

# ***St. Stephen Lutheran Church***

***West & East Bay, Central Valley, and Southern California***

Member congregations of the Church of the Lutheran Confession (clclutheran.org)

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St. Stephen Lutheran School Staff: Isaac & Mikkela Schmitt (Teachers),  
Julia Bernthal (Administrator), Pastor Luke Bernthal (Principal)

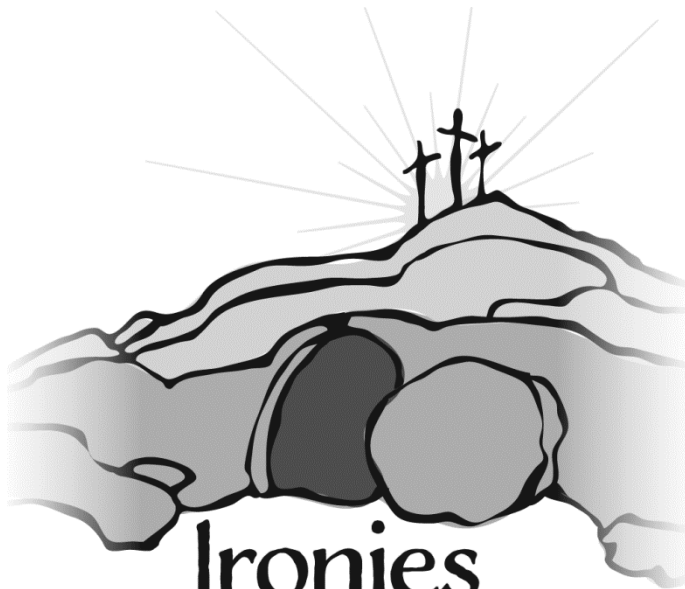
**School Office: (650) 961-2071**

**School Website: ssls.org**



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**Fifth Sunday in Lent – March 17<sup>th</sup>, 2024**

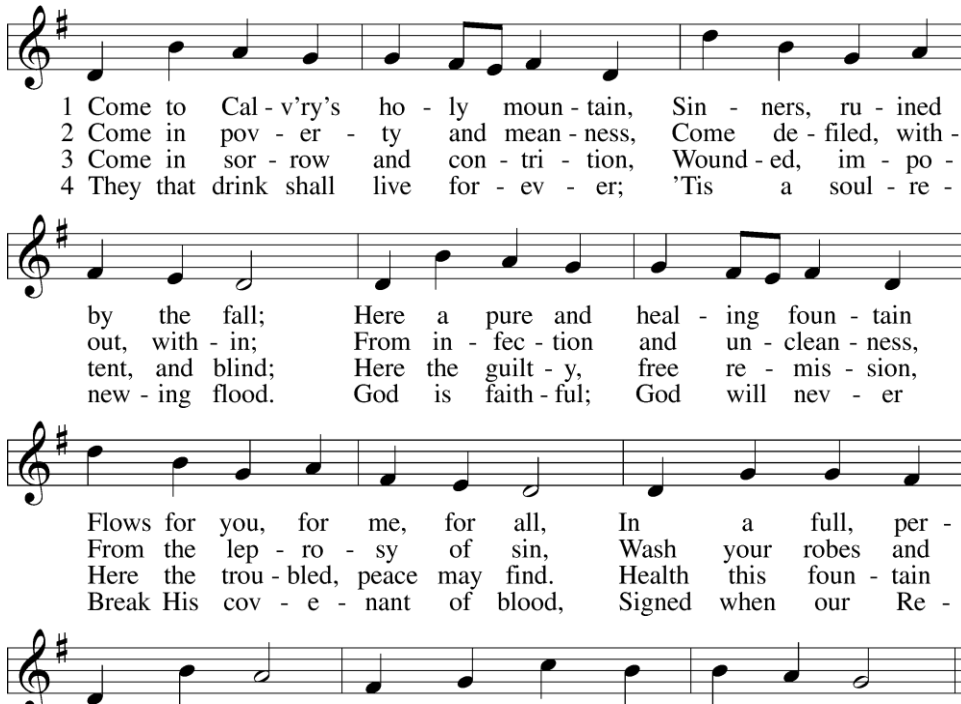


**Ironies  
of the Passion**

✠ Preparation for Worship: Read Psalm 6 (Lutheran Service Book or Pew Bible) ✠

## Opening Hymn: 435 *Come to Calvary's Holy Mountain*

LSB 435



1 Come to Cal - v'ry's ho - ly moun - tain, Sin - ners, ru - ined  
2 Come in pov - er - ty and mean - ness, Come de - filed, with -  
3 Come in sor - row and con - tri - tion, Wound - ed, im - po -  
4 They that drink shall live for - ev - er; 'Tis a soul - re -

by the fall; Here a pure and heal - ing foun - tain  
out, with - in; From in - fec - tion and un - clean - ness,  
tent, and blind; Here the guilt - y, free re - mis - sion,  
new - ing flood. God is faith - ful; God will nev - er

Flows for you, for me, for all, In a full, per -  
From the lep - ro - sy of sin, Wash your robes and  
Here the trou - bled, peace may find. Health this foun - tain  
Break His cov - e - nant of blood, Signed when our Re -

pet - ual tide, O - pened when our Sav - ior died.  
make them white; Ye shall walk with God in light.  
will re - store; They that drink shall thirst no more.  
deem - er died, Sealed when He was glo - ri - fied.

Text: James Montgomery, 1771–1854, alt.  
Tune: Ludvig M. Lindeman, 1812–87  
Text and tune: Public domain

## Invocation

*We invoke (“call upon”) the name of the one true God – Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.*

**P** In the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit.

**G** Amen.

# Confession and Absolution

*We come before our Holy God recognizing that we are sinful and daily need His forgiveness.*

**P** Beloved of God: Let us draw near with a true heart, and confess our sins to God our Father, asking Him, in the Name of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ, to grant us forgiveness.

**C** **Almighty God, Merciful Father, we are sinful by nature, and have sinned against You in our thoughts, words, and actions. But we are sorry for our sins and pray that You would be gracious and merciful unto us. Forgive us for Jesus' sake, renew us by Your Spirit, and lead us in the way everlasting. Amen.**

**P** Jesus Christ is the atoning sacrifice for our sins, and not for ours only, but also for the sins of the whole world. We are forgiven! With boldness and confidence we may approach the throne to find grace to help in time of need. In the peace of forgiveness, let us praise the Lord!


**P** O Lord, open my lips,

**C** **And my mouth will declare Your praise!**

**P** Make haste, O God, to deliver me;

**C** **Make haste, to help me, O Lord!**

(tune of "The Doxology")

 ***Lord Jesus Christ, You set us free—  
Accept our thanks eternally!  
Forgiven through Your precious blood,  
We now are reconciled to God. Amen.***

## Psalm (Responsive) - *Psalm 32 (NKJV)*

**P** Blessed is he whose transgression is forgiven, Whose sin is covered.

**C** **Blessed is the man to whom the LORD does not impute iniquity,  
And in whose spirit there is no deceit.**

**P** When I kept silent, my bones grew old Through my groaning all the day long.

**C** **For day and night Your hand was heavy upon me;  
My vitality was turned into the drought of summer.**

**P** I acknowledged my sin to You, And my iniquity I have not hidden.

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

**P** For this cause everyone who is godly shall pray to You  
In a time when You may be found;

**C** **Surely in a flood of great waters They shall not come near him.**

**P** You are my hiding place; You shall preserve me from trouble;

**C** **You shall surround me with songs of deliverance.**

**P** I will instruct you and teach you in the way you should go;

**C** **I will guide you with My eye.**

**P** Do not be like the horse or like the mule, Which have no understanding,

**C** **Which must be harnessed with bit and bridle, Else they will not come near you.**

**P** Many sorrows shall be to the wicked;

**C** **But he who trusts in the LORD, mercy shall surround him.**

**C** Be glad in the LORD and rejoice, you righteous;

**P** **And shout for joy, all you upright in heart!**

## **Prayer of the Day / Psalm Prayer**

**P** We pray:

Lord God, you are merciful and tenderhearted, abounding in love and faithfulness. Turn to us in our anguish over sin and hear our cry for mercy that we may be at peace. We pray this through Jesus Christ, our Lord and Savior, who lives and reigns with You and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever.

**C** **Amen.**

## Scripture Reading

## THE PASSION HISTORY OF CHRIST - Part 6

Then they crucified Him there, and two others with Him, robbers and criminals, one on the right hand, and the other on the left, and Jesus in the center. So the Scripture was fulfilled which says, "And He was numbered with the transgressors." Now it was the third hour [9:00 a.m., according to Jewish time] when they crucified Him. Then Jesus said, "Father, forgive them; for they do not know what they do."

Then the soldiers, when they had crucified Jesus, took His garments and divided them up among themselves into four parts, to each soldier a part, casting lots for them to determine what every man should take. Now the tunic was without seam, woven from the top in one piece. They said therefore among themselves, "Let us not tear it, but cast lots for it, whose it shall be;" that the Scripture might be fulfilled, which says, "They divided My garments among them, and for My clothing they cast lots." Therefore the soldier did these things; and, sitting down, they kept watch over Him there.

Now Pilate wrote a title or inscription of His accusation over Him. And the soldiers put it above His head on the cross. And it was written: "This is Jesus of Nazareth, the King of the Jews." Then many of the Jews read this title, for the place where Jesus was crucified was near the city; and it was written in letters of Hebrew, Greek, and Latin. Then the chief priests of the Jews said to Pilate, "Do not write, 'The King of the Jews,' but 'He said, "I am the King of the Jews.'""

Pilate answered, "What I have written, I have written."

And the people stood, looking on. And those who passed by blasphemed Him, wagging their heads and saying, "Aha! You who destroy the temple and build it in three days, save Yourself! If You are the Son of God, come down from the cross."

Likewise even the rulers, the chief priests, together with the scribes, the Pharisees, and the elders, sneered at Him and mocked Him among themselves and said, "He saved others; Himself He cannot save. Let Him save Himself if He is the Christ, the Chosen of God. If He is the King of Israel, let Him now come down from the cross, that we may see and believe in Him. He trusted in God; let Him deliver Him now, if He will have Him; for He said, 'I am the Son of God.'"

And the soldiers also mocked Him, coming and offering Him sour wine, and saying, "If You are the King of the Jews, save Yourself!"

Even the robbers who were crucified with Him reviled Him with the same thing. One of the criminals who were hanged blasphemed Him, saying, "If you are the Christ, save Yourself and us!"

But the other, answering, rebuked him, saying, "Do you not even fear God, seeing you are under the same condemnation? And we indeed justly, for we receive the due reward of our deeds; but this Man has done nothing wrong." Then he said to Jesus, "Lord, remember me when You come into Your kingdom!"

And Jesus said to him, "Truly I say to you, today you will be with Me in Paradise."

Now there stood by the cross of Jesus His mother, and His mother's sister, Mary, the wife of Clopas, and Mary Magdalene. When Jesus, therefore, saw His mother, and the disciple whom He loved, standing by, He said to His mother, "Woman, behold your son!" Then He said to the disciple, "Behold, your mother!" And from that hour that disciple took her to his own home.

And it was about the sixth hour [12:00 noon]. Then the sun was darkened. From this hour darkness fell over the whole land until the ninth hour [3:00 p.m.].

And at the ninth hour Jesus cried out with a loud voice, saying, "Eli, Eli, lama sabachthani!" Which is translated, "My God, My God, why have You [hast Thou] forsaken Me?"

And when some of those who stood by heard that, they said, "Look! This Man is calling for Elijah."

After this, Jesus, seeing that all things were now accomplished, that the Scripture might be fulfilled, said, "I thirst."

Now a vessel full of sour wine was sitting there. Then immediately someone ran and took a sponge, filled it with sour wine, and put it on a reed, on hyssop, and put it to His mouth and offered it to Him to drink. He and the others said, "Let Him alone! Let us see if Elijah will come to save Him and take Him down."

So when Jesus had received the sour wine, He said, "It is finished!"

And when Jesus had cried out again with a loud voice, He said, "Father, into Your hands I commend My spirit." And having said this, He bowed His head and gave up His spirit, and breathed His last.

Then, behold, the veil of the temple was torn in two from top to bottom, and the earth quaked; and the rocks were split, and the graves were opened; and many bodies of the saints who had fallen asleep were raised; and, coming out of the graves after His resurrection, they went into the holy city and appeared to many.

Now when the centurion, who stood opposite Jesus, saw what had happened and that He cried out like this, he glorified God, saying, "Certainly this was a righteous Man." When the centurion, and those with him who were guarding Jesus, saw the earthquake and the things that had happened, they feared greatly, saying, "Truly this Man was the Son of God."

- L** Here ends our Passion History reading.
- C** **All we like sheep have gone astray,  
and the Lord has laid on him the iniquity of us all.  
By his wounds we are healed.**

**Confession of Faith: 2<sup>nd</sup> Article of the Apostle's Creed** (Luther's Catechism, Sydow p. 87)

- C** **"I believe 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, dead, and buried;  
He descended into hell; the third day He rose again from the dead;  
He ascended into heaven  
and sits on the right hand of God, the Father Almighty;  
from there He shall come to judge the living and the dead.**

**I believe that Jesus Christ, true God, begotten of the Father from eternity,  
and also true man, born of the virgin Mary is my Lord.**

**He has redeemed me, a lost and condemned person,  
purchased and won me from all sin, from death,  
and from the power of the devil, not with gold or silver,  
but with His holy, precious blood and His innocent suffering and death.**

**He did this that I should be His very own, live under Him in His kingdom,  
and serve Him in eternal righteousness, innocence, and joy;  
just as He is risen from death, lives and reigns in eternity.**

**This is most certainly true!"**

## Hymn of the Day: 608 *Lord, to You I Make Confession*

LSB 608

1 Lord, to You I make con-fes-sion: I have sinned and  
2 Yet, though con-science' voice ap-pall me, Fa-ther, I will  
3 For Your Son has suf-fered for me, Giv'n Him-self to  
4 Lord, on You I cast my bur-den— Sink it in the  
gone a-stray, I have mul-ti-plicated trans-gres-sion,  
seek Your face; Though Your child I dare not call me,  
res-cue me, Died to save me and re-store me,  
deep-est sea! Let me know Your gra-cious par-don,  
Cho-sen for my-self my way. Led by You to  
Yet re-ceive me in Your grace. Do not for my  
Rec-on-ciled and set me free. Je-sus' cross a-  
Cleanse me from in-iq-ui-ty. Let Your Spir-it  
see my er-rors, Lord, I trem-ble at Your ter-rors.  
sins for-sake me; Let Your wrath not o-ver-take me.  
lone can van-quish These dark fears and soothe this an-guish.  
leave me nev-er; Make me on-ly Yours for-ev-er.

Text: Johann Franck, 1618–77; tr. Catherine Winkworth, 1827–78, alt.  
Tune: Johann Crüger, 1598–1662  
Text and tune: Public domain

## Sermon Text: Luke 23:39-43 (EHV)

<sup>39</sup> One of the criminals hanging there was blaspheming him, saying, “Aren’t you the Christ? Save yourself and us!” <sup>40</sup> But the other criminal rebuked him. “Don’t you fear God, since you are under the same condemnation? <sup>41</sup> We are punished justly, for we are receiving what we deserve for what we have done, but this man has done nothing wrong.” <sup>42</sup> Then he said, “Jesus, remember me when you come in your kingdom.” <sup>43</sup> Jesus said to him, “Amen I tell you: Today you will be with me in paradise.”



## **Sermon Theme: Ironies of the Passion – “Don’t You Fear God?”**

- † *irony* = “a combination of circumstances or a result that is the opposite of what might be expected.”
- † What was ironic about the words from this particular thief on the cross next to Jesus?
- † How does this account apply to your life?

### **Offertory**

LSB 956

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 Thy pres - ence; and take not Thy Ho - ly Spir - it  
from me. Re - store un - to me the joy of Thy sal - va - tion;  
and up - hold me with Thy free spir - it. A - men.

Public domain

**Offering** *We offer our gifts to the Lord, remembering that He has first given to us that we might have to give to Him.*  
(† *If you have an offering to give today, please place it in the plate in the church entryway.* †)

## Prayer of the Church / Prayer Requests *We bring our prayers to God.*

### Lord's Prayer

LSB 209

☐ 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.

### Sermon Hymn: 560 *Drawn to the Cross, Which Thou Hast Blessed*

LSB 560



1 Drawn to the cross, which Thou hast blessed With heal - ing  
2 Thou know - est all my griefs and fears, Thy grace a -  
3 Wash me and take a - way each stain; Let noth - ing  
4 And then for work to do for Thee, Which shall so



gifts for souls dis - tressed, To find in Thee my  
bused, my mis - spent years; Yet now to Thee with  
of my sin re - main. For cleans - ing, though it  
sweet a ser - vice be That an - gels well might



life, my rest, Christ cru - ci - fied, I come.  
con - trite tears, Christ cru - ci - fied, I come.  
be through pain, Christ cru - ci - fied, I come.  
en - vy me, Christ cru - ci - fied, I come.

Text: Genevieve M. Irons, 1855–1928

Tune: Joseph Barnby, 1838–96

Text and tune: Public domain

## Salutation ("Greeting") and Prayer for Grace

**P** The Lord be with you.

**C** And also with you.

**P** Lord God, all holy desires, all good counsels, and all just works come from You. Give to us, Your servants, that peace which the world cannot give, that our hearts may be set to live by Your Word. Defend us also from the fear of our enemies that we may live in peace and quietness. We pray this through the merits of Jesus Christ our Savior, Who lives and reigns with You and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever.

**C** Amen.

**Benedicamus** *Latin: "We bless." We praise our LORD and Savior.*

*LSB 202*

**P** Bless we the Lord!

**C** Thanks be to God!

**Benediction** *Blessing*

*LSB 202*

**P** The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ and the love of God the Father and the communion of the Holy Spirit be with you all!



## Closing Hymn: 611 *Chief of Sinners Though I Be*

LSB 611



1 Chief of sin - ners though I be, Je - sus shed His  
2 Oh, the height of Je - sus' love, High - er than the  
3 On - ly Je - sus can im - part Balm to heal the  
4 Chief of sin - ners though I be, Christ is all in  
5 O my Sav - ior, help af - ford By Your Spir - it



blood for me, Died that I might live on high,  
heav'ns a - bove, Deep - er than the depths of sea,  
wound - ed heart, Peace that flows from sin for - giv'n,  
all to me; All my wants to Him are known,  
and Your Word! When my way - ward heart would stray,



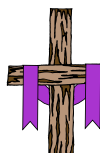
Lives that I might nev - er die. As the branch is  
Last - ing as e - ter - ni - ty! Love that found me—  
Joy that lifts the soul to heav'n, Faith and hope to  
All my sor - rows are His own. He sus - tains the  
Keep me in the nar - row way; Grace in time of



to the vine, I am His, and He is mine.  
won - drous thought! Found me when I sought Him not.  
walk with God In the way that E - noch trod.  
hid - den life Safe with Him from earth - ly strife.  
need sup - ply While I live and when I die.

Text: William McComb, 1793–1873, alt. Tune: Richard Redhead, 1820–1901  
Text and tune: Public domain

## Acknowledgments



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**<https://www.sslcwest.org/worship.html>**

### **ANNOUNCEMENTS**

Today:  
3/17/24

**St. Stephen – West (Mt. View): Bible Class – 9am  
Worship – 10am  
Choir - 11am**

**St. Stephen – East Bay (Hayward): Worship – 1pm  
No Bible Class**

(Pastor leaving after worship service for his grandmother's funeral in WI)

Mon. – Tues. – **Pastor Out of Town** (Attending his grandmother's funeral)

Wednesday – **Confirmation Class** (Lang) (Mt. View) – **4pm**

Friday – **Bible Instruction Class** (Fenton) (Mt. View) – **11:30am**

Next Sunday: *Palm Sunday*

3/24/24



**St. Stephen – West (Mt. View): Bible Class – 9am / Choir – 9:30am**

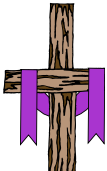
**Worship w/ Adult Confirmation** (Gary Fenton) – **10am**

**Reception & Refreshments** (Fellowship Hall) - **11am**

**Women's Auxiliary** – (After refreshments)

**St. Stephen – East Bay (Hayward): Worship – 1pm**

**Bible Class – 2pm**



**May our Savior Jesus richly bless your worship and personal meditations on His Word during this season of Lent. Please continue to join us as we remember Christ's suffering and death for our sins in our worship services.**

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**Confirmation and Reception into Membership – Next Sun. (Palm Sunday) 3/24 @ 10am**

We rejoice to announce that Gary Fenton will be finishing up his Bible Instruction classes this Friday and will be confirmed and received into membership at St. Stephen-West in Mountain View at our **10am** worship service. There will be a reception and refreshments afterwards at **11am** in the fellowship hall. Please join us in welcoming Gary into our fellowship on Palm Sunday!

**Easter Brunch Sign-Up Sheet** – We will be having an Easter Brunch after our **10am Easter Worship service in Mountain View** on **Easter Sunday, March 31<sup>st</sup>**. If you'd like to help with the brunch or bring a dish to pass, please sign the sheet in the church entryway. Thank you!

**Holy Week & Easter Worship Service Schedule** – Holy Week begins next Sunday (Palm Sunday). Please join us that week for Good Friday services and our joint-congregation Easter Service and brunch. The schedule is as follows:



**Good Friday w/ communion (3/29) – St. Stephen – East Bay (Hayward) – 1pm**  
**St. Stephen – West (Mt. View) – 7pm**

**Easter Sunday (3/31) – Easter Joint Worship Service (Mt. View) – 10am**  
**Easter Brunch / Children's Easter Egg Hunt – 11am**

**CLC News** - Pastor Nathanael Mayhew of Grace Ev. Lutheran in Sleepy Eye, MN. *has received a call* from Immanuel Lutheran Church and School, Mankato, MN. <> Teacher Neil Bernthal of Immanuel Lutheran School, Winter Haven, FL, *has returned* the call from Luther Memorial School, Fond du Lac, WI. <> Teacher Levi Schaller of Grace Lutheran School, Fridley, MN, *has accepted* the call from Messiah Lutheran School, Hales Corners, WI. <> Teacher Matthew Kranz, Immanuel Lutheran in Mankato, MN, *has returned the call* from Messiah Lutheran in Eau Claire, WI to be their 5th- 6th grade teacher and assistant principal. Messiah Lutheran *has now called* Caleb Noeldner for that position. <> Pastor Chad Seybt of the West Wisconsin Quad Parish *has received and returned the calls* to St. Peter's of Iron River and Calvary of Marquette.

## **Immanuel Lutheran High School and College Tour Choir Update –**

Dear Friends in Christ,

The ILC Tour Choir thanks all of you for your prayers, your well-wishes, and your support of the special offering that made this year's choir trip possible. The Lord has blessed us in our travels this week beginning last Saturday when we left campus for a concert at Peace Thru Christ in Middleton, WI. The people there greeted us warmly, worshiped with us, and provided a fellowship meal before we went on our way southeast.

We drove through the night and some 16 hours later reached the Atlanta area at noon on Sunday. With no concert scheduled we visited Stone Mountain Park and enjoyed the sunshine and some hiking trails.

On Monday morning we departed for Live Oak, FL. Along the way we stopped at the Museum of Aviation in Warner Robins, GA. Surrounded by the military aircraft displays, we sang "God Bless America" for visitors in the main lobby. We also met a guide in one of the museum hangars who was very interested in what we were doing. He showed us the wooden cross he kept in his pocket. He said it stays in there all the time and he never puts anything else in that pocket so he can always reach in and find it right away. Before we left the museum we gathered up and sang "Amazing Grace" for him. We have learned some *a cappella* pieces so that we can sing anywhere—and we have. The other day at the hotel we sang in the breakfast room and the pool room. In Lakeland, FL we sang outside the main gate at the Tigers/Twins spring training game while fans were leaving.

At Grace Lutheran In Live Oak, FL, Pastor Priestap and the members were so welcoming. A good group attended the concert that night including some visitors. I spoke with a retired choral director who was there and he was very appreciative of what we were doing. Near the end of the fellowship time afterward a former ILC student arrived who had missed the concert because of work. Disappointed she couldn't see it, we gathered the choir together and sang a couple pieces for her. The next morning in Live Oak before we left the hotel we sang in the lobby and said goodbye to members who had stopped to see us off.

The theme for our concert services this year is *The Lord Bless You and Keep You: Benedictions from Above*. Every day as we sing we are reminded of God's blessings upon us both physical and spiritual. There are so many things He does for us in His grace that it is impossible to count or tell of them all. For all of them we are thankful.

Arriving in Winter Haven, FL at noon on Tuesday, we met Teacher Neil Bernthal and his family at a local nature preserve. They provided lunch for us and then we walked the nature trails counting how many alligators we saw. (There were a lot.) It was great to walk around outside in the Florida sun after so many miles on the bus. Tuesday evening was our concert at Immanuel in Winter

Haven. Once again the congregation was so welcoming and happy that we were there. It had been 18 years since the tour choir had visited our churches in Florida. For many of those who are in congregations so far from the midwest, the tour choir is the only contact with ILC they will ever have. Visiting them like this helps preserve the important bond of fellowship we share with these Christians. This trip has been very important even though it has not involved as many congregations as our last couple tours.

Wednesday was a rest and relaxation day for us. We spent the day in Clearwater, FL visiting the beach and shops. Sand volleyball, walking the pier, ice cream in served in little "beach pails," it was good to give the choir a day like this since they work so hard and give up their spring break and time at home with family for all this.

On Thursday morning we left Winter Haven and headed north for West Columbia, SC. A full day of driving brought us to Holy Trinity Lutheran Church at 5:00 pm. We had two hours to set up and prepare for our concert at 7:00. The choir always gathers for a pre-concert Bible reading or devotion just before they begin and at Holy Trinity we met outside the front doors of the church where three wooden crosses are placed in the ground. Standing beside those crosses we read together the account of Jesus' suffering and death from the Gospel of Luke. It was another beautiful night, the concert went well, and we were treated to a southern feast afterward!

I was invited the next morning to present the opening devotion for the school children at Holy Trinity—an invitation I very gladly accepted. The choir sat with the children for devotion and using a measuring cup, a tape measure, a clock, and a cross we talked about how the cross can help us measure just how great the love of God is for us. All the school children came out to see the bus off and we prayed the *Create in Me* in song with them before departing.

Yesterday a 728 mile drive brought us to a hotel in Vandalia, IL around 10:30 pm. We sing in Pana, IL this afternoon at 3:00 pm and then on to St. Louis to prepare for our last concert tomorrow morning before heading back to school. Today will be the first time the tour choir has ever sung at Word of God Lutheran Church in Pana.

The concerts at Immanuel, Winter Haven, FL and Holy Trinity, West Columbia, SC were live-streamed and you may be able to find replays on the websites of those congregations. You can visit [tourchoir.org](http://tourchoir.org) to find a copy of our current service bulletin for the concerts. We ask you to keep us in your prayers as we complete our bus tour today and tomorrow. After we return we have three more concerts in western Wisconsin when school starts again as well as a recording session, so there is still more work to be done. Thy kingdom come.

The Lord bless and keep you all,

Prof. David Schaller, director  
Immanuel Lutheran College Tour Choir