

March 1, 2026  
Second Sunday  
in Lent

St. John's Lutheran  
Church Mahone Bay





## St. John's Evangelical Lutheran Church (SJELC)

South Shore Lutheran Shared Ministry (SSLSM)

Mahone Bay, Nova Scotia

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### Sunday March 1<sup>st</sup>, 2026; Second Sunday in Lent

#### WELCOME AND ANNOUNCEMENTS

##### **Welcome Statement** *(read by lector)*

We are honored to be worshipping here today in Mi'kma'ki, the ancestral and unceded territory of the Mi'kmaq People, and we acknowledge them as the past, present, and future caretakers of this land.

Here at St. John's, we intentionally welcome all to worship and participate in our community. We believe we are drawn together by the love of Jesus Christ, our care for each other, and our passion for our community. At St. John's, all people are welcome, and we seek to worship in a way that respects and inspires our diversity. We believe that all people are created in the image of God, that all people are of sacred worth, and that Christ died, and rose, for all people. We believe that God's radically inclusive love excludes no one. We welcome everyone without exception, regardless of age, race, ethnicity, nationality, gender identity, sexual orientation, family or socioeconomic status, educational background, political affiliation, physical or mental ability, faith history or life experience. We believe that the diversity of God's creation is part of what makes it beautiful. We are a church where it is safe to have differences and still remain united in the love of Jesus. No matter who you are, where you're from, or what you believe, you are always welcome at St. John's.

#### GATHERING

##### INVOCATION

Blessed be the holy Trinity, ✝ one God,  
who forgives all our sin,  
whose mercy endures forever.

**Amen.**

##### A LITANY FOR LOVING OUR BODIES

**(by +V. Featherston, Sung Response "These Bodies" by The Many, Refrain Only)**

When we are told you gave us these bodies and you called them good, but the world tells us a different narrative

***You gave us these bodies, and you called them good.***

When we are told we are fearfully and wondrously made, and the small voice of insecurity grows louder

***You gave us these bodies, and you called them good.***

When we want to love our bodies, but the pressures of social media are so loud

***You gave us these bodies, and you called them good.***

When we are called to speak out against injustice in relation to the bodies of our neighbours whose bodies don't look like our own

***You gave us these bodies, and you called them good.***

When what we do or fail to do harms the one body that is You

***You gave us these bodies, and you called them good.***

May we love our bodies and call them good

***You gave us these bodies, and you called them good.***

***Opening Hymn ~ ELW 335***

***~ Jesus Keep Me Near the Cross***

## **GREETING**

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

**KYRIE ~ p. 213**

## **PRAYER OF THE DAY**

**(From "Prayers for an Inclusive Church" by Steven Shakespeare, page 14)**

Holy God  
whose wild Spirit's breath  
defies our frozen idols:  
take the night time of our fear  
and make it a welcoming womb  
for us and all the world;  
through Jesus the Christ, in whom we are born anew.  
**Amen.**

## **WORD**

### **SCRIPTURE READINGS**

**FIRST READING: GENESIS 12:1-4a**

<sup>1</sup> The Lord said to Abram, "Go from your country and your kindred and your father's house to the land that I will show you. <sup>2</sup> I will make of you a great nation, and I will bless you and make your name great, so that you will be a blessing. <sup>3</sup> I will bless those who bless you,

and the one who curses you I will curse, and in you all the families of the earth shall be blessed.”

<sup>4a</sup> So Abram went, as the Lord had told him, and Lot went with him.

Word of God, Word of life. **Thanks be to God**

### **PSALM: PSALM 121**

<sup>1</sup> I lift up my eyes to the hills;

**from where is my help to come?**

<sup>2</sup> My help comes from the Lord,

**the maker of heaven and earth.**

<sup>3</sup> The Lord will not let your foot be moved

**nor will the one who watches over you fall asleep.**

<sup>4</sup> Behold, the keeper of Israel

**will neither slumber nor sleep;**

<sup>5</sup> the Lord watches over you;

**the Lord is your shade at your right hand;**

<sup>6</sup> the sun will not strike you by day,

**nor the moon by night.**

<sup>7</sup> The Lord will preserve you from all evil

**and will keep your life.**

<sup>8</sup> The Lord will watch over your going out and your coming in,

**from this time forth forevermore.**

### **SECOND READING: ROMANS 4:1-5, 13-17**

<sup>1</sup> What then are we to say was gained by Abraham, our ancestor according to the flesh?

<sup>2</sup> For if Abraham was justified by works, he has something to boast about, but not before God. <sup>3</sup> For what does the scripture say? “Abraham believed God, and it was reckoned to him as righteousness.” <sup>4</sup> Now to one who works, wages are not reckoned as a gift but as something due. <sup>5</sup> But to one who does not work but trusts him who justifies the ungodly, such faith is reckoned as righteousness.

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

<sup>16</sup> For this reason the promise depends on faith, in order that it may rest on grace, so that it may be guaranteed to all his descendants, not only to the adherents of the law but also to those who share the faith of Abraham (who is the father of all of us, <sup>17</sup> as it is written, “I have made you the father of many nations”), in the presence of the God in whom he believed, who gives life to the dead and calls into existence the things that do not exist.

Word of God, Word of life. **Thanks be to God.**

**GOSPEL ACCLAMATION ~ ELW p.216 ~ Lent: "Return to the Lord..."**

The holy gospel according to John.

**Glory to you, O Lord.**

**GOSPEL: JOHN 3:1-17**

1 Now there was a Pharisee named Nicodemus, a leader of the Jews. 2 He came to Jesus by night and said to him, "Rabbi, we know that you are a teacher who has come from God, for no one can do these signs that you do unless God is with that person." 3 Jesus answered him, "Very truly, I tell you, no one can see the kingdom of God without being born from above." 4 Nicodemus said to him, "How can anyone be born after having grown old? Can one enter a second time into the mother's womb and be born?" 5 Jesus answered, "Very truly, I tell you, no one can enter the kingdom of God without being born of water and Spirit. 6 What is born of the flesh is flesh, and what is born of the Spirit is spirit. 7 Do not be astonished that I said to you, 'You must be born from above.' 8 The wind blows where it chooses, and you hear the sound of it, but you do not know where it comes from or where it goes. So it is with everyone who is born of the Spirit." 9 Nicodemus said to him, "How can these things be?" 10 Jesus answered him, "Are you the teacher of Israel, and yet you do not understand these things?

11 "Very truly, I tell you, we speak of what we know and testify to what we have seen, yet you do not receive our testimony. 12 If I have told you about earthly things and you do not believe, how can you believe if I tell you about heavenly things? 13 No one has ascended into heaven except the one who descended from heaven, the Son of Man. 14 And just as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, so must the Son of Man be lifted up, 15 that 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."

The gospel of the Lord

**Praise to you, O Christ.**

## **SERMON: John 3:1-17 and “Dangerous Unselfishness”**

**Sermon Discussion Questions:** *When did we last experience the presence of God? What did we see? What did we hear? What did we touch? What did we smell? What did we taste? What is something “we know” to be true? How do we practice our “Sand Paper Faith” in this season of Lent? When we talk about practicing our “Sand Paper Faith” in relation to unlearning systemic racism, what does “a kind of dangerous unselfishness” look like?*

**Hymn of the Day ~ ELW 660**  
**~ Lift High the Cross**

### **NICENE CREED – p. 104**

**We believe in one God, the Father, the Almighty, maker of heaven and earth, of all that is, seen and unseen. We believe in one Lord, Jesus Christ, the only Son of God, eternally begotten of the Father, God from God, Light from Light, true God from true God, begotten, not made, of one being with the Father. Through him all things were made. For us and for our salvation he came down from heaven; Was incarnate of the Holy Spirit and the Virgin Mary and became truly human. For our sake he was crucified under Pontius Pilate; he suffered death and was buried. On the third day he rose again in accordance with the scriptures; he ascended into heaven and is seated at the right hand of the Father. He will come again in glory to judge the living and the dead, and his kingdom will have no end. We believe in the Holy Spirit, the Lord, the giver of life, who proceeds from the Father and the Son. Who with the Father and the Son he is worshipped and glorified. He has spoken through the Prophets. We believe in one holy catholic and apostolic Church. We acknowledge one baptism for the forgiveness of sins. We look for the resurrection of the dead, and the life of the world to come.**

**Amen.**

### **PRAYERS OF INTERCESSION**

Reconciled by God’s mercy and sustained by God’s presence, let us pray for the world and its needs. *A brief silence.*

Faithful One, you renew us by grace. As you have inspired faith through the work of church artists and hymnwriters throughout the ages (*like George Herbert whom the church remembers today*), give your church the means to praise your beauty today. Hear us, O God.

**Your mercy is great.**

Living One, you delight in this world. The sun and moon, the wind and the water declare your goodness. Preserve this earth, and protect conservationists, scientists, water walkers, land defenders, and all who labor in service to creation. Hear us, O God.

**Your mercy is great.**

Ruling One, you bless us to be a blessing. We pray especially for *Gaza, Palestine, and Israel; Iran, and Yemen; Sudan/South Sudan; the DRC and Somalia; Minneapolis, Venezuela, Greenland, Puerto Vallarta, Russia and Ukraine.* Give wisdom to negotiators, sanctuary to refugees and protect the ministry of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Jordan and the Holy Land as they do Your work. Open the hearts of all leaders to seek the flourishing of every person and lend your help to all who wait for justice, deliverance, and peace. Hear us, O God.

**Your mercy is great.**

Compassionate One, you send your Son to save. Declare your word of acceptance to any who feel condemned and lift up any brought low by hatred, racism, queerphobia, transphobia, and exclusion. Tend to all who are struggling with illness or loss especially Jocelyn Wentzell, Florence Slauenwhite, Shelley Ernst, Donna Naugler, Jason Mailman, Wendy Keddy, Judy Verge and Bruce Parks.

Hear us, O God.

**Your mercy is great.**

Guiding One, you watch over our going out and coming in. Bless newcomers and new members in this assembly and accompany those who have recently left this community to journey elsewhere. Hear us, O God.

**Your mercy is great.**

Eternal One, you neither slumber nor sleep. Be our keeper in life and in death. Thank you for our beloved who have died, and for your promise which saves this whole world by your love. Hear us, O God.

**Your mercy is great.**

Receive our prayers, O God, through Jesus Christ, our strength and salvation.

**Amen.**

## **PEACE**

The peace of Christ be with you always.

**And also with you.**

Let's share a sign of peace with one another.

## **THANKSGIVING**

### **OFFERING**

*Offering is presented by one of the greeters.*

### **OFFERING PRAYER**

O God, maker of heaven and earth,  
your steadfast love embraces all creation.  
You send rain and sunshine to nourish the earth  
and bring forth its bounty.  
Through these gifts of bread and wine,

draw us into the death and life of your Son,  
who calls us to bear witness to his saving work.  
We ask this in Jesus' name.  
**Amen.**

**CANTICLE OF THANKSGIVING ~ ELW p 219**

**LORD'S PRAYER ~ p 221**

**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.**

**SENDING**

**BLESSING (From "Prayers for an Inclusive Church," page 154)**

May the crucified Christ  
shatter our brittle fear,  
draw all people to his glory  
and make us servants living for the world,  
and the blessing of the One who is Creator, Redeemer, and Sustainer of All Life  
✠ bless you now and forever.

**Amen**

***Sending Hymn ~ ELW 638***  
***~ Blessed Assurance***

**DISMISSAL**

The worship has ended, the service begins. Go in peace. Believe the good news.  
**Thanks be to God.**

**REMEMBER IN PRAYER**

**Jocelyn Wentzell, Florence Slauenwhite, Shelley Ernst, Donna Naugler, Jason  
Mailman, Wendy Keddy, Judy Verge and Bruce Parks.**

Please remember to pray for all those who we know

~ family and friends~

## ANNOUNCEMENTS

- **Sunday March 8<sup>th</sup>, daylight savings begin – spring ahead!**
- **Weekly services will be held in the Education Centre until Palm Sunday.**

### Practices:

- **Handbell Practice:** Thursdays at 7:30 p.m. (no practice March 5<sup>th</sup>)
- **St. John's Cantata Choir Practice:** Thursdays at 6:15 p.m.

### Upcoming Events:

- **Fellowship Sunday:** March 22<sup>nd</sup> @12pm after church

### Easter Season Worship in the SSLSM:

- **Midweek Services during Lent:**
  - **"Lenten Café" at Zion:** Wednesdays at 10:00am-12:00pm
  - **"Bless this Night" at St John's:** Wednesdays at 7:00pm
- **Maundy Thursday, April 2<sup>nd</sup>:**
  - St John's at 7:00pm; St Paul's at 7:00pm
- **Palm Sunday, March 29<sup>th</sup>:**
  - Easter Cantata @10:30a, St John's
  - Mount Calvary @10:30a, followed by potluck fellowship
- **Good Friday, April 3<sup>rd</sup>:**
  - St James Anglican @1030am, Mahone Bay (Ecumenical)
  - St Paul's 7:00pm
- **Easter Sunday, April 5<sup>th</sup>:**
  - St. John's Service at 1:00pm
  - St Lukes/Mount Olivet joint Service @9:00am

### Other:

- **Charitable tax receipts for 2025** are ready for pickup
- **Memorials for Easter** are graciously being accepted. Please provide your details and funds into the office by March 27th.

### Youth and Young Adult Retreat: Call for Volunteers

Are you passionate about Youth & Young Adult ministry? Are you interested in being part of a collaborative planning team? Are you passionate about administration and budgeting for an event? On June 12-14 (tentatively), congregations of the SSLSM are invited to take part in planning a Youth & Young Adult Retreat at Camp Mush-a-Mush which is focused on finding stillness in the storms of life. Anyone who is interested in participating in an initial planning or wishing to help lead activities during the retreat, contact Pastor Victoria at [sslsm.pastorvictoria@gmail.com](mailto:sslsm.pastorvictoria@gmail.com) for details.

### Happenings in our shared ministry life:

<b>Date/Time</b>	<b>Event &amp; Church</b>	<b>Description</b>
March 4 March 11 9:30am	<b>Walking Group</b> St John's, Mahone Bay	Wednesdays we meet at the Barn. Bad weather? Stay for fellowship at the Barn.
March 6 2:00pm	<b>World Day of Prayer</b> St. Paul's, Bridgewater	Ecumenical Service
March 9 March 23 1:30pm	<b>Drop In:</b> West Northfield Community Centre	Hosted by St. Andrews Lutheran Church on the second and fourth Tuesday of the month!
March 15 11:00am	<b>Cold Potluck</b> Mount Olivet, Upper LaHave	2nd Sunday a 11 am Cold Plate Potluck after service monthly. All welcome to stay/attend and share a meal
March 22 2:00pm	<b>Coffee Hour</b> St Lukes, Rhodes Corner	Fourth Sunday Coffee and Conversation after 1pm service
March 24 4:30-6pm	<b>Fed &amp; Nourished</b> Mt Calvary	4 <sup>th</sup> Tuesday of each month.

**Contact Information South Shore Lutheran Shared Ministry**

**Pastor Annette Smith**

emergency contact available 16-31st of each month  
sslsm.pastorannette@gmail.com

**Cell Phone: 902 605-0462**

**Pastor Victoria Featherston**

emergency contact available 1-15th of each month  
sslsm.pastorvictoria@gmail.com

**Cell Phone: 902 605-0461**

**Hilary Scott, Administrator for SSLSM**

**Office Phone: 902 605-0460**

Office days and hours: Monday, Wednesday, Friday  
9:00 a.m. - 2:00 p.m.

office email is sslsm.info@gmail.com

Messages & Emails are checked daily

**Website: [sslsm.ca](http://sslsm.ca)**

## SSLSM Worship Schedule – Odd and Even Months

<b>Odd Months Service Rotation</b>		
January, March, May, July, September, November - times shown as time at location.		
<b>Sunday</b>	<b>Pastor Annette</b>	<b>Pastor Victoria</b>
<b>First Sunday</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 9:00 am at Mt. Calvary, Upper Northfield</li> <li>• 11:00 am at St. Paul's, Bridgewater</li> <li>• 1:00 pm at All Saints, Newcombville</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 9:00 am at St. Andrew's, West Northfield</li> <li>• 11:00 am at Zion, Lunenburg</li> <li>• 1:00 pm at St. John's, Mahone Bay</li> </ul>
<b>Second Sunday</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 9:00 am at St. James, Branch LaHave</li> <li>• 11:00 am at St. John's, Mahone Bay</li> <li>• 1:00 pm at Zion, Lunenburg</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 9:00 am at St. Paul's, Bridgewater</li> <li>• 11:00 am at Mt. Olivet, Upper LaHave</li> <li>• 1:00 pm at Zion, Lunenburg</li> </ul>
<b>Third Sunday</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 9:00 am at St. Andrew's, West Northfield</li> <li>• 11:00 am at St. Paul's, Bridgewater</li> <li>• 1:00 pm at St. John's, Mahone Bay</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 9:00 am at Mt. Calvary, Upper Northfield</li> <li>• 11:00 am at All Saints, Newcombville</li> <li>• 1:00 pm at Zion, Lunenburg</li> </ul>
<b>Fourth Sunday</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 9:00 am at Grace, First South</li> <li>• 11:00 am at Zion, Lunenburg</li> <li>• 1:00 pm at St. Luke's, Rhodes Corner</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 9:00 am at St. Paul's, Bridgewater</li> <li>• 11:00 am at St. John's, Mahone Bay</li> <li>• 2:00 pm at St. James, Branch LaHave</li> </ul>

<b>Even Months Service Rotation</b>		
February, April, June, August, October, December - times shown as time at location.		
<b>Sunday</b>	<b>Pastor Victoria</b>	<b>Pastor Annette</b>
<b>First Sunday</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 9:00 am at Mt. Calvary, Upper Northfield</li> <li>• 11:00 am at St. Paul's, Bridgewater</li> <li>• 1:00 pm at All Saints, Newcombville</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 9:00 am at St. Andrew's, West Northfield</li> <li>• 11:00 am at Zion, Lunenburg</li> <li>• 1:00 pm at St. John's, Mahone Bay</li> </ul>
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