

Worship in the Home

Fourth Sunday in Lent, Year B

March 14, 2021



In this time of world-wide crisis, congregations throughout this church are not able to gather for worship as the body of Christ. While we cannot be together in person, we can hear the word of God and hold each other in prayer.

Prelude

Announcements

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.

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.**

Opening Hymn

Jesus, Keep Me Near the Cross

ELW # 335



1 Je - sus, keep me near the cross, there's a pre - cious foun - tain;
2 Near the cross, a trem - bling soul, love and mer - cy found me;
3 Near the cross! O Lamb of God, bring its scenes be - fore me;
4 Near the cross I'll watch and wait, hop - ing, trust - ing ev - er,



free to all, a heal - ing stream flows from Cal - v'ry's moun - tain.
there the bright and morn - ing star sheds its beams a - round me.
help me walk from day to day with its shad - ow o'er me.
till I reach the gold - en strand just be - yond the riv - er.



In the cross, in the cross be my glo - ry ev - er;



till my ran - somed soul shall find rest be - yond the riv - er.

Text: Fanny J. Crosby, 1820–1915

Music: NEAR THE CROSS, William H. Doane, 1832–1915

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.

First Reading: Numbers 21:4-9

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.” 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

¹Give thanks to the LORD, for the LORD is good, for God’s mercy endures forever.

²**Let the redeemed of the LORD proclaim that God redeemed them from the hand of the foe,**

³gathering them in from the lands; from the east and from the west, from the north and from the south.

¹⁷**Some were fools and took rebellious paths; through their sins they were afflicted.**

¹⁸They loathed all manner of food and drew near to death’s door.

¹⁹**Then in their trouble they cried to the LORD and you delivered them from their distress.**

²⁰You sent forth your word and healed them and rescued them from the grave.

²¹**Let them give thanks to you, LORD, for your steadfast love and your wonderful works for all people.**

²²Let them offer sacrifices of thanksgiving and tell of your deeds with shouts of joy.

Second Reading: Ephesians 2:1-10

Gospel: John 3:14-21

[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.

¹⁶For God loved the world in this way, that God gave the Son, the only begotten one, 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 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.”

Homily

Reflection

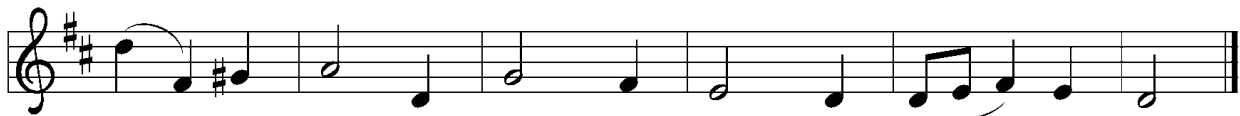
The writers of the New Testament sought in many ways to present the meaning of the crucifixion of Jesus, a tragic event that at first seems too horrible to have any meaning. The Gospel according to John here means to transform our horror into hope, borrowing an Old Testament image to do so. In Numbers, the people are dying and serpents are giving out this death. At God’s command, the serpent on the pole, as if it were death enthroned, gives life. The people look and live. So, for us, the man executed on the cross gives life to the world. We all are dead in sin. Christ shares the worst of our deaths. Now, not by looking but by looking in faith, by trusting what God has done, we are made alive together with Christ. The Spirit, poured out in baptism, lifts us up together with Christ into life. God loves the world and, giving us that gift of love, enables us also to love others with our good works.



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 If you are ill, if death draws near, this truth your
 4 Be of good cheer, for God's own Son for - gives all
 5 All glo - ry to the Fa - ther, Son, and Ho - ly



Son the lost to save, that all who would in
 flesh and suf - fered death; all who con - fide in
 trou - bled heart can cheer: Christ Je - sus res - cues
 sins that you have done, and jus - ti - fied by
 Spir - it, Three in One! To you, O bless - ed



him be - lieve should ev - er - last - ing life re - ceive.
 Christ a - lone are built on this chief cor - ner - stone.
 us from death; that is the firm - est ground of faith.
 Je - sus' blood, your bap - tism grants the high - est good.
 Trin - i - ty, be praise now and e - ter - nal - ly!

Text: *Gesangbuch*, Bollhagen, 1791; tr. August Crull, 1846–1923, alt.
 Music: ROCKINGHAM OLD, Edward Miller, 1731–1807, adapt.

Prayers of Intercession

On this fourth Sunday in Lent, let us pray to our loving God for all the needs of the world.

O God, preserve your church through good times and bad. Empower pastors, missionaries, Young Adults in Global Mission, and all ministries of service for their work throughout this pandemic. Bless Lutherans around the world, our ecumenical partners, and everyone preparing for baptism at Easter. O God our Redeemer, receive our prayers: **your mercy endures forever.**

Continue your creation of this good earth. Nourish seas and rivers, and give water to thirsty lands. Nurture spring growth that feeds hungry creatures, and bless the fields being prepared for the growing season. O God our Creator, receive our prayers: **your mercy endures forever.**

In Brazil and wherever COVID-19 rages, send healing. In Myanmar and wherever tyranny rules, restore human rights. In Nigeria and wherever there is domestic

terrorism, send concord. In Ethiopia and wherever there is bloodshed, bring peace. In Yemen and wherever people starve, give food and water. In the United States and wherever there is discrimination, inspire all residents to honor one another and to strive for justice. Prosper the work of those who care for victims of violence, and grant legislators wisdom in decision-making. O God our Protector, receive our prayers: **your mercy endures forever.**

Give rest and welcome to migrants. Bring run-aways to places of safety. Protect all who are incarcerated. Provide caring families to children who seek adoption. Give a decent life to all who live on our streets. O God our Homeland, receive our prayers: **your mercy endures forever.**

As you saved your people of old from snakebite, so now deliver all who suffer from disaster, hunger, disease, and despair, and those we name here before you. . . O God our Savior, receive our prayers: **your mercy endures forever.**

Shine light into our darkness, make night into a blessing, and in mercy hear the prayers of our hearts: O God our Friend, receive our prayers: **your mercy endures forever.**

We praise you for all the saints who have lived and died in Christ, especially Patrick and Joseph, and we remember before you all who have died from COVID-19. At the end, bring us with them into life in your presence. O God our Comforter, receive our prayers: **your mercy endures forever.**

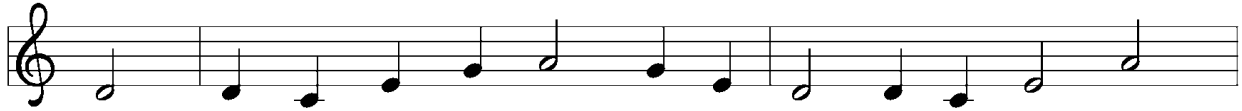
To you, O God, our only God, we entrust all this and every other needful thing, through Jesus Christ our loving Lord, who taught us to pray:

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 Hymn

What Wondrous Love Is This

ELW # 666



1 What won-drous love is this, O my soul, O my soul! What
2 When I was sink - ing down, sink - ing down, sink - ing down, when
3 To God and to the Lamb I will sing, I will sing; to
4 And when from death I'm free, I'll sing on, I'll sing on; and



won - drous love is this, O my soul! What won-drous love is this
I was sink - ing down, sink - ing down, when I was sink - ing down
God and to the Lamb I will sing; to God and to the Lamb,
when from death I'm free, I'll sing on; and when from death I'm free,



that caused the Lord of bliss to bear the dread-ful curse for my
be - neath God's righ-teous frown, Christ laid a - side his crown for my
who is the great I AM, while mil - lions join the theme, I will
I'll sing God's love for me, and through e - ter - ni - ty I'll sing



soul, for my soul, to bear the dread-ful curse for my soul?
soul, for my soul, Christ laid a - side his crown for my soul.
sing, I will sing, while mil - lions join the theme, I will sing.
on, I'll sing on; and through e - ter - ni - ty I'll sing on.

Text: North American folk hymn, 19th cent., alt.
Music: WONDROUS LOVE, W. Walker, *Southern Harmony*, 1835

Benediction

Almighty God, Father, + Son and Holy Spirit, bless us now and forever. **Amen.**

Join us on Zoom for Fellowship: 596-621-1441 Passcode 8675309

Stewardship Committee is in need of members. The committee's main function is to help the congregation make use of their "Time & Talents". The committee only has three members. Please email the church at: stmatthewluth@aol.com or call 814-793-2413 to volunteer.

Lenten Schedule:

Sunday 9:30 AM Livestream
Monday, Friday 9AM Hymn Devotion
Tuesday & Thursday 9AM Morning Prayer
Tuesday 9PM Night Prayer
Wednesday 7PM Holden Evening Prayer w/Bible Study after on Zoom
Thursday 7PM Lenten Devotions on Zoom

Schedule of Meetings:

Social Ministry Committee meeting is tomorrow, March 15th at 6:30 p.m. via Zoom

Staff Support Committee meeting is Tuesday, March 16th at 6:30 p.m. via Zoom

Serving God and Us

Our Pastor – Rev. Traci Marriott

Our Pianist/Organist – Dr. Adam Smith/Mary Nelson

Our Administrative Assistant – Lori Tremmel

Our Assistant Administrative Assistant– Laura Orczeck

Our Sexton – Bill Brown

Our Audio/Video Tech – Camden Kuster

Our Offering Counters – Jim Barley, Beth Garner

First Quarter Ventures in Faith to “*Local Needs*”

Prayers are needed for our homebound: Shirley Acker, Carl & Dawn Alexy, John Aljets, Vivian Beach, Verna Blough, Fred Brandenburg, Clyde Claycomb, Donna Gearhart, Betty Helsel, Doris Henderson, Jere Hess, Gerald Hoover, Audrey Hite, Ruth Johnson, Janet Kreider, Ginny Sell, Dan Sinal, Don Smith, Nancy Uber, Joy Williams.

Prayer Concerns: Amy & Family, Pastor Denise Arpino, Randy Barrett, Diane Cappel, Dwight Ciccotelli, Greg Comer, Brian Fleck, Scott Fletcher, Jim Freyer, Vinnie Gunning, Betty Helsel, Dan Hershberger, Marilyn Horton, Joan Housel, Amber Itle, Michelle Iwanski, Jenny, Anna Klepser, Darren Kreutzer, Karrie McCall & Family, Chuck McGeary, Kristen Malloy, Ryder McDermitt, Betty McDowell, Rick McIntyre, Nathan, Aunt Mica, Harry Partner, Deb Peters, Alana Rhodes, Paul Ruth, Barbara Smith, Luther Steele, Cindy Thomas, Carol Weyandt, Pete Williams, Jody Zelanko, and for our **Missionaries: Rev. Lesley Hand, On Eagle's Wings, Elizabeth Hendrickson.**

Our college students: Christopher Bush, Olivia Day, Jacob Orzech.

Specialist Training in the Army: Nathan Smith

Readings for the Week:

Monday Psalm 107:1-16. **Tuesday** 1 Corinthians 10:6-13. **Wednesday** (commemoration of Patrick, bishop, missionary to Ireland, 461) Isaiah 60:15-22. **Thursday** Psalm 51:1-12. **Friday** (Joseph, Guardian of Jesus) Matthew 1:16, 18-21, 24a. **Saturday** John 12:1-11. **Fifth Sunday in Lent** (commemoration of Thomas Cranmer, Bishop of Canterbury, martyr, 1556) Jeremiah 31:31-34; Psalm 51:1-12 *or* Psalm 119:9-16; Hebrews 5:5-10; John 12:20-33.

Reflection text: Gordon Lathrop. Intercessory Prayer: Gail Ramshaw

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THIRD CENTURY FUND (ENDOWMENT FUND)

The Third Century Fund had good earnings year in 2020 and as a result has \$5,437 for distribution in 2021. You or your committee may request funding in writing by contacting David Lehman, chairperson or committee members Allen Kuster, Laura Orczeck, Beth Garner or Pastor Traci.

Deadline to submit a request is Sunday, May 30, 2021. Funds will be distributed in June 2021. You can email Dave at: dlehman1@atlanticbb.net

The following is from the by-laws of the Third Century Fund and outline the guidelines for fund requests.

PURPOSE

The St. Matthew Evangelical Lutheran Church Mission Endowment Fund is established to encourage responsible Christian stewardship and to promote the mission of the congregation. In response to God's love and mercy, the Endowment Fund seeks to enhance and expand the mission outreach objectives of St. Matthew Evangelical Lutheran Church.

Members and friends of St. Matthew congregation are encouraged to practice responsible Christian Stewardship by making contributions to the Endowment Fund. There are a variety of ways such gifts can be made such as, Cash, Securities, Bequests through wills or living trusts, Life insurance policies, charitable gift annuity and Life estates.

The Endowment Fund provides financial support for the church in a manner that is separate from the expenditures normally funded by the annual operating budget of the congregation,

USE OF THE FUND

All contributions to the St. Matthew Lutheran Church Endowment Fund will be undesignated and added to the principal balance of the fund. The Endowment fund principal balance will be retained and only the dividend income will be used for annual disbursements.

Consideration for awarding fund requests will be given using the following guidelines.

1. Youth of all ages - scholarship support of congregational members and their children; for youth events, for church camps or similar Christian programs and education.
2. Christian outreach ministries and missions of St. Matthew Lutheran Church, its members and the ELCA.
3. Worship and music - support for the worship of St, Matthew.
4. Capital Projects - major renovations or building projects of St. Matthew.

COVID VACCINE INFORMATION

The Pennsylvania Department of Health is making the COVID-19 vaccine available to adults over the age of 65 and people with certain health conditions. You can call the PA Department of Health hotline at 1-877-724-3258 for information about the vaccination process.

To get access to the vaccine, click on the following link:

<https://www.health.pa.gov/topics/disease/coronavirus/Vaccine/Pages/Vaccine.aspx>

www.vaccinatepa.org

Then click on the box titled "When Am I Eligible?"

Scroll down to the "COVID Vaccine Eligibility Quiz" (click in the appropriate answers)

If you are eligible, you can scroll down your screen to see the map of available vaccination sites; click on the dot to find the phone number and/or website for your location of choice.

The website of the pharmacy or distribution site will walk you through the process of making an appointment or tell you if appointments are not available. If no appointments are available but you are eligible to receive the vaccine (you are 65+ or you have a qualifying health condition), keep checking back for an appointment.

If you don't have access to a computer you can use the following phone numbers to register for the vaccine:

Nason Hospital: 814-224-6224

UPMC 1-844-876-2822

If you are having trouble navigating the websites, call Pastor Traci at 814-935-9267 for help.