

March 21, 2021 – Lent 5

Prelude

Introduction to the Day

God promises Jeremiah that a “new covenant” will be made in the future: a covenant that will allow all the people to know God by heart. The church sees this promise fulfilled in Christ, who draws all people to himself when he is lifted up on the cross. Our baptismal covenant draws us to God’s heart through Christ and draws God’s love and truth into our hearts. We join together in worship, sharing in word, song, and meal, and leave strengthened to share God’s love with all the world.

GATHERING

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

CALL TO WORSHIP

Jesus said, “When I am lifted up, I will draw all people to myself

Blessed be the God of our salvation

who bears our burdens and forgives our sins.

COME LET US WORSHIP

Call to Confession

Let us pray for the cleansing of our hearts, confessing our sins to the One whose mercy is everlasting.

Prayer of Confession- ALL

Redeeming God, we confess that we have not loved you with our whole heart, and have not loved our neighbours as we ought; we have strayed from your commandments Do not remember our sins, but forgive our iniquities, that we may fix our eyes on you and sin no more, through Christ our Lord. Amen.

P: Declaration of Forgiveness

Sisters and brothers, by the faith of Christ, your sins are forgiven.

May you delight in the joy of your salvation.

GATHERING SONG - ELW #769 - *"If You But Trust in God to Guide You"*

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.**

KYRIE - *Page 138*

In peace, let us pray to the Lord.

Lord, have mercy.

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

Lord, have mercy.

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 mercy.

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

Lord, have mercy.

Help, save, comfort, and defend us, gracious Lord.

Lord, have mercy.

PRAYER OF THE DAY

Let us pray.

O God, with steadfast love you draw us to yourself, and in mercy you receive our prayers. Strengthen us to bring forth the fruits of the Spirit, that through life and death we may live in your Son, 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: Jeremiah 31:31-34

A reading from Jeremiah.

³¹The days are surely coming, says the LORD, when I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel and the house of Judah. ³²It will not be like the covenant that I made with their ancestors when I took them by the hand to bring them out of the land of Egypt—a covenant that they broke, though I was their husband, says the LORD. ³³But this is the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel after those days, says the LORD: I will put my law within them, and I will write it on their hearts; and I will be their God, and they shall be my people. ³⁴No longer shall they teach one another, or say to

each other, "Know the LORD," for they shall all know me, from the least of them to the greatest, says the LORD; for I will forgive their iniquity, and remember their sin no more.

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

PSALM: Psalm 51:1-12

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.**

SECOND READING: Hebrews 5:5-10

A reading from Hebrews.

⁵Christ did not glorify himself in becoming a high priest, but was appointed by the one who said to him,

"You are my Son, today I have begotten you"; ⁶as he says also in another

place, “You are a priest forever, according to the order of Melchizedek.” ⁷In the days of his flesh, Jesus offered up prayers and supplications, with loud cries and tears, to the one who was able to save him from death, and he was heard because of his reverent submission. ⁸Although he was a Son, he learned obedience through what he suffered; ⁹and having been made perfect, he became the source of eternal salvation for all who obey him, ¹⁰having been designated by God a high priest according to the order of Melchizedek.

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

GOSPEL ACCLAMATION – Page 142 - Recited by All
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 12:20-33

The holy gospel according to John. **Glory to you, O Lord.**

²⁰Now among those who went up to worship at the festival were some Greeks. ²¹They came to Philip, who was from Bethsaida in Galilee, and said to him, “Sir, we wish to see Jesus.” ²²Philip went and told Andrew; then Andrew and Philip went and told Jesus. ²³Jesus answered them, “The hour has come for the Son of Man to be glorified. ²⁴Very truly, I tell you, unless a grain of wheat falls into the earth and dies, it remains just a single grain; but if it dies, it bears much fruit. ²⁵Those who love their life lose it, and those who hate their life in this world will keep it for eternal life. ²⁶Whoever serves me must follow me, and where I am, there will my servant be also. Whoever serves me, the Father will honor. ²⁷“Now my soul is troubled. And what should I say—‘Father, save me from this hour’? No, it is for this reason that I have come to this hour. ²⁸Father, glorify your name.” Then a voice came from heaven, “I have glorified it, and I will glorify it again.” ²⁹The crowd standing there heard it and said that it was thunder. Others said, “An angel has spoken to him.” ³⁰Jesus answered, “This voice has come for your sake, not for mine. ³¹Now is the judgment of this world; now the ruler of this world will be driven out. ³²And I, when I am lifted up from the earth, will draw all people to myself.” ³³He said this to indicate the kind of death he was to die. The gospel of the Lord. **Praise to you, O Christ.**

GOSPEL MESSAGE –

Today is the Fifth Sunday of Lent, which means that our Lenten journey is now moving into Holy Week. The Lenten season is one of the most significant and challenging periods of the Christian calendar. That is why Lent is often referred to as a journey. The journey is about the trials of living as Jesus' disciples and reflecting on our discipleship. Today Jesus informs us that a renewed life must go through transformation, just as a seed that falls to the ground must die in order to bear fruit. This is a message of radical change, a commitment to the gospel Jesus proclaimed that somehow reveals his dying and rising again in how we love and serve our neighbour. It is a call to discipleship that replaces *death* with *life!*

I had the opportunity to attend the stations of the Cross that was held here a few weeks ago and hosted by the Zion Women's Group. It brought back memories of my returning to church and where my faith journey began about twenty-three years ago when I returned to an active church life. Much like the two Greeks in our gospel message today, I was purposefully looking to learn more about Jesus and my faith traditions.

The church I was attending put on an elaborate "Stations of the Cross" presentation during Holy Week. The congregation transformed their sanctuary into the streets of Jerusalem. As we entered the sanctuary it was like being transported back to the time of Jesus. The space was filled with the sounds of the streets, and the crowds gathering along the sides of the road as Jesus was forced to carry his own cross to Calvary while Roman soldiers were taunting him. We weaved our way through streets of Jerusalem and as we reached each station of the cross, we were able to sit down. There we were presented with a brief description of the scene and a prayer we could meditate with. It was an experience that we were able to take in with all of our senses.

They had incense burning somewhere; there were people dressed in period costume bustling about, people shouting to each other, street vendors trying to get our attention to buy their fruit and vegetables. The shouting of the Roman soldiers tormenting and ridiculing Jesus, and the sound of the cross being dragged by Jesus along the rough streets were piped in through the sound system. We were truly transported in space and time.

Walking the Stations of the Cross, experiencing something in real time, left an indelible impression on me. Approaching the station of the crucifixion, we heard the sounds of women crying and lamenting, the smell of burning incense, all made the scene a sensory and visual experience. As I got closer, I saw the wooden cross; there was a black cloth draped over it to symbolize the crucified Jesus. I stood there taking in the sounds, the smell of smoke, and being filled with a sense of standing there with Jesus and understanding his pain, I read the prayer, and such a feeling came over me that I had to sit down.

I don't think I heard a voice, or a crack of thunder as those in the crowd of today's Gospel, but I do know something made me realize that whatever was troubling me in my journey of faith, I could leave it here at the cross, and that Jesus had lifted my burdens from me.

Today's Gospel tells us of the two Greeks who had come to Jerusalem with a desire to meet with Jesus, not just to see him but to meet him in order to better understand him and question if there was anything in his proclamation for them; for Gentiles and Greeks were not named God's chosen people before Jesus.

Jesus responds with these words:

“Unless a grain of wheat falls into the earth and dies, it remains just a single grain; but if it dies, it bears much fruit. Those who love their life lose it, and those who hate their life in this world will keep it for eternal life. Whoever serves me must follow me, and where I am, there will my servant be also.” This is Jesus' answer to all who would “see” him; all who are drawn to him by the power of his proclamation; all who question their chosen-ness; all who hear the call to discipleship...and wonder.

Like Peter, there is a temptation for us to resist Jesus' extreme call to discipleship; to want to skip over the significance of his suffering and death and get to resurrection. So it is no coincidence that so many of the Sundays in Lent point us towards Holy Week and remind us that, as those who would “see” Jesus, as those who would follow Jesus, our resistance to the radical call of the gospel must die for there to be transformation and new life.

knew, once I heard Jesus' call as I walked the Stations of the Cross twenty-three years ago that there would be a cost to my discipleship, but, I knew, "I could leave my troubles, my misgivings, my uncertainty with Jesus; that my burdens were lifted." At the time I never imagined that answering Jesus' call would happen ten years later and to include attending seminary, spending long periods away from my family, and changing the whole direction of my life. Many of these things could be likened to the grain of wheat dying and falling into the earth.

But already, there has been new life and deep blessing, as I have begun to understand more fully how God's love in Jesus Christ embraces the deep needs of the world; and how ministry and discipleship, and love and serving our neighbour draws us close to Jesus and his love. My story is really the story of all who answer Jesus' call to follow him. Discipleship is the call and, as we hear in today's Gospel about even Greeks being welcomed by Jesus, the call is for everyone. The call to discipleship doesn't usually lead to studying for the ministry of word and sacrament, but, as I discovered, it could! Jesus calls us to discipleship each in our own way. As we walk with him, we also follow him. Amen.

HYMN OF THE DAY – ELW #335 – *“Jesus, Keep Me Near the Cross”*

PRAYERS OF INTERCESSION

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

A brief silence.

You wash us through and through and remember our sin no more. Make your church a community of forgiveness throughout the world. Give your people courage to forgive; through them show the world new possibilities. Bless ministries of repentance and reconciliation. Hear us, O God. **Your mercy is great.**

You fill the earth—from tiny grains of wheat to the mighty thunder—with your presence, and you call us to attend to your will for all creation. Grant weather that prepares the soil for seeds; protect all from violent storms, flooding, and wildfires (*especially*). Hear us, O God. **Your mercy is great.**

You promise to write your law on our hearts. Guide citizens throughout the world to shape communities that reflect your mercy, justice, and peace, and give them creativity to work for the welfare of all. Hear us, O God. **Your mercy is great.**

You sustain us with your bountiful Spirit. Restore the joy of all who need to know your presence: those who are lonely or feel unforgivable, those who need healing of mind or body, those who are dying, and all who grieve. We pray for Florence, Jason, Richard, Sheila, Albert, Addrienne, Robert, Dorian. Hear us, O God. **Your mercy is great.**

Jesus calls us to follow him in life and death. Empower this congregation in discipleship. Equip children and teachers in Sunday school, confirmation, and learning ministries. Give us your truth and wisdom and teach us to follow Jesus. Hear us, O God. **Your mercy is great.**

Here other intercessions may be offered.

In the cross of Christ, your name is glorified. We praise you for those who have given us words to worship you. With all those who have died in Christ, bring us into life everlasting. 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.**

MEAL

God feeds us with the presence of Jesus Christ.

INVITATION TO THE OFFERING

As we anticipate the transformation already begun within us, as we look toward being made perfect in god's holy love, let us respond in the joy of our salvation and in the hope of God's covenant people.

OFFERING PRAYER (ALL)

Let us pray.

As we give our gifts and tithes today we recommit ourselves to your service and to the service of your people. May we do so in response to your unending call that beckons us and leads us home. We pray as followers of the glorified Christ. Amen.

Music As the Table is Prepared

THE 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.

PREFACE

P. It is indeed right...we praise your name and join in their unending worship:

HOLY, HOLY, HOLY

Holy, holy, holy Lord,

God of pow'r and might,

heaven 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

Pastor prays the Eucharistic Prayer, ending with the Lord's Prayer.

Lamb of God – *Page 146*

Communion is received while you remain in your pews.

MUSIC DURING COMMUNION

PRAYER AFTER COMMUNION (*Assistant*)

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.

Amen.

BLESSING AND SENDING

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

BLESSING

May God, whose hand has written the law of love upon your heart,

Jer. 31:33

fill you with peace from deep within and the commitment to live in harmony.

And the blessing of God, who loves, forgives, and calls us home,

be with you now and always. **Amen.**

SENDING SONG - ELW #329 – *“As the Sun with Longer Journey”*

DISMISSAL

Go in peace. Christ is with you.

Thanks be to God.

Postlude

From sundaysandseasons.com.

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Questions for Reflection

God is at work offering forgiveness, showing mercy, and giving knowledge of life, death, and salvation.

Where is God enacting that new life within or around you?

What in your life must die so that you may flourish?

What must fall away so that you can rise again in Christ?

News and Announcements:

Please Pray for Those Who are Ill, in Hospital, or Requested Special

Prayers: Florence Felske, Jason Godin, Richard Hubert, Sheila Purdy, Albert Reiche, Addrienne Schroeder, Robert Schoof, Dorian Verch.

SERVICE BROADCAST ON COGECO

Cogeco Community Channel is now broadcasting Zion's services at 9:00 a.m. and 12 noon on Sunday mornings a week later.

CONFIRMATION CLASS

Confirmation classes have resumed in the fellowship hall after Sunday Worship. The next class will be Sunday, March 28th at 11:30am.

UPDATES FROM CHURCH COUNCIL

Please remember that Pastor Leena is available to all for pastoral care during the next few months. This support may look different than we are accustomed to as she will be following all of the covid restrictions. She can be contacted at 613-631-1082

REGISTERING FOR EASTER SUNDAY SERVICES

At this past week's Worship & Music Committee meeting, it was decided that we will once again have 2 Easter Sunday services – at 8am and 10:30am. Those wishing to attend will need to contact the church office by phone at 613-732-8792, or email at zionoffice@nrtco.net to pre-register (similar to what was done for the Christmas Eve services). We will take pre-registrations until March 29th. The church office is open on Monday, Wednesday and Thursday mornings from 9am until 12 noon to receive your phone calls.

EASTER DONATIONS

Anyone wishing to sponsor an Easter Lily or make any other Easter donations to the following funds (Building, Office, Good Shepherding, etc) is asked to contact the church office. The cost for the Easter lily is \$17.00. The deadline for the Easter lilies is Monday, March 22, 2021, and all other donations is Monday, March 29, 2021. Please note that due to the amount of donation requests received during this busy time, we request that bulletin announcements must be either e-mailed to the church office (zionoffice@nrtco.net), or legibly printed on the donation forms located at the entrances to the sanctuary, and dropped off at the office, or placed on

the offering plate or in the office correspondence mailbox. In this way, your announcement will be placed in the Easter bulletin exactly the way you wish.

HELP FOR ONE OF ZION'S FAMILIES

It is with a caring and prayerful heart that the Social Ministry Committee is appealing to Zion's church family and friends to assist one of our young families.

Jason and Karen Godin, with their children Haley and Lucas are active members here at Zion. Jason is the son-in-law of Cheryl Sack and brother-in-law of Blaine Sack. Jason works as a Commissionaire Barrack Warden at Garrison Petawawa as well as a volunteer firefighter for Petawawa.

Jason recently received a Glioblastoma brain cancer diagnosis - the same type of cancer that Gord Downie battled. Jason will be needing radiation and chemotherapy treatment for this aggressive, incurable type of cancer. With the long road ahead; they could use some assistance as Jason's work benefits will not be enough to cover the many expenses that will be incurred in the foreseeable future. Therefore, we are asking for your help to soften the financial stress. Let us show them our love and support.

You can help with your contribution of cash, cheque or e-transfer.

- Make the cheque payable to Zion Lutheran Church, noting 'Karen and Jason Godin' on the envelope or the memo line. You can drop off the cheque at the church office or mail it to:

Zion Lutheran Church,
454 Miller Street,
Pembroke, ON K8A 5Z4.

******Please note that we will not be able to issue donation receipts for this appeal due to what the CRA refers to as "private benevolence". The CRA does not permit a charitable donation receipt under these circumstances.

- Use your online banking to send an e-transfer to:
["zionoffice@nrtco.net"](mailto:zionoffice@nrtco.net). Passwords are not required as auto deposit is set up. Please indicate that it is for Karen and Jason in the message box.

We pray for God's healing touch.

Thank You and blessings to each of you for your generosity!

**Today's Video Has Been Brought To You By Zion Lutheran Church's
Production Crew:**

Presider: Pastor Leena Jensen

Musician: Blaine Sack

Worship Assistant/Reader: Wayne Kirk

Projectionist: Rick Gerundin

Recorder: Ty Phannenhour

Sound Board Operator: Todd Phannenhour

Credit Researcher: Diane Hammel

Today's Worship Volunteers

Counters: Lisa Campitelli, Karen Gauthier, David Lehman

Sexton: Don Boldt

Ushers: Doug & Pauline Malliff

This Week at Zion – March 22 - 28

Tuesday 7 p.m. Narcotics Anonymous

Wednesday 7 p.m. Lenten Service

Sunday 10 a.m. Palm Sunday Worship Service with Holy Communion

11:30 a.m. Confirmation Class