



St. Paul Lutheran Church

The Church on the Highway

Loving others into the Love of Christ

March 2026 Edition

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A Message From Our Senior Pastor

Rev. Dr. Brian Hesse

Email: pastorhesse@splcwaco.com

A Pastor Pondering: I Have Re-lent-ed

Lent is generally not the most exciting thing about March. While Lent runs the entire month and occupies March more than anything else there is plenty in March that grabs a spotlight before Lent. There are spring breaks from school, St. Patrick's celebrations and many other things about March worth noting long before anyone wants to consider the reflective, often gloomy nature of Lent.

However, since this is March and it is the season of Lent ask yourself what the season of Lent means to you. Consider the following questions:

- How many times have you observed the season of Lent?
- Do usually give up something for Lent this year? What was it?
- Are you attending the special worship services on Wednesdays?
- Have you tasked yourself with extra reading of Scriptures?

How are you choosing to observe Lent? For those who have grown up in the church their whole lives they are likely answer the questions about Lent with a fair amount of routine. It occurs to me that for more than 50 years I have been celebrating Lent and yet there may be neighbors and church members alike wondering, "What is Lent?"

Whether you are new Christian or a well experienced one, Lent is not about what we do. Sure, there is a lot of emphasis on confession, penitence, and self-reflection. Those things are helpful and good things for us to do. However, Lent is always going to be about what God is doing. Lent is always going to be about God relenting from the condemnation our sins deserve because of what Jesus did at the cross for us.

This year Lent is about being "Set Free." If you haven't joined us for a Lent service yet, you are missing out on some wonderful good news for you. If you are joining us for lent services and re-lent-ing through another season of these services, it is likely that you could be inviting someone who doesn't know about Lent. Just imagine, you could be the person that helps them be "Set Free" with the good news of Jesus. No matter how you are once again re-lent-ing during this season, it will soon be April and that will kick off with the joyous Good News of Christ's resurrection.

Looking forward to celebrating Easter with you.



Sunday Worship

8am & 10:30am

Online: www.splcwaco.com

Bible Class/Sunday School

9:15am



A Message From Our Youth & Family Director

Josh McNamara, D.C.E.

Email: FamilyMinistry@splcwaco.com

The Slave, the Shepherd, and the Saint

The month of March brings with it the familiar celebration of Saint Patrick's Day, but beyond the green decorations and cultural traditions lies a powerful story of how God sets people free.

This Lent, our congregation will be walking through the theme "Set Free" as we examine the life of Moses and how God delivered His people from slavery. Interestingly, that same pattern of God's freeing work also appears in the life of Patrick—a journey that mirrors the Lenten path of repentance, renewal, and mission.

Patrick's story might be described in three movements: the slave, the shepherd, and the saint.

The Slave

As a teenager, Patrick was kidnapped from his home and enslaved in Ireland. During years of isolation and hardship, he turned to prayer and came to know God in a deep and personal way. What began as suffering became the very place where faith was born. Lent invites us to a similar place. We are reminded that apart from Christ, we too live in bondage—not to earthly masters but to sin. Yet it is often in our weakness and need that God draws us back to Himself. Like the people of Israel in Egypt and like Patrick in captivity, we learn to depend on the Lord who alone sets His people free.

Where might God be using this Lenten season to draw you closer to Him?

The Sheperd

During his captivity, Patrick spent years tending sheep. Hidden from the world, he was being shaped through prayer, endurance, and quiet faithfulness. This echoes the story of Moses, who spent years as a shepherd in the wilderness before God called him to lead His people. Freedom, it seems, is not only about deliverance—it is also about faith formation. Lent is a season of such formation. Through repentance, prayer, and reflection, God shapes our hearts and prepares us for lives of faithful service.

How might God be forming you in the ordinary rhythms of daily faith?

The Saint

After escaping slavery, Patrick eventually returned to Ireland—not for revenge, but to share the Gospel with the people who had once enslaved him. The man who had been a slave returned as a servant of Christ. This is what God's freedom produces: lives marked by forgiveness, hearts of courage, and a deep love for our neighbors. Just as Moses was sent back to Egypt and just as Patrick returned to Ireland, those whom Christ sets free are sent to serve.

Who might God be calling you to love, forgive, or serve during this season of Lent?

Lent reminds us that God is still at work and that He is still writing life stories, like that of Moses and Saint Patrick. Through Christ, He frees the captive, forms the faithful, and sends His people into the world with hope.

May this Lenten season draw us closer to the One who truly sets us free as we seek to share His unending and freeing love, by loving others into the love of Christ.

In Him,
Josh McNamara
Director of Youth & Family Ministry



Please join us as we finish our Lenten Season and prepare for Easter.

March 4, 2026: Lent Midweek 2

Theme: God Sends a Deliverer (Exodus 4:1-20)

Worship at 11:00 am in the Sanctuary

Worship at 6:30 pm in the AFLC with meal sponsored by the Fellowship Committee (Nacho Bar)



March 11, 2026: Lent Midweek 3

Theme: God Passes Over Us (Exodus 12:1-14)

Worship at 11:00 am in the Sanctuary with Holy Communion and meal to follow in the AFLC

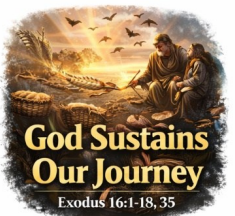
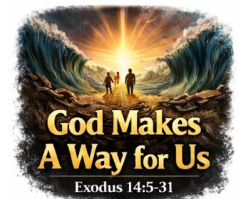
Worship at 6:30 pm in the AFLC with meal, **meal sponsor needed.**

March 18, 2026: Lent Midweek 4

Theme: God Makes A Way For Us (Exodus 14:5-31)

Worship at 11:00 a.m. in the Sanctuary

Worship at 6:30 p.m. in the AFLC with meal sponsored by the St. Paul Men's Club (pulled pork sandwiches).



March 25, 2026: Lent Midweek 5

Theme: God Sustains Our Journey (Exodus 16:1-18, 35)

Worship at 11:00 a.m. in the Sanctuary

Worship at 6:30 p.m. in the AFLC with meal sponsored by the High School Youth Group (meal to be determined).

April 2, 2026: Maundy Thursday

Theme: New Passover (Luke 22:7-20)

Worship Services are at 11:00 a.m. and 6:30 p.m. in the Sanctuary with Holy Communion at both services. This service will also include the stripping of the altar ceremony at the end of the service.



April 3, 2026: Good Friday

Theme: New Passover (Luke 22:7-20)

Worship Services are at 11:00 a.m. and 6:30 p.m. in the Sanctuary. This service will also include a service of darkness.

April 5, 2026: Easter Sunday

Theme: New Tombs (Matthew 27:57-66)

Worship Services will be held at 8:00 a.m. and 10:30 a.m., with Easter Pancake Breakfast served by the St. Paul Men's Club at 9:00 a.m.



Please Remember in Your Prayers:

- † We pray for continued healing for all those who have suffered physical problems in the last month, including: (a complete list is available in the church office). We pray the Lord lay His healing hand upon them.
- † We pray for all who are undergoing cancer diagnosis/treatment, including: (a complete list is available in the church office). We pray the Lord keep His healing hand upon them.
- † We pray for those who have friends or family living on hospice care, including: (a complete list is available in the church office). We pray the Lord give them peace and comfort during this time.
- † We pray for all who struggle with ongoing health concerns, including: (a complete list is available in the church office). We pray the Lord keep His healing hand upon them.
- † We pray for all who are home-bound, including: (a complete list is available in the church office). We pray the Lord give them comfort and peace with their living situation.
- † We pray for all those in nursing care or assisted/independent living facilities, including: (a complete list is available in the church office). We pray the Lord will give them comfort and peace with their living situation.
- † We pray for those who have lost loved ones in the past month, including: (a complete list is available in the church office). May the Lord provide these families comfort and peace during their time of grief.
- † We pray for those serving in our Armed Forces (a complete list is available through the church office). We pray the Lord keep them safe in their stead as they defend our freedom and safety.

Please contact the church office if you, someone in your family, or a family friend is in need of prayer. **Prayer requests will be listed for 4 weeks.** Please keep the church office advised of the status of those you add to the prayer list, so that our list remains up-to-date. If you wish to remain on the prayer list after 4 weeks, please call the church office (254.799.3211) or send an email to: wecare@splcwaco.com.



Join us for
our Monthly
Fellowship Lunch

All are invited to join us for our Monthly Fellowship luncheon immediately following our 11:00 a.m. Lent Worship on Wednesday, March 11.

Desserts are appreciated for the luncheon, but not required.

If you have any questions, please call the church office (254.799.3211).



Members of the Altar Guild will be in the church foyer on **Sunday, March 15 and Sunday, March 22**, to take your orders for Easter Lilies to be used to decorate the altar area on Easter Sunday, April 5.

You will be able to dedicate your lily in honor or memory of a loved one and have that information printed in the Easter Sunday bulletin.

Cost will be \$10 per plant.

You may pick up your Easter Lily following Easter Sunday worship.

Any lilies left will be disposed of on Tuesday, April 7.



Those who are scheduled to Serve at SPLC for March 2026

Servers are listed by Initial and Last Name to protect their identity.

ELDER OF THE MONTH:

Bob Dube

ALTAR FLOWERS:

3/1 D & N Newman
 3/4 K Koester - **Lent**
 3/8 L & J Swiggum
 3/11 J & K Lamar - **Lent**
 3/15 L & B Woodward
 3/18 J & M Lange - **Lent**
 3/22 L & C Graf (51st anniv.)
 3/25 T & M Kingsbury - **Lent**
 3/29 G & J Haverkamp - **Palm Sunday**

ACOLYTES:

3/1 A West (8:00am)
 L Gonzalez (10:30am)
 3/8 E Williams (8:00am)
 B Petrich (10:30am)
 3/15 W Hatfield (8:00am)
 A West (10:30am)
 3/22 B Petrich (8:00am)
 L Breton (10:30am)
 3/29 C Gonzalez (8:00am)
 E Tindle (10:30am)

LAY READERS

3/1 J Nawara (8:00am)
 D Galler (10:30am)
 3/8 M Borchardt (8:00am)
 MA Weaver (10:30am)
 3/15 L Woodward (8:00am)
 J Uptmore (10:30am)
 3/22 B Dube (8:00am)
 B Holobaugh (10:30am)
 3/29 T Albers (8:00am)
 B Strickland (10:30am)

NURSERY MINISTRY

3/1 W Ehlers (9:00am)
 S Cone (10:15am)
 3/8 A Bush (9:00am)
 P Price (10:15am)
 3/15 K McCullough (9:00am)
 S Cone (10:15am)
 3/22 J Lassetter (9:00am)
 A Gilchrest (10:15am)
 3/29 W Ehlers (9:00am)
 P Price (10:15am)

SUNDAY MORNING GREETERS:

3/1 M Dutschmann (8:00am)
 L Outlaw (10:30am)
 3/8 S Jugert (8:00am)
 B & T Holobaugh (10:30am)
 3/15 C Banta (8:00am)
 J Uptmore (10:30am)
 3/22 B Moss (8:00am)
 D Bracciale (10:30am)
 3/29 E Pareya (8:00am)
 S Cone (10:30am)

USHERS FOR WORSHIP

8:00am Worship: Group 7
 M Jugert, J Banta, D Wolfe, J Strauch, Z Ferguson, H Bush,
 A Lassetter
 10:30am Worship: Group 8
 F Spross, T Kersten, B Holobaugh, D Savage, L Swiggum,
 Bo Dube, D Newman
 6:30pm Lent Worship 3/4: Group 6
 D Reinke, R Randolph, S Reinke, D Galler, D Bood,
 T Randolph, D Caffey
 6:30pm Lent Worship 3/11: Group 5
 R Shelton, H Pick, H Strickland, M Perry, L Springman,
 D Tynes, K Koester
 6:30pm Lent Worship 3/18: Group 4
 G Hurta, J Kersten, B Hand, B Kubitza, D Prikryl,
 R Finstad
 6:30pm Lent Worship 3/25: Group 3
 L Payne, E King, M Lynch, B Leftwich, D Schwarz,
 R Faulknor, T Filer





Sunday, March 28, 2026
9:00 a.m. - 11:00 a.m.

Join us as we gather for a free community outreach event that helps to tell the Passion account of Jesus through the lens of Resurrection Eggs.

While you're here you won't want to miss out on our:

- ✂ Easter Bunny photo-op
- ✂ Bounce House
- ✂ Tasty Treats
- ✂ Easter Egg hunt

If you have any questions about this event, please contact Josh McNamara or Angel Breton.

A sign-up sheet will be in the foyer for people to sign-up to help volunteer at different stations for this upcoming event.

(In the event of inclement weather, we are planning on using Saturday, April 4th, as an alternative event date from 9am-11am).



Tri-Cities Ministries is accepting donations for their hygiene packs and food bag items. There has been an increase in clients and need help meeting the demand. Your generosity could change lives!

If you would like to donate items, you can pick up a list of needed items and bring them to church office, or deliver directly to the Tri-Cities office on Tuesday mornings. **Immediate Needs include:**

- | | | |
|---|--|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Toothpaste/toothbrush | <input type="checkbox"/> Shampoo/Conditioner | <input type="checkbox"/> Canned fruit or fruit cups |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Gallon size Ziploc bags | <input type="checkbox"/> Combs | <input type="checkbox"/> Canned meat |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Deodorant | <input type="checkbox"/> Wash cloth | <input type="checkbox"/> Pasta |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Razors | <input type="checkbox"/> Hand lotion | <input type="checkbox"/> Pasta sauce |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Travel sized shaving cream | <input type="checkbox"/> Small laundry detergent | <input type="checkbox"/> Rice |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Bar soap | | <input type="checkbox"/> Beans |
| | | <input type="checkbox"/> Cereal |

MARCH BLESSINGS FROM LWML

Here are a few things that LWML has going on in March:

1. Pill Bottle Campaign. The pill bottle basket in the foyer by our LWML table continues to stay full. Thank you everyone who has donated. This will be an ongoing service project for us.
2. March 28th is our Central Texas Zone Spring Event where we get together with the LWML groups in our Zone. The churches our Zone include Peace Lutheran, Hewitt; Immanuel Lutheran, Clifton; Trinity Lutheran, Woodway; Trinity Lutheran, Riesel; Christ Lutheran, Hillsboro; Grace Lutheran, Marlin; Grace Lutheran, Mart; Faith Lutheran, Mexia; St. Mark, Lutheran, Waco; Our Savior Lutheran, Whitney; and of course St. Paul Lutheran, Bellmead. The event will be hosted at Peace Lutheran in Hewitt. **All ladies are invited to attend.** Please contact Jacqueline Uptmore for more details. Breakfast and Lunch will be served, and we will have Robyn Tarnowski as our guest speaker.
3. Lastly, thank you so much for your generosity for our Super Bowl snacks bake sale. We will be able to fund scholarships and projects!!



LUTHERANS DOING LIFE TOGETHER

The LDLT group meets on Monday evenings in Rogers 207, BU campus. They begin with a meal and fellowship at 5:00 p.m. and Bible study at 5:30 p.m.

**Join us this month:
3/2, 3/16, 3/23, and 3/30.**

Make plans to attend our Game Night on March 21, in the Youth Room. All college age students are invited to join us for an evening of Fun, Fellowship, Games and snacks in the Youth Room.

If you have any questions, please contact Karen Shelton or Pastor Hesse.



Family Day | Saturday, March 28

Registration is now OPEN!

We're excited to invite you to join us at Family Day—designed for families (all ages are welcome!) to experience Camp together!

This day will be full of adventure, connection, and Christ-centered fun as you make memories and enjoy everything our La Grange campus has to offer.

All ages are welcome! Together as a family, you'll have the chance to enjoy Camp favorites like the slip 'n slide, arts & crafts, the rock wall, Target Town, and more! Whether you're new to Camp or have been coming for years, we are excited to help your kids and your family feel confident, connected, and excited about coming to Camp this summer.

Registration Deadline: March 14.

[Register here: www.camplonestar.org/family-day](http://www.camplonestar.org/family-day)



Classes for All Ages

Please join us for Sunday School and Bible Classes at 9:15 a.m.

Adult Bible Study (Albers Family Life Center)

This class is continuing to study sections of the Book of Nehemiah to learn what change looks like and how to adapt in a world that seems stacked against faith.

ASK PASTOR HESSE: Outside Pastor Hesse's office you will find a box to place any questions that you would like Pastor Hesse to answer during the Adult Bible Study class on Sunday mornings.

Men's Bible Class (classroom behind the Parish Hall)

This class is finishing up a study by author Max Lucado: *Ten Men of the Bible*. The men depicted in the Bible were not perfect by any means. We find story after story marked by scandal, failure, and intrigue. Yet we also find many stories of men who were able to look beyond their circumstances, completely trust in the Lord, and follow Him wherever He chose to take them. Like us, these men made both good and bad decisions along the way—and experienced both good and bad consequences—and we find our struggles and hopes in the pages of the Bible that tells their stories.

Ladies Bible Class (Conference Room)

This class is going through the study, *Strong and Courageous*, by Donna Snow. Life is full of conflict, daunting tasks, and roadblocks. Few people experience this as viscerally as Joshua did as he was called to lead God's people Israel into the Promised Land. Join us for this verse-by-verse Bible study looking at the life of Joshua and see how you, too, can be strong and courageous amidst any challenges you face.

Grades Nursery - Kindergarten: Simply Loved (classrooms)

This class teaches children to love Jesus and each other, created with the truth found in 1 John 4:7 in mind which says, 'Dear friends, let us continue to love one another, for love comes from God. Anyone who loves is a child of God and knows God.'

Grades 1-4: Bible Basics (classroom)

This class is learning how to use the Holy Bible and where to find their favorite Bible stories and characters.

Grade 5: Catechesis Training (classroom)

This class undergoes instruction in the Catechism and how to apply it to their daily lives.

Grades 6-8: Select Devotions (classroom)

This class is learning from a devotion study in preparation for new curriculum.

High School and College Students (Youth Room)

High school students meet in the Youth Room every Sunday for Bible Class! This will be a great time of study, building relationships, fellowship and fun! *Breakfast is usually served.*

College Students (classroom behind the Parish Hall)

After joining breakfast in the Youth Room, college students move to their classroom to study the Sunday Scripture readings used in worship.

Other Bible Study Opportunities:

College Student Evening Bible Study/Fellowship (LDLT - Lutherans Doing Life Together)

The LDLT group meets on Monday evenings in Rogers 207, BU campus. They begin with a meal and fellowship at 5:00 p.m. and Bible study at 5:30 p.m. Upcoming events include Game Night on March 21, in the Youth Room. If you have any questions, please contact Karen Shelton or Pastor Hesse.

Youth Confirmation/Catechesis Training and Music (grades 6-8)

During the Lenten season, the Confirmation Classes will meet each Wednesday immediately following the 6:30 p.m. evening Lenten Worship and Meal:

Grades 6-7 will meet with Pastor Hesse (Conference Room)

Grade 8 will meet with Josh McNamara (Youth Room)

There's a place for EVERYONE to be immersed in God's Word and fellowship with other Christians!

Children & Youth Activities



Join us as we gather for a free community outreach event that helps to tell the Passion account of Jesus through the lens of Resurrection Eggs.

While you're here you won't want to miss out on our:

- ✂ Easter Bunny photo-op
- ✂ Bounce House
- ✂ Tasty Treats
- ✂ Easter Egg hunt

If you have any questions about this event, please contact Josh McNamara or Angel Breton.

A sign-up sheet will be in the foyer for people to sign-up to help volunteer at different stations for this upcoming event.

(In the event of inclement weather, we are planning on using Saturday, April 4th, as an alternative event date from 9am-11am).

YOUTH Ministry Events

☆ "Proverbs & Putt-Putt" (Sunday, March 15th, 2-4pm)

The St. Paul Youth Group (grades 6th-12th) is heading to Putters on Sunday, March 15th to enjoy some quality fellowship time and to learn how God's Word and Putt-Putt can help us grow in our Christian faith.

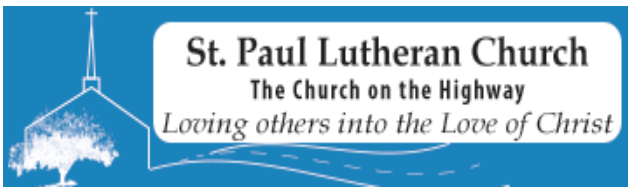
We will head off-site for an optional, family-funded lunch at Raising Cane's located at: 801 J H Kultgen Expy Waco, TX 76706 (near Baylor). After the optional meal, we will meet at Putters shortly before 2pm to get signed in so we can start playing at 2pm. We will wrap-up at 4pm.

Students need to register with Josh for this upcoming event so that we have an accurate number of how many putt-putt players to plan our event for.

☆ High School Youth Night (Sunday, March 22nd, 6-8pm)

All high school Youth students and their friends are invited to join us as we gather around God's Word, as we worship together, enjoy a great meal and as we spend time in fellowship with one another. During our time together we will be looking at what it truly means to care for others in our lives and how Jesus models this for us throughout the New Testament.

If you have any questions regarding these events, please reach out to Josh McNamara or Hannah Galler.



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March 2026 Edition



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Sunday, March 28, 2026

9:00 a.m. - 11:00 a.m.

Complete details found on page 8.