



ST. JOHN'S

EVANGELICAL LUTHERAN CHURCH

100 E Water Street
Abbottstown, PA 17301
717-259-0796
www.stjohnsatown.com



March 5, 2025
7:00pm Worship Service
Service of Holy Communion

Lent begins with a solemn call to fasting and repentance as we begin our journey to the baptismal waters of Easter. As we hear in tonight's readings, now is the acceptable time to return to the Lord. During Lent the people of God will reflect on the meaning of their baptism into Christ's death and resurrection. The sign of ashes suggests our human mortality and frailty. What seems like an ending is really an invitation to make each day a new beginning, in which we are washed in God's mercy and forgiveness. With the cross on our brow, we long for the spiritual renewal that flows from the springtime Easter feast to come.

Introduction

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.

About Holy Communion

St. John’s practices Eucharistic hospitality: All of God’s children are invited to join us for Holy Communion, to receive the Lord’s body and blood for forgiveness of sin and renewal of life. The church provides pre-filled fellowship cups that contain previously consecrated communion elements, to be used in the pews or in the home. If you need these communion elements for family members who are unable to worship with us in-person, please take a few from the rear of the church or stop by the church office.

A CALL TO WORSHIP

Please take a few moments to prepare your hearts and minds for worship. The ministers will enter in silence. After they have taken their place, the Psalm is sung.

PSALM 51: 1-17



- ¹Have mercy on me, O God, according to your | steadfast love;
in your great compassion blot out | my offenses.
- ²**Wash me through and through | from my wickedness, and cleanse me | from my sin.**
- ³For I know | my offenses, and my sin is ev- | er before me.
- ⁴**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.**
- ⁵Indeed, I was born | steeped in wickedness, a sinner from my | mother’s womb.
- ⁶**Indeed, you delight in truth | deep within me, and would have me know wisdom | deep within.**
- ⁷Remove my sins with hyssop, and I | shall be clean; wash me, and I shall be pur- | er than snow.
- ⁸**Let me hear | joy and gladness; that the body you have broken | may rejoice.**
- ⁹Hide your face | from my sins, and blot out | all my wickedness.
- ¹⁰**Create in me a clean | heart, O God, and renew a right spir- | it within me.**
- ¹¹Cast me not away | from your presence, and take not your Holy Spir- | it from me.
- ¹²**Restore to me the joy of | your salvation and sustain me with your boun- | tiful Spirit.**
- ¹³Let me teach your ways | to offenders, and sinners shall be re- | stored to you.
- ¹⁴**Rescue me from bloodshed, O God of | my salvation, and my tongue shall sing | of your righteousness.**
- ¹⁵O Lord, o- | pen my lips, and my mouth shall pro- | claim your praise.
- ¹⁶**For you take no delight in sacrifice, or | I would give it. You are not pleased | with burnt offering.**
- ¹⁷The sacrifice of God is a | troubled spirit; a troubled and broken heart, O God, you will | not despise.

***SALUTATION AND PRAYER OF THE DAY**

The Lord be with you. **And also with you.**

Let us pray.... 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. **Amen**

FIRST READING: Joel 2:1-2, 12-17

¹Blow 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—

²a 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.

¹²Yet even now, says the LORD, return to me with all your heart, with fasting, with weeping, and with mourning; ¹³rend 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.

¹⁴Who 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?

¹⁵Blow the trumpet in Zion; sanctify a fast; call a solemn assembly; ¹⁶gather 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.

¹⁷Between 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?' "

Holy Wisdom, Holy Word.

Thanks be to God.



SECOND READING: 2 Corinthians 5:20b--6:10

^{20b}We entreat you on behalf of Christ, be reconciled to God. ²¹For our sake he made him to be sin who knew no sin, so that in him we might become the righteousness of God.

^{6:1}As we work together with him, we urge you also not to accept the grace of God in vain.

²For he says,

“At an acceptable time I have listened to you,
and on a day of salvation I have helped you.”

See, now is the acceptable time; see, now is the day of salvation! ³We are putting no obstacle in anyone’s way, so that no fault may be found with our ministry, ⁴but as servants of God we have commended ourselves in every way: through great endurance, in afflictions, hardships, calamities, ⁵beatings, imprisonments, riots, labors, sleepless nights, hunger; ⁶by purity, knowledge, patience, kindness, holiness of spirit, genuine love, ⁷truthful speech, and the power of God; with the weapons of righteousness for the right hand and for the left; ⁸in honor and dishonor, in ill repute and good repute. We are treated as impostors, and yet are true; ⁹as unknown, and yet are well known; as dying, and see—we are alive; as punished, and yet not killed; ¹⁰as sorrowful, yet always rejoicing; as poor, yet making many rich; as having nothing, and yet possessing everything.

Holy Wisdom, Holy Word.

Thanks be to God.

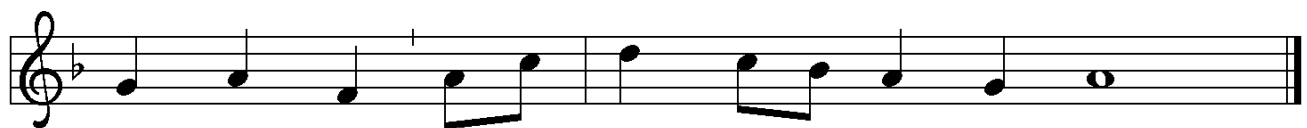
*GOSPEL ACCLAMATION



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 6:1-6, 16-21

The Holy Gospel according to Saint Matthew the 6th Chapter.

Glory to you, Oh Lord.

[Jesus said to the disciples:] ¹“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.

²“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. ³But when you give alms, do not let your left hand know what your right hand is doing, ⁴so that your alms may be done in secret; and your Father who sees in secret will reward you.

⁵“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. ⁶But 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.

¹⁶“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. ¹⁷But when you fast, put oil on your head and wash your face, ¹⁸so 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.

¹⁹“Do not store up for yourselves treasures on earth, where moth and rust consume and where thieves break in and steal; ²⁰but store up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust consumes and where thieves do not break in and steal. ²¹For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also.”

The Gospel of the Lord.

Praise to you, Oh Christ.

SERMON

Deacon Amy Mambu



“Restore in Us, O God”



1 Re - store in us, O God, the splen - dor of your love; re -
 2 O Spir - it, wake in us the won - der of your pow'r; from
 3 Bring us, O Christ, to share the full - ness of your joy; bap -
 4 Three - per - soned God, ful - fill the prom - ise of your grace, that



new your im - age in our hearts, and all our sins re - move.
 fruit - less fear un - furl our lives like spring - time bud and flow'r.
 tize us in the ris - en life that death can - not de - stroy.
 we, when all our search - ing ends, may see you face to face.

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 Music: BAYLOR, Hal H. Hopson, b. 1933
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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.

*CONFESSION

All may make the sign of the cross, the sign that is marked at baptism, as the presiding minister begins.

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

Amen.

Let us return to God, confessing our sin in the assurance of God's abiding love.

Silence is kept for reflection.

Compassionate One,
**you are slow to anger and abounding in steadfast love,
but our lives do not always reflect you and your love for the world.
We do not show others the tender compassion you have shown to us.
We do not welcome others with the radical hospitality you grant to all people.
We oppress others, even though you have set us free again and again.
We squander the abundant gifts of the earth.
Transform our lives and guide us again in the way of the cross.
Amen.**

Beloved in Christ,
God's arms are always stretched open wide to welcome the wandering ones home.
In ✝ Christ your sins are forgiven.
You have a place in God's house forever.
Amen.

IMPOSITION OF ASHES

*As a sign of penitence and turning, worshipers may choose to receive the imposition of ashes.
Approach by the center aisle; return by the side.*

Remember you are dust, and to dust you shall return. **Amen .**

We continue once everyone has returned to their seat.

Accomplish in us, O God, the work of your salvation,
that we may show forth your glory in the world.

By the cross and passion of your Son, our Savior,
bring us with all your saints to the joy of his resurrection.

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.

Amen.



*PRAYERS OF INTERCESSION

Led by the Spirit, let us turn to God in prayer for the church, the world, and all those in need.

A brief silence.

*(following each petition) ...God, in your mercy, **receive our prayer.***

Receive the prayers of your people and draw all things together in your love, in the name of Jesus, who leads us from death to life.

Amen.

*SHARING THE PEACE

The Peace of the Lord be with you always. **And also with you.**

THE OFFERING

We encourage you to please mail in your offering or [click here](#) to donate online. You can also go to our church website www.stjohnsatown.com and make a one-time donation or recurring donation.

OFFERTORY ANTHEM

“That Wondrous Cross”

Chancel Choir

*PRESENTATION OF THE OFFERING



Let the vine - yards be fruit-ful, Lord, and fill to the brim our cup of



bles-sing. Gath - er a har-vest from the seeds that were sown, that we may be



fed with the bread of life. Gath - er the hopes and the dreams of all; u -



nite them with the prayers we of - fer now. Grace our ta - ble with your



pres - ence, and give us a fore-taste of the feast to come.

*OFFERTORY PRAYER

Let us pray... Gracious Provider,

you set your immense treasures among us, opening your heart to the world.

As we prepare to feast on your bountiful love, deepen our commitment to sharing those treasures with others, through our Savior, Jesus Christ.

Amen.



***THE GREAT THANKSGIVING**

The Lord be with you. **And also with you.**
Lift up your hearts. **We lift them to the Lord.**
Let us give thanks to the Lord our God.
It is right to give our thanks and praise.



We should at all times and in all places offer thanks and praise to you, O Lord, holy Father, through Christ our Lord.; who on the tree of the cross gave salvation to all, that, where death began, there life might also be restored, and that Satan, who by a tree once overcame the human race, might on Calvary by a tree be overcome.

Thanks be to God. Blessed is the one, who in this holy meal, comes in the name of the Lord.

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 for all people for the forgiveness of sin. Do this for the remembrance of me.

Together now, let us pray using the words our Lord taught us...

***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.

***INVITATION TO COMMUNION**

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

THE DISTRIBUTION



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.

*POST COMMUNION BLESSING

The body and blood of our Lord Jesus Christ strengthen you and keep you in his grace, now and unto eternal life. **Amen.**

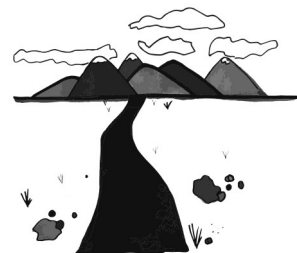
*POST COMMUNION PRAYER

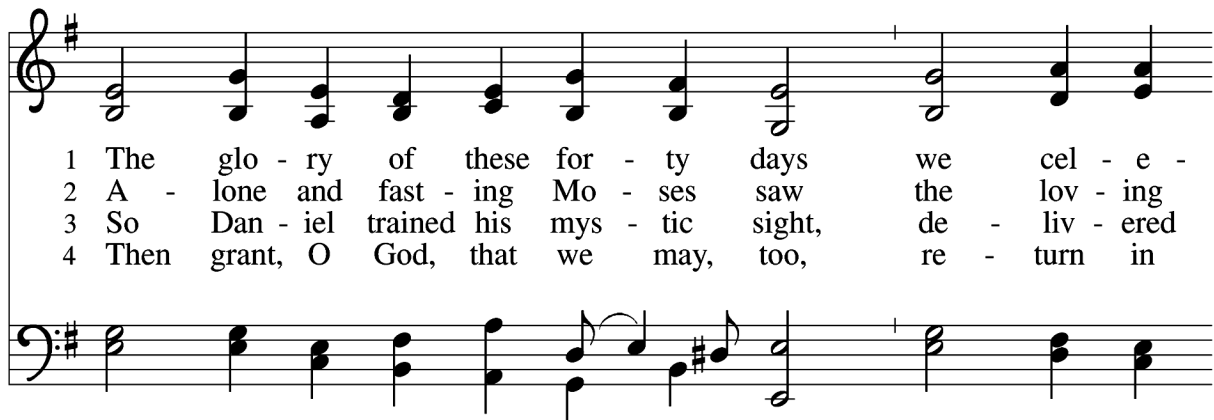
Let us pray... Generous Host, you have shared your feast with us and made us new. Send us now to set tables of love and grace in our communities, that your liberating love might nourish the world into freedom, in the name of the crucified one, Jesus Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

THE SENDING

*THE BLESSING

God our tender parent,
God the crucified one,
God the reconciling Spirit,
✠ bless you now and forever. **Amen.**

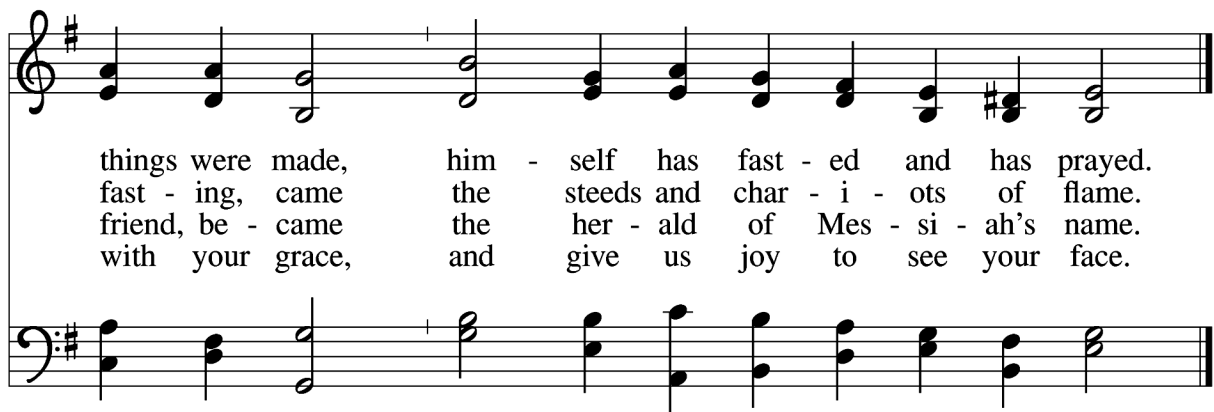




1 The glo - ry of these for - ty days we cel - e -
 2 A - lone and fast - ing Mo - ses saw the lov - ing
 3 So Dan - iel trained his mys - tic sight, de - liv - ered
 4 Then grant, O God, that we may, too, re - turn in



brate with songs of praise; for Christ, through whom all
 God who gave the law; and to E - li - jah,
 from the li - ons' might; and John, the Bride - groom's
 fast and prayer to you. Our spir - its strength-en



things were made, him - self has fast - ed and has prayed.
 fast - ing, came the steeds and char - i - ots of flame.
 friend, be - came the her - ald of Mes - si - ah's name.
 with your grace, and give us joy to see your face.

***THE DISMISSAL**

Go in peace. Care for others as God cares for you.

Thanks be to God. We Will!

POSTLUDE*"Adagio"*

Schubert

Serving St. John's this evening

Head Usher.....	Barb Colandreo
Communion Assistant.....	Warren Smith
Acolyte.....	Clara Berkebile
Greeters.....	Smith Family
Lector.....	Warren Smith

Abbottstown/ East Berlin Midweek Lenten Lunch & Prayer Service

MARCH 12

ST. JOHN'S LUTHERAN CHURCH
100 E WATER ST, ABBOTTSTOWN

MARCH 19

ZWINGLI UCC
403 W KING ST, EAST BERLIN

MARCH 26

PARADISE LUTHERAN
3241 CHURCH RD, THOMASVILLE

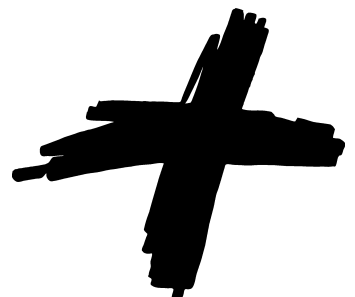
APRIL 2

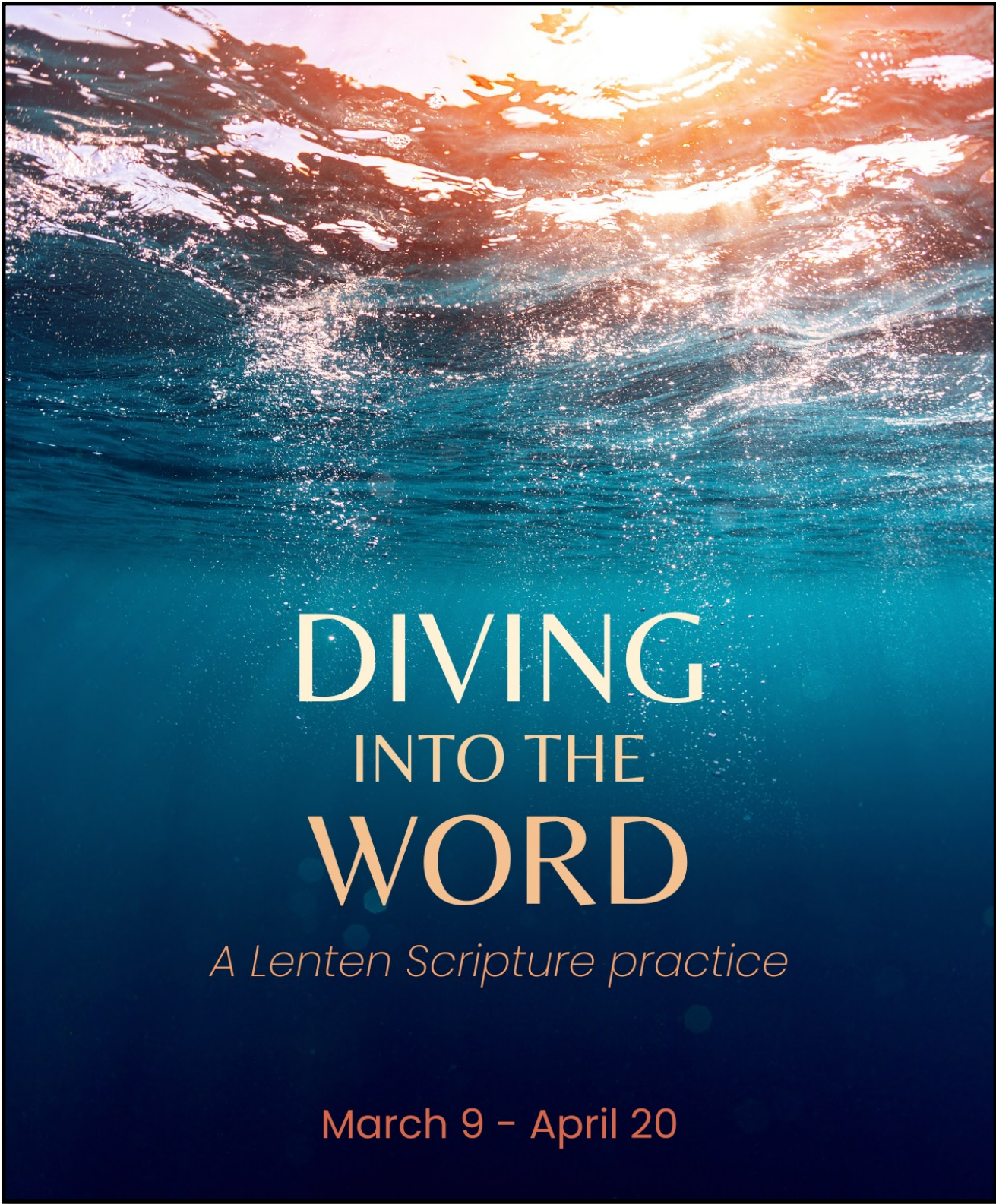
IMMACULATE HEART OF MARY
6084 W CANAL RD, ABBOTTSTOWN

APRIL 9

TRINITY LUTHERAN CHURCH
117 W KING ST, EAST BERLIN

*Wednesdays in Lent
12pm to 1pm*



An underwater photograph showing the sun's rays filtering through the water's surface, creating a shimmering, golden light effect. The water is a deep, clear blue, and the sun is positioned at the top center, creating a bright, circular glow. The overall mood is serene and contemplative.

DIVING INTO THE WORD

A Lenten Scripture practice

March 9 – April 20

During the season of Lent, you're invited into a practice of engaging more deeply with Scripture. We've created a list of twelve passages to dive into as a community - two for each week of Lent. You're invited to read and reflect on these passages throughout the week, notice how God is speaking to you through the Word, and share a written reflection with the community during worship. Beginning Sunday, March 9th, there will be Bible bookmarks available for pickup at the church, which list the weekly passages. Take a few, share them with loved ones, and join the St. John's community in this practice of Diving into the Word.

PRAYER CONCERNS

For our homebound members:

Gloria Breighner, Dorothy Hoffheins, Esther Swope, and Ruthetta Baker

For those serving the larger church:

Dr. Stephan J. Swanson and Jodi Lynn Swanson, RN - our missionaries in Tanzania

For persons who are ill or hospitalized:

Joan Plank - recovering from heart surgery

Ruth Edwards - having heart problems

Christine Uhercik - preparing for surgery

Lisa Wildasin - continuing in her fight with MS

Bobbie Bevas - recovering from abdominal surgery

Linda Utz - receiving care for pneumonia and kidneys

Beverly Davis - receiving care for Myasthenia gravis

Bonnie Staub - recovering from shoulder surgery

Myra Miller - recovering from injuries in an automobile accident

Lona Talaber - recovering from injuries in an automobile accident

Deb Litten - recovering from injuries/surgeries following an automobile accident

Jessica Harrison (great-niece of Lorna Runk) - receiving a permanent spinal cord stimulator

Mike Botterbush (brother of Eunice Mentzer) - receiving hospice care

Nancy Emig - continuing rehabilitation at home

Troy Roomsburg (son of Harold Roomsburg) - recovering from a heart attack

Kathy McMaster - receiving kidney dialysis

Dr. Anne Quinn - receiving care for ALS

Terry Murren - in need of prayers

Sarah Dutrow - in need of healing



For persons undergoing treatment for Cancer:

Jane Miller (mother of Corey Miller) - receiving care for breast cancer

Polly Stein (Ruth's Harvest volunteer) - receiving care for breast cancer

Daniel Bowers (nephew of Lorna Runk) - receiving care for prostate cancer

Norah Shively - receiving care for stage 1 melanoma

Sharon Ingram - receiving care for cancer

Chuck Gabrielson - receiving care for lung cancer

Doug Balko - receiving care for colon cancer

Fred Gebhart - receiving care for prostate cancer

James Mauk - receiving care for cancer and his heart

Jack Leib - receiving care for cancer at WellSpan Gettysburg

Irelyn Sprenkle (SGIS student) - receiving care for kidney cancer at Hershey Medical Center

Kim H. - receiving care for lymphoma

Audrey Watts - receiving care for cancer

Janet Heflin - receiving care for cancer

St. John's prays for the family and friends of Gloria Baker, who passed away on February 19. May God bring you all comfort and peace.