

Faith Lutheran Church
Sunday, March 7, 2021
Third Sunday in Lent



Welcome

Confession and 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.

Gathering Hymn: ELW #324 (verses 1 & 2)

"In the Cross of Christ I Glory"

Opening Prayer

Please join me in the 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.

Readings and Psalm

- Exodus 20:1-17

The commandments are given at Sinai

- Psalm 19

The commandment of the LORD gives light to the eyes. (Ps. 19:8)

- 1 Corinthians 1:18-25

Christ crucified, the wisdom of God

The Holy Gospel according to John 2:13-22

Jesus attacks the commercialization of religion by driving merchants out of the temple. When challenged, he responds mysteriously, with the first prediction of his own death and resurrection. In the midst of a seemingly stable religious center, Jesus suggests that the center itself has changed.

¹³The Passover of the Jews was near, and Jesus went up to Jerusalem. ¹⁴In the temple he found people selling cattle, sheep, and doves, and the money changers seated at their tables. ¹⁵Making a whip of cords, he drove all of them out of the temple, both the sheep and the cattle. He also poured out the coins of the money changers and overturned their tables. ¹⁶He told those who were selling the doves, "Take these things out of here! Stop making my Father's house a marketplace!" ¹⁷His disciples remembered that it was written, "Zeal for your house will consume me." ¹⁸The Jews then said to him, "What sign can you show us for doing this?" ¹⁹Jesus answered them, "Destroy this temple, and in three days I will raise it up." ²⁰The Jews then said, "This temple has been under construction for forty-six years, and will you raise it up in three days?" ²¹But he was speaking of the temple of his body. ²²After he was raised from the dead, his disciples remembered that he had said this; and they believed the scripture and the word that Jesus had spoken.

The Gospel of the Lord.

Praise to You, O Christ.

Sermon

Grace, Mercy, and Peace from God our Father and our Lord and savior Jesus Christ!

We are celebrating international women's day on March 8th, which is tomorrow. International women's day is a global day celebrating the social, economic, cultural, and political achievements of women. This day also marks a call to action for celebrating gender equality. The UN Women's Council announced the theme for the 2021 international women's day. It is "women in leadership achieving an equal future in a covid-19 world." Women stand at the frontline of the covid-19 crises, as health care workers, caregivers, community organizers. Women have been some of the most exemplary and effective national and international leaders fighting the pandemic.

Before we go into our sermon today, I would like to wish all the women across the globe a very happy women's day! Here is a poem for all the women who are with us today and those who are watching online.

Dear beautiful you,.

Yes, you have within you the strength to get through even the darkest of days....

Don't let anyone or anything steal your peace....

Keep your chin up and know and know that things are going to get better...

Yes, they will...

Take one step at a time and keep believing in your dreams always. (writer unknown)

Today's Gospel text tells us that Jesus chased away the money changers, and cattle, merchants out of the temple in Jerusalem. It is a custom for all Jewish men to go to Jerusalem for the Passover. This was an annual festival to remind them that God delivered them from slavery in Egypt. When Jesus entered the temple courts, "he found people selling cattle, sheep, and doves. Others were sitting at tables exchanging money."

Throughout the Gospel texts, we read that Jesus encountered religious leaders, elders, and scribes. Jesus was greatly disappointed to find the temple had been turned into a marketplace. The Temple is considered to be a holy place. It was a place of prayer and worship, and also believed to be a dwelling place of God. Therefore, Jesus was angered seeing His Father's house turned into a marketplace.

Throughout His life Jesus did not own anything of his own. He was born in a manger because there was no place in the inn. He never held any big titles. He never went to a big college. But you could always find him among the people, healing, teaching and comforting. Jesus lived a very ordinary life. He had no credentials other than that of God Himself, who created everything that exists, despite living like a stranger amongst us. In every area of His ministry, we notice that Jesus corrected the corrupt norms that

existed in the society. He fought against injustice against the marginalized or downtrodden. He challenged the system and temple leaders many times.

Jesus also set an example for the Church to treat women equal with men. For Jesus, women should not be treated as subordinates or restricted in any way (Matt 12:49-50; 15:38; 25:31-46; Mark 3:34-35; Luke 8:21; 11:27-28) Jesus' treatment of women as equals challenged the judicial, social, and religious customs of the times. During this period, Jewish society regarded women as inferior to men in every way. And this attitude was common in many societies across the globe, continuing until today. Jesus set an example by respecting women's intelligence and spiritual capacity, as is evident in (John 4: 10-26) where Jesus taught spiritual truth to a Samaritan woman and to Martha. (John 11:25-26)

In a culture that considered women second class citizens, Jesus encouraged women in His ministry, and encouraged both women and men to be leaders in the Church. Jesus defined the role of women in the church and encouraged gender equality.

In today's Gospel text, Jesus challenges religious leaders by driving them away from the Temple. He set a good example against the corruption within society. I like the passion of Jesus in the Old Testament, correcting and teaching society to keep them from going astray. But the Good News for today is that Jesus never leaves us whenever we go astray. God the Holy Spirit is always with us guiding, protecting, and rescuing us through every step of our lives.

From the beginning of creation God has always rescued us. God continues to show His great mercy towards us...even though we often stray from God's commandments. Despite our corrupted human nature, God rescues and restores us. From the Old Testament times, until today, we notice God's strong relationship with His children. God was with Israelites, who were oppressed, discriminated, and seeking freedom.... God came down, delivered them and provided them with food in the wilderness. God personally rescued the Israelites. And now in the New Testament, God came down to us through Jesus Christ, dwelt amongst us and rescued us personally into His everlasting kingdom. "God has spoken and acted in the life, death, and resurrection of Jesus Christ.

Sometimes things might be difficult for some of us, especially during this pandemic. Some might be seeking a job, some might be struggling with health issues, and some might struggle in their relationships. Whatever the situations we are caught up in, if we cry out to God, God will come down to rescue and deliver us. "God is truly present in the midst of our situation and identifies with our struggle to liberate us.

In today's reading, Jesus refers to His body as the temple of God. Jesus died for all of us on Good Friday and rose again on the third day, exactly as He said he would. He told the religious leaders present in the temple. "I will destroy this temple and in three days I will raise it up." (V. 19) Once again this reminds us of God's love towards humanity. Jesus was raised on the third day...so that we may live. **Amen.**

Hymn of the Day: ELW #532

"Gather Us In"

Blessing

The peace of the lord be with you always. **and also with you. Amen.**

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.

Prayers of Intercession

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

(A brief silence.)

Grant, O God, that on International Women's Day your holy and life-giving spirit may move every human heart; that the barriers dividing us may crumble and hatred cease, so we might live in justice and peace; through Jesus Christ our LORD. Hear us, O God.

Your mercy is great.

Almighty God, your Son, Jesus Christ, dignified our labor by sharing our toil. Guide us with your justice in the workplace, so that we may never value things above people or surrender honor to love of gain or lust for power. Prosper all efforts to put an end to work that brings no joy, and teach us how to govern the ways of business to the harm of none and for the sake of the common good; through Jesus Christ our Lord. Hear us, O God.

Your mercy is great.

O God, you made us in your own image and redeemed us through Jesus your Son. Look with compassion on the whole human family; take away the arrogance and hatred that infect our hearts; break down the walls that separate us; unite us in bonds of love; and, through our struggle and confusion, work to accomplish your purposes on earth; so that, in your good time, every people and nation may serve you in harmony around your heavenly throne; through Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord. Hear us, O God.

Your mercy is great.

Your weakness is stronger than human strength. Protect those who are vulnerable and give courage to all who are suffering especially: Beverly Tankersly, Pastor Matthew Lamb, Connie Mattson, Lori Strickland, Eric Marken, Eva Mohr, Al Picotte, Bill Duff, Bill Vaneffen, Sandra Kaye, Lois Stoppel, Teri DePlonty, Janet Rolston, Dawn Aldrich and for all those who are grieving for loved ones especially the family and friends of Cindy Panik. For whom and what else do we pray silently or out loud? (Pause...). 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.

O God of all, with the wonderful diversity of languages and cultures you created all people in your own image. Free us from prejudice and fear, that we may see your face in the faces of people around the world; through Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord. 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.

We await the day of Christ's coming in glory. Lead us by the example of all the saints whom you have called to take up their cross and follow you, that together we may find our lives in you. 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.**

Offering

At this point in the service the offering plate would normally be passed around, but for safety reasons, we have placed the offering plate near the entrance of the Sanctuary. Please leave your offering on the plate on your way out after the service. Contributions can also be made by mail, or online at our church website. We are grateful for the community's continued generous support especially during these trying times.

Offertory Prayer (please join in prayer)

Let us pray

Faithful God,

you walk beside us in desert places,

and you meet us in our hunger with bread from heaven.

Accompany us in this meal,

that we may pass over from death to life

with Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord.

Amen.

Our Lord's Prayer

I invite you to join in praying the prayer our Lord Jesus taught us...

**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 debts, as we forgive our debtors;
and lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil.
For thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory forever. Amen**

Benediction

Whatever wilderness the Spirit has brought you to:
Walk in boldness as a beloved child of God
Walk in peace, under the shelter of the most High
Walk in Faith knowing + Christ is with you.
Amen.

Dismissal

Go in peace. Live in faith, Share Christ's love
Thanks be to God.

Sending Hymn: ELW #660

"Lift High the Cross"

Sources:

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ANNOUNCEMENTS

❖ **In-person Worship Services at Faith has resumed!**

We urge everyone to follow the guidelines set forth to ensure the safety of everyone in attendance. We hope to see you there!

❖ **Pastor Rita is available for any pastoral needs by phone, email, and Zoom! ❖**

If you would like to speak with Pastor Rita, please call or email her at **(312) 478-6212** or **critawilliam@gmail.com** From there if you'd like to set up a Zoom meeting, just ask!

❖ **Midweek Lenten Zoom Gathering**

Wednesday evenings, we will be having 30-40 minute midweek Lent contemplative worships via Zoom at **7pm**. Please make sure you note the change in time from 6pm, **NOW AT 7PM**. The zoom invite information is on the previous page of this document.

❖ **After-service Zoom Coffee Hour Gatherings have resumed!**

We will begin holding our after-service Zoom gatherings again after this Sunday's service.

❖ **Online giving is here!**

You can now make an electronic contribution on our website. Just go to our website:

www.faithlutheransaultstemarie.org

Scroll down to just above our videos. There, you will find a green button that says "**Online Giving**". Click that and enter in your information, and Faith will receive your contribution within 48 hours. The online giving company we went with (Tithe.ly) is one of the largest and most secure companies who specialize in online church giving, so your information is safe and secure. If you would like any help going over this process, please call the church office and Sean would be happy to help you.

❖ **Watch Faith's Worship Service Live on Sundays on our Facebook page!**

You can catch our Service at 10:20am every Sunday at **www.facebook.com/FaithLC1966** . You can also find us online by searching for **FaithLC1966** in any browser. If you have any questions or comments, please call the church office at (906) 632-7246.