

Fourth Sunday of Lent
March 14, 2021
Living Faith Lutheran Church, Sechelt, BC

Preservice music/welcome/announcements

Order for Confession and Forgiveness

All may make the sign of the cross, the sign marked at baptism, as the minister begins.

Blessed be the holy Trinity, † one God, the keeper of the covenant,
the source of steadfast love, our rock and our redeemer. **Amen.**

God hears us when we cry, and draws us close in Jesus Christ.
Let us return to the one who is full of compassion. *Silence is kept for reflection.*

Fountain of living water, **pour out your mercy over us.**

Our sin is heavy, and we long to be free.

Rebuild what we have ruined and mend what we have torn.

Wash us in your cleansing flood.

**Make us alive in the Spirit to follow in the way of Jesus,
as healers and restorers of the world you so love. Amen.**

Beloved, God's word never fails. The promise rests on grace:
by the saving love of Jesus Christ, the wisdom and power of God, your sins are † forgiven,
and God remembers them no more. Journey in the way of Jesus. **Amen.**

GATHERING

Gathering Hymn – Light Dawns on a Weary World #726

- 1 Light dawns on a weary world
when eyes begin to see
all people's dignity.
Light dawns on a weary world:
the promised day of justice comes.

Refrain

The trees shall clap their hands;
the dry lands, gush with springs;
the hills and mountains shall break forth with singing!
We shall go out in joy,
and be led forth in peace,
as all the world in wonder echoes shalom.

- 2 Love grows in a weary world
when hungry hearts find bread
and children's dreams are fed.

Love grows in a weary world:
the promised feast of plenty comes. *Refrain*

- 3 Hope blooms in a weary world
when creatures, once forlorn,
find wilderness reborn.
Hope blooms in a weary world:
the promised green of Eden comes. *Refrain*

Greeting and Kyrie

The grace of our Brother, Jesus, the love of God our heavenly parent,
and the presence of the Holy Breath, be with you all. **And also with you.**

Kyrie Eleison, Christe Eleison, Kyrie Eleison.
Lord, have mercy; Christ, have mercy; Lord, have mercy.
Kyrie Eleison, Christe Eleison, Kyrie Eleison.

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.

WORD

Response to the readings: "Thanks be to God"

First Lesson – 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.”⁹ So 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 our God. Thanks be to God.

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.

The word of our God. Thanks be to God.

Lenten verse

Let your steadfast love come to us, O Lord.

Save us as you promised; we will trust your word.

Holy Gospel – John 3:14-21 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:] 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.”

The gospel of our Lord. Praise to you, O Christ.

Sermon

Hymn of the Day – God Loved the World #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.
- 3 If you are ill, if death draws near,
this truth your troubled heart can cheer:
Christ Jesus rescues us from death;
that is the firmest ground of faith.
- 4 Be of good cheer, for God's own Son
forgives all sins that you have done,
and justified by Jesus' blood,
your baptism grants the highest good.
- 5 All glory to the Father, Son,
and Holy Spirit, Three in One!
To you, O blessed Trinity,
be praise now and eternally!

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.**

Prayer of Intercession

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

A brief silence.

You sent your Son that the world might be saved through him. Inspire the witness of the church throughout the world. Empower missionaries, Bible translators, and ministries of service in your name. Bless our partners in ministry in our community, the BC Synod, the ELCiC and global partner churches. Hear us, O God.

Your mercy is great.

From east to west your steadfast love is shown. Nourish seas and deserts, wilderness areas and cities. Give water to thirsty lands; nurture spring growth that feeds hungry creatures; bless farmers as they prepare for the growing season. Hear us, O God.

Your mercy is great.

You sustained your people in the wilderness. Give courage to all who lead in times of crisis and scarce resources. Prosper the work of those who aid victims of famine and drought (*especially*). Bring peace in places where scarce resources cause violence. Hear us, O God.

Your mercy is great.

Your mercy endures forever. Deliver all who cry to you, especially those who are hungry or without homes. Give life in places where death seems triumphant; give healing to those who are sick and comfort to those who mourn. *Especially Gwen and Ed, Erika and Rikki, Marlene and Merv, Sharon and Phil, Nicholas and Linda, Terry and Ingrid, Al and Tory, Randi and Pam, Dorothy and Michelle, Albert and Inez. . . and all those whom we name before you now with our lips or in our hearts. . .Pause. . .*) Hear us, O God.

Your mercy is great.

By grace we have been saved. Fill this congregation to overflowing with that grace, that we show mercy to others. Open our eyes to those in our community who are hungry, especially children, and empower us to reach out with generosity. Give us patience and courage when the way seems long. Hear us, O God.

Your mercy is great.

Here other intercessions may be offered.

Your Son was lifted up that whoever believes might have eternal life. We praise you for all who have died in Christ. Bring us with all the saints into the fullness of your promises. 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.

Sharing of the Peace/Offering/Offertory

Offering Prayer

Faithful God, **you walk beside us in desert places,
and you meet us in our hunger with bread from heaven.**

**Accompany us always, that we may pass over from death to life
with Jesus Christ, our Saviour and Lord. Amen.**

Musical reflection

Prayer of Thanksgiving for the Word

Gracious God, who has named and claimed us, calling us your beloved children, you know the secrets of our hearts. When we sin and stray from your paths, you astound us with your saving grace. For this Word of life, **we give you thanks.**

Loving Jesus, living Word, in you the kingdom of God has come near; through you all that was lost has been found. Help us to boldly follow wherever you may lead, trusting your promise that we need not fear, for you are with us. For this Word of life, **we give you thanks.**

Holy Spirit, the mystery in which we dwell, into our scarcity, your abundance flows. Enliven all communities with your good news. Guide us to love and serve Jesus, giving ourselves away for the sake of the world. For this Word of life, **we give you thanks.**

All glory to you, holy God, now and forever. **Amen.**

Lord, remember us in your kingdom and teach us to pray. *The prayer is sung*

**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.**

SENDING

Blessing

You are what God made you to be: created in Christ Jesus for good works, chosen as holy and beloved, freed to serve your neighbour.

God bless you ✠ that you may be a blessing,
in the name of the holy and life-giving Trinity. **Amen.**

Sending Song – Drawn to the Light #539

- 1 People who walk in darkness have sought
a light in the heart of the darkest night.
Just when we thought all would be lost,
we were drawn to the light of God.

Refrain

Dawn is in sight! Gone is the night,
drawn to the light and the morning.
Glorious and bright, oh, what a sight
to be drawn to the light of God.

2 How can we tell a heaven from hell
if ev'ryone dwells in the dark of night?
Morning dispels, gently compels,
and we're drawn to the light of God. *Refrain*

3 Where is the sun? Oh, there will be none!
The Lamb is the one who is shining bright,
bids us to come! Life has begun
when we're drawn to the light of God. *Refrain*

Dismissal

Go in peace. Serve the world by sharing the good news in all you do.
We will with the help of God.

Postlude

