

ZION LUTHERAN CHURCH PEMBROKE

ASH WEDNESDAY

Wednesday March 5 2025

Introduction to the day

On Ash Wednesday we begin our forty-day journey toward Easter with a day of fasting and repentance. Marking our foreheads with dust, we acknowledge that we die and return to the earth. At the same time, the dust traces the life-giving cross indelibly marked on our foreheads at baptism. While we journey through Lent to return to God, we have already been reconciled to God through Christ. We humbly pray for God to make our hearts clean while we rejoice that “now is the day of salvation.” Returning to our baptismal call, we more intentionally bear the fruits of mercy and justice in the world.

WE GATHER IN SILENCE

GATHERING HYMN *The Glory of These Forty Days* (ELW 320)

1 The glory of these forty days
we celebrate with songs of praise;
for Christ, through whom all things were made,
himself has fasted and has prayed.

2 Alone and fasting Moses saw
the loving God who gave the law;
and to Elijah, fasting, came
the steeds and chariots of flame.

3 So Daniel trained his mystic sight,
delivered from the lions' might;
and John, the Bridegroom's friend, became
the herald of Messiah's name.

4 Then grant, O God, that we may, too,
return in fast and prayer to you.
Our spirits strengthen with your grace,
and give us joy to see your face.

Text: Latin hymn, 11th cent.; tr. Maurice F. Bell, 1862–1947, alt. Outside USA: Tr. from The English Hymnal, © Oxford University Press 1906. All rights reserved.
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GREETING (ELW p. 251)

The Lord be with you.

And also with you.

PRAYER OF THE DAY (ELW p. 251)

Let us pray.

Almighty and ever-living God, you hate nothing you have made, and you forgive the sins of all who are penitent. Create in us new and honest hearts, so that, truly repenting of our sins, we may receive from you, the God of all mercy, full pardon and forgiveness through your Son, Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever.

Amen.

MEN'S CHOIR - 'Forty Days and Forty Nights'

by Smyttan, Herbst, and Monk

FIRST READING: Joel 2:1-2, 12-17

A reading from Joel.

¹Blow the trumpet in Zion; sound the alarm on my holy mountain! Let all the inhabitants of the land tremble, for the day of the Lord is coming, it is near—²a day of darkness and gloom, a day of clouds and thick darkness! Like blackness spread upon the mountains a great and powerful army comes; their like has never been from of old, nor will be again after them in ages to come.

¹²Yet even now, says the Lord, return to me with all your heart, with fasting, with weeping, and with mourning; ¹³rend your hearts and not your clothing. Return to the Lord, your God, for he is gracious and merciful, slow to anger, and abounding in steadfast love, and relents from punishing. ¹⁴Who knows whether he will not turn and relent, and leave a blessing behind him, a grain offering and a drink offering for the Lord, your God? ¹⁵Blow the trumpet in Zion; sanctify a fast; call a solemn assembly; ¹⁶gather the people. Sanctify the congregation; assemble the aged; gather the children, even infants at the breast. Let the bridegroom leave his room, and the bride her canopy.

¹⁷Between the vestibule and the altar let the priests, the ministers of the Lord, weep. Let them say, "Spare your people, O Lord, and do not make your heritage a mockery, a byword among the nations. Why should it be said among the peoples, 'Where is their God?'"

Word of God, word of life.

Thanks be to God.

PSALM: Psalm 51:1-17

¹Have mercy on me, O God, according to your steadfast love;in your great compassion blot out my offenses.

²**Wash me through and through from my wickedness,and cleanse me from my sin.**

³For I know my offenses,and my sin is ever before me.

⁴**Against you only have I sinned and done what is evil in your sight;so you are justified when you speak and right in your judgment.**

⁵Indeed, I was born steeped in wickedness,a sinner from my mother's womb.

⁶**Indeed, you delight in truth deep within me,and would have me know wisdom deep within.**

⁷Remove my sins with hyssop, and I shall be clean;wash me, and I shall be purer than snow.

⁸**Let me hear joy and gladness;that the body you have broken may rejoice.**

⁹Hide your face from my sins, and blot out all my wickedness.

¹⁰**Create in me a clean heart, O God, and renew a right spirit within me.**

¹¹Cast me not away from your presence, and take not your Holy Spirit from me.

¹²**Restore to me the joy of your salvation and sustain me with your bountiful Spirit.**

¹³Let me teach your ways to offenders,and sinners shall be restored to you.

¹⁴**Rescue me from bloodshed, O God of my salvation,and my tongue shall sing of your righteousness.**

¹⁵O Lord, open my lips,and my mouth shall proclaim your praise.

¹⁶**For you take no delight in sacrifice, or I would give it.You are not pleased with burnt offering.**

¹⁷The sacrifice of God is a troubled spirit;a troubled and broken heart, O God, you will not despise.

SECOND READING: 2 Corinthians 5:20b-6:10

A reading from 2 Corinthians.

^{20b}We entreat you on behalf of Christ, be reconciled to God. ²¹For our sake he made him to be sin who knew no sin, so that in him we might become the righteousness of God.

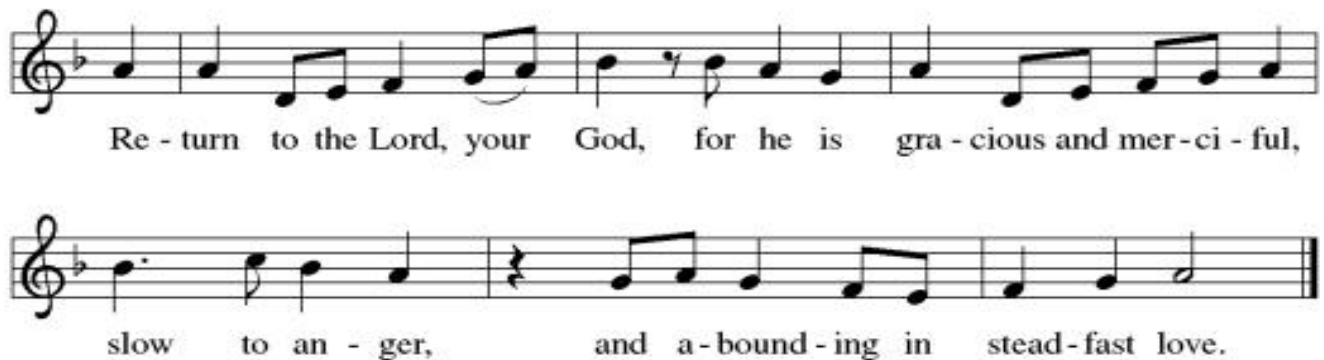
^{6:1}As we work together with him, we urge you also not to accept the grace of God in vain. ²For he says, "At an acceptable time I have listened to you,and on a day of salvation I have helped you."

See, now is the acceptable time; see, now is the day of salvation! ³We are putting no obstacle in anyone's way, so that no fault may be found with our ministry, ⁴but as servants of God we have commended ourselves in every way: through great endurance, in afflictions, hardships, calamities, ⁵beatings, imprisonments, riots, labors, sleepless nights, hunger; ⁶by purity, knowledge, patience, kindness, holiness of spirit, genuine love, ⁷truthful speech, and the power of God; with the weapons of righteousness for the right hand and for the left; ⁸in honor and dishonor, in ill repute and good repute. We are treated as impostors, and yet are true; ⁹as unknown, and yet are well known; as dying, and see—we are alive; as punished, and yet not killed; ¹⁰as sorrowful, yet always rejoicing; as poor, yet making many rich; as having nothing, and yet possessing everything.

Word of God, word of life.

Thanks be to God.

GOSPEL ACCLAMATION (ELW p. 151) *Return To The Lord, Your God*



GOSPEL: Matthew 6:1-6, 16-21

The holy gospel according to Matthew.

Glory to you, O Lord.

[Jesus said to the disciples:] ¹“Beware of practicing your piety before others in order to be seen by them; for then you have no reward from your Father in heaven.

²“So whenever you give alms, do not sound a trumpet before you, as the hypocrites do in the synagogues and in the streets, so that they may be praised by others. Truly I tell you, they have received their reward. ³But when you give alms, do not let your left hand know what your right hand is doing, ⁴so that your alms may be done in secret; and your Father who sees in secret will reward you. ⁵“And whenever you pray, do not be like the hypocrites; for they

love to stand and pray in the synagogues and at the street corners, so that they may be seen by others. Truly I tell you, they have received their reward. ⁶But whenever you pray, go into your room and shut the door and pray to your Father who is in secret; and your Father who sees in secret will reward you.

¹⁶“And whenever you fast, do not look dismal, like the hypocrites, for they disfigure their faces so as to show others that they are fasting. Truly I tell you, they have received their reward. ¹⁷But when you fast, put oil on your head and wash your face, ¹⁸so that your fasting may be seen not by others but by your Father who is in secret; and your Father who sees in secret will reward you.

¹⁹“Do not store up for yourselves treasures on earth, where moth and rust consume and where thieves break in and steal; ²⁰but store up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust consumes and where thieves do not break in and steal. ²¹For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also.”

The gospel of the Lord.

Praise to you, O Christ.

SERMON (ELW p. 252)

HYMN OF THE DAY *Restore in Us, O God (BAYLOR) (ELW 328)*

1 Restore in us, O God,
the splendor of your love;
renew your image in our hearts,
and all our sins remove.

3 Bring us, O Christ, to share
the fullness of your joy;
baptize us in the risen life
that death cannot destroy.

2 O Spirit, wake in us
the wonder of your pow'r;
from fruitless fear unfurl our lives
like springtime bud and flow'r.

4 Three-personed God, fulfill
the promise of your grace,
that we, when all our searching ends,
may see you face to face.

Text: Carl P. Daw Jr., b. 1944. Text © 1989 Hope Publishing Company. All rights reserved. Used by permission: One License #A-728050.

INVITATION TO LENT (ELW p. 252)

Friends in Christ, today with the whole church we enter the time of remembering Jesus' Passover from death to life, and our life in Christ is renewed.

We begin this holy season by acknowledging our need for repentance and for God's mercy. We are created to experience joy in communion with God, to love

one another, and to live in harmony with creation. But our sinful rebellion separates us from God, our neighbors, and creation, so that we do not enjoy the life our creator intended. As disciples of Jesus, we are called to a discipline that contends against evil and resists whatever leads us away from love of God and neighbor. I invite you, therefore, to the discipline of Lent—self-examination and repentance, prayer and fasting, sacrificial giving and works of love—strengthened by the gifts of word and sacrament. Let us continue our journey through these forty days to the great Three Days of Jesus’ death and resurrection.

CONFESSION OF SIN (ELW p. 252)

Let us confess our sin in the presence of God and of one another.

Most holy and merciful God,

**we confess to you and to one another,
and before the whole company of heaven,
that we have sinned by our fault,
by our own fault,
by our own most grievous fault,
in thought, word, and deed,
by what we have done and by what we have left undone.**

We have not loved you with our whole heart, and mind, and strength. We have not loved our neighbors as ourselves. We have not forgiven others as we have been forgiven.

Have mercy on us, O God.

We have shut our ears to your call to serve as Christ served us. We have not been true to the mind of Christ. We have grieved your Holy Spirit.

Have mercy on us, O God.

Our past unfaithfulness, the pride, envy, hypocrisy, and apathy that have infected our lives, we confess to you.

Have mercy on us, O God.

Our self-indulgent appetites and ways, and our exploitation of other people, we confess to you.

Have mercy on us, O God.

Our negligence in prayer and worship, and our failure to share the faith that is in us, we confess to you.

Have mercy on us, O God.

Our neglect of human need and suffering, and our indifference to injustice and cruelty, we confess to you.

Have mercy on us, O God.

Our false judgments, our uncharitable thoughts toward our neighbors, and our prejudice and contempt toward those who differ from us, we confess to you.

Have mercy on us, O God.

Our waste and pollution of your creation, and our lack of concern for those who come after us, we confess to you.

Have mercy on us, O God.

Restore us, O God, and let your anger depart from us.

Hear us, O God, for your mercy is great.

MEN'S CHOIR - 'Remember That You Are Dust'

text is Ash Wednesday liturgy, with music by Mark Mummert

IMPOSITION OF ASHES (ELW p. 254)

Almighty God, you have created us out of the dust of the earth.

May these ashes be a sign of our mortality and penitence, reminding us that only by the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ are we given eternal life; through the same Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord.

Amen.

Remember that you are dust, and to dust you shall return.

Accomplish in us, O God, the work of your salvation,

that we may show forth your glory in the world.

By the cross and passion of your Son, our Savior,

bring us with all your saints to the joy of his resurrection.

Almighty God have mercy on us, forgive us all our sins through our Lord Jesus Christ, strengthen us in all goodness, and by the power of the Holy Spirit keep us in eternal life.

Amen.

PRAYERS OF INTERCESSION

Sustained by God's abundant mercy, let us pray for the church, the world, and all of creation.

O Lord, our God, you gather your church and call us to return to you.

Accompany us throughout our Lenten pilgrimage. Create in us clean hearts and renew all the baptized to declare your praise. Merciful God,
receive our prayer.

Renew your creation, O God. Bring rains to parched places and heal lands affected by a changing climate that all inhabitants of the earth experience your abundance. Merciful God,
receive our prayer.

Renew the nations, O God. Give voice to those on the margins and resolve to world leaders who seek to protect those most vulnerable. Loosen the bonds of injustice and bring an end to all violence, oppression, and persecution. Merciful God,
receive our prayer.

Renew your people, O God. Respond to those who cry out to you in secret or in seclusion. Equip us with compassion to care for those who experience homelessness, food insecurity, economic hardship, and illness (*especially Jason, Martha, Ella, Rhonda, Heather, Anneliese, Joan, Judy, Larry, Garnet, Betty, Lily, Karl, Elva, Clarence, Eva, Barbara, Inge, Marcella, Patricia, Amy, Edie, Otilia, Kirk, Joan, David, Gwen, Don, Jeanette, James*). Merciful God,
receive our prayer.

Renew this congregation, O God. Inspire our faith formation ministries and those who teach and lead. Invigorate us with lifelong curiosity and wonder as we grow as your disciples. Merciful God,
receive our prayer.

O Lord, our God, we give thanks for all your faithful ones of every time and place. Renew us by the example of their lives of prayer and service, and at the last, bring us with them into your everlasting presence. Merciful God,
receive our prayer.

We lift our prayers to you, O God, trusting in your steadfast love and your promise to renew your whole creation; through Jesus Christ our Savior.
Amen.

OFFERING *We Place upon Your Table, Lord* (ELW 467 vs 1 & 3)

1 We place upon your table, Lord,
where you by grace have bid us dine,
these tokens of our daily work,
the food of life, the bread and wine.

3 Accept them, Lord; they come from you;
we take them humbly from your hand;
put these your gifts to higher use:
the holy meal that you command.

Text: M. F. C. Wilson, 1884–1944, alt. Text: Public Domain

OFFERING PRAYER

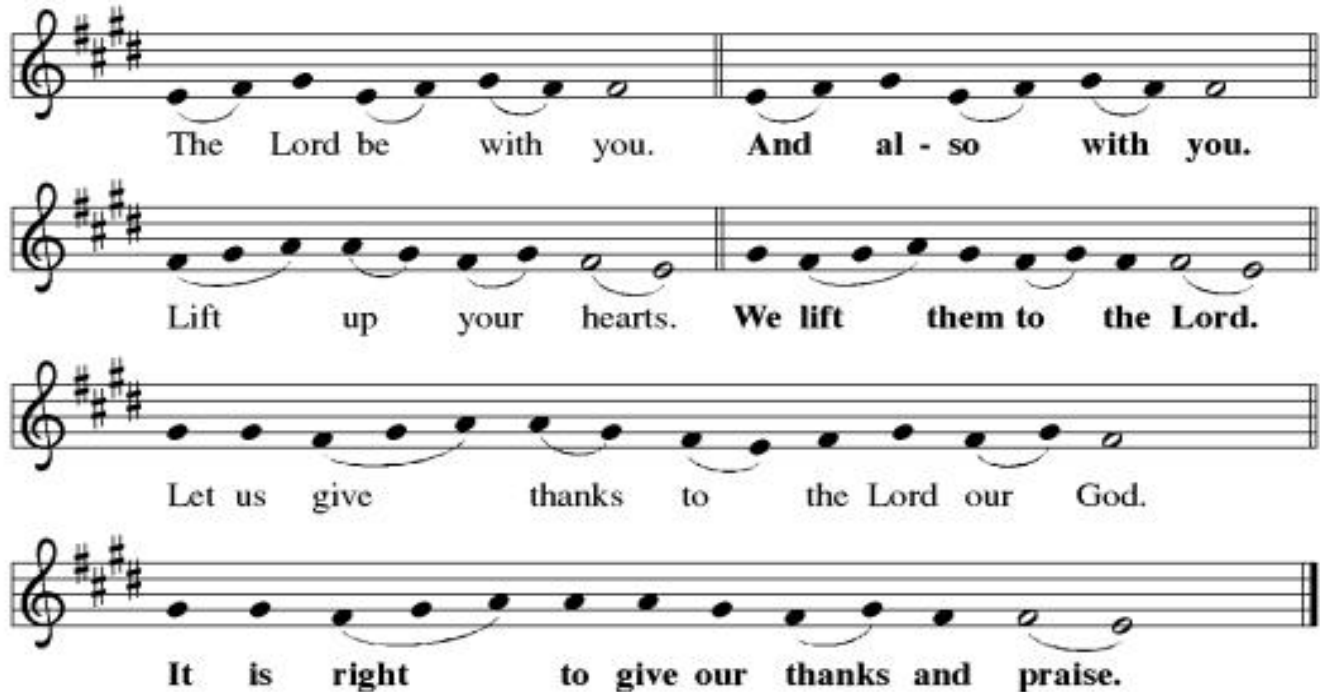
Let us pray.

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.

Amen.

GREAT THANKSGIVING (p152)

DIALOGUE



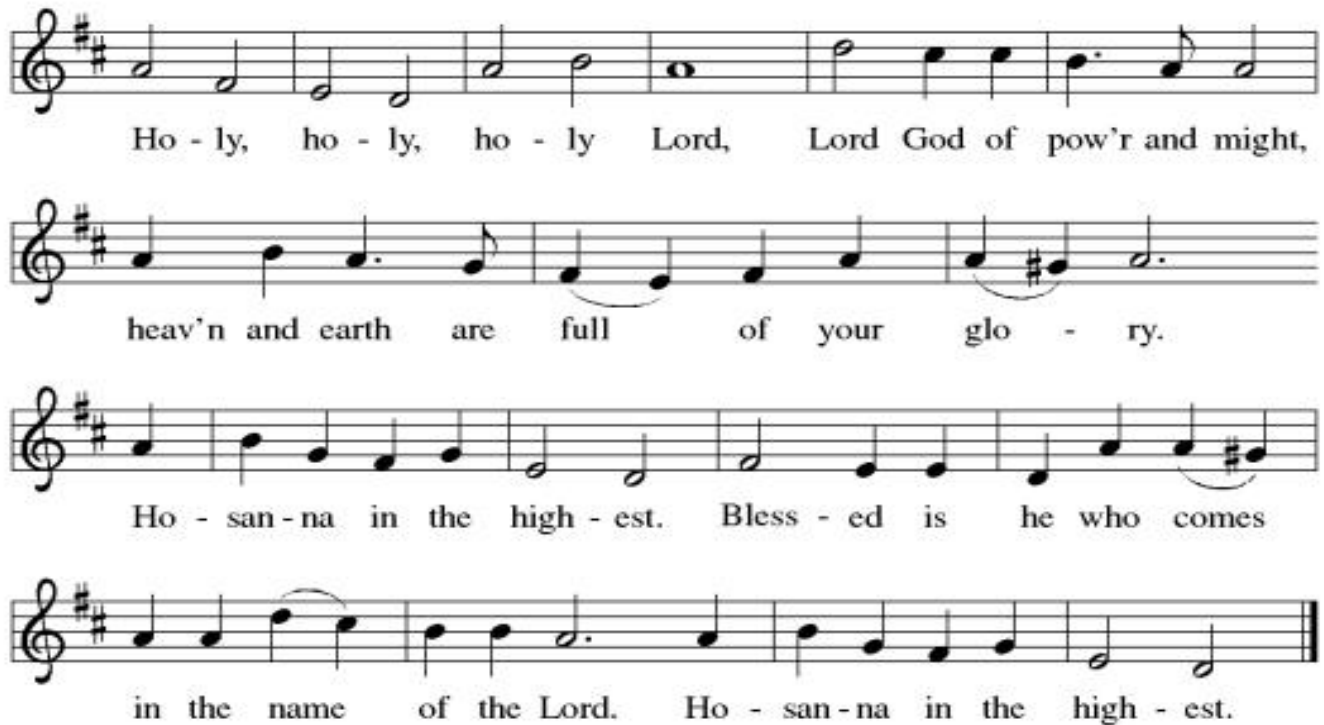
PREFACE

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



THANKSGIVING AT THE TABLE

You are indeed holy, almighty and merciful God.
You are most holy,
and great is the majesty of your glory.

You so loved the world that you gave your only Son,
so that everyone who believes in him may not perish
but have eternal life.

We give you thanks for his coming into the world
to fulfill for us your holy will
and to accomplish all things for our salvation.

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.

For as often as we eat of this bread and drink from this cup,
we proclaim the Lord's death until he comes.
Remembering, therefore, his salutary command,
his life-giving passion and death, his glorious resurrection and ascension,
and the promise of his coming again,
we give thanks to you, O Lord God Almighty,
not as we ought but as we are able;
we ask you mercifully to accept our praise and thanksgiving
and with your Word and Holy Spirit to bless us, your servants,
and these your own gifts of bread and wine,
so that we and all who share in the body and blood of Christ
may be filled with heavenly blessing and grace,
and, receiving the forgiveness of sin,
may be formed to live as your holy people
and be given our inheritance with all your saints.

To you, O God, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit,
be all honor and glory in your holy church, now and forever.

LORD'S PRAYER (ELW p. 112)

Gathered into one by the Holy Spirit, let us pray as Jesus taught us.

**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 (ELW p. 112)

Come to the banquet, for all is now ready.

COMMUNION (ELW p. 112)

The body of Christ, given for you.

The blood of Christ, shed for you.

Amen.

COMMUNION SONG (p154)

Lamb of God, you take away the sin of the world; have mercy on us.

Lamb of God, you take away the sin of the world; have mercy on us.

Lamb of God, you take away the sin of the world; grant us peace, grant us peace.

DISTRIBUTION HYMN *Create in Me a Clean Heart* (Freylinghausen) (ELW 188)

Create in me a clean heart, O God,
and renew a right spirit within me.

Cast me not away from your presence,
and take not your Holy Spirit from me.

Restore unto me the joy of your salvation,
and uphold me with your free Spirit.

Scriptural Reference: Psalm 51: 10-12. Text: Public Domain.

DISTRIBUTION HYMN *Softly and Tenderly Jesus Is Calling* (ELW 608)

1 Softly and tenderly Jesus is calling,
calling for you and for me.

See, on the portals he's waiting and watching,
watching for you and for me.

Refrain

"Come home, (Come home,
come home! (come home!)

You who are weary, come home."

Earnestly, tenderly, Jesus is calling,
calling, "O sinner, come home!"

2 Why should we tarry when Jesus is pleading,
pleading for you and for me?

Why should we linger and heed not his mercies,
mercies for you and for me? **Refrain**

3 Oh, for the wonderful love he has promised,
promised for you and for me!
Though we have sinned, he has mercy and pardon,
pardon for you and for me. **Refrain**

Text: Will L. Thompson, 1847-1909. Text: Public Domain.

PRAYER (ELW p. 254)

Let us pray.

Merciful God, accompany our journey through these forty days. Renew us in the gift of baptism, that we may provide for those who are poor, pray for those in need, fast from self-indulgence, and above all that we may find our treasure in the life of your Son, Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever.

Amen.

BLESSING (ELW p. 255)

Almighty God, Father, ✠ Son, and Holy Spirit, bless you now and forever.

Amen.

SENDING HYMN *Savior, When in Dust to You* (ELW 601)

1 Savior, when in dust to you
low we bow in homage due;
when, repentant, to the skies
scarce we lift our weeping eyes;
oh, by all your pains and woe
suffered once for us below,
bending from your throne on high,
hear our penitential cry!

2 By your helpless infant years,
by your life of want and tears,
by your days of deep distress
in the savage wilderness,
by the dread, mysterious hour
of the insulting tempter's pow'r,
turn, oh, turn a fav'ring eye;
hear our penitential cry!

3 By your hour of dire despair,
by your agony of prayer,
by the cross, the nail, the thorn,
piercing spear, and torturing scorn,
by the gloom that veiled the skies
o'er the dreadful sacrifice,
listen to our humble sigh;
hear our penitential cry!

4 By your deep expiring groan,
by the sad sepulchral stone,
by the vault whose dark abode
held in vain the rising God,
oh, from earth to heav'n restored,
mighty, reascended Lord,
bending from your throne on high,
hear our penitential cry!

Text: Robert Grant, 1779-1838, alt. Text: Public Domain.

DISMISSAL (ELW p. 255)

Go forth into the world to serve God with gladness;
be of good courage;
hold fast to that which is good;
render to no one evil for evil;
strengthen the fainthearted; support the weak;
help the afflicted; honor all people;
love and serve God, rejoicing in the power of the Holy Spirit.
Thanks be to God.

EVERYONE LEAVES IN SILENCE

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