

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

Sunday, February 18th, 2024
THE FIRST SUNDAY IN LENT / 10:00 AM

*** CONFESSION & FORGIVENESS**

Blessed be the holy Trinity, † one God, who writes the law on our hearts, who draws all people together through Jesus. **Amen.**

Held in God’s mercy, let us confess our sin in the presence of God and of one another.
Silence is kept for reflection.

Holy God,

we confess that we are caught in snares of sin and cannot break free. We hoard resources while our neighbors are hungry and cold. We speak in ways that silence others. We are silent when we should speak up. We keep score in our hearts. We let hurts grow into hatred. For all these things and for sins only you know, forgive us, Lord. Amen.

Here is a flood of grace: Out of love for the whole world, God draws near to us, breaks every snare of sin, washes away our wrongs, and restores the promise of life through † Jesus Christ. **Amen.**

*** OPENING SONG**

Jesus, Still Lead On



1 Je - sus, still lead on, till our rest be won; and, al - though the
2 If the way be drear, if the foe be near, let no faith - less
3 When we seek re - lief from a long - felt grief, when temp - ta - tions
4 Je - sus, still lead on, till our rest be won; heav'n - ly lead - er,



way be cheer - less, we will fol - low, calm and fear - less;
fears o'er - take us, let not faith and hope for - sake us;
come al - lur - ing make us pa - tient and en - dur - ing;
still di - rect us, still sup - port, con - sole, pro - tect us,

... song continues ...

* - Congregation Stands (If for any reason you are unable to stand during the service, please remain seated.)



guide us by your hand to the prom - ised land.
safe - ly past the foe to our home we go.
show us that bright shore where we weep no more.
till we safe - ly stand in the prom - ised land.

Text: Nicolaus L. von Zinzendorf, 1700–1760; tr. Jane L. Borthwick, 1813–1897, alt.
Music: SEELENBRÄUTIGAM, Adam Drese, 1620–1701

*** 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: Holy God, heavenly Father, in the waters of the flood you saved the chosen, and in the wilderness of temptation you protected your Son from sin. Renew us in the gift of baptism. May your holy angels be with us, that the wicked foe may have no power over us, 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: Genesis 9:8-17 (*see back of bulletin for text*)

RESPONSIVE READING: Psalm 25:1-10

¹To you, O LORD,
I lift up my soul.

²**My God, I put my trust in you; let me not be put to shame,
nor let my enemies triumph over me.**

³Let none who look to you be put to shame;
rather let those be put to shame who are treacherous.

⁴**Show me your ways, O LORD,
and teach me your paths.**

⁵Lead me in your truth and teach me,
for you are the God of my salvation; in you have I trusted all the day long.

⁶**Remember, O LORD, your compassion and love,
for they are from everlasting.**

⁷Remember not the sins of my youth and my transgressions;
remember me according to your steadfast love and for the sake of your goodness, O LORD.

⁸**You are gracious and upright, O LORD;
therefore you teach sinners in your way.**

⁹You lead the lowly in justice
and teach the lowly your way.

¹⁰**All your paths, O LORD, are steadfast love and faithfulness
to those who keep your covenant and your testimonies.**

SECOND READING: 1 Peter 3:18-22 (see back of bulletin for text)

LIGHTING OF THE “CROWN OF THORNS” ADVENT WREATH

In our world we are tempted to think that our Heavenly Father has not given us all that we need. In essence, this was the temptation that led to original sin. May we be delivered from the temptation to turn our heads to anyone other than Almighty God.

As we journey through lent, may we believe without a doubt that God has provided for all our needs. No matter how desolate the landscape of our lives may look, God has made a Way through Jesus Christ – through his death on the cross and resurrection.

Let us pray together:

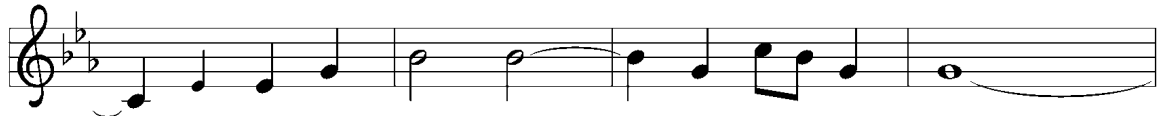
Heavenly Father, throughout these forty days, unseal within us the wellspring of your grace, cleanse our hearts of all that is not holy, and cause your gift of new life to flourish once again. Amen.

*** HYMN OF PRAISE**

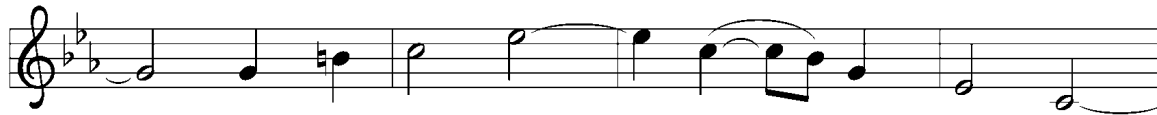
I Want Jesus to Walk with Me



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.

Text: African American spiritual
Music: SOJOURNER, African American spiritual

*** THE WORD OF GOD: Mark 1:9-15**

A reading from the Gospel of Mark:

(see back of bulletin for text)

Word of God, Word of Life.

Thanks be to God.

SERMON

CONGREGATIONAL SONG

Out in the Wilderness



1 Driv - en by the Spir - it out in the wil - der - ness;
2 Tempt - ed by the dev - il out in the wil - der - ness;
3 An - gels all a - round you out in the wil - der - ness;
4 "You are my be - lov - ed" out in the wil - der - ness.



driv - en by the Spir - it out in the wil - der - ness;
tempt - ed by the dev - il out in the wil - der - ness;
an - gels all a - round you out in the wil - der - ness;
"You are my be - lov - ed" out in the wil - der - ness.



when the Spir - it says, "Go," you can't say, "No."
though you try to be strong, it's been so long.
you are far . . . from home where wild things roam.
When you were . . . bap - tized, you re - a - lized



You lis - ten for the voice when you're bend - ed low;
He whis - pers in your ear and you know he's wrong;
There's dan - ger ev - 'ry - where but you're not a - lone;
you'd heard the voice of God from the o - p'ning skies:



driv - en by the Spir - it out in the wil - der - ness.
tempt - ed by the dev - il out in the wil - der - ness.
an - gels all a - round you out in the wil - der - ness.
"You are my be - lov - ed" out in the wil - der - ness.

Text: Jay Beech
Music: OUT IN THE WILDERNESS, Jay Beech

Text and music © 1999 Jay Beech

*** 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**

Trusting in God's promise to reconcile all things, let us pray for the church, the well-being of creation, and a world in need.

A brief silence.

God our truth, the ark of your church has room for many expressions of faith. We give thanks for voices that challenge and awaken your people (*especially that of Martin Luther, renewer of the church, whom we commemorate today*). Hear us, O God.

Your mercy is great.

God our maker, you remember your covenant with the earth and its inhabitants. Rescue communities and creatures hurting from natural disasters. Preserve species and habitats endangered by human carelessness and disregard. Hear us, O God.

Your mercy is great.

God our light, you know our weakness. Free all who govern from the temptations of power. Sustain all who work for human rights in every nation (*organizations may be named*). Hear us, O God.

Your mercy is great.

God our help, you care for your beloved children. Comfort all who are grieving, ill, afraid, in pain, or in despair. Feed hungry people living in food deserts. Protect any at risk from exploitation and abuse. Hear us, O God.

Your mercy is great.

God our home, you gather your people. Grant us health and safety as we assemble. Keep us mindful of any who are homebound, hospitalized, convalescing, or traveling (*especially*). Hear us, O God.

Your mercy is great.

Here other intercessions may be offered.

God our hope, you promise eternal life to your beloved children. We remember with gratitude those who have lived and died in faith. Grant that we may also dwell with you in everlasting peace. Hear us, O God.

Your mercy is great.

Accompany us on our journey, God of grace, and receive the prayers of our hearts, 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: Jesus, you are the bread of life and the host of this meal. Bless these gifts that we have gathered that all people may know your goodness. Feed us not only with this holy food but with hunger for justice and peace. We pray this in your name. **Amen.**

*** THE GREAT THANKSGIVING**

The Lord be with you.

And also with you.

Lift up your hearts.

We lift them to the Lord.

Let us give thanks to the Lord our God.

It is right to give him thanks and praise.

It is indeed right and salutary...*(Here the minister continues with the preface appropriate to the day or season, concluding:)* we praise your name and join their unending hymn:

Ho - ly, ho - ly, ho - ly Lord, Lord God of pow'r and might:
 Heav'n and earth are full of your glo - ry.
 Ho - san - na in the high - est. Bless - ed is he who comes
 in the name of the Lord. Ho - san - na in the high - est.

*** 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**

**Bread for the journey. A feast for hungry hearts. Come!
 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 bread and a pre-filled cup of wine. 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

3 "Go, my chil - dren, fed and nour-ished, clos - er to me.
Grow in love and love by serv - ing, joy - ful and free.
Here my Spir - it's pow - er filled you, here his ten - der com - fort stilled you.
Go, my chil - dren, fed and nour-ished, joy - ful and free."

The image shows a musical score for a hymn. It consists of four staves of music in G major (one sharp) and 3/4 time. The lyrics are written below the notes. The first staff begins with a '3' indicating a triplet. The music is written in a simple, accessible style suitable for a church hymn.

*** PRAYER AFTER COMMUNION**

Let us pray: Generous God, at this table we have tasted your immeasurable grace. As grains of wheat are gathered into one bread, now make us one loaf to feed the world; in the name of Jesus, the Bread of life. **Amen.**

*** BLESSING**

And now a blessing: Beloved, we are God's own people, holy, washed, renewed. God bless you and keep you, shower you with mercy, fill you with courage, and ✝ give you peace. **Amen.**

*** CLOSING SONG**

A Mighty Fortress Is Our God



1 A might - y for - tress is our God, a sword and shield vic -
2 No strength of ours can match his might! We would be lost, re -
3 Though hordes of dev - ils fill the land all threat - 'ning to de -



to - rious; he breaks the cruel op - pres - sor's rod and
ject - ed. But now a cham - pion comes to fight, whom
vour us, we trem - ble not, un - moved we stand; they



wins sal - va - tion glo - rious. The old sa - tan - ic foe
God him - self e - lect - ed. You ask who this may be?
can - not o - ver - pow'r us. Let this world's ty - rant rage;



has sworn to work us woe! With craft and dread - ful might
The Lord of hosts is he! Christ Je - sus, might - y Lord,
in bat - tle we'll en - gage! His might is doomed to fail;



he arms him - self to fight. On earth he has no e - qual.
God's on - ly Son, a - dored. He holds the field vic - to - rious.
God's judg - ment must pre - vail! One lit - tle word sub - dues him.

Text: Martin Luther, 1483–1546; tr. *Lutheran Book of Worship*
Music: EIN FESTE BURG, Martin Luther
Text © 1978 *Lutheran Book of Worship*, admin. Augsburg Fortress

*** SENDING**

Go in peace. Share the bread.

Thanks be to God.

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