

SOLOMON'S EVANGELICAL LUTHERAN CHURCH  
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*"Solomon's Evangelical Lutheran Church, following the example of Jesus Christ, seeks to live in the confidence and fullness of God's grace; to preach the Good News boldly and truthfully; to support and serve others in faith; to work in harmony with all creation."*

SECOND SUNDAY IN LENT  
FEBRUARY 28, 2021

**February 28, 2021**  
Second Sunday in Lent

The second covenant in this year's Lenten readings is the one made with Abraham and Sarah: God's promise to make them the ancestors of many, with whom God will remain in everlasting covenant. Paul says this promise comes to all who share Abraham's faith in the God who brings life into being where there was no life. We receive this baptismal promise of resurrection life in faith. Sarah and Abraham receive new names as a sign of the covenant, and we too get new identities in baptism, as we put on Christ.

**GREETINGS AND ANNOUNCEMENTS**

**PRELUDE**

**CONFESSION AND FORGIVENESS**

Blessed be the holy Trinity, ✠ one God,  
the keeper of the covenant,  
the source of steadfast love,  
our rock and our redeemer.

**Amen.**

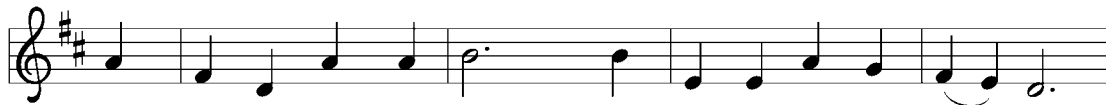
God hears us when we cry, and draws us close in Jesus Christ. Let us return to the one who is full of compassion.

Fountain of living water,  
**pour out your mercy over us.**  
**Our sin is heavy, and we long to be free.**  
**Rebuild what we have ruined**  
**and mend what we have torn.**  
**Wash us in your cleansing flood.**  
**Make us alive in the Spirit**  
**to follow in the way of Jesus,**  
**as healers and restorers of the world you so love.**  
**Amen.**

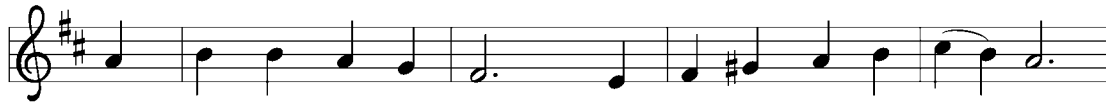
Beloved, God's word never fails.  
The promise rests on grace:  
by the saving love of Jesus Christ,  
the wisdom and power of God,  
your sins are ✠ forgiven, and God remembers them no more.  
Journey in the way of Jesus.  
**Amen.**

## GATHERING SONG *O God, My Faithful God* (ELW 806)

### O God, My Faithful God



1 O God, my faith - ful God, true foun-tain ev - er flow - ing,  
2 Give me the strength to do with read - y heart and will - ing  
3 Keep me from say - ing words that lat - er need re - call - ing;  
4 When dan-gers gath - er round, oh, keep me calm and fear - less;



with - out whom noth - ing is, all per - fect gifts be - stow - ing:  
what - ev - er you com - mand, my call - ing here ful - fill - ing—  
guard me, lest i - dle speech may from my lips be fall - ing;  
help me to bear the cross when life seems dark and cheer - less;



give me a health - y frame, and may I have with - in  
to do it when I ought, with all my might—and bless  
but when, with - in my place, I must and ought to speak,  
help me, as you have taught, to love both great and small,



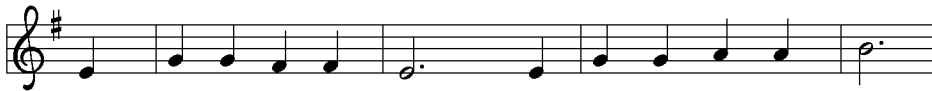
a con - science free from blame, a soul un - stained by sin.  
what - ev - er I have wrought, for you must give suc - cess.  
then to my words give grace, lest I of - fend the weak.  
and, by your Spir - it's might, to live at peace with all.

Text: Johann Heermann, 1585–1647; tr. Catherine Winkworth, 1827–1878, alt.  
Music: WAS FRAG ICH NACH DER WELT, Ahasuerus Fritsch, 1629–1701

## GREETING

The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, the love of God,  
and the communion of the Holy Spirit be with you all.  
**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

Let us pray.

**O God, by the passion of your blessed Son you made an instrument of shameful death to be for us the means of life. Grant us so to glory in the cross of Christ that we may gladly suffer shame and loss for the sake of 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: Genesis 17:1-7, 15-16

A reading from Genesis.

*As with Noah, God makes an everlasting covenant with Abraham and Sarah. God promises this old couple that they will be the ancestors of nations, though they have no child together. God will miraculously bring forth new life from Sarah's womb. The name changes emphasize the firmness of God's promise.*

<sup>1</sup>When Abram was ninety-nine years old, the LORD appeared to Abram, and said to him, "I am God Almighty; walk before me, and be blameless. <sup>2</sup>And I will make my covenant between me and you, and will make you exceedingly numerous." <sup>3</sup>Then Abram fell on his face; and God said to him, <sup>4</sup>"As for me, this is my covenant with you: You shall be the ancestor of a multitude of nations. <sup>5</sup>No longer shall your name be Abram, but your name shall be Abraham; for I have made you the ancestor of a multitude of nations. <sup>6</sup>I will make you exceedingly fruitful; and I will make nations of you, and kings shall come from you. <sup>7</sup>I will establish my covenant between me and you, and your offspring after you throughout their generations, for an everlasting covenant, to be God to you and to your offspring after you."

<sup>15</sup>God said to Abraham, "As for Sarai your wife, you shall not call her Sarai, but Sarah shall be her name. <sup>16</sup>I will bless her, and moreover I will give you a son by her. I will bless her, and she shall give rise to nations; kings of peoples shall come from her."

The word of the Lord.

**Thanks be to God.**

## PSALM: Psalm 22:23-31

*(Read responsively between lector and congregation, beginning with the lector)*

<sup>23</sup>You who fear the LORD, give praise! All you of Jacob's | line, give glory.

Stand in awe of the LORD, all you off- | spring of Israel.

<sup>24</sup>**For the LORD does not despise nor abhor the poor in their poverty; neither is the LORD's face hid- | den from them;**

**but when they cry out, | the LORD hears them.**

<sup>25</sup>From you comes my praise in the | great assembly;

I will perform my vows in the sight of those who | fear the LORD.

<sup>26</sup>**The poor shall eat | and be satisfied,**

**Let those who seek the LORD give praise! May your hearts | live forever!**

<sup>27</sup>All the ends of the earth shall remember and turn | to the LORD;

all the families of nations shall bow | before God.

<sup>28</sup>**For dominion belongs | to the LORD,**

**who rules o- | ver the nations.**

<sup>29</sup>Indeed, all who sleep in the earth shall bow | down in worship;

all who go down to the dust, though they be dead, shall kneel be- | fore the LORD.

<sup>30</sup>**Their descendants shall | serve the LORD,**

**whom they shall proclaim to genera- | tions to come.**

<sup>31</sup>They shall proclaim God's deliverance to a people | yet unborn,

saying to them, "The | LORD has acted!"

## SECOND READING: Romans 4:13-25

A reading from Romans.

*Paul presents Abraham as the example for how a person comes into a right relationship with God not through works of the law but through faith. Though Abraham and Sarah were far too old for bearing children, Abraham trusted that God would accomplish what God had promised to accomplish.*

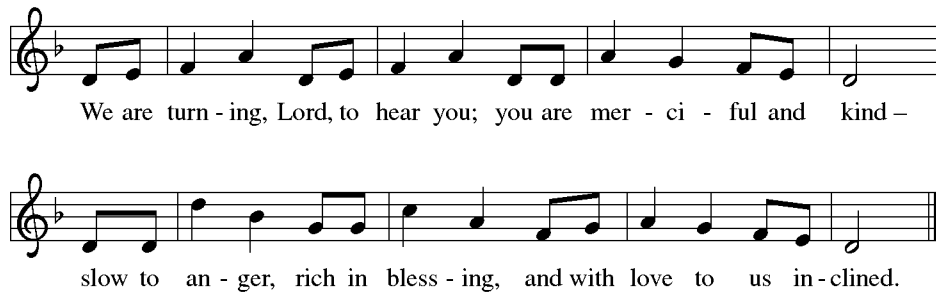
<sup>13</sup>The promise that he would inherit the world did not come to Abraham or to his descendants through the law but through the righteousness of faith. <sup>14</sup>If it is the adherents of the law who are to be the heirs, faith is null and the promise is void. <sup>15</sup>For the law brings wrath; but where there is no law, neither is there violation.

<sup>16</sup>For this reason it depends on faith, in order that the promise may rest on grace and be guaranteed to all his descendants, not only to the adherents of the law but also to those who share the faith of Abraham (for he is the father of all of us, <sup>17</sup>as it is written, "I have made you the father of many nations")—in the presence of the God in whom he believed, who gives life to the dead and calls into existence the things that do not exist. <sup>18</sup>Hoping against hope, he believed that he would become "the father of many nations," according to what was said, "So numerous shall your descendants be."

<sup>19</sup>He did not weaken in faith when he considered his own body, which was already as good as dead (for he was about a hundred years old), or when he considered the barrenness of Sarah's womb. <sup>20</sup>No distrust made him waver concerning the promise of God, but he grew strong in his faith as he gave glory to God, <sup>21</sup>being fully convinced that God was able to do what he had promised. <sup>22</sup>Therefore his faith "was reckoned to him as righteousness."  
<sup>23</sup>Now the words, "it was reckoned to him," were written not for his sake alone, <sup>24</sup>but for ours also. It will be reckoned to us who believe in him who raised Jesus our Lord from the dead, <sup>25</sup>who was handed over to death for our trespasses and was raised for our justification.

The word of the Lord.  
**Thanks be to God.**

### GOSPEL ACCLAMATION (ELW p. 205)



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.

### GOSPEL: Mark 8:31-38

The holy gospel according to Mark.  
**Glory to you, O Lord.**

*After Peter confesses his belief that Jesus is the Messiah, Jesus tells his disciples for the first time what is to come. Peter's response indicates that he does not yet understand the way of the cross that Jesus will travel.*

<sup>31</sup>[Jesus] began to teach them that the Son of Man must undergo great suffering, and be rejected by the elders, the chief priests, and the scribes, and be killed, and after three days rise again. <sup>32</sup>He said all this quite openly. And Peter took him aside and began to rebuke him. <sup>33</sup>But turning and looking at his disciples, he rebuked Peter and said, "Get behind me, Satan! For you are setting your mind not on divine things but on human things."

<sup>34</sup>He called the crowd with his disciples, and said to them, "If any want to become my followers, let them deny themselves and take up their cross and follow me. <sup>35</sup>For those who want to save their life will lose it, and those who lose their life for my sake, and for the sake of the gospel, will save it. <sup>36</sup>For what will it profit them to gain the whole world and forfeit their life? <sup>37</sup>Indeed, what can they give in return for their life?

<sup>38</sup>Those who are ashamed of me and of my words in this adulterous and sinful generation, of them the Son of Man will also be ashamed when he comes in the glory of his Father with the holy angels.”

The gospel of the Lord.  
**Praise to you, O Christ.**

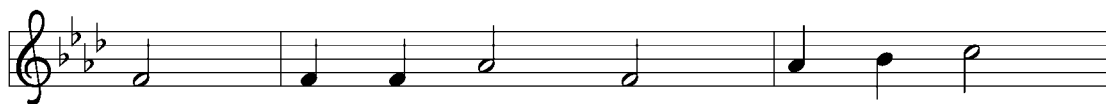
**SERMON**

**Pastor Bill**

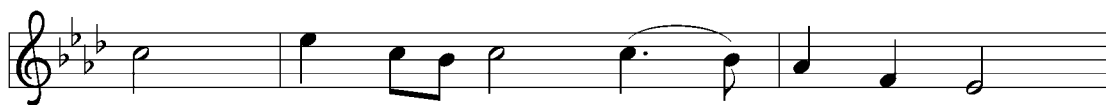
**HYMN OF THE DAY *Take Up Your Cross, the Savior Said (BOURBON) (ELW 667)***



1 “Take up your cross,” the Sav - ior said,  
2 Take up your cross; let not its weight  
3 Take up your cross, nor heed the shame,  
4 Take up your cross and fol - low Christ,



“if you would my dis - ci - ple be;  
per - vade your soul with vain a - larm;  
nor let your fool - ish heart re - bel;  
nor think till death to lay it down;



for - sake the past, and come this day,  
his strength shall bear your spir - it up,  
for you the Lord en - dured the cross  
for those who hum - bly bear the cross



and hum - bly fol - low af - ter me.”  
sus - tain your heart, and nerve your arm.  
to save your soul from death and hell.  
one day will wear the glo - rious crown.

Text: Charles W. Everest, 1814–1877, alt.  
Music: BOURBON, W. Hauser, *Hesperian Harp*, 1848

*Please stand if you are able.*

Please join me as we confirm our faith together in the words of the Apostles' Creed.

## **CREED**

**I believe in God, the Father almighty,  
creator of heaven and earth.**

**I believe in Jesus Christ, God's 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 to the dead.\*  
On the third day he rose again;  
he ascended into heaven,  
he is seated at the right hand of the Father,  
and he will come to judge the living and the dead.**

**I believe in the Holy Spirit,  
the holy catholic church,  
the communion of saints,  
the forgiveness of sins,  
the resurrection of the body,  
and the life everlasting. Amen.**

## **PRAYERS OF THE CHURCH** *(please respond)*

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

## **PEACE**

The peace of Christ be with you always.  
**And also with you.**



## OFFERTORY

### Create in Me a Clean Heart

Cre - ate in me a clean heart, O God, and re - new a right  
spir - it with - in me. Cast me not a - way from your  
pres - ence, and take not your Ho - ly Spir - it from me. Re -  
store un - to me the joy of your sal - va - tion,  
and up - hold me with your free Spir - it.

The musical score is written in G minor (one flat) and 4/4 time. It consists of five staves of music. The lyrics are placed below the notes, with hyphens indicating syllables that span across multiple notes. The music features a mix of quarter, eighth, and half notes, with some phrases ending in a fermata.

Music: J. A. Freylinghausen, 1670–1739

## OFFERING PRAYER

Faithful God,  
you walk beside us in desert places,  
and you meet us in our hunger with bread from heaven.  
Accompany us in this meal,  
that we may pass over from death to life  
with Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord.  
**Amen.**

## 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.**

## 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 gift of baptism,  
we may come to the fullness of your grace.

And so, with all the choirs of angels,  
with the church on earth and the hosts of heaven,  
we praise your name and join their unending hymn:

## HOLY, HOLY, HOLY



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.

## THANKSGIVING AT THE TABLE

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.

## **LORD'S PRAYER**

Gathered into one by the Holy Spirit, let us pray as Jesus taught us.

**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**

Jesus draws the whole world to himself.  
Come to this meal and be fed.

## **COMMUNION**

*Continuous - Please continue down center aisle at the direction of the usher, maintaining your distance and keeping your mask on. Move your mask to eat the bread and drink the wine. Please place your empty communion cup in the basket. Return to your seat with your mask on.*

## **COMMUNION BLESSING**

The body and blood of our Lord Jesus Christ strengthen you and keep you in his grace.  
**Amen.**

## **PRAYER AFTER COMMUNION**

God of steadfast love,  
at this table you gather your people  
into one body for the sake of the world.  
Send us in the power of your Spirit,  
that our lives bear witness to the love that has made us new  
in Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord.  
**Amen.**

## BLESSING

The Lord bless you and keep you.

The Lord's face shine on you with grace and mercy.

The Lord look upon you with favor and ✝ give you peace.

Amen.

## SENDING SONG *Let Us Ever Walk with Jesus* (ELW 802)



1 Let us ev - er walk with Je - sus, fol - low his ex - am - ple pure,  
2 Let us suf - fer here with Je - sus, and with pa - tience bear our cross.  
3 Let us glad - ly die with Je - sus. Since by death he con - quered death,  
4 Let us al - so live with Je - sus. He has ris - en from the dead



through a world that would de - ceive us and to sin our spir - its lure.  
Joy will fol - low all our sad - ness; where he is there is no loss.  
he will free us from de - struc - tion, give to us im - mor - tal breath.  
that to life we may a - wak - en. Je - sus, you are now our head,



On - ward in his foot - steps tread - ing, trav - 'lers here, our home a - bove,  
Though to - day we sow no laugh - ter, we shall reap ce - les - tial joy:  
Let us mor - ti - fy all pas - sion that would lead us in - to sin;  
we are your own liv - ing mem - bers; where you live, there we shall be



full of faith and hope and love, let us do our Sav - ior's bid - ding.  
all dis - com - forts that an - noy shall give way to mirth here - af - ter.  
and the grave that shuts us in shall but prove the gate of heav - en.  
in your pres - ence con - stant - ly, liv - ing there with you for - ev - er.



Faith - ful Lord, with me a - bide; I shall fol - low where you guide.  
Je - sus, here I share your woe; help me there your joy to know.  
Je - sus, here with you I die, there to live with you on high.  
Je - sus, let me faith - ful be; life e - ter - nal grant to me.

Text: Sigismund von Birken, 1626–1681; tr. *Lutheran Book of Worship*, alt.

Music: LASSET UNS MIT JESU ZIEHEN, Georg G. Boltze, 18th cent.

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## DISMISSAL

Go in peace. Share the good news.

**Thanks be to God.**

## SILENT PRAYER

## POSTLUDE

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## SERVING TODAY

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Organist .....	Doug Mummert
Head Usher .....	Sam Mull
Acolyte .....	Katarina Nienstedt
Lector.....	Rich McIntire
Securing Offering.....	Margie Dale & Bernie Harris
Communion Set-Up.....	Margie Dale
Communion Clean-Up .....	Margie Dale
Bread Cubes .....	Margie Dale
Attendance last Sunday .....	31

Stewardship Thought - **February 28, 2021** (Second Sunday in Lent, Year B)

*“For those who want to save their life will lose it, and those who lose their life for my sake, and for the sake of the gospel, will save it.” – Mark 8:35*

Jesus is pretty clear that we are not to spend our time on earth amassing stuff and seeking to extend our lives and capital but rather to give ourselves away in grateful response to the gospel. Saving one’s life is about loving and giving instead of fortifying one’s own status and economic condition.

## ANNOUNCEMENTS

**The altar flowers** this morning are placed to the Glory of God and in loving memory of John McKenzie given by Wayne and Marjorie Dale.

**Welcome Visitors!** We welcome you to our worship service. We hope your visit with us will be a time of blessing. If you have any concerns, please talk to the Head Usher. We invite you to worship with us again!

**2021 Altar Flowers Chart**—Kimberly will **not** be posting the new altar flowers chart as usual. **INSTEAD**, please call her to reserve your special Sunday! **Flowers will now be purchased from Royer's Florist in Chambersburg. Please note the price will change to \$35.** For the price of two flower arrangements, you can give glory to God with the beauty of His creation on the altar; commemorate a loved one; and if you choose, have your flowers given to someone who is homebound or recovering from surgery or illness.

**Prayer requests** for the following persons *Mary Ellen Bower, April Hughes, Larry Lehman, Jere Brehm, Lee Locke, Jennifer Haughie, Bud Armstrong, Gertie Reichard, Joyce Wildeson, Manny Negron, Jerry and Peggy Tyson, Sue Ressler, Dee Dee Fox, Jody Swartz, Quentin, Linda Small Naus, Barbara Socks, Denise Bowen, Sylvia Wenger, Patsy Wagner, Anne English, Millie Kulkusky, Jackson, Bonnie Hudson.* If anyone has a prayer request, please call Janice McEntire. **Note:** At the beginning of each month, the Prayer Request List will start anew. If you would like to remain listed on the next month's list, or if you would like to have your name removed from the list before the end of the month, please call the office.

**Lenten Midweek Bible Study:** I invite you to join us for a Zoom video midweek Lenten Bible Series entitled *Created for Community*, each Wednesday in Lent at 6:30 pm. Using readings from Mark's gospel, this series invites us to reflect on what it means to be community with one another, with the world, with creation, and with God. On Wednesday, March 3, we will study Mark 9:2-8, the account of the transfiguration, reflecting on how our faith has been influenced by those who have gone before us. Please check your email for the Zoom link, call the office, or email Pastor Bill for the link.

**Relief for Storm Victims:** Lutheran Disaster Response is collaborating with the Texas-Louisiana Gulf Coast Synod, the Southwestern Texas Synod, the Northern Texas-Northern Louisiana Synod, and Lutheran Social Services Disaster Response. Congregations are already conducting relief efforts such as supplying water, food and generators to those in need and opening their doors to serve as shelters. Long-term recovery may include repairing water-damaged homes, disaster case management and supporting vulnerable populations. Please consider giving to Lutheran Disaster Response to aid in this effort. 100% of your donation will go to aid. Make your gift out to Solomon's Lutheran Church and note on your gift "US Severe Storms." Place your gift in the offering plate or send to the office. Thank you for your generosity.

If you would like to sign up for **altar flowers** for a Sunday during the month of March or April, the following dates are still available: 3/7 & 4/18. Please email or call Kimberly ([office@solomonslutheran.org](mailto:office@solomonslutheran.org) / 717 267-2266).

**Notice of Congregational Meeting:** The annual congregation meeting will be held immediately following worship today, February 28, 2021. All voting members are encouraged to attend. We are hoping to be able to have a Zoom video of the meeting as well. A link will be provided before the meeting. In addition to a review of the 2020 Annual Report, we will review and approve the 2021 budget, elect new council members, and review a proposal for new carpet in the sanctuary.

**Annual Reports and 2021 Member Directories:** Will be available on Sundays during worship and available for pick-up in the Fellowship Center during office hours—Monday-Friday, 9:00 am-1:00 pm. Note that annual reports will not be mailed but will be available by email.

**Thank you** to Solomon's members who graciously contribute to the church via their IRA. Please note, however, that your financial institution may not always indicate the name of the contributor on the check. Please contact Janice McEntire at 717 264-3702 if you wish to have your semi-annual or year-end statements reflect your contribution.

If you need to email Kimberly please continue to use [office@solomonslutheran.org](mailto:office@solomonslutheran.org) or [kimberly@solomonslutheran.org](mailto:kimberly@solomonslutheran.org). Thank you!

**Glossy Magazines** - The magazine recycling company's processing equipment for the Ronald McDonald House has been damaged and is in need of repair. Due to the pandemic, the repair is not possible for the foreseeable future; therefore, we are not collecting glossy magazines at this time.

**Power Packs:** The need for nutritious food for New Franklin Elementary School students in need is an on-going project. Please consider donating individual serving size fruit and vegetable cups. See Pastor Bill if you would like to give a monetary donation.

**Bulletin Announcement Forms** are located in both pamphlet racks. Please submit all bulletin announcements to by the Wednesday prior to the Sunday for inclusion in the bulletin.

**Council Minutes, Monthly Financial Statement and Committee Minutes** are available in the library for anyone to read.

**FEBRUARY 28, 2021**  
**SECOND SUNDAY IN LENT**

*The difficulty and joy of discipleship.*



**DAILY BIBLE READINGS**

These passages are related to the Lectionary texts for this Sunday.

<b>Sunday</b>	<b>Mark 8:31-38</b>	<b>Jesus predicts his death</b>
<b>Monday</b>	<b>Genesis 17:1-7, 15-16</b>	<b>Sign of the covenant</b>
<b>Tuesday</b>	<b>Romans 4:13-25</b>	<b>God's promise</b>
<b>Wednesday</b>	<b>2 Timothy 2:1-13</b>	<b>A good soldier of Christ</b>
<b>Thursday</b>	<b>2 Timothy 2:14-26</b>	<b>A worker approved by God</b>
<b>Friday</b>	<b>Proverbs 8:32-36</b>	<b>Listen to what you are taught</b>
<b>Saturday</b>	<b>Psalms 22:23-31</b>	<b>Suffering and praise</b>
<b>Sunday</b>	<b>John 2:13-22</b>	<b>Jesus cleanses the temple</b>

**SCRIPTURE VERSE FOR THIS WEEK**

*"For those who want to save their life will lose it, and those who lose their life for my sake, and for the sake of the gospel, will save it." Mark 8:35 (NRSV)*

**PRAYERS AND BLESSING**

**A Prayer for the Week:**

Almighty God, help us to remember that it is in giving that we receive and in caring for others that we experience the joy of following Jesus, our Savior and Lord. Amen.

**Mealtime Prayer:**

Dear God, as you satisfy us with this food and for all that blesses us this day, we give you thanks. Amen.

**A Blessing to Give:**

May the God who gives life to the dead and who calls into existence things that do not exist bless you with faith. (Romans 4:17b)

**CARING CONVERSATIONS**

Discuss in your home, small group, or use for personal reflections:

- What is something you didn't want to do because it was too difficult?
- Do you think it is difficult to follow Jesus? Why or why not?
- How would you describe a life of faith that lives for others?



## HYMN OF THE WEEK

*Take My Life, That I May Be*



## DEVOTIONS

*Read:* Mark 8:31-38.

These are some of the most difficult words to hear as followers of Jesus. To truly live as people of God, we are to live for the needs of others, just as Jesus did. It is hard for Peter—and us—to hear that Christ must suffer and die a criminal’s death before rising to glory. It is hard for us to imagine picking up the cross, the tool of torture and death, and courageously walk with it daily for the sake of the good news of Christ and the needs of others. The Gospel of Mark is not a happy text for disciples. The Gospel ends with Jesus’ followers running away and Peter denying his Lord in the courtyard of the high priest. Our challenge is not to run away and deny the needs of others. According to Mark, we don’t do this well. The good news is that Jesus never gives up on us. To the disciples who ran away from him and denied him, he says in essence, “meet me in Galilee, where your ministry and life will truly begin” (Mark 16:7). By the end of Mark, there are no great stories of bravery and success of the disciples. What exists is a promise that Jesus will go before them and be with them into the future. The disciples will continue to hear Jesus’ words, “If any want to become my followers, let them deny themselves and take up their cross and follow me” (v. 34). What have you found to be difficult to do as a follower of Jesus? What have you found to be a joy as a follower?

***Pray:* Dear God, thank you for never giving up on us as we seek to lovingly give of ourselves for the needs of others and the sake of the gospel of Jesus Christ. Amen.**

## SERVICE

Making pretzels is a Lenten tradition. Pretzels are shaped like arms folded in prayer and can remind us to pray to God for our needs and the needs of others. Choose some people beyond your household to pray for by name this week. Make or buy pretzels to give to them as a sign that you are praying for them.

## RITUALS AND TRADITIONS

Jesus tells us that following him means taking up our cross, that is, saying no to ourselves and sometimes suffering for him. This week make a cross from wood, card stock, or other materials. Hold the cross during your devotional time this week while reading the *Daily Bible Readings*. Say the *Prayer for the Week* and add your own prayers. End the time by saying: **Remember that you are God’s, and to God you shall return.**