

Worship in the Home

Third Sunday in Lent, Year B

March 7, 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.**

Gathering Hymn

Lord, Keep Us Steadfast in Your Word

ELW #517



1 Lord, keep us stead - fast in your word; curb those who
2 Lord Je - sus Christ, your pow'r make known, for you are
3 O Com - fort - er of price - less worth, send peace and



by de - ceit or sword would wrest the king - dom from your Son
Lord of lords a - lone; de - fend your ho - ly church, that we
u - ni - ty on earth; sup - port us in our fi - nal strife



and bring to naught all he has done.
may sing your praise e - ter - nal - ly.
and lead us out of death to life.

Text: Martin Luther, 1483–1546; tr. Catherine Winkworth, 1827–1878, alt.
Music: ERHALT UNS, HERR, J. Klug, *Geistliche Lieder*, 1543

Greeting

The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, the love of God, and the communion of the Holy Spirit be with us all. **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.**

First Reading: Exodus 20:1-17

Psalm 19

- ¹The heavens declare the glory of God, and the sky proclaims its maker's handiwork.
- ²**One day tells its tale to another, and one night imparts knowledge to another.**
- ³Although they have no words or language, and their voices are not heard,
- ⁴**their sound has gone out into all lands, and their message to the ends of the world, where God has pitched a tent for the sun.**
- ⁵It comes forth like a bridegroom out of his chamber; it rejoices like a champion to run its course.
- ⁶**It goes forth from the uttermost edge of the heavens and runs about to the end of it again; nothing is hidden from its burning heat.**
- ⁷The teaching of the LORD is perfect and revives the soul; the testimony of the LORD is sure and gives wisdom to the simple.
- ⁸**The statutes of the LORD are just and rejoice the heart; the commandment of the LORD is clear and gives light to the eyes.**
- ⁹The fear of the LORD is clean and endures forever; the judgments of the LORD are true and righteous altogether.
- ¹⁰**More to be desired are they than gold, more than much fine gold, sweeter far than honey, than honey in the comb.**
- ¹¹By them also is your servant enlightened, and in keeping them there is great reward.
- ¹²**Who can detect one's own offenses? Cleanse me from my secret faults.**
- ¹³Above all, keep your servant from presumptuous sins; let them not get dominion over me; then shall I be whole and sound, and innocent of a great offense.
- ¹⁴**Let the words of my mouth and the meditation of my heart be acceptable in your sight, O LORD, my strength and my redeemer.**

Second Reading: 1 Corinthians 1:18-25

Gospel: John 2:13-22

- ¹³The Passover of the Jewish people 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 Judeans 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 Judeans then said, “This temple has been under construction for forty-six years, and will you raise it up in three days?” ²¹But Jesus 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.

Homily

A couple weeks ago we talked about the WWJD—What would Jesus do? bracelets. Inevitably, when today’s gospel reading comes up in the lectionary, someone likes to point out that when you ask what Jesus would do, overturning tables and chasing people with a whip is, technically, a correct answer. I would argue that is one of those moments in Jesus’ life that we are *not* called to emulate. We’re going to have to work a little harder to understand what Jesus was up to here.

What Jesus finds in the Temple is maybe not so different from what we find ourselves doing in this part of the year. People who had made the pilgrimage to the Temple in Jerusalem had come a little early in order to make all the necessary preparations for celebrating the Passover. This would have involved changing their Roman money into shekels to pay the Temple tax and purchasing animals to make their required sacrifices. We might compare these rituals to our own practices of including prayers of confession and absolution at the beginning of services where we celebrate the Eucharist, or spending this Lenten season in prayer, fasting, and charity ahead of the Easter celebration. In either case, the people of God are waiting to commemorate and praise God’s saving work: God saving Israel from slavery in Egypt at the Passover, God saving all people from sin and death by the cross and Resurrection. That doesn’t sound like something that would cause this reaction from Jesus, so we have to ask what is really going on.

There are two things which are easy to assume are the problem but aren’t. First, although the synoptic gospels suggest that the money-changers in the Temple are dishonest in their dealings, John gives us no evidence of that here. Jesus does not claim to be defending the worshippers against fraud in their transactions. And second, the system of sacrifice itself is not the problem; the Law specified making offerings and sacrifices, and Jesus, albeit in Matthew and not John’s gospel, promises that he has not come to abolish the law but to fulfill it. So neither the sacrifices nor the integrity of the system whereby they are offered cause Jesus’ dramatic response.

It's interesting that the leaders don't argue with what Jesus has done so much as they ask him to prove that he has the authority to have done it. *What sign can you show us for doing this?* Jesus challenges them to destroy the temple and then see him raise it again in three days. We recognize this as foreshadowing of Jesus' death and resurrection, but we can hardly blame the Jewish leaders for thinking that Jesus is talking about the physical building of the Temple in which they are standing. What is interesting to remember is that by the time John wrote his gospel, the Temple had been destroyed...and yet God and God's people continued on.

Jesus' critique is not of the sacrifices, the preparations, or the Temple building itself, but the way the people have placed their faith in these practices, institutions, and places created by human hands. The same critique would be true of us when we forget that our own devotional practices, our own tithes and offerings, our own buildings and furnishings are only meant to help point us toward God—they are not supposed to be what we trust. It was not the Temple or offerings or the sacrifices that the people made that gave them their identity; it was the powerful hand of God who, at the Passover, led them to freedom. It's not our Lenten disciplines—however successful we may be in them—that make us perfect before God; it is the unstoppable love of God who rolled away the stone to reveal an empty tomb.

Unlike the other three gospels, John places this scene in chapter two, right at the beginning of Jesus' public ministry, in his first recorded trip to Jerusalem during the three years he will spend preaching, teaching, healing, feeding, and pointing people toward God. The leaders ask for a sign, and Jesus says—*here it is—I'm your sign*. Then, not just in his death on the cross, but in the life he lives that leads to the cross, he shows the people—his contemporaries then and us now—where to find God, which is in relationship with him. There's nothing wrong with what we do—the preparations we make and the goods works with which we respond to God's call—but we are not meant to place our faith in what we do, or, in other words, in ourselves. We are called to trust in the God who cannot be contained by rites and rituals, who cannot be confined in temples or churches, who cannot even be constrained by death and the grave. That is who makes us holy—the one whose infinite love does what no number of prayers or fasts or gifts or sacrifices could do. So keep up whatever it is that points you toward the Savior. But to anything that seems to take the place of God's mighty work, to that hear Jesus say, "Take those things out of here!" God, and God alone had made you free.



1 Built on a rock the church shall stand, e - ven when stee - ples are
 2 Sure - ly, in tem - ples made with hands God the Most High is not
 3 Christ builds a house of liv - ing stones: we are his own hab - i -
 4 Yet in this house, an earth - ly frame, Je - sus the chil - dren is
 5 Through all the pass - ing years, O Lord, grant that, when church bells are



fall - ing; crum - bled have spires in ev - 'ry land, bells still are
 dwell - ing— high in the heav'ns his tem - ple stands, all earth - ly
 ta - tion; he fills our hearts, his hum - ble thrones, grant - ing us
 bless - ing; hith - er we come to praise his name, faith in our
 ring - ing, man - y may come to hear your Word, who here this



chim - ing and call - ing— call - ing the young and old to rest, call - ing the
 tem - ples ex - cel - ling. Yet God who dwells in heav'n a - bove deigns to a -
 life and sal - va - tion. Where two or three will seek his face, he in their
 Sav - ior con - fess - ing. Je - sus to us his Spir - it sent, mak - ing with
 prom - ise is bring - ing: "I know my own, my own know me; you, not the



souls of those dis - tressed, long - ing for life ev - er - last - ing.
 bide with us in love, mak - ing our bod - ies his tem - ple.
 midst will show his grace, bless - ings up - on them be - stow - ing.
 us his cov - e - nant, grant - ing his chil - dren the king - dom.
 world, my face shall see; my peace I leave with you. A - men."

Text: Nikolai F. S. Grundtvig, 1783–1872; tr. Carl Doving, 1867–1937, adapt.
 Music: KIRKEN DEN ER ET GAMMEL HUS, Ludvig M. Lindeman, 1812–1887
 Text © 1958 *Service Book and Hymnal*, admin. Augsburg Fortress

Duplication in any form prohibited without permission or valid license from copyright administrator

Prayers of Intercession

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

O God, our lawgiver, our temple, our wisdom, form your church to worship you alone. As you blessed Gregory the Great, so bless our bishops for their ministry in church and world. You are our strength and our redeemer: **grant us your wisdom, O God.**

Protect all who call upon the power of your name. As you blessed the martyr Perpetua and her companions, so bless all the baptized who suffer for their faith. You are our strength and our redeemer: **grant us your wisdom, O God.**

Even during this pandemic, connect us in diverse ways to our worshipping communities, and give to all persons regular rest from their work. You are our strength and our redeemer: **grant us your wisdom, O God.**

Bless with wisdom all parents and any who are granted authority over others, and give to children the will to honor those who care for them. You are our strength and our redeemer: **grant us your wisdom, O God.**

Keep the nations of the earth from engaging in war, bloodshed, and torture, and help people of all ages to resist the lure of violence. You are our strength and our redeemer: **grant us your wisdom, O God.**

Uphold marriages and all commitments of care, and defend all persons, especially children, from sexual abuse. You are our strength and our redeemer: **grant us your wisdom, O God.**

Guard your earth, its animals and its plant life from all who would take for themselves more than they need. You are our strength and our redeemer: **grant us your wisdom, O God.**

Train the diverse peoples of our nation to respect one another. As you blessed Harriet Tubman and Sojourner Truth, so bless all who work to end discrimination and the oppression of the vulnerable. You are our strength and our redeemer: **grant us your wisdom, O God.**

Use our bounty to meet the needs of others, those who are homeless or hungry, and hear our prayers for all who are sick or suffering, especially all afflicted with the coronavirus and all we name here before you. . . You are our strength and our redeemer: **grant us your wisdom, O God.**

Teach us how to pray, also for ourselves: You are our strength and our redeemer: **grant us your wisdom, O God.**

Receive our thanks for all who have died in the faith, and bring us all at the end into the fullness of your life. You are our strength and our redeemer: **grant us your wisdom, O God.**

We entrust ourselves and all this to you, O faithful and gracious God, through Jesus Christ, our Savior and 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

Through the Night of Doubt and Sorrow

ELW # 327



1 Through the night of doubt and sor - row, on - ward
 2 One the light of God's own pres - ence on the
 3 One the strain that lips of thou - sands lift as
 4 On - ward, there - fore, sis - ters, broth - ers; on - ward,



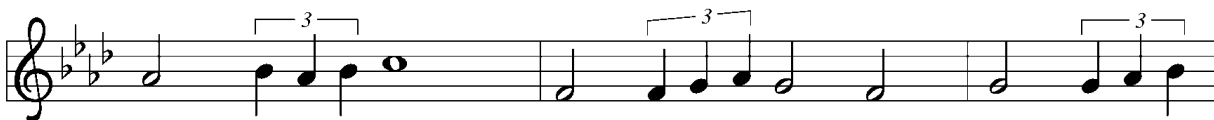
goes the pil - grim band, sing - ing songs of ex - pec -
 ran - somed peo - ple shed, chas - ing far the gloom and
 from the heart of one; one the con - flict, one the
 with the cross our aid. Bear its shame, and fight its



ta - tion, march - ing to the prom - ised land. Clear be -
 ter - ror, bright - 'ning all the path we tread. One the
 per - il, one the march in God be - gun. One the
 bat - tle till we rest be - neath its shade. Soon shall



fore us through the dark - ness gleams and burns the
 ob - ject of our jour - ney, one the faith which
 glad - ness of re - joic - ing on the far e -
 come the great a - wak - 'ning; soon the rend - ing



guid - ing light; pil - grim clasps the hand of
 nev - er tires, one the ear - nest look - ing
 ter - nal shore, where the one al - might - y
 of the tomb! Then the scat - t'ring of all



pil - grim step - ping fear - less through the night.
 for - ward, one the hope our God in - spires.
 Fa - ther reigns in love for - ev - er - more.
 shad - ows, and the end of toil and gloom.

Benediction

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

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

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:

Council Meeting is scheduled for Tuesday, March 9th at 6:30 p.m. viz 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 Orczeck.

Specialist Training in the Army: Nathan Smith

Readings for the Week

Monday Psalm 84. **Tuesday** Hebrews 9:23-28. **Wednesday** (commemoration of Harriet Tubman, 1913; Sojourner Truth, 1883; renewers of society) Mark 11:15-19. **Thursday** Psalm 107:17-22. **Friday** (commemoration of Gregory the Great, Bishop of Rome, 604) Ephesians 1:7-14. **Saturday** Numbers 20:22-29. **Fourth Sunday in Lent** Numbers 21:4-9; Psalm 107:1-3, 17-22; Ephesians 2:1-10; John 3:14-21.

Intercessory Prayer: Gail Ramshaw

Portions from *Evangelical Lutheran Worship, All Creation Sings*, and sundaysandseasons.com © 2021 Augsburg Fortress. All rights reserved. Used with permission.

Readings from *Readings for the Assembly* © 1995, 1996, 1997 Augsburg Fortress. Citations from the Revised Common Lectionary © 1992 Consultation on Common Texts. Scripture quotations from NRSV Bible, Copyright © 1989, Division of Christian Education of the National Council of the Churches of Christ in the United States of America, adapted and edited with permission by Gordon Lathrop and Gail Ramshaw.

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.