



Fourth Sunday in Lent
March 14, 2021

The following worship service may be used on its own or along with the video found on the Swamp Lutheran YouTube page.

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.

Hymn "God Loved the World" ELW 323

- 1 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.
- 2 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.

The Apostolic Greeting and Prayer of the Day

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.

Let us pray:

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

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.

The Word of the Lord.
Thanks be to God.

Second Reading: Ephesians 2: 1-10

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.

The Word of the Lord
Thanks be to God.

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:] ¹⁴Just 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.

¹⁶For 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.

¹⁷Indeed, 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."

The Gospel of the Lord.
Praise to you, O Christ.

Homily The Rev. Kurt Strause

Prayers of Intercession

Each petition ends "Lord, in your mercy," and the response is "**Hear our prayer.**"

Lord's Prayer

Let us pray together

**Our Father in heaven,
hallowed be your name,
your kingdom come,
your will be done,
on earth as is 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.**

Blessing

The Lord bless you and keep you.

The Lord make his face shine on you and be gracious to you.

The Lord look upon you with favor and give you peace;

In the name of the Father, and of the + Son, and of the Holy Spirit.

Amen

Hymn "Christ the Life of All the Living" ELW 339

- 1 Christ, the life of all the living,
Christ, the death of death, our foe,
Christ, yourself for me once giving
to the darkest depths of woe:
through your suff'ring, death, and merit
life eternal I inherit.
Thousand, thousand thanks are due,
dearest Jesus, unto you.

- 2 You have suffered great affliction
and have borne it patiently,
even death by crucifixion,
fully to atone for me;
for you chose to be tormented
that my doom should be prevented.
Thousand, thousand thanks are due,
dearest Jesus, unto you.

DISMISSAL

Take up your cross. Follow the Lord.

Thanks be to God.

POSTLUDE "God Loved the World" J. Wayne Kerr

Sanctuary Candle is presented in memory of Ray Long by his wife Joan Long.



Michael A. Crowther
Clarice Haws
Betty Hornberger
Charles Moyer
Ella Shirk
Alverta Showalter
Clyde Showalter
Mary Ann Weitzel
Mary Jane Miller
Josie Reitz

Katie Houck
 Sue Kittler
 Ralph Good
 Susan Levan
 Nancy Kulp
 Mary Kring (aunt of Linda Ream)
 Mary Jane Miller
 Janice Moyer Kelly
 Dorothy Good

Sharon Fremont – friend of Sue Kreitz
 Shirley Achey – neighbor of Sue Kreitz
 Hunter Leisey
 Elmo Lorah
 Jean Wolf
 Korey Eppinette Family
 Clair Sweigart
 Earl Myers
 Josie Reitz



When someone is put on the prayer list, we will keep them on for four weeks. After that time, they will be taken off unless you make another request to have them put back on.

TAKE NOTE - Please contact Joyce Stoner 717-336-7077 if you would like to sponsor a candle. Many coming dates are open.

Following Jesus: An Online Lenten Pilgrimage

Lent provides Christians and opportunity to deepen their faith by focusing on Jesus’ own journey to the cross. By following our Lord to his Passion, Death, and Resurrection we are drawn into the story of God’s confrontation with the forces of sin and evil and the victory God wins over death.

You are invited to participate in a Lenten pilgrimage with Jesus through a weekly gathering on Zoom. Each week we will follow Jesus to the cross by reading the stories in scripture. Our journey will be enhanced by depictions in art, music, and literature. The sessions are held each week on Tuesdays and began on February 23 and will continue for five weeks through March 23. Each session begins at 7:00 p.m. and lasts about an hour. All are welcome to participate but we are asking that you register. You may do so by following the link on our church’s website.

Made for Community

The Cocalico Lutheran Cluster of Churches will sponsor a VIRTUAL Lenten series. We will post the videos weekly on our church website. Please take note of the schedule below.

Wednesday, March 17	Mellingers, Stevens	“In Community with Those on the Margins”
Wednesday, March 24	Muddy Creek, Denver	“In Community with Christ”
Wednesday, March 31	Bergstrasse, East Ephrata	“In Community in the Face of Brokenness”

Orders are being taken for Easter Lilies. Deadline and price still unknown. Please get the following information to the church office or to Jodi Showalter (717)413-7149.

Name _____

Phone Number _____

Lily 3-4 blooms _____

In Memory of _____

In Honor of _____



Gift Cards for Easter are now available. Order forms are on table at front door of sanctuary. Orders will be due by Sunday, March 21 for delivery on Sunday, March 28. Any questions call Missy Regan at (717) 314-5658.