

St. John Evangelical Lutheran Church
Sunday, March 14, 2021
Fourth Sunday in Lent

Introduction to the day

The fourth of the Old Testament promises providing a baptismal lens this Lent is the promise God makes to Moses: those who look on the bronze serpent will live. In today's gospel Jesus says he will be lifted up on the cross like the serpent, so that those who look to him in faith will live. When we receive the sign of the cross in baptism, that cross becomes the sign we can look to in faith for healing, for restored relationship to God, for hope when we are dying.

P: This is the day that the Lord has made.

C: Let us rejoice and be glad in it.

JOYS AND CONCERNS

PRELUDE

GATHERING

The Holy Spirit calls us together as the people of God.

CONFESSION AND FORGIVENESS

All may make the sign of the cross, the sign marked at baptism, as the presiding minister begins.

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

C: Amen.

P: 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.

P: Fountain of living water,

C: 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.

C: Amen.

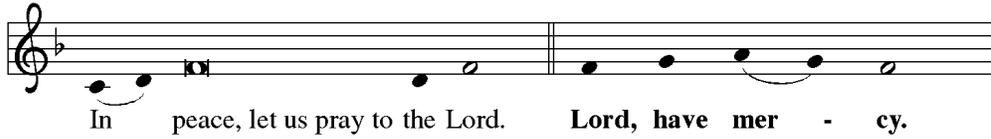
GATHERING SONG: Christ, Be Our Light (ELW 715)

GREETINGS

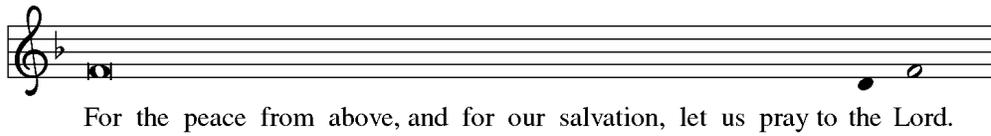
P: The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, the love of God,
and the communion of the Holy Spirit be with you all.

C: **And also with you.**

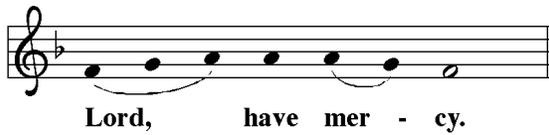
KYRIE



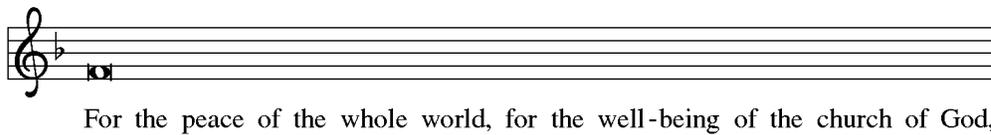
In peace, let us pray to the Lord. **Lord, have mer - cy.**



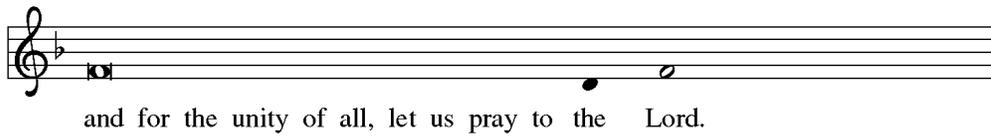
For the peace from above, and for our salvation, let us pray to the Lord.



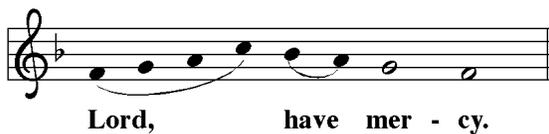
Lord, have mer - cy.



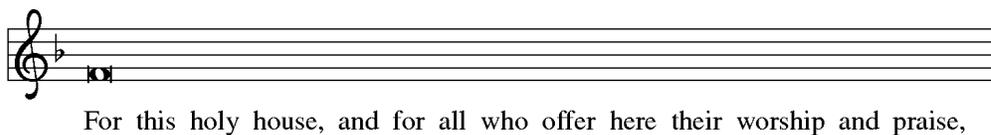
For the peace of the whole world, for the well-being of the church of God,



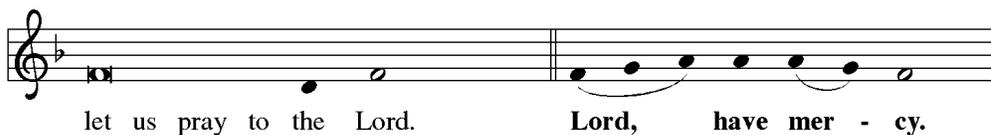
and for the unity of all, let us pray to the Lord.



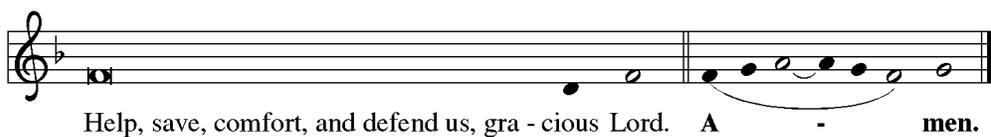
Lord, have mer - cy.



For this holy house, and for all who offer here their worship and praise,



let us pray to the Lord. **Lord, have mer - cy.**



Help, save, comfort, and defend us, gra - cious Lord. **A - men.**

PRAYER OF THE DAY

P: Let us pray.

C: 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.

WORD

God speaks to us in scripture reading, preaching, and song.

FIRST READING: Numbers 21:4-9

L: A reading from Numbers.

Though God provides food and water for the Israelites in the wilderness, they whine and grumble. They forget about the salvation they experienced in the exodus. God punishes them for their sin, but when they repent God also provides a means of healing: a bronze serpent lifted up on a pole.

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.

L: The word of the Lord.

C: Thanks be to God.

PSALM: 107:1-3, 17-22 read responsively

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

L: A reading from Ephesians.

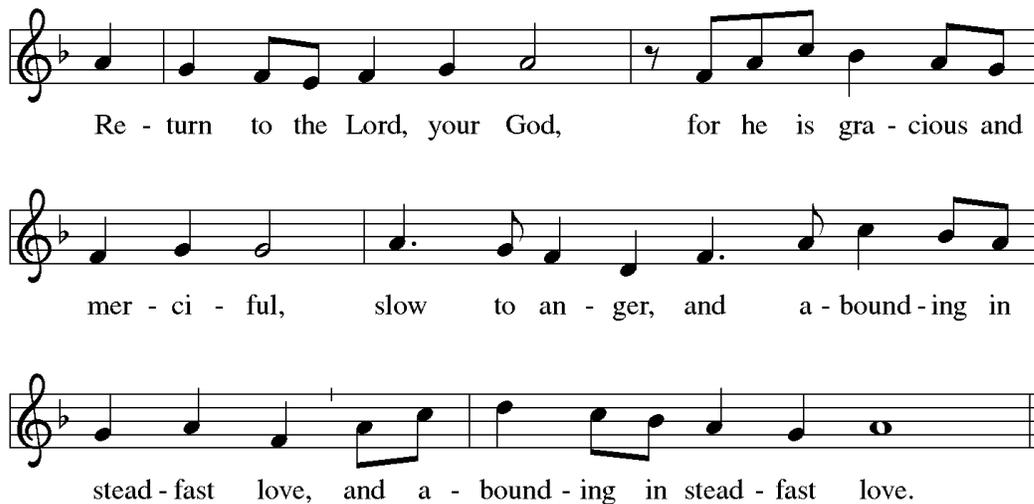
While we were dead in our sinfulness, God acted to make us alive as a gift of grace in Christ Jesus. We are saved not by what we do but by grace through faith. Thus our good works are really a reflection of God's grace at work in our lives.

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.

L: The word of the Lord.

C: Thanks be to God.

GOSPEL ACCLAMATION



Re - turn to the Lord, your God, for he is gra - cious and
mer - ci - ful, slow to an - ger, and a - bound - ing in
stead - fast love, and a - bound - ing in stead - fast love.

GOSPEL: John 3:14-21

The holy gospel according to John.

Glory to you, O Lord.

To explain the salvation of God to the religious leader, Nicodemus, Jesus refers to the scripture passage quoted in today's first reading. Just as those who looked upon the bronze serpent were healed, so people will be saved when they behold Christ lifted up on the cross.

[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.”

P: The gospel of the Lord.

C: Praise to you, O Christ.

SERMON

Leader: We continue on our journey to the light, to the Easter Vigil, looking at our world and at our own lives in the light of Christ, who is lifted up before us on the cross. Let us pray. Lord, be close to your family. Rule and guide us on our way to your kingdom and bring us all into the light of your truth.

Response: Let us see you, Lord!

We will be saved, but on our knees and under the sign of the cross.

Response: Let us see you, Lord!

Let us pray for all those who do evil and all those who do not challenge evil.

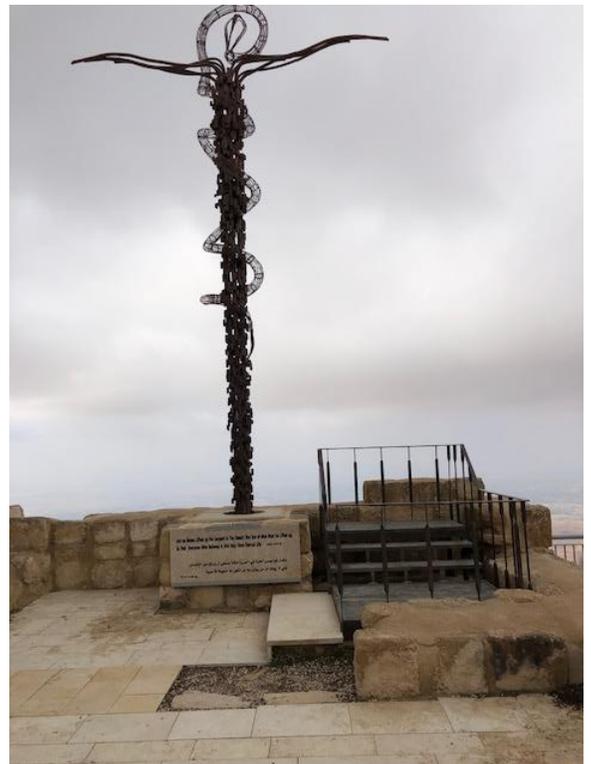
Response: Let us see you, Lord!

Let us pray for all those who are concerned only with their own lives.

Response: Let us see you, Lord!

Let us pray for all those who in their greed steal life from the poor.

Response: Let us see you, Lord!



Let us pray for all those who blame the homeless and aliens for their predicament.

Response: Let us see you, Lord!

Let us pray for all those who use war and hatred in their attempt to control.

Response: Let us see you, Lord!

Let us pray for all those who legally kill and thus add to fear and insecurity in the world.

Response: Let us see you, Lord!

Let us pray for all those who are not moved by the starvation and sickness of children and the poor.

Response: Let us see you, Lord!

Let us pray for all those who practice and encourage abortion, euthanasia, and the death penalty.

Response: Let us see you, Lord!

Let us pray for all those who self-righteously blame others and take no responsibility for the evil in the world today.

Response: Let us see you, Lord!

Let us pray for all those who use and sell drugs and alcohol, and who seek profit from prostitution and slave-trafficking.

Response: Let us see you, Lord!

Let us pray for all those who nurture hatred and refuse to forgive.

Response: Let us see you, Lord!

Let us pray for all those who are sources of division in the world and in the church.

Response: Let us see you, Lord!

Let us pray for all those who use their authority for their own ends instead of serving others.

Response: Let us see you, Lord!

(anyone may add their own petitions. Then remain in silence.)

Leader: Let us pray.

That you, O Lord, may dispel the darkness of our minds and be the light that shines in the hearts of your people. Let us pray to the Lord.

Response: Lord, hear our prayer.

That you may kindly lead us to Christ, the Light of the World. Let us pray to the Lord.

Response: Lord, hear our prayer.

That we may open our hearts to God and acknowledge you as the source of light and the witness to the truth. Let us pray to the Lord.

Response: Lord, hear our prayer.

That you may heal us and preserve us from the skepticism of this world. Let us pray to the Lord.

Response: Lord, hear our prayer.

That you, who takes away the sin of the world, may free us from the contagious power of evil.

We pray to the Lord.

Response: Lord, hear our prayer.

That after having been enlightened by the Holy Spirit, we may never fail to profess the good news of salvation and share it with others. We pray to the Lord.

Response: Lord, hear our prayer.

That all of us, by the example of our lives, may ourselves become in Christ the light of the world.
We pray to the Lord.

Response: Lord, hear our prayer.

That all the inhabitants of the earth may acknowledge you as the creator of all things, the One who bestows upon us the gifts of the Spirit and life ever more abundantly. Let us pray to the Lord.

Response: Lord, hear our prayer.

Lord God, unfailing light and Father of light, by the death and resurrection of your Son, Jesus, you have cast out the darkness of hatred and deceit and poured upon the human family the light of truth and love. Hear our prayers for the sons and daughters you have called and chosen to be your very own children. Help us pass from darkness to radiance. Set us free from the power of the prince of darkness, so that we may live forever as children of the light. We ask this through Christ, our Lord. Amen.

Silence for meditation

HYMN OF THE DAY: *Jesus, Keep Me Near the Cross* (ELW 335)

CREED

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 is worshiped and glorified,
who 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

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

A brief silence.

A: 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.

C: Your mercy is great.

A: 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.

C: Your mercy is great.

A: 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. Bring peace in places where scarce resources cause violence. Hear us, O God.

C: Your mercy is great.

A: 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.

C: Your mercy is great.

A: 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.

C: Your mercy is great.

A: 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.

C: Your mercy is great.

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

C: Amen.

MEAL

God feeds us with the presence of Jesus Christ.

Our Offerings

This is our response to God's grace.

This ministry is funded by those who call St. John home and are excited about what God is doing through this ministry. If you are new to church, please don't feel any obligation to give. As much as we welcome your gifts for the Lord's work in this place, we care a whole lot more about you than money. We're just thrilled you're here.

CHOIR ANTHEM *Hold on to Hope*

OFFERTORY

Offertory Hymn: Create in Me (ELW 186)

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 your pres-ence, and take not your Ho-ly Spir-it from me.

Re-store to me the joy of your sal-va-tion, and up-hold me with your free Spir-it.

OFFERING PRAYER

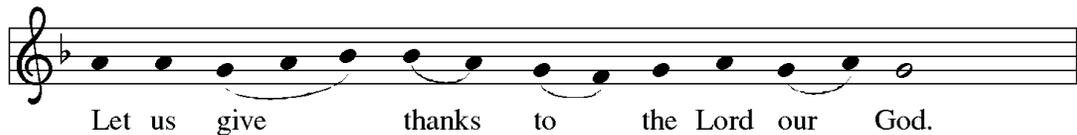
A: Let us pray.

God our provider, you have not fed us with bread alone, but with words of grace and life. Bless us and these your gifts, which we receive from your bounty, through Jesus Christ our Lord.

C: Amen.

GREAT THANKSGIVING

DIALOGUE



PREFACE by Pastor

HOLY, HOLY, HOLY

Ho - ly, ho - ly, ho - ly Lord, God of pow'r and might,
heav-en and earth are full of your glo - ry. Ho - san - na. Ho -
san-na. Ho - san - na in the high - est. Bless-ed is he who
comes in the name of the Lord. Ho-san - na in the high - est.

THANKSGIVING AT THE TABLE

Holy God, our living Water and our merciful Guide,
together with rivers and seas, wells and springs
we bless and magnify you.

You led your people Israel through the desert,
and provided them water from the rock.

We praise you for Christ, our Rock and our Water,
who joined us in our desert,
pouring out his life for the world.

In the night in which he was betrayed,
our Lord Jesus took bread, and gave thanks;
broke it, and gave it to his disciples, saying:
Take and eat; this is my body, given for you.

Do this for the remembrance of me.

Again, after supper, he took the cup, gave thanks,
and gave it for all to drink, saying:
This cup is the new covenant in my blood,
shed for you and for all people for the forgiveness of sin.

Do this for the remembrance of me.

Remembering, therefore,
his life, death, and resurrection,
we await your salvation for all this thirsty world.

Pour out your Spirit on this holy food
and on all the baptized gathered for this feast:
wash away our sin,
that we may be revived for our journey by the love of Christ.
Through him all glory and honor is yours,
Almighty Father, with the Holy Spirit,
in your holy Church,
both now and forever.
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.**

INVITATION TO COMMUNION

Jesus draws the whole world to himself.
Come to this meal and be fed.

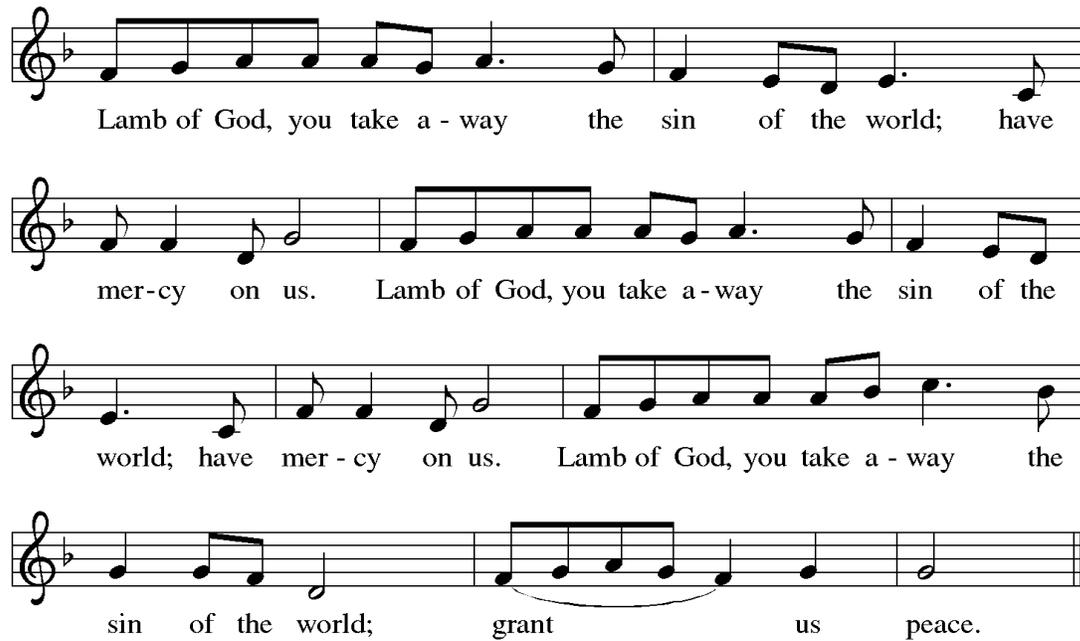
COMMUNION

When giving the bread and cup, the communion ministers say

The body of Christ, given for you.
The blood of Christ, shed for you.
and each person may respond

Amen.

COMMUNION SONG



Lamb of God, you take a - way the sin of the world; have
mer-cy on us. Lamb of God, you take a - way the sin of the
world; have mer - cy on us. Lamb of God, you take a - way the
sin of the world; grant us peace.

SONG AFTER COMMUNION *Jesus, Remember Me* (ELW 616)

“Jesus, remember me when you come into your kingdom.
Jesus, remember me when you come into your kingdom.”

PRAYER AFTER COMMUNION

P: Let us pray. Compassionate God, you have fed us with the bread of heaven. Sustain us in our Lenten pilgrimage: may our fasting be hunger for justice; our alms, a making of peace; and our prayer, the song of grateful hearts, through Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord.

C: Amen.

SENDING

God blesses us and sends us in mission to the world.

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.

C: Amen.

SENDING SONG *What Wondrous Love Is This* (ELW 666)

DISMISSAL

P: Go in peace. Share the good news.

C: Thanks be to God.

Postlude

Announcements

Remember in prayer: Rowen Aldridge, Betty and Jim Allen, Luke Antolick, Bob Braucht, Dawn Hauser, Linda and Ralph Lehman, Sara Leighow, David Mitchell, Bob and Phyllis Moriarity, Kathy Neal, Rev. Donald and Ruth Nice, Jack Rishel, Joann Rishel, Ben Saar, Jane Shaffer, John Truax, Jillian Waldman, and all of our shut-ins; the safety of our military troops around the world (Mark Baier, Isaac Boring, Jade Cordrey, Paul Laidacker, Kenny Leitch, Maddison Myers, Tyler O'Neal, Adam Shaffer, Aaron Stabley, Paul St. James, Jenna White); Everyone affected by the fires on the West Coast; Family Promise and the homeless in our counties. Bishop Eaton, our Presiding Bishop; and Bishop Collins, Bishop of the Upper Susquehanna Synod. For our Companion Synod in Liberia and Ansbach-Wurzburg, Germany; our sister church, St. Wunibald in Heidenheim, Germany and for the New Love Center as it seeks to build a new food hub.

The altar flowers are given to the Glory of God

Special Thanks to this week's helpers: Lector –Karen Aucker; Assisting Ministers - Bill Ely and Ken Dougherty; Crucifer – Brayden Wehler; Acolyte –Emilee Eisner; Head Usher -Christine Barner; Teller-Bob Wehler; Bulletin sponsor -; Bread Sponsor –.

Next week's helpers: Lectors –Shane Snyder; Assisting Ministers -Gary Johnson and Karen Aucker; Crucifer –Carter Stackhouse; Acolyte –Cora Stackhouse; Head Usher -Christine Barner; Teller-Bob Wehler; Bulletin sponsor -; Bread Sponsor –.

The Lutheran Church **Women's Prayer Chain** is a vital ministry of St. John Lutheran. Anyone in need of prayers is asked to contact any of the following persons:

Gloria Ely – 570-873-3597

Sarah Davidson - 570-398-0659

Joyce Braucht - 570-398-2852

Church Envelopes - Please pick up your church envelopes on the bench located by the elevator on the second level Thank you.

Sponsors sheets are available by the Office for the Sanctuary Candle, Weekly Bulletins, Flowers, and Bread Donors. You can sponsor any of the above by placing your name on the sponsor sheets and they will be listed in the bulletin. Enclose money in your offering envelope: Sanctuary candle \$6; Weekly bulletin \$17; Flowers are provided by Russell Florists (\$42) or you can provide your own. If you wish to provide your own, please contact Molly. Payment should be made to "St. John Lutheran Church." Currently we are using wafers during this time of pandemic concerns.

Service of Healing

Pastor will offer the Service of Healing next Sunday, March 21, during the worship service. For the safety and health of all concerned, we will not have the individual laying on of hands.

Palm Sunday

The start of Holy Week, Palm Sunday will be on March 28. Holy Week comes early this year and if all is safe, we look forward to celebrating Maundy Thursday together as the body of Christ.

Giving Plus+

Download the “Giving Plus+” app from your app store for your cell phone.

Also available on our web site. Enter your email, make up a password, and walk through the choices to give the church an electronic donation by check or debit/credit card. People were asking if they could give electronically by debit/credit card.

Give+ Text:

Simply send a text message to 570-865-1101 with the amount you would like to contribute. Within a few minutes, you’ll be sent a text with a link to register. Click on the link and enter your cardholder name and credit or debit card information. Once your registration is complete, you will receive a text verification and a receipt of your donation via email.

Youth Ministry

“Grab-a-Tab”

The youth of St. John would like to ask for donations of little tabs from beverage, soup and dessert cans. It doesn’t matter what color the tab, just grab them and deliver them to the church office. This project will benefit the Ronald McDonald House of Danville. “Grab-a-Tab” program allows people of all ages to join in the effort of providing a “Home-away-from-Home” to children with cancer or other serious illnesses and their families.



Annual Easter Egg hunt

Our annual Easter Egg Hunt will be held on Saturday, April 3rd at 11:00 a.m. for all children and grandchildren of St. John 12 years and under. We will begin promptly, so please arrive at 10:45 a.m. and bring a basket with you. Middle and High school youth will meet in the church office at 9:30 a.m. to help fill the eggs.

Summer Camp



Sign up for Summer Camp at Camp Mt. Luther. Registration forms and Camp Brochures are available please see Molly. Our Christian Education Ministry encourages all our youth to attend camp and we will pay your registration fees. Church camp is a great place to grow in your faith.

THIS WEEK'S EVENTS

Sunday, March 14, 2021

Fourth Sunday in Lent

9:30 a.m. Nave Worship Service

Monday, March 15, 2021

PB&J Day

10:00 a.m. NLC Training

6:00 p.m. Christian Education Meeting

Tuesday, March 16, 2021

Lent 4 Service posted at garmanlutheranchurch.org and stjl.org

Wednesday, March 17, 2021

St. Patrick's Day

10:00 a.m. Prayer/Communion @ Trinity Episcopal

6:30 p.m. Choir Practice

Sunday, March 21, 2021

Fifth Sunday in Lent

Service of Healing

9:30 a.m. Nave Worship Service

2:00 p.m. Catechism

