

Order of Worship for February 22, 2026

P: The Lord be with you.

C: And also with You.

Opening Hymn: "A Mighty Fortress is Our God" – Hymn #657

Confession and Forgiveness

P: In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit.

C: Amen.

P: "When the time came, I listened to you," says the LORD, "and when you needed help, I came to save you."

C: But we are dust, and to dust we shall return.

P: "Yet even now, "says the LORD, "return to Me with all your heart, with fasting and with weeping, and with mourning."

C: The sacrifice the LORD desires is a broken, contrite heart; it will not be despised.

P: O God, we have sinned.

C: In our thinking, in our speaking, in our doing we have sinned. We have disobeyed Your will, and we have neglected it. We stand condemned. But Jesus Christ stands with us. His Spirit makes it possible for us to plead for mercy. We come with broken, contrite hearts, for we have sinned.

P: Christ never sinned! But God treated Him as a sinner, so that Christ could make us acceptable to God. By His command I forgive you all your sins in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit.

C: Amen

Service of the Word

Psalm 32:1-7

P: You are a hiding place for me;

C: You preserve me from trouble.

P: Blessed is the one whose transgression is forgiven,

C: whose sin is covered.

P: Blessed is the man against whom the LORD counts no iniquity,

C: and in whose spirit there is no deceit.

P: For when I kept silent, my bones wasted away

C: through my groaning all day long.

P: For day and night Your hand was heavy upon me;

C: my strength was dried up as by the heat of summer.

P: I acknowledged my sin to You, and I did not cover my iniquity;

C: I said, "I will confess my transgressions to the LORD," and You forgave the iniquity of my sin.

P: Therefore let everyone who is godly offer prayers at a time when You may be found;

C: surely in the rush of great waters, they shall not reach him.

P: You are a hiding place for me; You preserve me from trouble;

C: You surround me with shouts of deliverance.

All: Glory be to the Father and to the Son and to the Holy Spirit; as it was in the beginning, is now, and will be forever. Amen.

P: You are a hiding place for me;

C: You preserve me from trouble.

Prayer of the Day

P: O almighty and eternal God, we implore You to direct, sanctify, and govern our hearts and bodies in the ways of Your laws and the works of our commandments, that through Your mighty protection, both now and ever, we may be preserved in body and soul, through our Lord, Jesus Christ, Your Son, who lives and rules with You and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever.

C: Amen.

Hymn: "I Walk in Danger All the Way" – Hymn #716 vs. 1,5,6

Old Testament Lesson – Genesis 3:1-15

R: Now the serpent was more crafty than any other beast of the field that the LORD God had made. He said to the woman, "Did God actually say, 'You shall not eat of any tree in the garden'?" And the woman said to the serpent, "We may eat of the fruit of the trees in the garden, but God said, 'You shall not eat of the fruit of the tree that is in the midst of the garden, neither shall you touch it, lest you die.'" But the serpent said to the woman, "You will not surely die. For God knows that when you eat of it your eyes will be opened, and you will be like God, knowing good and evil." So when the woman saw that the tree was good for food, and that it was a delight to the eyes, and that the tree was to be desired to make one wise, she took of its fruit and ate, and she also gave some to her husband who was with her, and he ate. Then the eyes of both were opened, and they knew that they were naked. And they sewed fig leaves together and made themselves loincloths. And they heard the sound of the LORD God walking in the garden in the cool of the day, and the man and his wife hid themselves from the presence of the LORD God among the trees of the garden. But the LORD God called to the man and said to him, "Where are you?" And he said, "I heard the sound of you in the garden, and I was afraid, because I was naked, and I hid myself." God said, "Who told you that you were naked? Have you eaten of the tree of which I commanded you not to eat?" The man said, "The woman whom You gave to be with me, she gave me fruit of the tree, and I ate." Then the LORD God said to the woman, "What is this that you have done?" The woman said, "The serpent deceived me, and I ate." The LORD God said to the serpent, "Because you have done this, cursed are you above all livestock and above all beasts of the field; on your belly you shall go, and dust you shall eat all the days of your life. I will put enmity between you and the woman, and between your offspring and her offspring; He shall bruise your head, and you shall bruise His heel."

R: This is the Word of the Lord.

C: Thanks be to God.

Epistle Lesson – Romans 5:12-19

R: Therefore, just as sin came into the world through one man, and death through sin, and so death spread to all men because all sinned—for sin indeed was in the world before the law was given, but sin is not counted where there is no law. Yet death reigned from Adam to Moses, even over those whose sinning was not like the transgression of Adam, who was a type of the one who was to come. But the free gift is not like the trespass. For if many died through one man's trespass, much more have the grace of God and the free gift by the grace of that one man Jesus Christ abounded for many. And the free gift is not like the result of that one man's sin. For the judgment following one trespass brought condemnation, but the free gift following many trespasses brought justification. For if, because of one man's trespass, death reigned through that one man, much more will those who receive the abundance of grace and the free gift of righteousness reign in life through the one man Jesus Christ. Therefore, as one trespass led to condemnation for all men, so one act of righteousness leads to justification and life for all men. For as by the one man's disobedience the many were made sinners, so by the one man's obedience the many will be made righteous.

R: This is the Word of the Lord.

C: Thanks be to God.

Gospel – Matthew 4:1-11

P: The Holy Gospel according to St. Matthew, the 4th chapter.

C: Glory to You, O Lord.

P: Then Jesus was led up by the Spirit into the wilderness to be tempted by the devil. And after fasting forty days and forty nights, He was hungry. And the tempter came and said to Him, "If You are the Son of God, command these stones to become loaves of bread." But Jesus answered, "It is written, 'Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that comes from the mouth of God.' Then the devil took Him to the holy city and set Him on the pinnacle of the temple and said to Him, "If You are the Son of God, throw Yourself down, for it is written, 'He will command His angels concerning you,' And 'On their hands they will bear you up, lest you strike your foot against a stone.'" Jesus said to him, "Again it is written, 'You shall not put the Lord your God to the test.'" Again, the devil took Him to a very high mountain and showed Him all the kingdoms of the world and their glory. And he said to Him, "All these I will give You, if You will fall down and worship me." Then Jesus said to him, "Be gone, Satan! For it is written, 'You shall worship the Lord your God and Him only shall you serve.'" Then the devil left Him, and behold, angels came and were ministering to Him.

P: This is the Gospel of the Lord.

C: Praise to You, O Christ.

Children's Message: (8:30)

Sermon Hymn: "O Love, How Deep" - Hymn # 544

Sermon: "If You Are the Son of God" - Matthew 4:1-11

What tempts us? The old Lay's Potato Chip commercials convince you that you can't just eat one chip. One leads to another, then another, and so on. We look at something on our cell phone which leads to something else, and on and on. As men we look at an attractive woman, then it turns to more than just looking. We hear gossip and find how easy it is to share with someone else. When it is something that doesn't require too much effort for us to do, when we are convinced that no one will notice, when we convince ourselves that it isn't a big deal, then it is so tempting.

But notice how Jesus was tempted. We are told that He had fasted for 40 days. That is significant because the people of Israel wandered in the wilderness for 40 years after they had given in to temptation at Mt. Sinai to worship the golden calf instead of God. You might think that after 40 days Jesus would have been so famished that any promise of food would be so tempting. But we know that when people starve for several days the hunger is tremendous. Then the stomach shrinks and the hunger goes away. People who starve that long have to be almost forcibly fed. It wasn't the physical hunger that was tempting to Jesus when the devil said to him, "Tell these stones to change to bread." How would that be tempting to us? We can't turn stone to bread. How could that be so tempting?

But the devil began that temptation with the words, "If You are the Son of God?" He was not tempting Jesus because of Jesus' hunger, but because it would be tempting for Jesus to prove He is the Son of God. He did have the power to turn stone into bread. Afterall, He is the almighty God, who created the universe.

"If You are the Son of God" That is a temptation that Jesus faced daily. We see Jesus in His ministry doing miracles—healing the sick, chasing out demons, feeding the 5000, calming the storm, bringing the dead back to life. But Jesus never did any of this to prove a point. He always did it in response to human need. In Matthew 12 we read:

Then some of the scribes and Pharisees told Jesus, "Teacher, we want to see a sign from You." But Jesus replied to them, "An evil and adulterous generation craves a sign. Yet no sign will be given to it except the sign of the prophet Jonah, because just as Jonah was in the stomach of the sea creature for three days and three nights, so the Son of Man will be in the heart of the earth for three days and three nights.

Jesus was, of course, talking about His resurrection from the dead; but that was for the future. Right then and there He did nothing to prove to the Pharisees or to Himself that He is the Son of God.

"If You are the Son of God." Why would that be a question for Jesus? He is God almighty. He knows everything, right? When we confess our faith in Jesus in the Apostle's Creed we speak of His ministry on earth in two sections—His humiliation and exaltation. His humiliation is talked about in the words, "He was conceived by the Holy Spirit, born of the virgin Mary, suffered under Pontius Pilate, was crucified, died, and was buried." His exaltation is covered with the words, "He descended into hell (this was to proclaim His victory over evil on the cross), on the third day He rose again from the dead, He ascended into heaven, and sits on the right hand of God the Father almighty." This is based on St. Paul's words in Philippians where he says:

Have this mind among yourselves, which is yours in Christ Jesus, who, though He was in the form of God, did not count equality with God a thing to be grasped, but emptied Himself, by taking the form of a servant, being born in the

likeness of men. And being found in human form, He humbled Himself by becoming obedient to the point of death, even death on a cross. Therefore God has highly exalted Him and bestowed on Him the name that is above every name, so that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, in heaven and on earth and under the earth, and every tongue confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.

In Jesus' humiliation, He refrained from using His power as God almighty. He did no miracles until His baptism when the Holy Spirit came upon Him, not to give Him faith as the Spirit does to us in Baptism, but to give Him the power as Messiah to do the works which would show that He is the Savior promised in the Old Testament. All that Jesus did in His humiliation was done with only one thing—His faith in His Father. Even the very fact that He is the Son of God was not a matter for Him of scientific knowledge, but of faith. And where did he get that faith? From the same place we do—from the Word of God in which he had been raised. Think of Adam and Eve in the Garden of Eden. They were told by God to not eat the fruit from the tree or they will die. But the devil's temptation was to say, "Trust yourself, not God. Prove that you will not die if you eat from the tree." In the same way the devil is tempting Jesus to prove it, to trust in Himself, not the Word of His Father.

"If You are the Son of God." The devil says that a second time when he takes Jesus to the top of the highest point of the temple. He adds to that taking the Word of God out of context with the quote from Psalm 91: "He will command His angels concerning you," "On their hands they will bear you up, lest you strike your foot against a stone" I don't know about you, but if I am at the highest point of the temple, the last thing I'd do is jump off. But Jesus is being tempted to prove He is the Son of God. It isn't just that as God He could safely jump off, but according to tradition the Messiah would appear from the top of the temple when he came from heaven. This would prove beyond a doubt that Jesus is that Messiah.

In the final temptation Jesus is shown all the earth. The devil says it is all Jesus' if He bows to worship the devil. It is like Adam and Eve when the devil tells them, "Eat this fruit, and you will be like God." For Jesus that would sound like, "Bow to me. Don't depend anymore on Your faith in the Father. Trust in what You see before You, what is so easy to do, what puts You in the driver's seat, not the Father."

What we see now in all of that is not just how tempting all that was to Jesus, but how it is part of how Jesus substituted for all of us. He doesn't give in like Adam and Eve, the people of Israel at Mt. Sinai, like all of us have and will. He holds to what He has—faith in His Father's Word.

The story of Jesus' temptation is often taught as Jesus giving us an example of how to fight temptation. He used God's Word each time. The remarkable thing is that all of His quotes come from the book of Deuteronomy, the words Moses spoke to Israel before they entered the Promised Land, the words they failed to heed. He did what they failed to do. And that is the main point of Jesus' temptation. He held to His faith, not so much to give us an example, but in our place. Yes, His example helps us in facing temptation. As we just sang at the beginning of the service in Luther's famous hymn, "One little word subdues him." In other words, one little Word of God can totally defeat the devil. But nevertheless, we do give in. As we say in the explanation of the petition of the fifth petition of the Lord's Prayer, "We daily sin much and are in need of forgiveness." Our faith fails, but Jesus didn't. Even as He suffered on

the cross and had His very Father turn His back on Jesus, He still held on to that faith. And by it He defeated temptation for us. We teach that we are saved by faith. But that doesn't mean so much our faith in Jesus, but the very faith by which He endured all temptation and suffering for us.

We have begun our yearly Lenten journey to the cross of Jesus. That is the main answer to temptation. "If You are the Son of God." Jesus proved that not with a miracle, but by obeying His Father and dying on that cross and rising from the dead. In that we have certainty that our sins are forgiven. In that we can face all temptation because indeed He is the Son of God.

Confession: 6th and 7th Petitions of the Lord's Prayer page 324-5

Prayer of the Church

P: Lord, in your mercy;

C: hear our prayer.

Sharing Our Ministry:

8:30 AM Continues:

P: This is no ordinary battle, O God. We are not surrounded by the din of combat,

C: except the honeyed hiss of a serpent.

P: We are not overcome by the clash of swords, the sting of arrows,

C: but the tempter's evil barbs.

P: We are not confronted with carnage and death,

C: except the threat of our own mortality—sin's savage wage.

P: This is no ordinary battle, O God. But it IS a battle nonetheless. The ancient battle of good and evil rages—within us and around us.

C: We are at war.

P: We need a hero, O God, to defend us against the ancient foe.

C: We require a conqueror, O God, to slay our sin.

P: Help us to follow our hero, to follow our conqueror, to follow our Savior.

C: Help us to follow Your Son.

P: Through the same Jesus Christ, Your Son, our Lord. He lives and rules with You and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever.

C: Amen.

Hymn: "O Christ, You Walked the Road" – **Hymn #424**

The Lord's Prayer:

Closing Prayer:

P: Lord God, our strength, the battle for good and evil rages within and around us, and our ancient foe tempts us with his deceits and empty promises. Keep us steadfast in Your Word

and, when we fall, raise us again and restore us through Your Son, Jesus Christ, our Lord.

C: Amen.

Blessing (Pastor)

C: Amen.

Closing Hymn: "O Lord, throughout These Forty Days" – Hymn #418

Postlude:

11 AM Continues:

Offering & Voluntary:

Service of the Sacrament

P: The Lord be with you.

C: And also with you.

P: Lift up your hearts.

C: We lift them up to the Lord.

P: Let us give thanks to the Lord.

C: It is right to give Him thanks and praise.

Prayer of Thanksgiving:

P: Lord Almighty we thank and praise You for taking the blame for all of our sins by sacrificing Your Son, Christ Jesus, on the cross to take responsibility for all we do wrong and all we fail to do. Bless us as we come to Christ's supper prepared to stop blaming others and to admit our guilt and have Him forgive us of all of it. All this we share as we pray in His name . . .

Lord's Prayer:

Words of Our Lord:

Distribution and Hymns:

"O Christ, You Walked the Road" – Hymn #424

"O Little Flock, Fear Not the Foe" – Hymn #666

Prayer After Communion:

P: Lord Jesus Christ, at this table we meet You

C: in body broken, in blood outpoured.

P: Nourish us with this holy food.

C: for by it we are made more than conquerors.

P: You are the Lord forevermore.

C: Amen.

Blessing (Pastor)

C: Amen.

Closing Hymn: “*O Lord, throughout These Forty Days*” – **Hymn #418**

Postlude: