

Home worship service during time of isolation and social distancing.

The Fourth Sunday in Lent

March 22, 2020

L In the name of the Father and the Son and of the Holy Spirit.

C Amen.

L Holy God, holy and most gracious Father,

C have mercy and hear us.

Introit

Ps. 27:4–6; antiphon: Ps. 25:15

My eyes are ever toward the LORD,
for he will pluck my feet out of the net.

One thing have I asked of the LORD, that will I seek after:

**that I may dwell in the house of the LORD all the days of my life, to gaze upon the beauty of the LORD
and to inquire in his temple.**

For he will hide me in his shelter in the day of trouble;
he will conceal me under the cover of his tent; he will lift me high upon a rock.

**And now my head shall be lifted up above my enemies all around me, and I will offer in his tent
sacrifices with shouts of joy;**

I will sing and make melody to the LORD.

**Glory be to the Father and to the Son
and to the Holy Spirit;**

as it was in the beginning,

is now, and will be forever. Amen.

My eyes are ever toward the LORD,
for he will pluck my feet out of the net.

Kyrie

C Lord, have mercy. Christ, have mercy. Lord, have mercy.

Collect of the Day

L Almighty God, our heavenly Father, Your mercies are new every morning; and though we deserve only punishment, You receive us as Your children and provide for all our needs of body and soul. Grant that we may heartily acknowledge Your merciful goodness, give thanks for all Your benefits, and serve You in willing obedience; through Jesus Christ, Your Son, our Lord, who lives and reigns with You and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever.

C Amen.

Isaiah 42:14-21

¹⁴For a long time I have held my peace;
I have kept still and restrained myself;
now I will cry out like a woman in labor;
I will gasp and pant.

¹⁵I will lay waste mountains and hills,
and dry up all their vegetation;
I will turn the rivers into islands,
and dry up the pools.

¹⁶And I will lead the blind
in a way that they do not know,
in paths that they have not known

I will guide them.
I will turn the darkness before them into light,
the rough places into level ground.
These are the things I do,
and I do not forsake them.
¹⁷They are turned back and utterly put to shame,
who trust in carved idols,
who say to metal images,
“You are our gods.”

¹⁸Hear, you deaf,

and look, you blind, that you may see!
¹⁹Who is blind but my servant,
or deaf as my messenger whom I send?
Who is blind as my dedicated one,
or blind as the servant of the LORD?

²⁰He sees many things, but does not observe
them;
his ears are open, but he does not hear.
²¹The LORD was pleased, for his righteousness'
sake,
to magnify his law and make it glorious.

Gradual

Heb. 12:2

O come, let us fix our eyes on Jesus,
the founder and perfecter of our faith,
who for the joy that was set before him endured the cross, despising the shame,
and is seated at the right hand of the throne of God.

Ephesians 5:8-14

⁸For at one time you were darkness, but now you are light in the Lord. Walk as children of light ⁹(for the fruit of light is found in all that is good and right and true), ¹⁰and try to discern what is pleasing to the Lord.
¹¹Take no part in the unfruitful works of darkness, but instead expose them. ¹²For it is shameful even to speak of the things that they do in secret. ¹³But when anything is exposed by the light, it becomes visible, ¹⁴for anything that becomes visible is light. Therefore it says,
“Awake, O sleeper,
and arise from the dead,
and Christ will shine on you.”

Verse of the Day With you is the fountain of life; in your light do we see light

Ps. 36:9

John 9:1-7, 13-17, 34-39

¹As [Jesus] passed by, he saw a man blind from birth. ²And his disciples asked him, “Rabbi, who sinned, this man or his parents, that he was born blind?” ³Jesus answered, “It was not that this man sinned, or his parents, but that the works of God might be displayed in him. ⁴We must work the works of him who sent me while it is day; night is coming, when no one can work. ⁵As long as I am in the world, I am the light of the world.”

⁶Having said these things, he spat on the ground and made mud with the saliva. Then he anointed the man’s eyes with the mud ⁷and said to him, “Go, wash in the pool of Siloam” (which means Sent). So he went and washed and came back seeing. . .

¹³They brought to the Pharisees the man who had formerly been blind. ¹⁴Now it was a Sabbath day when Jesus made the mud and opened his eyes. ¹⁵So the Pharisees again asked him how he had received his sight. And he said to them, “He put mud on my eyes, and I washed, and I see.” ¹⁶Some of the Pharisees said, “This man is not from God, for he does not keep the Sabbath.” But others said, “How can a man who is a sinner do such signs?” And there was a division among them. ¹⁷So they said again to the blind man, “What do you say about him, since he has opened your eyes?” He said, “He is a prophet.”

³⁴They answered him, “You were born in utter sin, and would you teach us?” And they cast him out.

³⁵Jesus heard that they had cast him out, and having found him he said, “Do you believe in the Son of Man?” ³⁶He answered, “And who is he, sir, that I may believe in him?” ³⁷Jesus said to him, “You have seen him, and it is he who is speaking to you.” ³⁸He said, “Lord, I believe,” and he worshiped him. ³⁹Jesus said, “For judgment I came into this world, that those who do not see may see, and those who see may become blind.”

**☐ I believe in God, the Father Almighty,
maker of heaven and earth.**

**And in Jesus Christ, His 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 into hell.
The third day He rose again from the dead.
He ascended into heaven
and sits at the right hand of God the Father
Almighty.
From thence He will come to judge the living
and the dead.**

**I believe in the Holy Spirit,
the holy Christian Church,
the communion of saints,**

**the forgiveness of sins,
the resurrection of the body,
and the life everlasting. Amen.**

L I cry to You, O Lord;
C in the morning my prayer comes before You.

L Restore to me the joy of Your salvation,
C and uphold me with a willing spirit.

L My mouth is filled with Your praise,
C and with Your glory all the day.

L Every day I will bless You
C and praise Your name forever and ever.

L By awesome deeds You answer us with righteousness,
C O God of our salvation, the hope of all the ends of the earth and of the farthest seas.

L Bless the Lord, O my soul;
C and all that is within me, bless His holy name!

L He redeems your life from the pit
C and crowns you with steadfast love and mercy.

L Hear my prayer, O Lord;
C let my cry come to You.

L Let us pray.
Almighty God, our heavenly Father, Your mercies are new every morning; and though we deserve only punishment, You receive us as Your children and provide for all our needs of body and soul. Grant that we may heartily acknowledge Your merciful goodness, give thanks for all Your benefits, and serve You in willing obedience; through Jesus Christ, Your Son, our Lord, who lives and reigns with You and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever.

C I thank You, my heavenly Father, through Jesus Christ, Your dear Son, that You have kept me this night from all harm and danger; and I pray that You would keep me this day also from sin and every evil, that all my doings and life may please You. For into Your hands I commend myself, my body and soul, and all things. Let Your holy angel be with me, that the evil foe may have no power over me. Amen.

C 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.

L Let us bless the Lord.
C Thanks be to God.

L The Lord bless us, defend us from all evil, and bring us to everlasting life.
C Amen.

Suggested Hymns:

Hymn of the Day

571 God Loved the World So That He Gave



1 God loved the world so that He gave His on - ly
2 Christ Je - sus is the ground of faith, Who was made
3 God would not have the sin - ner die; His Son with
4 Be of good cheer, for God's own Son For - gives all



Son the lost to save, That all who would in
flesh and suf - fered death; All then who trust in
sav - ing grace is nigh; His Spir - it in the
sins which you have done; And, jus - ti - fied by



Him be - lieve Should ev - er - last - ing life re - ceive.
Him a - lone Are built on this chief cor - ner - stone.
Word de - clares How we in Christ are heav - en's heirs.
Je - sus' blood, Your Bap - tism grants the high - est good.

5 If you are sick, if death is near,
This truth your troubled heart can cheer:
Christ Jesus saves your soul from death;
That is the firmest ground of faith.

6 Glory to God the Father, Son,
And Holy Spirit, Three in One!
To You, O blessed Trinity,
Be praise now and eternally!

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425 When I Survey the Wondrous Cross



1 When I sur - vey the won - drous cross On which the
2 For - bid it, Lord, that I should boast Save in the
3 See, from His head, His hands, His feet Sor - row and
4 Were the whole realm of na - ture mine, That were a



Prince of Glo - ry died, My rich - est gain I
death of Christ, my God; All the vain things that
love flow min - gled down! Did e'er such love and
trib - ute far too small; Love so a - maz - ing,



count but loss And pour con - tempt on all my pride.
charm me most, I sac - ri - fice them to His blood.
sor - row meet Or thorns com - pose so rich a crown?
so di - vine, De - mands my soul, my life, my all!

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420 Christ, the Life of All the Living



1 Christ, the life of all the liv - ing, Christ, the death of
 2 Thou, ah! Thou, hast tak - en on Thee Bonds and stripes, a
 3 Thou hast borne the smit - ing on - ly That my wounds might
 4 Heart - less scof - fers did sur - round Thee, Treat - ing Thee with



death, our foe, Who, Thy - self for me once giv - ing
 cru - el rod; Pain and scorn were heaped up - on Thee,
 all be whole; Thou hast suf - fered, sad and lone - ly,
 shame - ful scorn And with pierc - ing thorns they crowned Thee.



To the dark - est depths of woe: Through Thy suf - f'rings,
 O Thou sin - less Son of God! Thus didst Thou my
 Rest to give my wea - ry soul; Yea, the curse of
 All dis - grace Thou, Lord, hast borne, That as Thine Thou



death, and mer - it I e - ter - nal life in - her - it.
 soul de - liv - er From the bonds of sin for - ev - er.
 God en - dur - ing, Bless - ing un - to me se - cur - ing.
 might - est own me And with heav'n - ly glo - ry crown me.



Thou - sand, thou - sand thanks shall be, Dear - est Je - sus, un - to Thee.
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 Thou - sand, thou - sand thanks shall be, Dear - est Je - sus, un - to Thee.

5 Thou hast suffered men to bruise Thee,
 That from pain I might be free;
 Falsely did Thy foes accuse Thee:
 Thence I gain security;
 Comfortless Thy soul did languish
 Me to comfort in my anguish.
 Thousand, thousand thanks shall be,
 Dearest Jesus, unto Thee.

6 Thou hast suffered great affliction
 And hast borne it patiently,
 Even death by crucifixion,
 Fully to atone for me;

7

Thou didst choose to be tormented
 That my doom should be prevented.
 Thousand, thousand thanks shall be,
 Dearest Jesus, unto Thee.

Then, for all that wrought my pardon,
 For Thy sorrows deep and sore,
 For Thine anguish in the Garden,
 I will thank Thee evermore,
 Thank Thee for Thy groaning, sighing,
 For Thy bleeding and Thy dying,
 For that last triumphant cry,
 And shall praise Thee, Lord, on high.

Service Notes:

One person may serve as Leader or this may be shared with a number of individuals.

Read one or more of the lessons.

Hymns may be sung or read.

Devotional thoughts:

During this time of national emergency it is good to remember the words of the Collect of the Day, "Father, Your mercies are new every morning; and though we deserve only punishment, You receive us as Your children and provide for all our needs of body and soul. Grant that we may heartily acknowledge Your merciful goodness, give thanks for all Your benefits, and serve You in willing obedience."

We can become so accustomed to God's mercy that we take it for granted. The devastation we are experiencing in our nation and around the world can serve as a reminder that because of our sinfulness we deserve nothing but punishment. This fact is difficult to acknowledge but true.

Two verses from Romans underscore this truth: "There is no distinction: for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God," (Romans 3:22b-23) and "The wages of sin is death." (Romans 6:23). This may be a hard pill to swallow and human nature being what it is constantly rebels against this truth. In normal times most of us can pretend that these words from the Bible are not true. Yet when we see death and devastation all around, it becomes impossible to ignore. While some may become infected with a virus and others not, when it comes to death there is no distinction! The Apostle Paul explains why in Romans 3:12 quoting the 14th Psalm, "no one does good, not even one."

What can be done to avoid death and destruction? Nothing. In fact it is so impossible, it would be easier to push a camel through the eye of a needle. But as Jesus reassures His disciples, "with God all things are possible" (Matthew 19:26). Our God can and has done the impossible! He has redeemed us though we deserve only punishment.

Earlier I shared with you only abbreviated verses from Romans 3 & 6. I left out some crucial information that St. Paul was quick to include. Let's look at Romans 3:22b-24 again, "For there is no distinction: for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God, and are justified by his grace as a gift, through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus." In truth, there is no distinction: All have sinned but praise be to God, all are justified by his grace as a gift."

During this Lenten time, we are reminded to constantly take our eyes off of ourselves and fix them on Jesus. On the cross He does the impossible! He saves us from the wages of sin, death and destruction. Romans 6:23 in its entirety reads, "For the wages of sin is death, but the free gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord." Oh, how great is the mercy of God! We deserve death. God gives us eternal life!

We may have difficult times here and now but they are nothing compared to eternal life granted to us in Christ. Still, God does care for us in this life as well. His mercies are new every morning! We read in Lamentations 3:22-23, "The steadfast love of the Lord never ceases; his mercies never come to an end; they are new every morning; great is your faithfulness."

Martin Luther reminds us, "I believe that God has made me and all creatures; that He has given me my body and soul, eyes, ears, and all my members, my reason and all my senses, and still takes care of them.

He also gives me clothing and shoes, food and drink, house and home, wife and children, land, animals, and all I have. He richly and daily provides me with all that I need to support this body and life.

He defends me against all danger and guards and protects me from all evil.

All this He does only out of fatherly, divine goodness and mercy, without any merit or worthiness in me. For all this it is my duty to thank and praise, serve and obey Him.

This is most certainly true.

Since God provides for and takes care of all of our needs, we are free to serve Him by caring for others. Jesus tells us that one day a man was on his way down from Jerusalem to Jericho (Luke 10:25-37). Unfortunately, he fell among robbers, who stripped him and beat him and departed, leaving him half dead. God did not send angels to help this man. He sent a Samaritan to be his neighbor.

During this time of anxiety and devastation, look around. Has God called you to be a Samaritan to someone? To love your neighbor as yourself? When we listen to those in authority and follow safe practices of social distancing, we are loving our neighbor. When we reach out and help those in need, we are loving our neighbor. When we share the necessities of life rather than hoarding them, we are loving our neighbor.

Yes, fear and anxiety are sure to afflict us as well as others but we need not fear. The Bible tells us that God has said “I will never leave you nor forsake you.” So we can confidently say, “The Lord is my helper; I will not fear” (Hebrews 13:5b-6). Or as the Apostle Peter reminds us, “Cast all your care upon him; for he cares for you” (1 Peter 5:7).

Finally, we can do no better than to remember the words of Jesus Himself, “Peace I leave with you; my peace I give to you. Not as the world gives do I give to you. Let not your hearts be troubled, neither let them be afraid” (John 14:27).

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