

Lent 3, 2021, Order of Worship (March 7, 2021)

Greeting In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit. **Amen.**

A note on today's texts: The third covenant in this year's Lenten readings is the central one of Israel's history: the gift of the law to those God freed from slavery. The commandments begin with the statement that because God alone has freed us from the powers that oppressed us, we are to let nothing else claim first place in our lives. When Jesus throws the merchants out of the temple, he is defending the worship of God alone and rejecting the ways commerce and profit-making can become our gods. The Ten Commandments are essential to our baptismal call: centered first in God's liberating love, we strive to live out justice and mercy in our communities and the world (*Sundays & Seasons*, 2020, Augsburg Fortress, p. 117).

Call to Worship, Psalm 19: The heavens declare the glory of God; the skies proclaim the work of his hands. Day after day they pour forth speech; night after night they display knowledge. There is no speech or language where their voice is not heard. Their voice goes out into all the earth, their words to the ends of the world. In the heavens he has pitched a tent for the sun, which is like a bridegroom coming forth from his pavilion, like a champion rejoicing to run his course. It rises at one end of the heavens and makes its circuit to the other; nothing is hidden from its heat.

The law of the Lord is perfect, reviving the soul. The statutes of the Lord are trustworthy, making wise the simple. The precepts of the Lord are right, giving joy to the heart. The commands of the Lord are radiant, giving light to the eyes. The ordinances of the Lord are sure and altogether righteous. They are more precious than gold, than much pure gold; they are sweeter than honey, than honey from the comb. By them is your servant warned; in keeping them there is great reward.

Who can discern his errors? Forgive my hidden faults. Keep your servant also from willful sins; may they not rule over me. Then will I be blameless, innocent of great transgression. May the words of my mouth and the meditation of my heart be pleasing in your sight, O Lord, my Rock and my Redeemer.

Confession and Forgiveness for Lent (from *Sundays & Seasons*, 2020, Augsburg Fortress, p. 100)

God hears us when we cry, and draws us close in Jesus Christ. Let us return to the one who is full of compassion. 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, and by the eternal mercy and power of God, your sins are forgiven. God remembers them no more! Journey in the way of Jesus. **Amen.**

Opening Hymn *Oh, for a Thousand Tongues* (public domain) LBW 559, ELW 886 HP 1903

*Oh, for a thousand tongues to sing my great Redeemer's praise
The glories of my God and King, the triumphs of his grace!*

*My gracious Master and my God, assist me to proclaim,
To spread through all the earth abroad the honors of our name.*

*To God all glory, praise, and love be now and ever given
By saints below and saints above, the Church in earth and heaven.*

The 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 Holy God, through your Son you have called us to live faithfully and act courageously. Keep us steadfast in your covenant of grace, and teach us the wisdom that comes only through Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. **Amen.**

A reading from Exodus, the 20th chapter (20:1-7) After escaping from slavery, the Israelites come to Mount Sinai, where God teaches them how to live in community. Ten Commandments proclaim that God alone is worthy of worship. Flowing from God, the life of the community flourishes when based on honesty, trust, fidelity, and respect for life, family, and property (*Sundays & Seasons*, 2020, Augsburg Fortress, p. 117).

And God spoke all these words: "I am the Lord your God, who brought you out of the land of slavery. -- You shall have no other gods before me. -- You shall not make for yourself an idol in the form of anything in heaven above or on the earth beneath or in the waters below. You shall not bow down to them or worship them; for I, the Lord your God, am a jealous God, punishing the children for the sin of the fathers to the third and fourth generation of those who hate me, but showing love to a thousand generations of those who love me and keep my commandments.

Remember the Sabbath day by keeping it holy. Six days you shall labor and do all your work, but the seventh day is a Sabbath to the Lord your God. On it you shall not do any work, neither you, nor your son or daughter, nor your manservant or maidservant, nor your animals, nor the alien within your gates. For in six days the Lord made the heavens and the earth, the sea, and all that is in them, but he rested on the seventh day. Therefore the Lord blessed the Sabbath day and made it holy.

Honor your father and your mother, so that you may live long in the land the Lord your god is giving you. – You shall not murder. – You shall not commit adultery. -- You shall not steal. -- You shall not give false testimony against your neighbor. -- You shall not covet your neighbor's house. You shall not covet your neighbor's wife, or his manservant or maidservant, his ox or donkey, or anything that belongs to you neighbor."

Word of God, word of life.

A reading from 1st Corinthians, the 1st chapter (1:18-25) The word of the cross is pure foolishness and nonsense to the world because it claims that God is mostly revealed in weakness, humiliation, and death. But through such divine foolishness and weakness, God is working to save us. The center of Paul's preaching is *Christ crucified* (*Sundays & Seasons*, 2020, Augsburg Fortress, p. 117).

The message about the cross is foolishness to those who are perishing, but to us who are being saved it is the power of God. For it is written, "I will destroy the wisdom of the wise, and the discernment of the discerning I will thwart." Where are the wise? Where is the teacher of the law? Where is the philosopher of this age? Has not God made foolish the wisdom of the world? For since in the wisdom of God the world through its wisdom did not know him, God was pleased through the foolishness of what was preached to save those who believe. Jews demand signs and Greeks look for wisdom, but we preach Christ crucified: a stumbling block to Jews and foolishness to Gentiles, but to those whom God has called, both Jews and Greeks, Christ the power of God and the wisdom of God. For the foolishness of God is wiser than human wisdom, and the weakness of God is stronger than human strength.

Word of God, word of life.

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.

The gospel according to John, the 2nd chapter (2:13-22), sermon (page 7)

Sermon Hymn *In the Cross of Christ I Glory* (public domain) LBW 104, ELW 324, HP 554

*In the cross of Christ I glory, towering o'er the wrecks of time.
All the light of sacred story gathers round its head sublime.*

*When the woes of life o'ertake me, hopes deceive, and fears annoy,
Never shall the cross forsake me; lo, it glows with peace and joy.*

Apostle's Creed

I believe in God, the Father almighty, creator of heaven and earth.

I believe in Jesus Christ, his only Son, our Lord. He was conceived by the power of the Holy Spirit and born of the Virgin Mary. He suffered under Pontius Pilate, was crucified, died, and was buried. He descended into hell. On the third day he rose again. He ascended into heaven, and is seated at the right hand of the Father. 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.

Prayers (from *Sundays and Seasons*, 2020, p. 117)

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

O Lord, there is no God before you. Purify the faith of your church, that your people may place their trust in nothing beside you. Your name is holy. Guide your church, that in every situation your people's words and actions may honor your name. Hear us, O God. **Your mercy is great.**

The heavens declare your glory. Renew your creation. Provide leaders in the struggle for clean air and water; protect creatures and crops that rely on healthy ecosystems; give all people the willingness to repent when our way of life pollutes the earth and skies. Hear us, O God. **Your mercy is great.**

Your foolishness is wiser than human wisdom. Fill leaders with the foolishness of your peace and mercy. Your law defends the vulnerable. Work through legislators, judicial systems, and systems of law enforcement to protect the well-being of all. Hear us, O God. **Your mercy is great.**

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Your weakness is stronger than human strength. Protect those who are vulnerable and give courage to all who are suffering. Defend victims of crime and bring redemption to those who have harmed others. Give sabbath rest to all who labor. Hear us, O God. **Your mercy is great.**

You call us to proclaim Christ crucified. Give clarity to this congregation and our leaders, so that we might follow Christ beyond our own habits and comfort. Clear out anything in our common life that would obscure the gospel or that serves our own interests. Hear us, O God. **Your mercy is great.**

The cross of Christ is your power for all who are being saved. Thank you for all the martyrs whose witness reveals the power of the cross. Give us the same trust in life and in death. Hear us, O God. **Your mercy is great.**

We entrust ourselves and all our prayers to you, O faithful God, through Jesus Christ our Savior and Lord. **Amen.**

Holy Communion

Words of Institution

The Lord's Prayer

Receiving the Body and Blood

Communion Blessing

Prayer after Communion

God of steadfast love, at this table you gather your people into one body for the sake of the world. Send us in the power of your Spirit, so that our lives may bear witness to the love that has made us new in Jesus Christ, our Savior. **Amen.**

Benediction:

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

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

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Sending Song *Spread, Oh, Spread* (public domain) LBW 379, ELW 663, HP 1723

*Spread, oh, spread, almighty Word, spread the reign of God the Lord;
Tell how his own Son he gave, all from sin and death to save.*

*Tell of our Redeemer's grace, who, to save our human race
And to pay rebellion's price, gave himself as sacrifice.*

*Lord of harvest, great and kind, rouse to action heart and mind;
Let the gathering nations all see your light and heed your call.*

Dismissal Go in peace to love and serve the Lord!

Thanks be to God!