

ADVENT LUTHERAN CHURCH

Fourth Sunday of Lent

March 14, 2021

Confession and Forgiveness

All may make the sign of the cross, the sign marked at baptism, as Pastor Matt begins.

Blessed be the holy Trinity, † one God,
the keeper of the covenant,
the source of steadfast love,
our rock and our redeemer.

Amen.

God hears us when we cry and draws us close in Jesus Christ. Let us return to the one who is full of compassion.

Silence is kept for reflection.

Fountain of living water,
pour out your mercy over us.
Our sin is heavy, and we long to be free.
Rebuild what we have ruined
and mend what we have torn.
Wash us in your cleansing flood.
Make us alive in the Spirit
to follow in the way of Jesus,
as healers and restorers of the world you so love.

Amen.

Beloved, God's word never fails.
The promise rests on grace:
by the saving love of Jesus Christ,
the wisdom and power of God,
your sins are † forgiven, and God remembers them no more.
Journey in the way of Jesus.

Amen.

Opening Hymn: "Amazing Grace"

Amazing grace! how sweet the sound,
That saved a wretch; like me!
I once was lost, but now am found,
Was blind, but now I see.

The Lord hath promised good to me,
His word my hope secures;
He will my shield and portion be
As long as life endures.

Kyrie:

P: In peace, let us pray to the lord.

C: Lord, have mercy.

P: For the peace from above, and for our salvation, let us pray to the Lord.

C: Lord, have mercy.

P: For the peace of the whole world, for the well-being of the Church of Christ and for the unity of all, let us pray to the Lord

C: Lord, have mercy.

P: For this holy house, and for all who offer here their worship and praise, let us pray to the lord.

C: Lord, have mercy.

P: Help, save, comfort and defend us, gracious Lord. **Amen**

Prayer of the Day

O God, 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 Reading: Numbers 21:4-9 (Read by the Worship Assistant)

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.

Psalm: Psalm 107:1-3, 17-22 (Read together)

¹Give thanks to the LORD, for the LORD is good,
for God’s mercy endures forever.

²**Let the redeemed of the LORD proclaim
that God redeemed them from the hand of the foe,**
³gathering them in from the lands;
from the east and from the west, from the north and from the south.

¹⁷**Some were fools and took rebellious paths;
through their sins they were afflicted.**

¹⁸They loathed all manner of food
and drew near to death’s door.

¹⁹**Then in their trouble they cried to the LORD
and you delivered them from their distress.**

²⁰You sent forth your word and healed them
and rescued them from the grave.

²¹**Let them give thanks to you, LORD, for your steadfast love
and your wonderful works for all people.**

²²Let them offer sacrifices of thanksgiving
and tell of your deeds with shouts of joy.

Second Reading: Ephesians 2:1-10 (Read by the Worship Assistant)

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.

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.”

Sermon

Hymn – “Find Me in the River”

Find me in the river
Find me on my knees
I've walked against the water
Now I'm waiting if you please
We've longed to see the roses
But never felt the thorns
And bought our pretty crowns
But never paid the price

Find me in the river
Find me there
Find me on my knees with my soul laid bare
Even though you're gone
And I'm cracked and dry
Find me in the river
I'm waiting here (cont'd)

Find me in the river
Find me on my knees
I've walked against the water
Now I'm waiting if you please
We didn't count on suffering
We didn't count on pain
But if there are blessings in the valley
Then in the river I will wait

Find me in the river
Find me there
Find me on my knees with my soul laid bare
Even though you're gone
And I'm cracked and dry
Find me in the River
I'm waiting here

Find me in the river
Find me there
Find me on my knees with my soul laid bare
Even though you're gone
And I'm cracked and dry
Find me in the river
I'm waiting here for you

Apostles' Creed

I believe in God, the Father almighty, creator of heaven and earth.

I believe in Jesus Christ, his only Son, our Lord. He was conceived by the power of the Holy Spirit and born of the virgin Mary. He suffered under Pontius Pilate, was crucified, died, and was buried. He descended into hell. On the third day he rose again. He ascended into heaven, and is seated at the right hand of the Father, He will come again 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.

Sharing of the Peace (nods, waves, “air hugs” to each other, only)

Prayers of Intercession

The prayers are prepared locally for each occasion. The following examples may be adapted or used as appropriate.

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 (*specific mission partners may be named*), our ELCA global partner churches, and Young Adults in Global Mission. Hear us, O God.

Your mercy is great.

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. Hear us, O God.

Your mercy is great.

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*). Bring peace in places where scarce resources cause violence. Hear us, O God.

Your mercy is great.

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. Hear us, O God.

Your mercy is great.

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 (*especially*). Give us patience and courage when the way seems long. Hear us, O God.

Your mercy is great.

Here other intercessions may be offered.

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. Hear us, O God.

Your mercy is great.

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

Amen.

Lord's Prayer

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.

Blessing

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.

Amen.

Sending Hymn: "Still the Cross"

Sometimes it seems the world's unraveling around us
We fear it all may one day come undone
We can't forget the One who came before us
To forgive the past and bring hope for what's to come

When it all comes crashing down
The cross still stands alone
And on this our faith is built
And our courage is made strong

When the world falls apart
And you fear for your heart
There's a tower of peace
It's still the cross

So bring your sick and your poor
And your longing for more
To the place of relief
It's still the cross
There is hope for the lost
It's still the cross

Sometimes it seems that I have been forgotten
I don't know how I will make it on my own
But the One who said I will never be forsaken
He still hears my prayer and I will never be alone

When it all comes crashing down
The cross still stands alone
And on this our faith is built
And our courage is made strong

When the world falls apart
And you fear for your heart
There's a tower of peace
It's still the cross

So bring your sick and your poor
And your longing for more
To the place of relief
It's still the cross
There is hope for the lost
It's still the cross

Dismissal

Go in peace. Share the good news.

Thanks be to God.