

REFORMATION LUTHERAN CHURCH
Serving Absecon - Galloway Township
Rev. Heidi Link – Pastor
Brian Conover - Music Director

Sunday, March 19th, 2023
THE FOURTH SUNDAY IN LENT / 8:30 & 10:00 AM

*** OPENING SONG**

My Faith Looks Up to Thee



1 My faith looks up to thee, thou Lamb of Cal - va - ry,
2 May thy rich grace im - part strength to my faint - ing heart,
3 While life's dark maze I tread and griefs a - round me spread,
4 When ends life's tran - sient dream, when death's cold, sul - len stream



Sav - ior di - vine! Now hear me while I pray, take all my
my zeal in - spire; as thou hast died for me, oh, may my
be thou my guide; bid dark-ness turn to day, wipe sor-row's
shall o'er me roll; blest Sav - ior, then, in love fear and dis -



guilt a - way, oh, let me from this day be whol - ly thine!
love to thee pure, warm, and change-less be, a liv - ing fire!
tears a - way, nor let me ev - er stray from thee a - side.
trust re-move; oh, bear me safe a - bove, a ran - somed soul!

Text: Ray Palmer, 1808–1887
Music: OLIVET, Lowell Mason, 1792–1872

*** GREETING & PRAYER OF THE DAY**

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.

Let us pray: Almighty God, your Son came into the world to free us all from sin and death. Breathe upon us the power of your Spirit, that we may be raised to new life in Christ and serve you in righteousness all our days, through Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. **Amen.**

*** CONFESSION & FORGIVENESS**

Blessed be the holy Trinity, † one God, who journeys with us these forty days, and sustains us with the gift of grace. **Amen.**

Let us acknowledge before God and one another our need for repentance and God's mercy.

Silence is kept for reflection.

Holy God,

we confess to you our faults and failings. Too often we neglect and do not trust your holy word; we take for ourselves instead of giving to others; we spoil rather than steward your creation; we cause hurt though you call us to heal; we choose fear over compassion. Forgive us, renew us, and lead us, as we seek to follow in your way of life. Amen.

Hear the good news: God so loved the world that God gave the only Son, so that all may receive life. This promise is for you! God embraces you with divine mercy, † forgives you in Christ's name, and revives you in the Spirit's power. **Amen.**

FIRST READING: Ezekiel 37:1-14 (*see back of bulletin for text*)

RESPONSIVE READING: Psalm 130

¹Out of the depths

I cry to you, O LORD;

²**O LORD, hear my voice!**

Let your ears be attentive to the voice of my supplication.

³If you were to keep watch over sins,

O LORD, who could stand?

⁴**Yet with you is forgiveness,**

in order that you may be feared.

⁵I wait for you, O LORD; my soul waits;

in your word is my hope.

⁶**My soul waits for the Lord more than those who keep watch for the morning,
more than those who keep watch for the morning.**

⁷O Israel, wait for the LORD, for with the LORD there is steadfast love;
with the LORD there is plenteous redemption.

⁸**For the LORD shall redeem Israel
from all their sins.**

MAKE A JOYFUL NOISE OFFERING

Refrain: Make a joyful noise to the Lord, all the earth! (Repeat)

**Oh, how right it is to give thanks to Him, our creator and our king;
We sing out our praise to the holy one; We rejoice, we rejoice in our God!** *(Repeat Refrain)*

SECOND READING: Romans 8:6-11 *(see back of bulletin for text)*

LIGHTING OF THE “CROWN OF THORNS” ADVENT WREATH (CANDLES 1 - 5)

With each week of Lent, we journey closer to the truth found at the foot of the cross and at the entrance to the empty tomb. With each step on our journey, may we believe – without a doubt – that God is still the God who brings sight to the blind, causes the lame to walk, sets prisoners free, restores the outcast, and brings the dead back to life!

We think of those situations in our lives that we feel are “too far gone” or those places that feel dead or lifeless within us that are in need of resurrection. May we be encouraged with a newness of belief in the power of Jesus Christ – who overcame death so we could have life with him!

What does this mean? *(A child of the congregation answers, followed by our prayer.)*

Let us pray together:

Heavenly Father, throughout these forty days, unseal within us the wellspring of your grace, cleanse our hearts of all that is not holy, and cause your gift of new life to flourish once again. Amen.

* HYMN OF PRAISE

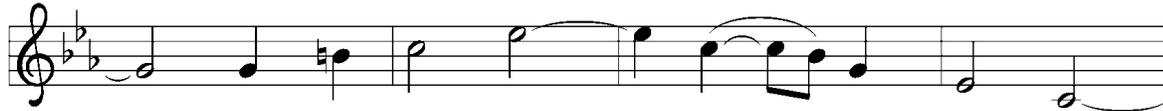
I Want Jesus to Walk with Me



1 I want Je - sus to walk with me;
2 In my tri - als, Lord, walk with me;
3 When I'm in trou - ble, Lord, walk with me;



I want Je - sus to walk with me;
in my tri - als, Lord, walk with me;
when I'm in trou - ble, Lord, walk with me;



all a - long my pil - grim jour - ney,
 when my heart is al - most break - ing,
 when my head is bowed in sor - row,



Lord, I want Je - sus to walk with me.
 Lord, I want Je - sus to walk with me.
 Lord, I want Je - sus to walk with me.

*** THE WORD OF GOD: John 11:1-45**

A reading from the Gospel of John:

(see back of bulletin for text)

Word of God, Word of Life.

Thanks be to God.

SERMON

CONGREGATIONAL SONG

Glory Be to Jesus



1 Glo - ry be to Je - sus, who, in bit - ter pains,
 2 Grace and life e - ter - nal in that blood I find;
 3 Blest through end - less a - ges be the pre - cious stream
 4 A - bel's blood for ven - geance plead - ed to the skies;



poured for me the life - blood from his sa - cred veins.
 blest be his com - pas - sion, in - fi - nite - ly kind.
 which from end - less tor - ment did the world re - deem.
 but the blood of Je - sus for our par - don cries.

Text: Italian, 18th cent.; tr. Edward Caswall, 1814-1878
 Music: WEM IN LEIDENSTAGEN, Friedrich Filitz, 1804-1876

*** 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 OF INTERCESSION**

Sustained by God's abundant mercy, let us pray for the church, the world, and all of creation.

A brief silence.

You have breathed into us the breath of life. Enliven your church. Deepen our partnerships with our companion churches around the globe (*specific synods, dioceses, or congregations may be named*), and bless the work of missionaries who accompany them.

Merciful God,

receive our prayer.

Your spirit brings life to creation. Enliven the natural world and restore ecosystems in need of healing (*local natural places may be named*). Uplift prophetic voices that turn us to the needs of the soil beneath our feet and the air all around. Merciful God,

receive our prayer.

You redeem the world and its peoples. Free us from systems of oppression. Unbind nations and societies from the sins of racism, sexism, and homophobia. Raise up leaders at all levels of government who work to promote the dignity of every human life.

Merciful God,

receive our prayer.

You weep when we weep. Be present with those who grieve or who are troubled by illness (*especially*). You hear us when we call to you. Deliver us from the depths of our despair, and free us from the worries that bind us. Merciful God,

receive our prayer.

Your Spirit of life dwells in our assembly. Bless the music ministries of this congregation (*specific ensembles may be named*) and all who lead us in hymns of praise and thanksgiving and in songs of lament and prayer. Merciful God,

receive our prayer.

Here other intercessions may be offered.

You are the resurrection and the life. Even though we die, we will live. With thanksgiving, we remember all your saints who now live in your eternal love. Merciful God,

receive our prayer.

We lift our prayers to you, O God, trusting in your steadfast love and your promise to renew your whole creation; through Jesus Christ our Savior.

Amen.

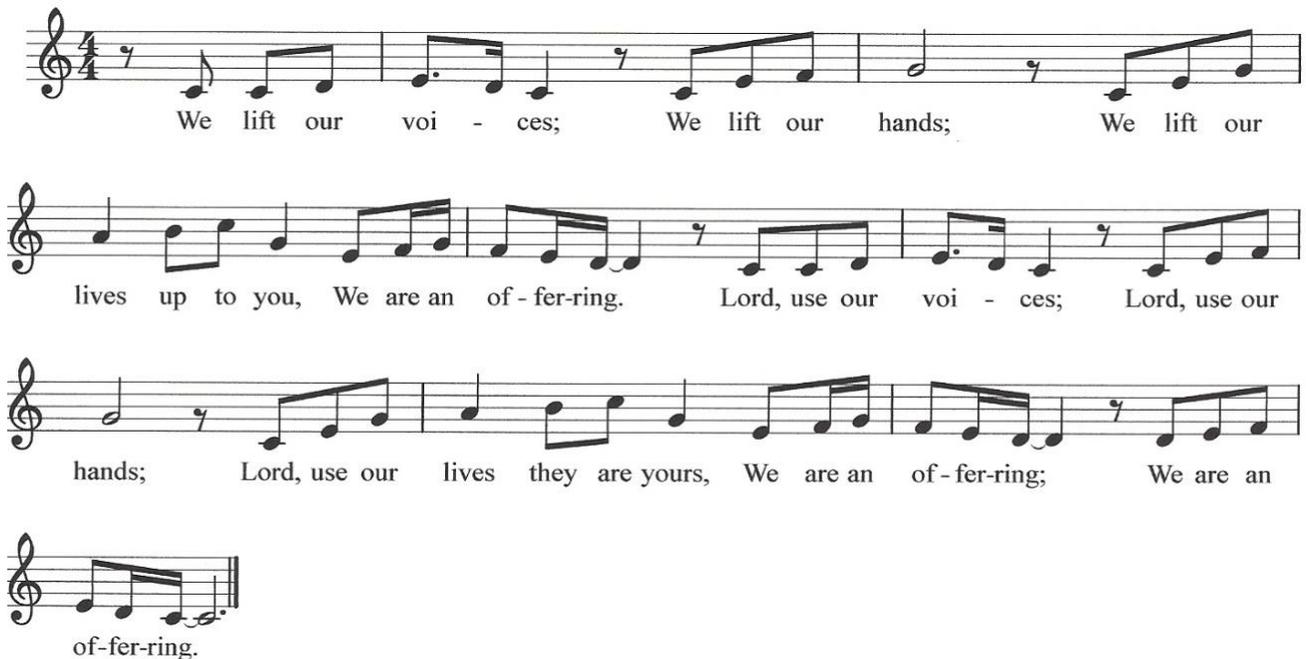
*** SHARING OF THE PEACE**

The Peace of the Lord be with you always.

And also with you.

OFFERING / SPECIAL MUSIC

* OFFERING SONG



We lift our voi - ces; We lift our hands; We lift our
lives up to you, We are an of - fer-ring. Lord, use our voi - ces; Lord, use our
hands; Lord, use our lives they are yours, We are an of - fer-ring; We are an
of-fer-ring.

* OFFERING PRAYER

Let us pray: God of good gifts, receive these and all our offerings as we present them in faithful service for the sake of your gospel. Prepare our hearts to receive you in this meal as you pour out your very presence through Christ Jesus, the wellspring of eternal life. **Amen.**

* WORDS OF INSTITUTION

* THE LORD'S PRAYER

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 trespasses, as we forgive those who trespass against us; and lead us not into temptation; but deliver us from evil. For thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, forever and ever. Amen

* INVITATION TO COMMUNION

Come and receive Jesus, our strength in the wilderness.
We come.

DISTRIBUTION OF HOLY COMMUNION

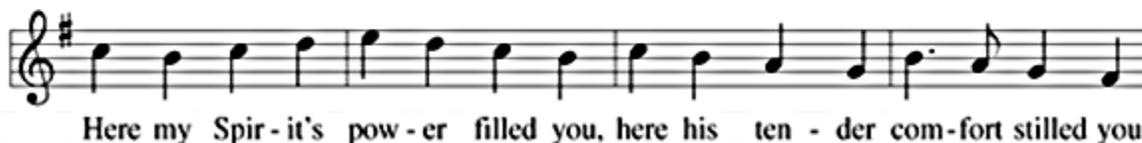
(BAPTIZED CHRISTIANS who believe that the risen Christ is present in the Eucharist to forgive sin and renew life are invited to either come to the altar area for communion as directed or share at your pew. If you come forward, you will receive the elements. If you choose to receive at your seat, please remain there, kneel as you are able, and receive the elements using the communion packets available from the ushers. If there are other special needs, please speak to an usher.)

***POST-COMMUNION BLESSING**

The body and blood of our Lord Jesus Christ strengthen you and keep you in his grace. **Amen**

*** POST COMMUNION HYMN**

Go, My Children, with My Blessing



*** PRAYER AFTER COMMUNION**

Let us pray: Embodied God, at your table, we have tasted the goodness of Jesus. With the eyes of our hearts open to your promise, empower us to hear the needs of our neighbors and touch the world with your love. **Amen.**

*** BLESSING**

And now a blessing: God, the giver of love, ✝ Christ, the resurrection and the life, and the Holy Spirit of rebirth bless you in this Lenten journey. **Amen.**

* CLOSING SONG

In the Hour of Trial



1 In the hour of tri - al, Je - sus, plead for me,
2 With for - bid - den plea - sures should this vain world charm,
3 Should thy mer - cy send me sor - row, toil, and woe,



lest by base de - ni - al I de - part from thee.
or its sor - did trea - sures spread to work me harm,
or should pain at - tend me on my path be - low,



When thou seest me wa - ver, with a look re - call;
bring to my re - mem - brance sad Geth - sem - a - ne,
grant that I may nev - er fail thy hand to see;



nor from fear or fa - vor suf - fer me to fall.
or, in dark - er sem - blance, cross-crowned Cal - va - ry.
grant that I may ev - er cast my care on thee.

Text: James Montgomery, 1771–1854
Music: PENITENCE, Spencer Lane, 1843–1903

* SENDING

Go in peace. Serve in Love.
Thanks be to God.

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