**The Lutheran Church of the Covenant**

“Reaching Out, Reflecting Christ, Renewing Lives”

**

*Fourth Sunday in Lent*

*March 10, 2024*



We welcome you to worship here at the Lutheran Church of the Covenant! Here are a few notes to make you feel more at home as we praise this God of new life together!

* Bulletins and Communion (wheat or gluten-free wafers, wine or grape juice options) are available to be picked up at the back of the sanctuary.
* Portions marked with \* are when we invite you to stand as you are able to do so.
* We encourage you to participate throughout the worship by speaking the **bold** print and singing along with the hymns!
* There will not be a separate time for an offering, so a basket is placed in the back for those who wish to support our local ministry as well as the wider church.
* We will commune from our respective seats, where the presiding minister will invite you to open your respective cups with the Communion elements. We believe this meal is for everyone who wishes to partake, regardless of church affiliation or lack thereof. This tangible gift of God’s love is meant for the world to enjoy!

***Our Worship Leaders & Staff***

Ministers All People

Presiding Minister Rev. Andrea McDonough

Lector Harry Werner

Parish Administrator Jennifer Lasher-Dobush

Custodian Vince Besednjak

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**Fourth Sunday In Lent**

*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.*

Prelude *Just As I Am Without One Plea* (John Keys)

Welcome & Greetings

\* Confession and Forgiveness

Blessed be the holy Trinity, ☩ one God,

who writes the law on our hearts,

who draws all people together through Jesus. **Amen.**

Held in God’s mercy, let us confess our sin

in the presence of God and of one another.

*Silence is kept for reflection.*

Holy God,

**we confess that we are caught in snares of sin**

**and cannot break free.**

**We hoard resources while our neighbors**

**are hungry and cold.**

**We speak in ways that silence others.**

**We are silent when we should speak up.**

**We keep score in our hearts.**

**We let hurts grow into hatred.**

**For all these things and for sins only you know,**

**forgive us, Lord.** **Amen.**

Here is a flood of grace

Out of love for the whole world,

God draws near to us,

breaks every snare of sin,

washes away our wrongs,

and restores the promise of life through ☩ Jesus Christ. **Amen.**

\*Gathering Hymn *Jesus Keep Me Near the Cross* (John Keys) ELW #335

*There is a short intro before the first verse if the hymn begins*

\*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.**

\*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 LessonNumbers 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!**

Psalm Psalm 107:1-3, 17-22

The bold verses below are spoken by the congregation responsively



**Antiphon*:*** *You deliver your people from their distress*. (Ps. 107:19)

1Give thanks to the Lord, for the **|** Lord is good,
  for God’s mercy en- **|** dures 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 re- | bellious paths;**
  **through their sins they | were afflicted.**
 18They loathed all man- **|** ner 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.** Antiphon
 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. Antiphon

Second Lesson 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.

Word of God, word of life! **Thanks be to God!**

**\***Gospel Acclamation

**Return to the Lord your God,**

**For he is gracious and merciful,**

**Slow to anger and abounding in steadfast love,**

**And abounding in steadfast love.**

\*Gospel John 3:14-21

*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.*

The Gospel according to John, the 3rd chapter. **Glory to you, O Lord!**

[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.”

This is the holy Gospel of our Lord! **Praise to you, O Christ!**

Sermon

\*Hymn of the Day *Christ Be Our Light* (John Keys) ELW#715

*There is a short intro before the first verse of the hymn begins*

\*Apostles Creed

**I believe in God, the Father almighty,**

 **creator of heaven and earth.**

**I believe in Jesus Christ,**

 **God’s only Son, our Lord,**

 **who was conceived by the Holy Spirit,**

 **born of the virgin Mary,**

 **suffered under Pontius Pilate,**

 **was crucified, died, and was buried;**

 **he descended to the dead.**

 **On the third day he rose again;**

 **he ascended into heaven,**

 **he is seated at the right hand of the Father,**

 **and he will come 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.**

\*Prayers of Intercession

Trusting in God’s promise to reconcile all things, let us pray for the church, the well-being of creation, and a world in need.

Gracious God, your love unites. Give vision to the global church and foster cooperation in mission. Increase inter-religious understanding and ecumenical dialog. Make your church a sanctuary for all fleeing persecution, disaster, and war. Hear us, O God. **Your mercy is great.**

Creating God, your love enlivens. Restore balance to the earth’s fragile habitats. Preserve wilderness lands, rainforests, and wildlife. Cleanse oceans and rivers. Make us good stewards of the earth. Hear us, O God. **Your mercy is great.**

Righteous God, your love liberates. We give thanks for those who courageously witness to your liberating love. Hear us, O God. **Your mercy is great.**

Merciful God, your love heals. Care tenderly for all whose loved ones perished from pandemic disease in every nation. Strengthen health care workers, first responders, and caregivers. Relieve all who live with chronic illness and pain. Hear us, O God. **Your mercy is great.**

Incarnate God, your love enlightens. Open our hearts and minds to fresh understandings of our faith. Deepen our love for you and for one another. Teach us to pray for our enemies. Hear us, O God. **Your mercy is great.**

Abiding God, your love saves. Those who died in the faith are made alive in Christ. We give thanks for your promise that we also will be raised to newness of life. Hear us, O God. **Your mercy is great.**

Accompany us on our journey, God of grace, and receive the prayers of our hearts, through Jesus Christ, our Savior. **Amen.**

\*Sharing of the Peace

The peace of the risen Christ be with you always! **And Also with you.**

Music Interlude *Give To Our God Immortal Praise* (John Keys)

\*Great Thanksgiving

The Lord be with you.

**And also with you.**

Lift up your hearts.

**We lift them to the Lord.**

Let us give thanks to the Lord our God.

**It is right to give our thanks and praise.**

It is indeed right, our duty and our joy,

that we should at all times and in all places

give thanks and praise to you, almighty and merciful God,

through our Savior Jesus Christ.

You call your people to cleanse their hearts

and prepare with joy for the paschal feast,

that, renewed in the gift of baptism,

we may come to the fullness of your grace.

And so, with all the choirs of angels,

with the church on earth and the hosts of heaven,

we praise your name and join their unending hymn:

**Holy, Holy, holy, lord god of power and might**

**Heave and earth are full of your glory**

**Hosanna, Hosanna, Hosanna in the highest.**

**Blessed is he who comes in the name of the lord.**

**Hosanna in the highest.**

\*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**

 **\*Our Father in heaven,**

 **hallowed be your name,**

 **your kingdom come,**

 **your will be done,**

 **on earth as 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.**

\*Invitation to Communion

Bread for the journey.

A feast for hungry hearts. Come! **Thanks be to God!**

Communion

Music Interlude  *What Wondrous Love is This* (JGauen)

\*Prayer after Communion

Generous God,

at this table we have tasted your immeasurable grace.

As grains of wheat are gathered into one bread,

now make us one loaf to feed the world;

in the name of Jesus, the Bread of life. **Amen.**

\*Blessing

Beloved,

we are God’s own people,

holy, washed, renewed.

God bless you and keep you,

shower you with mercy,

fill you with courage,

and ☩ give you peace. **Amen.**

\*Sending Hymn *When I Survey the Wondrous Cross* (John Keys) ELW# 803 *There is a very short intro before the first verse of the hymn begins*

Dismissal

Go in peace. Share your bread.

**Thanks be to God!**

Postlude *Amazing Grace, How Sweet the Sound* (Haden Plays Organ)

Praying Together

**... for those who are homebound, ill, hospitalized or recuperating:** Gayle Agg, Nora Beach, Sheena Cameron, Bruce Constant, Christina Copeland, Barbara Fossa, Ken Frajter, Donna Franz, Barb Gaglione, Michelle Garnett, Rosa Garnett, Dylan King, Elaine Knerem, Jason Lanese, Barbara Mingee, Matthew Morrissey, Phyllis Nemeth, Jean Rusher, Arlene Stoltz, Gwen Susanek, Barb Toth, Phyllis Welker, Maud Wright, Wilma Dancy, Bill Helmick, Nancy Helmick, Robert Lambrecht, Laura Mele, Judy Morgan, Kris Sandor, Bill Wilkens, Lois Williams, Eugene Winfrey, the Copeland/Lane Family.

**LAST WEEK**

 General Fund receipts for week ending 3/3/2024: $1677.

*To the glory of God and in loving memory of Carolyn Frajter:* a memorial was given by Claudia & Steve Senderak