



Lent

OUR SAVIOR
LUTHERAN CHURCH

Fourth Sunday in Lent
Sunday, March 14, 2021



OUR SAVIOR LUTHERAN CHURCH
745 Front Street S., Issaquah, WA 98027
425-392-4169

SERVICE OF THE WORD: SUNDAYS IN LENT

GATHERING: THE HOLY SPIRIT CALLS US TOGETHER AS THE PEOPLE OF GOD.

PRELUDE

Wondrous Love — Johnson

Karla Stalwick

WELCOME

Pastor Jim Kruse

PRAYER OF CONFESSION

PM: Blessed be the holy Trinity, ☩ one God, whose mercy is poured out upon all people, and whose goodness cascades over all creation.

C: Amen.

PM: Holy God,

C: We confess that our hearts are burdened by sin.

We turn inward, failing to follow your way of love.

We distrust those who are not like us.

We exploit the resources of the earth and fail to consider generations to come.

Forgive us, gracious God, for all we have done and left undone.

Amen.

PM: Through the power and promise of ☩ Christ Jesus, our sins are washed away and we are forgiven. We are called to be a beloved community, living out Christ's justice and the Spirit's reconciling peace

C: Amen.

GATHERING SONG

I Heard the Voice of Jesus Say

Cantor

Text: Horatio Bonar, 1808-1889; Music: English folk tune

I heard the voice of Jesus say, "Come unto me and rest;
Lay down, O weary one, lay down your head upon my breast."

I came to Jesus as I was, so weary, worn and sad;
I found in him a resting place, and he has made me glad.

I heard the voice of Jesus say, "I am this dark world's light;
Look unto me, your morn shall rise, and all your day be bright."

I looked to Jesus, and I found in him my star, my sun;
And in that light of life I'll walk till trav'ling days are done.

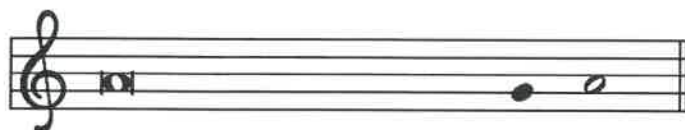
I came to Jesus as I was, so weary, worn and sad;
I found in him a resting place, and he has made me glad.

GREETING

PM: The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, the love of God and the community of the Holy Spirit be with you all.

C: And also with you.

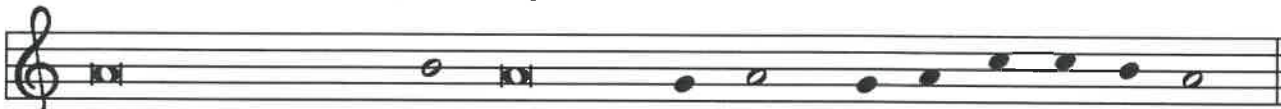
KYRIE



AM: In peace, let us pray to the Lord.



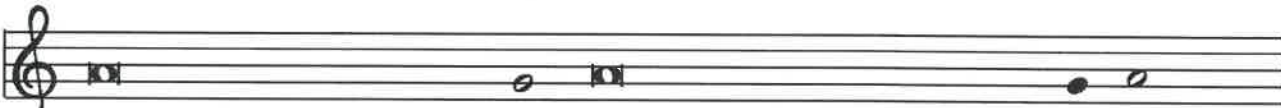
C: Lord, have mer - cy.



AM: For the peace from a-bove, and for our sal - vation, let us pray to the Lord.



C: Lord, have mer - cy.



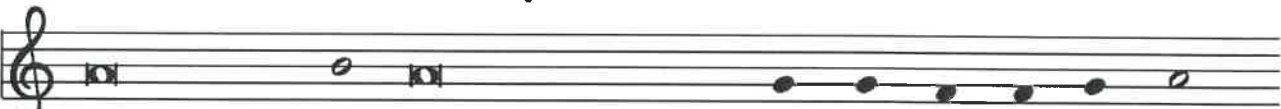
AM: For the peace of the whole world, for the well-being of the church of God,



and for the unity of all, let us pray to the Lord.



C: Lord, have mer - cy.



AM: For this holy house, and for all who offer here their wor-ship and praise,



let us pray to the Lord.

C: Lord have mer - cy.



AM: Help, save, comfort, and de-fend us, gra-cious Lord. C: A - men.

PRAYER OF THE DAY

PM: Let us pray. O God,

C: rich in mercy, by the humiliation of your Son you lifted up this fallen world and rescued us from the hopelessness of death. Lead us into your light, that all our deeds may reflect your love, through Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. Amen.

FIRST LESSON

Numbers 21:4-9

⁴From Mount Hor the Israelites set out by the way to the Red Sea, to go around the land of Edom; but the people became impatient on the way. ⁵The people spoke against God and against Moses, “Why have you brought us up out of Egypt to die in the wilderness? For there is no food and no water, and we detest this miserable food.” ⁶Then the Lord sent poisonous serpents among the people, and they bit the people, so that many Israelites died. ⁷The people came to Moses and said, “We have sinned by speaking against the Lord and against you; pray to the Lord to take away the serpents from us.” So Moses prayed for the people. ⁸And the Lord said to Moses, “Make a poisonous serpent, and set it on a pole; and everyone who is bitten shall look at it and live.” ⁹So Moses made a serpent of bronze, and put it upon a pole; and whenever a serpent bit someone, that person would look at the serpent of bronze and live.

AM: Word of God, word of life. **C: Thanks be to God.**

SECOND LESSON

Ephesians 2:1-10

¹You were dead through the trespasses and sins ²in which you once lived, following the course of this world, following the ruler of the power of the air, the spirit that is now at work among those who are disobedient. ³All of us once lived among them in the passions of our flesh, following the desires of flesh and senses, and we were by nature children of wrath, like everyone else. ⁴But God, who is rich in mercy, out of the great love with which he loved us ⁵even when we were dead through our trespasses, made us alive together with Christ—by grace you have been saved—⁶and raised us up with him and seated us with him in the heavenly places in Christ Jesus, ⁷so that in the ages to come he might show the immeasurable riches of his grace in kindness toward us in Christ Jesus. ⁸For by grace you have been saved through faith, and this is not your own doing; it is the gift of God—⁹not the result of works, so that no one may boast. ¹⁰For we are what he has made us, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand to be our way of life.

AM: Word of God, word of life. **C: Thanks be to God.**

GOSPEL ACCLAMATION

Return to God

Cantor

Text & Music: Marty Haugen, b. 1950

Re - turn to God with all your heart, the source of grace and
mer-cy: Come seek the ten - der faith - ful - ness of God.

The image shows two staves of musical notation in G major (one sharp) and 3/4 time. The melody is simple and hymn-like. The lyrics are written below the notes. The first staff ends with a double bar line, and the second staff continues the melody and lyrics.

THE GOSPEL

John 3:14-21

Jesus said: ¹⁴“Just as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, so must the Son of Man be lifted up, ¹⁵that whoever believes in him may have eternal life.

¹⁶“For God so loved the world that he gave his only Son, so that everyone who believes in him may not perish but may have eternal life.

¹⁷“Indeed, God did not send the Son into the world to condemn the world, but in order that the world might be saved through him. ¹⁸Those who believe in him are not condemned; but those who do not believe are condemned already, because they have not believed in the name of the only Son of God. ¹⁹And this is the judgment, that the light has come into the world, and people loved darkness rather than light because their deeds were evil. ²⁰For all who do evil hate the light and do not come to the light, so that their deeds may not be exposed. ²¹But those who do what is true come to the light, so that it may be clearly seen that their deeds have been done in God.”

PM: The Gospel of the Lord.

C: Praise to you, O Christ.

SERMON

No Snakes In Paradise?

Pastor Jim Kruse

The first time I every saw a mongoose, I was running a cross-country race for my high school team in Hawaii. The course had been set up to begin on the school track, then to leave through a gate at one end, then to go down several dirt roads through fields of mature sugar cane, and then to return to the track through another gate to the finish line. I was sore and tired when an animal ran across the road in front of me in the middle of the cane field. It looked a lot like a big, overgrown rat. But it had a fuller, bushier tail. It was kind of spooky; my first mongoose.

The people who live in Hawaii will tell you that there are no snakes in Hawaii. They will tell you that mongooses were brought into the state long ago in an attempt to control the population of rats that had stowed away on ships and subsequently populated the cane fields. But it did not work. The rats and the mongooses live side by side in the fields. There are, however, now no snakes in Hawaii. The mongooses eliminated the snakes instead of the rats. And the State Department of Agriculture fiercely defends against the arrival of any new snakes. A snake-free Hawaii has become one of the many symbols of the carefree quality of life there.

“There are no snakes in Hawaii.” And that is the way most people think it should be like. “There are no snake in paradise.” And that is the way most people think heaven should be like as well.

By the time that the story that was read for the First Lesson was written down in the form we have it today, it had become more than just a story of sinful discontent, followed by divine judgment, followed by repentance and forgiveness. It had become a legend that explained to the people why there was a bronze statue of a snake wrapped around a pole in the Holy Temple in Jerusalem. It had become a symbol for the quality of life that they were seeking, trusting in God to carry them through the dangers of a hostile world.

For the children of Israel, “there were no snakes in the paradise,” they would say. And here is why: They would tell the story about how, in olden days, when their great-great-great-grandparents were rescued out of slavery in Egypt they were not always grateful for God’s

guidance. They started to complain to Moses about their sad life. “Why have you brought us out into the desert to die?” they would say. “And what is this stuff, this Manna, that we are supposed to eat? It tastes terrible. We hate it.” The complaining was enough to drive God crazy, so God guided them into a field of poisonous snakes.

The legend of the poisonous snakes is one of those stories you save to tell children when they are really acting up. It is the kind of story designed to scare them into good behavior. But of course, when you tell a story like this, there has to be a way out, or else it is just tragic and sad. And so, in this case, God provides the way out. The people who are suffering in the story say to Moses, “Ask God to take away the serpents from us.”

And Moses does. And God does. But not before ordering that bronze snake statue is fashioned on the end of a pole.

And that is why there are no snakes in Paradise.

For us today, there are a couple of problems with this story of the fiery serpents and the bronze pole. The first problem is with the sending of the snakes in the first place. We would like to think that what God is all about is doing the work of rescuing us from the trouble that we get into. In fact, our teachings on the consequences of sin follow much more closely John’s words from the Gospel for today than they do the reading from Numbers. John says that those who believe in God, that is, those who trust in God’s way of saving us from sin through Christ, are not condemned. But then he says, “Those who do not believe are condemned already, because they have not believed.” The consequence of sin, according to these words, is not that God gets angry and punishes us. But the consequence of sin is that we are choosing to go our own way through life, refusing access to God’s providence and grace. It’s not so much that God punishes us as it is that God lets us alone to stumble into whatever pit of poisonous vipers is lurking out there just waiting to do us in.

The point of this First Lesson is to make it clear that God’s final act, his ultimate act for all people, is an act of grace. God is the one who ultimately heals those who look to him for their wellbeing.

The second problem with the story, and perhaps the more interesting one, is in the symbol of the bronze snake on a pole. At first it must have seemed like a bad joke to fashion a metal image of the serpent, the very creature that has been bringing them so much pain and suffering, and then to ask the people to look at it—even to stare at it—as a way of healing them. That seems like a very strange thing to do. If you were to go down the street and ask someone to give you a symbol of healing or new life, they would most likely talk to you about a rainbow, or a butterfly, or a spring flower pushing itself up through the ground after a long winter’s rest. When we are in the middle of pain and suffering, we like to see smiling faces, not be forced to look at the thing that is causing the suffering.

Yet it appears from this story that God, who is wiser than we, does exactly that. God gives us symbols that portray restoration over and against some pretty terrible stuff. Symbols like the fiery serpent on a stick. Or symbols like the cross. Or symbols like John 3:16.

John 3:16 is more than just a reference to a single Bible verse. The phrase, “John 3:16” is a central symbol of the faith and life in Christ. The words are as familiar to us as our own names and addresses. They may be the first words we ever memorized from the Bible. They

were for me. “For God so loved the world that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish but have eternal life.” (See, I even know it in the King James Version that I learned as a child.)

The words flow from us with ease. But they are deceptively simple. For the gift of a Son is an expensive gift. John 3:16 is not about a handful of letters and numbers that can be written on posters and fences at public events so that TV cameras can flash them around the world. John 3:16 is about a real human being. John 3:16 is about a precious human life, nailed to a rough-hewn crucifixion cross to die a real and tragic human death.

If we are shocked that God insisted that the people of Israel stare at the an image of the serpent of their death in order to be healed, how much more are we shocked that God asks us to lift high the Cross of Christ before a world that is suffering sadness and death on a daily basis. If crosses were not so prevalent in our churches, and in our homes, and out in the world around us, maybe we would be more moved by viewing this perverse symbol.

Looking at the cross is supposed to move us to change our ways. When we look at the cross, we are supposed to be seeing there the love that God has given to the world by the horror of having used it. We should be stirred to remember God’s promise to remember us, and not abandon us in our sin and illness. We should be strengthened with courage and hope for a life that threatens to overwhelm us. This is why, still today, we fashion crosses of all shapes and sizes, made from wood and metal and stone, and stick them on poles and necklaces and walls. This is why, still today, we mark our babies foreheads with the cross at baptism.

So that in the middle of our sorrow we will remember the love. And in the middle of our joy we will remember the price.

Yes, they will tell you that there are no snakes in Hawaii--there are no snakes in Paradise. And technically, they may be right. But nothing was really changed after introducing the mongoose. There are still rats in the sugar cane fields. So in a broader, symbolic sense, there are still snakes in the grass.

And there are still snakes in God’s paradise as well. People have tried, over the years, to introduce more pleasant images of God’s gift of grace for us. Butterflies, rainbows, a beautiful sunrise; they have all been suggested. But nothing sticks. Nothing has outlasted the image of the cross, and the story that is told as to why we place it in our midst. To those who have no need of it, it remains a perverse joke. But for those who are perishing, those who get bit by the poisons of life, it is the only symbol with the power to connect us with our God of salvation.

We thank God that there is still at least this one snake left in Paradise.

HYMN OF THE DAY

God Loved the World

Cantor

Text: *Gesangbuch*, Bollhagen, 1791; Music: Edward Miller, 1731-1807

God loved the world so that He gave his only Son the lost to save,
That all who would in him believe should everlasting life receive.

Christ Jesus is the ground of faith, who was made flesh and suffered death;
All who confide in Christ alone are built on this chief cornerstone.

All glory to God the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, Three in One!
To you, O blessed Trinity, be praise now and eternally!

OFFERING

During the season of Lent, we see and hear most clearly the fullness of God's love, as Jesus accepts the journey to the cross, where he suffers death on our behalf. The mission of the church is to continue to carry this good news to all people across the years. Please make a special effort this Lent to support this work at Our Savior Lutheran Church with your financial gifts.

OFFERING PRAYER

PM: Faithful God, you walk beside us in desert places, and you meet us in our hunger with bread from heaven. Accompany us in our journey as we pass over death to life with Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord.

C: Amen.

APOSTLES' 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 PEOPLE

Relying on the promises of God, we pray boldly for the church, the world, and all in need.

[A brief silence.]

You sent your Son that the world might be saved through him. Inspire the witness of the church throughout the world. Empower missionaries, Bible translators, and ministries of service in your name. Bless our partners in ministry, our ELCA global partner churches, and Young Adults in Global Mission. Lord, in your mercy, **hear our prayer.**

From east to west your steadfast love is shown. Nourish seas and deserts, wilderness areas and cities. Give water to thirsty lands; nurture spring growth that feeds hungry creatures; bless farmers as they prepare for the growing season. Lord, in your mercy, **hear our prayer.**

You sustained your people in the wilderness. Give courage to all who lead in times of crisis and scarce resources. Prosper the work of those who aid victims of famine and drought, especially, Kip, Noreen, Rachel, Alice, Leslie, Evy and her family, the Smith & Taylor fami-

lies, James, Joan and Stephanie, Betty, Brandi, Katia & Rahul, Willie & Mary, Donna, Bruni, the Kowal and the Zazueta families, Roger, Carol, communities across the country, Dave, Guests of the Community Meals Program, Sonja, Nicole, Josee and Jeannie. Bring peace in places where scarce resources cause violence. Lord, in your mercy, **hear our prayer.**

Your mercy endures forever. Deliver all who cry to you, especially those who are hungry or without homes. Give life in places where death seems triumphant; give healing to those who are sick and comfort to those who mourn. Lord, in your mercy, **hear our prayer.**

By grace we have been saved. Fill this congregation to overflowing with that grace, that we show mercy to others. Nourish any in our midst who are hungry, especially children, and bless our ministries of feeding and shelter. Give us patience and courage when the way seems long. Lord, in your mercy, **hear our prayer.**

Gracious God, we are thankful for the medical services by Augusta Victoria Hospital, Jerusalem, and for Palestinians in East Jerusalem and the West Bank. Lord, in your mercy, **hear our prayer.**

God of the powerful and helpless, you clothe us with strength when our spirits are weak and weary. We are grateful that vaccines that reduce the spread of the COVID-19 pandemic are reaching more and more people, and we pray for the continued success of this medical miracle. At the same time, we pray that you give peace to the families of those who have lost loved ones. Strengthen and encourage those who are sick and those who work to alleviate the suffering. Lord, in your mercy, **hear our prayer.**

For what and for whom else do the people of God pray this morning?

[Here other intercessions may be offered.]

Lord, in your mercy, **hear our prayer.**

Your Son was lifted up that whoever believes might have eternal life. We praise you for all who have died in Christ. Bring us with all the saints into the fullness of your promises. Lord, in your mercy, **hear our prayer.**

We entrust ourselves and all our prayers to you, O faithful God, through Jesus Christ our Lord.

Amen.

THE LORD'S PRAYER

PM: Lord, remember us in your love as you teach us to pray:

C: Our Father in heaven, hallowed be your name, your kingdom come, your will be done, on earth as in heaven. Give us today our daily bread. Forgive us our sins as we forgive those who sin against us. Save us from the time of trial and deliver us from evil. For the kingdom, the power, and the glory are yours, now and forever. Amen.

SENDING SONG*Lord Jesus, You Shall Be My Song*

Cantor

Text & Music: Les Petites Soeurs de Jésus and L'Arche Community

Lord Jesus, you shall be my song as I journey;
I'll tell ev'rybody about you wherever I go:
You alone are our life and our peace and our love.
Lord Jesus, you shall be my song as I journey.

BLESSING

PM: You are what God made you to be: created in Christ Jesus for good works, chosen as holy and beloved, freed to serve your neighbor.

God bless you + that you may be a blessing, in the name of the holy and life-giving Trinity.

C: Amen.

POSTLUDE*Postlude for Lent* — Dandrieu

Karla Stalwick

Serving in Worship:

Worship Leader:	Pastor Jim Kruse
Assisting Minister:	Jen Winslow
Cantors:	Alice Lewis, Scott Hafso
Organist:	Karla Stalwick
Pianist:	Scott Hafso
Videographer:	Leslie Waltzer
Video Editor:	Dave Carlson
Banner:	Elaine Stamm
Bulletin Cover:	Craig Gillin

Readings for next Sunday: Jeremiah 31:31-34; Hebrews 5:5-10; John 12:20-33

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Our Savior Lutheran Church Staff

Rev. James R. Kruse, *Transition Pastor*
Shari Lundberg, *Parish Administrator*
Dr. Jiyoung Lee, *Parish Organist*

Scott Hafso, *Director of Worship & Music*
Kate Gagnon, *Lay Visitation Minister*



Additional worship resources:

Reading: Psalm 107: 1-3, 17-22

Suggested Hymn for Listening: *Amazing Grace, How Sweet the Sound*

Text: John Newton, 1725-1807; Music: W. Walker, Southern Harmony, 1835

Prayer is putting our faith into action. We invite you to include these people in your daily prayers. You can make prayer requests via email at fice@oslcissaquah.org. All written requests will remain on this list for 4 weeks.

Kip Hauser diagnosed with throat cancer. (father of Cheryl Hauser)

Noreen adoptive mother of a 3 week old baby, in the hospital with COVID. (Connie Fletcher)

Rachel 21 yrs old, in need of a kidney transplant. (Marilyn Carlson)

Alice F healing and wholeness. (Marilyn Carlson)

Leslie Lapp hit by a car and recovering from injuries, wife to a pastor in California. (Mary Ann Hult)

Evy Sneva and her family as they grieve the loss of her son.

The Smith and Taylor families, James Murphy recovering from COVID (Shelley & Mark Howe)

Joan Perry admitted to the hospital for COVID 19, and her daughter, **Stephanie**. (Cheryl Neeb)

Betty Anderson-healing of intestinal issues. (mother of Shelley Howe)

Brandi Kowal-peace and strength after a miscarriage. (niece of Shelley Howe)

Katia & Rahul, Willie & Mary, Donna, Bruni, the The Kowal & Zazueta families recovering from COVID (Shelley & Mark Howe)

Roger Stanley strength and healing. (Alice Lewis)

Carol Harbolt peace and healing. (Ray Harbolt)

Safety and peace for communities being torn apart during these difficult times. (Karen Hansen)

Dave Carlson continued healing and following kidney transplant surgery.

Guests of the Community Meals Program safety, health and peace of mind. (Connie Fletcher)

Sonja 3 years old undergoing treatment for cancer. (granddaughter of Henrik & Patty Christopherson)

Nicole DeCamp healing and strength. (Ken DeCamp and Cheryl Leiter)

Josee Jordan peace of mind as she faces health challenges. (Dianne Tanner)

Jeannie Lindquist continued healing and strength.

Healing and peace of mind: Henrik & Patty Christopherson (Dianne Tanner); **Vern Lindquist; Marian James; Gregory** (nephew of Joanne Suttmeier); **Doug Patur; Katie Moeller; Margot Inman; Ken Acker** (son of Lucy Acker); **Marilyn Carlson; Taufik Hidayut** (Ken Konigsmark); **Don Wilkinson** (husband of Gwynn Wilkinson); **Rebecca Thomas; Tanisha Foote** (Marilyn Carlson);

Dorothy Soland; Randi Strom; Jeanne Kuipers; John Pass; Florence Kinnune; Carol Harbolt; Sandy Aldworth; Jen Winslow; Larry Pruitt.

Undergoing cancer treatment: Tim Rutten (cousin of Mark Howe); **Carol Howe** (cousin of Mark Howe); **Tom Killoran** (Shelley Howe); **Les Carlson** (father of Dave Carlson); **Harold Mandt** (brother of Mary Ann Hult and Lorna Robertson); **Chris Howe** (brother of Mark Howe); **Peggy Scalise** (cousin of Mark Howe); **Eileen Letts** (cousin of Mark Howe); **Keith DeCamp** (brother of Ken DeCamp); **Barbara Jones** (mother of Ron Sordahl); **Doug McVety** (Helen Nychay); **Al Batt** (Connie Fletcher); **Larry Harbolt** (Ray Harbolt); **Gerald Welch** (Vern and Jeannie Lindquist); **Dana Mancini** (Jan Setterlund); **Greg Petersen** (Wes Collum); **Barry Donker** (Joan Parish); **Germaine Korum** (Lyle and Alice Lewis); **Kathryn Aitcheson** (Gerrie Hendrickson); **Yuko Takiguchi** (Teiko Soland)

Living with cancer: Liz Kidd (Bob Beck); **Duane Jacobson; Mary Lewis** (sister-in-law of Lyle and Alice Lewis); **Mark Becker** (uncle of Paula Seeger); **Barbara Krogh Jarvis** (sister of Steve Krogh); **Suzanne Lewis** (daughter-in-law of Lyle & Alice Lewis); **Mira Bergsma**

Expectant Mothers: Karen (daughter of Bob & Patty Gerde); **Marian Martin** (Stacy Smith); **Alyssa Saavedra** (Cheryl Neeb); **Shawna McIntyre** (Cheryl Neeb)

Mourning the death of loved ones: For peace and comfort during this time of grieving for the family and friends of: **JD Golick** (nephew to Patty Gerde); **Dave McMurray** (father of Shannon Dickens); **Del Elliott** (Kate Gagnon); **John Sneva** (Evy Sneva's son)

Members and friends serving in the military; fire & police departments, & emergency rooms: Mike special ops, unexpectedly called up. (nephew of Dave and Marilyn Carlson)

Global Missions and Missionaries: Augusta Victoria Hospital, Jerusalem, and for Palestinians in East Jerusalem and the West Bank. Chiclayo, Peru: **Pepe** at Las Brisas, **Merci** in San Antonio and **Harold** at Las Lomas. **MaaSae Girls Lutheran Secondary School** in Tanzania.

Thanksgiving: for the joyous birth of Claire, granddaughter to Mark Mummy and Bev Geary.