mysterious condescending!
O abandonment sublime!
Very God Himself is bearing
All the sufferings of time!**

**Cross of Jesus, cross of sorrow,
Where the blood of Christ was shed.
Perfect Man on thee did suffer,
Perfect God on thee has bled!**

PRAYER FOR THE CHURCH

Pastor: Almighty God, we implore You to give to Your Church Your Holy Spirit and the wisdom that comes down from above, that Your Word, as is fitting for it, may not be bound but have free course and be preached to the joy and edification of Christ's holy people, that in constant faith we may serve You and in the confession of Your name abide until the end; through Jesus Christ, our Lord, who lives and reigns with You and the Holy Spirit, one God forever and ever.

Cong: Amen.

THE BENEDICTION

Pastor: The Lord bless you and keep you; the Lord make His face shine upon you and be gracious unto you; the Lord lift up His countenance upon you and give you peace.

Cong: Amen.

SILENT PRAYER

ANNOUNCEMENTS

PASTOR AWAY: Pastor Gantt will be taking Josiah back to ILHS tomorrow. He will return early afternoon on Tuesday.

FINAL MIDWEEK LENTEN SERVICE: This Wednesday we will have our final midweek Lenten service as we meditate on the sixth word of Jesus from the cross. The service will begin at 9:30 AM.

WORK DAY: We will have a work day at church this Saturday to give the church yard and the church interior a “spring cleaning.” Please join us as you are able.

GOOD FRIDAY SERVICE: We will have a special Good Friday worship service. This service will provide us the opportunity to meditate on the seventh and final word of Jesus from the cross. The service will begin at 7:00 PM.

EASTER BRUNCH & WORSHIP: On Easter Sunday, we will have an Easter brunch hosted by the men of the congregation. The brunch will begin being served at 8:30. Our Easter Sunday worship will begin at 10:00 AM.

Daily Bible Readings for Home Devotions

March 23 – March 28, 2026

Mon John 8:46-59 Accused of having a demon, Jesus responds, “On the contrary, I honor my Father” (v49). And when He said, “Before Abraham was born, I AM” (v58), they were ready to stone Him.

Tues Hebrews 9:11-15 The high priests of old were mere illustrations of Christ, the high priest who is the mediator of a new covenant, and who sacrificed Himself to cleanse us from sin and give us eternal life.

Wed Genesis 12:1-3 The Lord calls Abram out from his country and his father’s family to a land new to him. He promises great blessings to Abram and great blessings to all families of the earth through him.

Thurs Psalm 27:1-6 Because the Lord is our safe stronghold, we need not fear evildoers advancing against us. If we can see the beauty of the Lord (v4), we will be lifted up above the enemies around us (v6).

Fri Psalm 27:7-14 With David (and Christ) we call upon the Lord in the day of trouble. Guided by the light of His Word we are taught His ways (v11). Confident of His goodness, we wait for the Lord! (v14)

Sat Psalm 54 When David was betrayed to Saul, who was hunting him down, he looked to God his Savior. Indeed, his Helper (v4) was the One who had power over every enemy, and could lift him up (v7).

