

First Lutheran Church, Morris MN

Order of Worship for Sunday, March 14, 2021: 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.

Gathering

Welcoming & Announcements

Confession & Forgiveness

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.

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

*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. **Amen.***

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.***

Hymn: "Christ, the Life of All the Living" #339

1. Christ, the life of all the living,
Christ, the death of death, our foe,
Christ, yourself for me once giving
to the darkest depths of woe:
through your suff'ring, death, and merit
life eternal I inherit.
Thousand, thousand thanks are due,
dearest Jesus, unto you.
2. You have suffered great affliction
and have borne it patiently,
even death by crucifixion,
fully to atone for me;
for you chose to be tormented
that my doom should be prevented.
Thousand, thousand thanks are due,
dearest Jesus, unto you.
3. Then, for all that bought my pardon,
for the sorrows deep and sore,
for the anguish in the garden,
I will thank you evermore;
thank you for the groaning, sighing,
for the bleeding and the dying,
for the last triumphant cry,
praise you evermore on high.

Text: Ernst Christoph Homburg, tr. Catherine Winkworth. Public Domain

Word

Reading: Numbers 21:4-9

⁴From Mount Hor they 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.

Psalm 107:1-3, 17-22

Give thanks to the Lord, for the Lord is good, **for God's mercy endures forever.**

Let the redeemed of the Lord proclaim **that God redeemed them from the hand of the foe,**
gathering them in from the lands; **from the east and from the west; from the north and from the south.**

Some were fools and took rebellious paths; **through their sins they were afflicted.**

They loathed all manner of food **and drew near to death's door.**

Then in their trouble they cried to the Lord **and you delivered them from their distress.**

You sent forth your word and healed them **and rescued them from the grave.**

Let them give thanks to you, Lord, for your steadfast love **and your wonderful works for all people.**

Let them offer sacrifices of thanksgiving **and tell of your deeds with shouts of joy.**

Reading: Ephesians 2:1-10

You 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.

Gospel Acclamation Return to the Lord, your God, who is gracious and merciful, slow to anger, and abounding in steadfast love.

Gospel: John 3:14-21 (*response after announcement of Gospel: **Glory to you, O Lord***)

¹⁴And 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.”

*(response after reading of Gospel: **Praise to you, O Christ**)*

Message

Hymn: “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 again 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.

Offering/Offertory

Prayers & Lord's Prayer

Sharing the Peace

Sending

Hymn: "Drawn to the Light" #593

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**

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**

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**

**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.**

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Benediction

Go in peace, serve the Lord! Thanks be to God!

Remember in your prayers

Mick Rose, those affected by COVID-19, those working in our hospitals and care centers, those who serve in the military, families of victims of war, terrorism and violence, those in our nursing homes and those who are homebound. Continue to pray for the overseas missionary we support, Pastor Alex LaChappelle serving as a pastor of Nairobi International Lutheran in Kenya, Africa. Note: you may honor a loved one and support Pastor LaChappelle in Kenya. Contact the church office for information.