

# *Ash Wednesday*



*“Little Church with a BIG Heart”*  
**Saint Bartholomew Lutheran Church**

February 18, 2026 7:30 PM



**Evangelical Lutheran Church in America**  
God's work. Our hands.

## Prelude

## Gathering

*(lighting candles) you may sit, stand, or kneel as you wish.*

### Gathering Hymn: ACS # 924

#### As the Winter Days Grow Longer



1 As the win - ter days grow long - er, draw - ing short the hours of night;  
2 As the vines burst in - to blos - som, fra - grant in the morn - ing air,  
3 As we jour - ney through this sea - son, pil - grims through a thirst - y land,



as our ea - ger ex - pec - ta - tion waits for Eas - ter's dawn-ing light—  
lift - ing spir - its with their sweet-ness, lur - ing hearts to thank-ful prayer—  
quench us with your liv - ing pres - ence; guide us with your lov - ing hand.



yearn - ing peo-ple, here we gath-er, turn - ing watch-ful eyes to you:  
Lent - en peo-ple, here we gath-er, seek - ing lives re-freshed from sin.  
Wan-d'ring peo-ple, here we gath-er, called to rest a - long our way.



God who bless-es earth with spring-time, shine with-in our world a - new!  
God who bless-es earth with spring-time, bloom with-in our hearts a - gain!  
God who bless-es earth with spring-time, grant us sab-bath joy this day!

Text: Mary Louise Bringle, b. 1953

Music: SUO GÂN, Welsh melody

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## Words of Welcome

P On Ash Wednesday we begin our forty-day journey toward Easter with a day of fasting and repentance.

Marking our foreheads with dust, we acknowledge that we die and return to the earth. At the same time, the dust traces the life-giving cross indelibly marked on our foreheads at baptism.

While we journey through Lent to return to God, we have already been reconciled to God through Christ. We humbly pray for God to make our hearts clean while we rejoice that “now is the day of salvation.”

Returning to our baptismal call, we more intentionally bear the fruits of mercy and justice in the world.

## Responsive Reading: Psalm 51:1-17

A Have mercy on me, O God, according to your steadfast love; in your great compassion blot out my offenses.

C **Wash me through and through from my wickedness, and cleanse me from my sin.**

A For I know my offenses, and my sin is ever before me.

C **Against you only have I sinned and done what is evil in your sight; so you are justified when you speak and right in your judgment.**

A Indeed, I was born steeped in wickedness, a sinner from my mother's womb.

C **Indeed, you delight in truth deep within me, and would have me know wisdom deep within.**

A Remove my sins with hyssop, and I shall be clean; wash me, and I shall be purer than snow.

C **Let me hear joy and gladness; that the body you have broken may rejoice.**

A Hide your face from my sins, and blot out all my wickedness.

C **Create in me a clean heart, O God, and renew a right spirit within me.**

A Cast me not away from your presence, and take not your Holy Spirit from me.

C **Restore to me the joy of your salvation and sustain me with your bountiful Spirit.**

A Let me teach your ways to offenders, and sinners shall be restored to you.

C **Rescue me from bloodshed, O God of my salvation, and my tongue shall sing of your righteousness.**

A O Lord, open my lips, and my mouth shall proclaim your praise.

C **For you take no delight in sacrifice, or I would give it. You are not pleased with burnt offering.**

A The sacrifice of God is a troubled spirit; a troubled and broken heart, O God, you will not despise.

## ***APOSTOLIC GREETING***

P 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**



1 Have mer - cy on us, Lord, and hear our sol - emn prayer.  
2 Have mer - cy on us, Christ, and wash a - way our sin.  
3 Have mer - cy on us, Lord; make sin and shame de - part.



We come to hear your liv - ing word; it saves us from de - spair.  
Pour out your grace and make us whole that new life may be - gin.  
Re - new us with your sav - ing pow'r; cre - ate in us new hearts!

## **Prayer of the Day**

P The Lord be with you.

C **And also with you.**

P Almighty and ever-living God, you hate nothing you have made, and you forgive the sins of all who are penitent. Create in us new and honest hearts, so that, truly repenting of our sins, we may receive from you, the God of all mercy, full pardon and forgiveness through your Son, Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever.

C **Amen.**

## WORD

A I will bless the Lord at all times; his praise shall continually be in my mouth (Psalm 34:1). Lord, bless the reading of your word. Make it come alive in our midst.

C Amen.

### First Reading: Joel 2:1-2, 12-17

Blow the trumpet in Zion; sound the alarm on my holy mountain! Let all the inhabitants of the land tremble, for the day of the Lord is coming, it is near—a day of darkness and gloom, a day of clouds and thick darkness! Like blackness spread upon the mountains a great and powerful army comes; their like has never been from of old, nor will be again after them in ages to come.

Yet even now, says the Lord, return to me with all your heart, with fasting, with weeping, and with mourning; rend your hearts and not your clothing. Return to the Lord, your God, for he is gracious and merciful, slow to anger, and abounding in steadfast love, and relents from punishing. Who knows whether he will not turn and relent, and leave a blessing behind him, a grain offering and a drink offering for the Lord, your God?

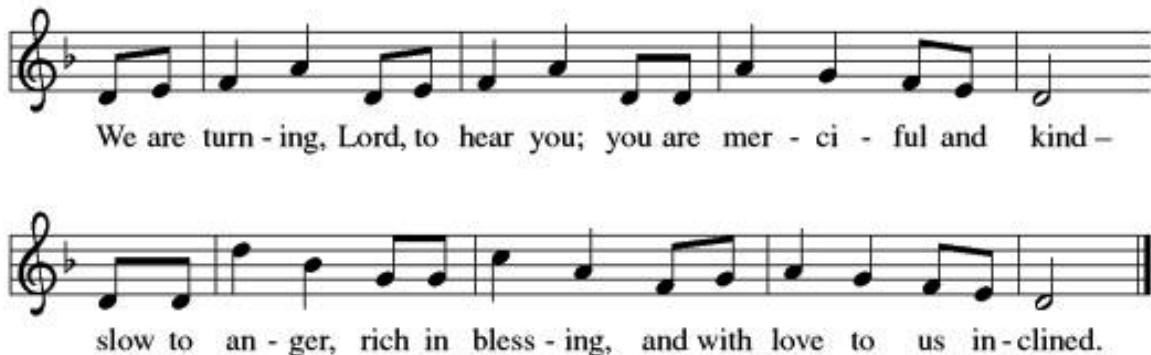
Blow the trumpet in Zion; sanctify a fast; call a solemn assembly; gather the people. Sanctify the congregation; assemble the aged; gather the children, even infants at the breast. Let the bridegroom leave his room, and the bride her canopy.

Between the vestibule and the altar let the priests, the ministers of the Lord, weep. Let them say, “Spare your people, O Lord, and do not make your heritage a mockery, a byword among the nations. Why should it be said among the peoples, ‘Where is their God?’ ”

**A** Word of God, Word of life.

**C** Thanks be to God

Gospel Acclamation



We are turn - ing, Lord, to hear you; you are mer - ci - ful and kind -

slow to an - ger, rich in bless - ing, and with love to us in - clined.

**P** The Holy Gospel according to Matthew the 6<sup>th</sup> chapter.

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

**Matthew 6:1-6, 16-21**

[Jesus said to the disciples:] “Beware of practicing your piety before others in order to be seen by them; for then you have no reward from your Father in heaven. “So whenever you give alms, do not sound a trumpet before you, as the hypocrites do in the synagogues and in the streets, so that they may be praised by others. Truly I tell you, they have received their reward.

<sup>3</sup>But when you give alms, do not let your left hand know what your right hand is doing, <sup>4</sup>so that your alms may be done in secret; and your Father who sees in secret will reward you.

“And whenever you pray, do not be like the hypocrites; for they love to stand and pray in the synagogues and at the street corners, so that they may be seen by others. Truly I tell you, they have received their reward. But whenever you pray, go into your room and shut the door and pray to your Father who is in secret; and your Father who sees in secret will reward you.

“And whenever you fast, do not look dismal, like the hypocrites, for they disfigure their faces so as to show others that they are fasting. Truly I tell you, they have received their reward. But when you fast, put oil on your head and wash your face, so that your fasting may be seen not by others but by your Father who is in secret; and your Father who sees in secret will reward you.

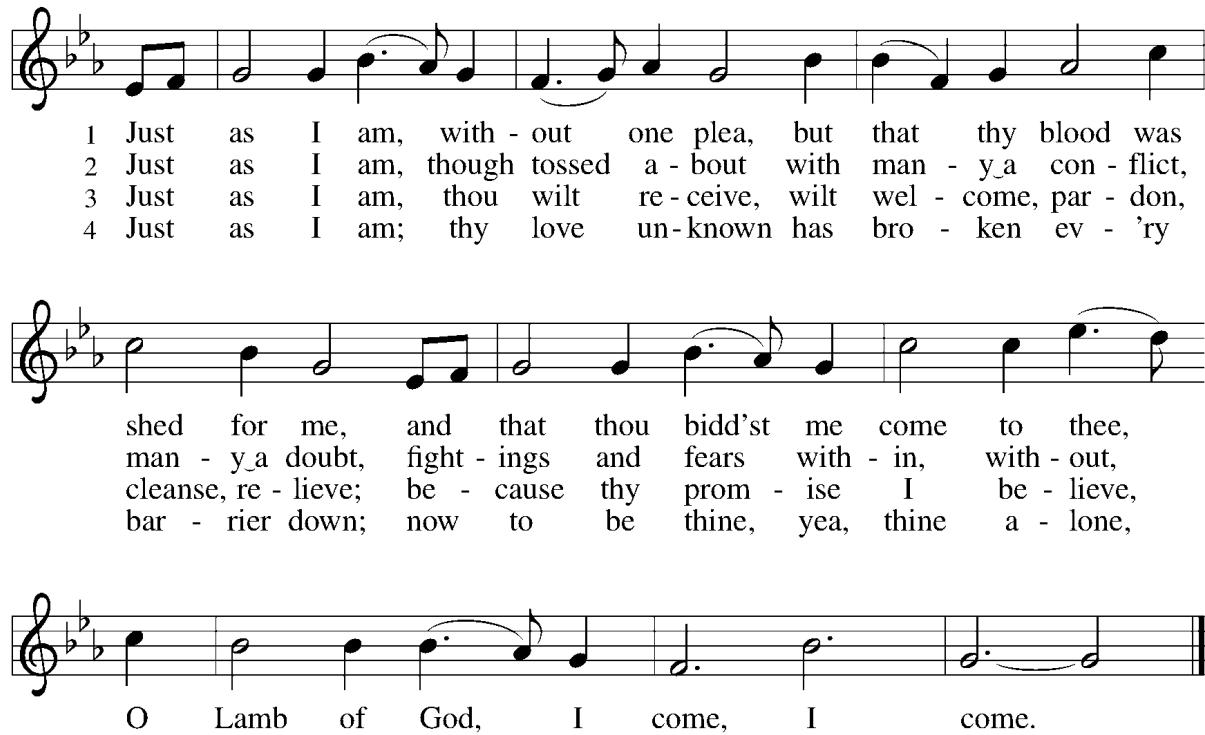
“Do not store up for yourselves treasures on earth, where moth and rust consume and where thieves break in and steal; but store up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust consumes and where thieves do not break in and steal. For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also.”

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

**SERMON**

## Hymn of the Day: ELW # 592

### Just As I Am, without One Plea



1 Just as I am, with - out one plea, but that thy blood was  
2 Just as I am, though tossed a - bout with man - y\_a con - flict,  
3 Just as I am, thou wilt re - ceive, wilt wel - come, par - don,  
4 Just as I am; thy love un-known has bro - ken ev - 'ry

shed for me, and that thou bidd'st me come to thee,  
man - y\_a doubt, fight - ings and fears with - in, with - out,  
cleanse, re - lieve; be - cause thy prom - ise I be - lieve,  
bar - rier down; now to be thine, yea, thine a - lone,

O Lamb of God, I come, I come.

Text: Charlotte Elliott, 1789–1871

Music: WOODWORTH, William B. Bradbury, 1816–1868

## PEACE

P The peace of Christ be with you always.

C **And also with you.**

## **Invitation to Lent**

Friends in Christ, today with the whole church we enter the time of remembering Jesus' Passover from death to life, and our life in Christ is renewed.

We begin this holy season by acknowledging our need for repentance and for God's mercy. We are created to experience joy in communion with God, to love one another, and to live in harmony with creation. But our sinful rebellion separates us from God, our neighbors, and creation, so that we do not enjoy the life our creator intended.

As disciples of Jesus, we are called to a discipline that contends against evil and resists whatever leads us away from love of God and neighbor.

I invite you, therefore, to the discipline of Lent—self-examination and repentance, prayer and fasting, sacrificial giving and works of love—strengthened by the gifts of word and sacrament. Let us continue our journey through these forty days to the great Three Days of Jesus' death and resurrection.

## **Fire Paper Casting-Away Litany**

## 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 seeking worldly delights that deceive us and dishonor  
you: 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 disdaining 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.**

## IMPOSITION OF ASHES

*When ashes are used in the service, the presiding minister may say the following prayer.*

P Almighty God, you have created us out of the dust of the earth. May these ashes be a sign of our mortality and penitence, reminding us that only by the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ are we given eternal life; through the same Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord.

**C Amen.**

*People may come forward and kneel or stand to receive the ashes.*

*Ministers mark the forehead of each person with a cross of ashes, saying:*

P Remember that you are dust, and to dust you shall return.

*After those who desire ashes have received them, all may kneel or sit, and the minister continues.*

P Accomplish in us, O God, the work of your salvation,  
C **that we may show forth your glory in the world.**  
P By the cross and passion of your Son, our Savior,  
C **Bring us with all your saints to the joy of his resurrection.**

P Almighty God have mercy on us, forgive us all our sins through our Lord Jesus Christ, strengthen us in all goodness, and by the power of the Holy Spirit keep us in eternal life.  
C **Amen.**

### **Prayers of Intercession**

Each petition ends:

A Hear us, O God. C **Your mercy is great.**

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

*A brief silence.*

Guide your church, O God. Accompany all Christians in this season of repentance, and renew our faith in the riches of grace you give to us in baptism. Hear us, O God.  
**Your mercy is great.**

Heal this earth, O God. Satisfy the needs of every parched place, every diverse ecosystem, every suffering creature. Though all return to dust, grant beauty and purpose to each living thing. Hear us, O God.

**Your mercy is great.**

Restore the nations, O God. Let your healing spring up quickly across the world (*especially Ukraine, Palestine, and Minnesota*). Give all in authority the will to loose the bonds of injustice and let any who are oppressed go free. Hear us, O God.

**Your mercy is great.**

Deliver your people, O God. Comfort any whose hearts are rent by grief, uphold any who are sick, *especially Joe, Nick, Bob, Justin, Billy, Gloria, Rosemary, Nelson, Tom, Shirley, Rich, Heather, and Gail*, bring food to those who hunger, and give housing to all without shelter. Hear us, O God.

**Your mercy is great.**

Bless this assembly, O God. Reconcile us to one another and to you. Strengthen our resolve to fast from evil, open our hands in sharing, and quicken our prayer. Hear us, O God.

**Your mercy is great.**

*Here other intercessions may be offered.*

Hold us forever, O God. We thank you for all who now know their treasure in heaven, *especially Beth Peroni*; and for *Martin Luther and Dietrich Bonhoeffer*, and all who on earth proclaimed your abounding, steadfast love. Hear us, O God.

**Your mercy is great.**

(Pastor) Receive our prayers, O God, through Jesus Christ, our strength and salvation.

**C Amen.**

## **THE OFFERING**

### **Offering Prayer**

P 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.

**C Amen**

### **Great Thanksgiving**

P The Lord be with you.

**C And also with you.**

P Lift up your hearts.

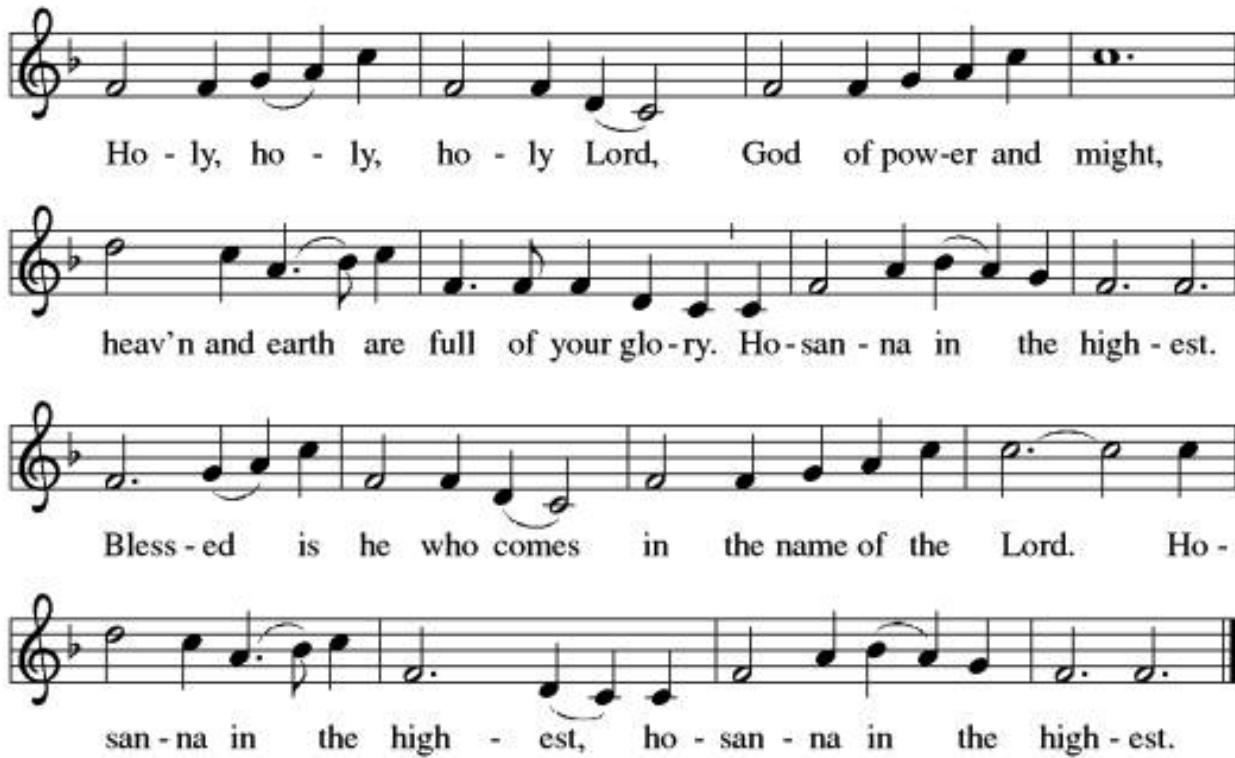
**C We lift them to the Lord.**

P Let us give thanks to the Lord our God.

**C It is right to give our thanks and praise.**

## PREFACE

It is indeed right and good  
to give you thanks and praise,  
almighty God and everlasting Father,  
through Jesus Christ your Son.  
For in these forty days  
you lead us into the desert of repentance  
that through a pilgrimage of prayer and discipline  
we may grow in grace and learn to be your people once again.  
Through fasting, prayer and acts of service  
you bring us back to your generous heart.  
Through study of your holy word  
you open our eyes to your presence in the world  
and free our hands to welcome others  
into the radiant splendour of your love.  
As we prepare to celebrate the Easter feast  
with joyful hearts and minds we bless you for your mercy  
and join with saints and angels  
forever praising you and singing:



Ho - ly, ho - ly, ho - ly Lord, God of pow-er and might,  
heav'n and earth are full of your glo-ry. 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, ho - san - na in the high - est.

## EUCARISTIC PRAYER

God of our weary years, God of our silent tears,  
you have brought us this far along the way.  
In times of bitterness you did not abandon us, but guided us  
into the path of love and light. In every age you sent prophets  
to make known your loving will for all humanity.

The cry of the poor has become your own cry;  
our hunger and thirst for justice is your own desire.  
In the fullness of time, you sent your chosen servant  
to preach good news to the afflicted,  
to break bread with the outcast and despised,  
and to ransom those in bondage to prejudice and sin.

In the night in which he was betrayed,  
our Lord Jesus took bread, and gave thanks;  
broke it, and gave it to his 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 all people for the forgiveness of sin.  
Do this for the remembrance of me.

For as often as we eat of this bread and drink from this cup  
we proclaim the Lord's death until he comes.

**Christ has died. Christ is risen. Christ will come again.**

Remembering, therefore, his death and resurrection,  
we await the day when Jesus shall return  
to free all the earth from the bonds of slavery and death.  
Come, Lord Jesus! And let the church say, Amen.

**C    Amen.**

### **Lord's Prayer**

P    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; 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.**

### **INVITATION TO COMMUNION**

P    Come to the table.  
Feast on God's goodness and mercy.

## **Post-Communion Prayer**

P 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.**

## **SENDING**

### **Benediction**

P Beloved, we are God's own people, holy, washed, renewed.  
God bless you and keep you, shower you with mercy, fill  
you with courage, and + give you peace.

**C Amen.**

### **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 Hymn: ELW # 793

### Be Thou My Vision

1 Be thou my vi - sion, O Lord of my heart;  
2 Be thou my wis - dom, and thou my true word;  
3 Rich - es I heed not, nor vain, emp - ty praise,  
4 Light of my soul, af - ter vic - to - ry won,

naught be all else to me, save that thou art:  
I ev - er with thee and thou with me, Lord.  
thou mine in - her - i - tance, now and al - ways:  
may I reach heav - en's joys, O heav - en's Sun!

thou my best thought both by day and by night,  
Thou my soul's shel - ter, and thou my high tow'r,  
thou and thou on - ly, the first in my heart,  
Heart of my own heart, what - ev - er be - fall,

wak - ing or sleep - ing, thy pres - ence my light.  
raise thou me heav'n - ward, O Pow'r of my pow'r.  
great God of heav - en, my trea - sure thou art.  
still be my vi - sion, O Rul - er of all.

## Dismissal

P Go in peace. Believe the good news.

C **Thanks be to God!**

*Postlude*