



GRACE LUTHERAN CHURCH

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Passion/ Palm Sunday

March 24, 2024

ELW Holy Communion, Setting Three

This week, the center of the church's year, is one of striking contrasts: Jesus rides into Jerusalem surrounded by shouts of glory, only to be left alone to die on the cross, abandoned by even his closest friends. Mark's gospel presents Jesus in his complete human vulnerability: agitated, grieved, scared, forsaken. Though we lament Christ's suffering and all human suffering, we also expect God's salvation: in the wine and bread, Jesus promises that his death will mark a new covenant with all people. We enter this holy week thirsty for the completion of God's astonishing work.

A warm welcome to those who are here worshipping in-person and on-line with us today! Here at Grace Lutheran we believe God is active in your life. Even you being here now is testament of God's calling and leading in your heart, which you have faithfully heeded. So we welcome you, and pray that today you will be nurtured and that the gifts that God has graciously given you will be stirred for the sake of God's mission in the world.

Grace Lutheran worships, prays, and serves on the traditional and unceded lands and territories of the hən̓q̓əmiñəm̓ (Musqueam) and Sk̓wx̓wú7mesh (Squamish) speaking peoples.

GATHERING

ACCLAMATION (p. 256)

Blessed is the one who comes in the name of the Lord.

Hosanna in the highest.

PROCESSIONAL GOSPEL: Mark 11:1-11

The holy gospel according to Mark.

Glory to you, O Lord.

¹When they were approaching Jerusalem, at Bethphage and Bethany, near the Mount of Olives, [Jesus] sent two of his disciples ²and said to them, "Go into the village ahead of you, and immediately as you enter it, you will find tied there a colt that has never been ridden; untie it and bring it. ³If anyone says to you, 'Why are you doing this?' just say this, 'The Lord needs it and will send it back here immediately.'" ⁴They went away and found a colt tied near a door, outside in the street. As they were untying it, ⁵some of the bystanders said to them, "What are you doing, untying the colt?" ⁶They told them what Jesus had said; and they allowed them to take it. ⁷Then they brought the colt to Jesus and threw their cloaks on it; and he sat on it. ⁸Many people spread their cloaks on the road, and others spread leafy branches that they had cut in the fields. ⁹Then those who went ahead and those who followed were shouting,

"Hosanna!

Blessed is the one who comes in the name of the Lord!

¹⁰Blessed is the coming kingdom of our ancestor David!

Hosanna in the highest heaven!"

¹¹Then he entered Jerusalem and went into the temple; and when he had looked around at everything, as it was already late, he went out to Bethany with the twelve.

The gospel of the Lord.

Praise to you, O Christ.

BLESSING OF PALMS (p. 256)

The Lord be with you.

And also with you.

Let us pray.

We praise you, O God, for redeeming the world through our Saviour Jesus Christ. Today he entered Jerusalem in triumph and was proclaimed messiah and king by those who spread garments and branches along his way. Bless these branches and those who carry them. Grant grace to all to follow Jesus in the way of the cross, so that, joined to his death and resurrection, we might enter into life with you; through the same Jesus Christ, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever.

Amen.

PROCESSION:

Let us go forth in peace,

in the name of Christ. Amen.

All Glory, Laud, and Honor (#344)

Refrain

All glory, laud, and honor
to you, redeemer, king,
to whom the lips of children
made sweet hosannas ring.

You are the king of Israel
and David's royal Son,
now in the Lord's name coming,
our King and Blessed One. *Refrain*

The company of angels
are praising you on high;
creation and all mortals
in chorus make reply. *Refrain*

The multitude of pilgrims
with palms before you went;
our praise and prayer and anthems
before you we present. *Refrain*

To you, before your passion,
they sang their hymns of praise.
To you, now high exalted,
our melody we raise. *Refrain*

Their praises you accepted;
accept the prayers we bring,
great author of all goodness,
O good and gracious King. *Refrain*

PRAYER OF THE DAY

As we now shift from the triumphal entry to the contemplation of the passion of our Lord Jesus Christ, meditating on the salvation of the world through his sufferings, death, burial, and resurrection, let us pray.

Everlasting God, in your endless love for the human race you revealed to us all how our Lord Jesus Christ took on our nature and suffered death on the cross. In your mercy enable us to share in his faith in and obedience to your will, that we might see and believe in the glorious victory of his resurrection as he continues to live and reign with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever.

Amen.

WORD

FIRST READING: Isaiah 50:4-9a

A reading from Isaiah.

The image of the servant of God is one of the notable motifs in the book of Isaiah. Today's reading describes the mission of the servant, whom early Christians associated with Jesus. Like Jesus, the servant does not strike back at his detractors but trusts in God's steadfast love.

⁴The Lord God has given me
the tongue of a teacher,
that I may know how to sustain
the weary with a word.
Morning by morning he wakens—
wakens my ear
to listen as those who are taught.
⁵The Lord God has opened my ear,
and I was not rebellious,
I did not turn backward.
⁶I gave my back to those who struck me,
and my cheeks to those who pulled out the beard;
I did not hide my face
from insult and spitting.
⁷The Lord God helps me;
therefore I have not been disgraced;
therefore I have set my face like flint,
and I know that I shall not be put to shame;
⁸he who vindicates me is near.
Who will contend with me?
Let us stand up together.
Who are my adversaries?
Let them confront me.
^{9a}It is the Lord GOD who helps me;
who will declare me guilty?

The word of the Lord.

Thanks be to God.

PSALM: Psalm 31:9-16

⁹Have mercy on me, O LORD, for I am in trouble;
my eye is consumed with sorrow, and also my throat and my belly.
¹⁰**For my life is wasted with grief, and my years with sighing;
my strength fails me because of affliction, and my bones are consumed.**
¹¹I am the scorn of all my enemies, a disgrace to my neighbors, a dismay to my acquaintances;
when they see me in the street they avoid me.
¹²**Like the dead I am forgotten, out of mind;
I am as useless as a broken pot.**
¹³For I have heard the whispering of the crowd; fear is all around;
they put their heads together against me; they plot to take my life.
¹⁴**But as for me, I have trusted in you, O LORD.
I have said, "You are my God.**

- ¹⁵My times are in your hand;
rescue me from the hand of my enemies, and from those who persecute me.
- ¹⁶**Let your face shine upon your servant;
save me in your steadfast love."**

SECOND READING: Philippians 2:5-11

A reading from Philippians.

Christ did not act to attain status and glory but was obedient to God even to the point of death. Following Christ's example, we do not seek personal status or glory but care for others as God cared for us in Christ's death.

- ⁵Let the same mind be in you that was in Christ Jesus,
⁶who, though he was in the form of God,
did not regard equality with God
as something to be exploited,
⁷but emptied himself,
taking the form of a slave,
being born in human likeness.
And being found in human form,
⁸he humbled himself
and became obedient to the point of death—
even death on a cross.
⁹Therefore God also highly exalted him
and gave him the name
that is above every name,
¹⁰so that at the name of Jesus
every knee should bend,
in heaven and on earth and under the earth,
¹¹and every tongue should confess
that Jesus Christ is Lord,
to the glory of God the Father.

The word of the Lord.

Thanks be to God.

GOSPEL ACCLAMATION (p. 142)

GOSPEL: Mark 14:1- 15:47

The holy gospel according to Mark.

Glory to you, O Lord.

The passion story in Mark's gospel presents Jesus as one who dies abandoned by all. He shows himself to be the true Son of God by giving his life for those who have forsaken him.

- ¹It was two days before the Passover and the festival of Unleavened Bread. The chief priests and the scribes were looking for a way to arrest Jesus by stealth and kill him; ²for they said, "Not during the festival, or there may be a riot among the people."

³While he was at Bethany in the house of Simon the leper, as he sat at the table, a woman came with an alabaster jar of very costly ointment of nard, and she broke open the jar and poured the ointment on his head. ⁴But some were there who said to one another in anger, "Why was the ointment wasted in this way? ⁵For this ointment could have been sold for more

than three hundred denarii, and the money given to the poor.” And they scolded her. ⁶But Jesus said, “Let her alone; why do you trouble her? She has performed a good service for me. ⁷For you always have the poor with you, and you can show kindness to them whenever you wish; but you will not always have me. ⁸She has done what she could; she has anointed my body beforehand for its burial. ⁹Truly I tell you, wherever the good news is proclaimed in the whole world, what she has done will be told in remembrance of her.”

¹⁰Then Judas Iscariot, who was one of the twelve, went to the chief priests in order to betray him to them. ¹¹When they heard it, they were greatly pleased, and promised to give him money. So he began to look for an opportunity to betray him.

¹²On the first day of Unleavened Bread, when the Passover lamb is sacrificed, his disciples said to him, “Where do you want us to go and make the preparations for you to eat the Passover?” ¹³So he sent two of his disciples, saying to them, “Go into the city, and a man carrying a jar of water will meet you; follow him, ¹⁴and wherever he enters, say to the owner of the house, ‘The Teacher asks, Where is my guest room where I may eat the Passover with my disciples?’ ¹⁵He will show you a large room upstairs, furnished and ready. Make preparations for us there.” ¹⁶So the disciples set out and went to the city, and found everything as he had told them; and they prepared the Passover meal.

¹⁷When it was evening, he came with the twelve. ¹⁸And when they had taken their places and were eating, Jesus said, “Truly I tell you, one of you will betray me, one who is eating with me.” ¹⁹They began to be distressed and to say to him one after another, “Surely, not I?” ²⁰He said to them, “It is one of the twelve, one who is dipping bread into the bowl with me. ²¹For the Son of Man goes as it is written of him, but woe to that one by whom the Son of Man is betrayed! It would have been better for that one not to have been born.”

²²While they were eating, he took a loaf of bread, and after blessing it he broke it, gave it to them, and said, “Take; this is my body.” ²³Then he took a cup, and after giving thanks he gave it to them, and all of them drank from it. ²⁴He said to them, “This is my blood of the covenant, which is poured out for many. ²⁵Truly I tell you, I will never again drink of the fruit of the vine until that day when I drink it new in the kingdom of God.”

²⁶When they had sung the hymn, they went out to the Mount of Olives. ²⁷And Jesus said to them, “You will all become deserters; for it is written,

‘I will strike the shepherd,
and the sheep will be scattered.’

²⁸But after I am raised up, I will go before you to Galilee.” ²⁹Peter said to him, “Even though all become deserters, I will not.” ³⁰Jesus said to him, “Truly I tell you, this day, this very night, before the rooster crows twice, you will deny me three times.” ³¹But he said vehemently, “Even though I must die with you, I will not deny you.” And all of them said the same.

³²They went to a place called Gethsemane; and he said to his disciples, “Sit here while I pray.” ³³He took with him Peter and James and John, and began to be distressed and agitated. ³⁴And he said to them, “I am deeply grieved, even to death; remain here, and keep awake.” ³⁵And going a little farther, he threw himself on the ground and prayed that, if it were possible, the hour might pass from him. ³⁶He said, “Abba, Father, for you all things are possible; remove this cup from me; yet, not what I want, but what you want.” ³⁷He came and found them sleeping; and he said to Peter, “Simon, are you asleep? Could you not keep awake one hour? ³⁸Keep awake and pray that you may not come into the time of trial; the spirit indeed is willing, but the

flesh is weak.”³⁹ And again he went away and prayed, saying the same words.⁴⁰ And once more he came and found them sleeping, for their eyes were very heavy; and they did not know what to say to him.⁴¹ He came a third time and said to them, “Are you still sleeping and taking your rest? Enough! The hour has come; the Son of Man is betrayed into the hands of sinners.⁴² Get up, let us be going. See, my betrayer is at hand.”

⁴³Immediately, while he was still speaking, Judas, one of the twelve, arrived; and with him there was a crowd with swords and clubs, from the chief priests, the scribes, and the elders.⁴⁴ Now the betrayer had given them a sign, saying, “The one I will kiss is the man; arrest him and lead him away under guard.”⁴⁵ So when he came, he went up to him at once and said, “Rabbi!” and kissed him.⁴⁶ Then they laid hands on him and arrested him.⁴⁷ But one of those who stood near drew his sword and struck the slave of the high priest, cutting off his ear.⁴⁸ Then Jesus said to them, “Have you come out with swords and clubs to arrest me as though I were a bandit?⁴⁹ Day after day I was with you in the temple teaching, and you did not arrest me. But let the scriptures be fulfilled.”⁵⁰ All of them deserted him and fled.

⁵¹A certain young man was following him, wearing nothing but a linen cloth. They caught hold of him,⁵² but he left the linen cloth and ran off naked.

⁵³They took Jesus to the high priest; and all the chief priests, the elders, and the scribes were assembled.⁵⁴ Peter had followed him at a distance, right into the courtyard of the high priest; and he was sitting with the guards, warming himself at the fire.⁵⁵ Now the chief priests and the whole council were looking for testimony against Jesus to put him to death; but they found none.⁵⁶ For many gave false testimony against him, and their testimony did not agree.⁵⁷ Some stood up and gave false testimony against him, saying,⁵⁸ “We heard him say, ‘I will destroy this temple that is made with hands, and in three days I will build another, not made with hands.’”⁵⁹ But even on this point their testimony did not agree.⁶⁰ Then the high priest stood up before them and asked Jesus, “Have you no answer? What is it that they testify against you?”⁶¹ But he was silent and did not answer. Again the high priest asked him, “Are you the Messiah, the Son of the Blessed One?”⁶² Jesus said, “I am; and

‘you will see the Son of Man seated at the right hand of the Power,’ and ‘coming with the clouds of heaven.’”

⁶³Then the high priest tore his clothes and said, “Why do we still need witnesses?⁶⁴ You have heard his blasphemy! What is your decision?” All of them condemned him as deserving death.⁶⁵ Some began to spit on him, to blindfold him, and to strike him, saying to him, “Prophecy!” The guards also took him over and beat him.

⁶⁶While Peter was below in the courtyard, one of the servant-girls of the high priest came by.⁶⁷ When she saw Peter warming himself, she stared at him and said, “You also were with Jesus, the man from Nazareth.”⁶⁸ But he denied it, saying, “I do not know or understand what you are talking about.” And he went out into the forecourt. Then the rooster crowed.⁶⁹ And the servant-girl, on seeing him, began again to say to the bystanders, “This man is one of them.”⁷⁰ But again he denied it. Then after a little while the bystanders again said to Peter, “Certainly you are one of them; for you are a Galilean.”⁷¹ But he began to curse, and he swore an oath, “I do not know this man you are talking about.”⁷² At that moment the rooster crowed for the second time. Then Peter remembered that Jesus had said to him, “Before the rooster crows twice, you will deny me three times.” And he broke down and wept.

^{15:1}As soon as it was morning, the chief priests held a consultation with the elders and scribes and the whole council. They bound Jesus, led him away, and handed him over to Pilate. ²Pilate asked him, "Are you the King of the Jews?" He answered him, "You say so." ³Then the chief priests accused him of many things. ⁴Pilate asked him again, "Have you no answer? See how many charges they bring against you." ⁵But Jesus made no further reply, so that Pilate was amazed.

⁶Now at the festival he used to release a prisoner for them, anyone for whom they asked. ⁷Now a man called Barabbas was in prison with the rebels who had committed murder during the insurrection. ⁸So the crowd came and began to ask Pilate to do for them according to his custom. ⁹Then he answered them, "Do you want me to release for you the King of the Jews?" ¹⁰For he realized that it was out of jealousy that the chief priests had handed him over. ¹¹But the chief priests stirred up the crowd to have him release Barabbas for them instead. ¹²Pilate spoke to them again, "Then what do you wish me to do with the man you call the King of the Jews?" ¹³They shouted back, "Crucify him!" ¹⁴Pilate asked them, "Why, what evil has he done?" But they shouted all the more, "Crucify him!" ¹⁵So Pilate, wishing to satisfy the crowd, released Barabbas for them; and after flogging Jesus, he handed him over to be crucified.

¹⁶Then the soldiers led him into the courtyard of the palace (that is, the governor's headquarters); and they called together the whole cohort. ¹⁷And they clothed him in a purple cloak; and after twisting some thorns into a crown, they put it on him. ¹⁸And they began saluting him, "Hail, King of the Jews!" ¹⁹They struck his head with a reed, spat upon him, and knelt down in homage to him. ²⁰After mocking him, they stripped him of the purple cloak and put his own clothes on him. Then they led him out to crucify him.

²¹They compelled a passer-by, who was coming in from the country, to carry his cross; it was Simon of Cyrene, the father of Alexander and Rufus. ²²Then they brought Jesus to the place called Golgotha (which means the place of a skull). ²³And they offered him wine mixed with myrrh; but he did not take it. ²⁴And they crucified him, and divided his clothes among them, casting lots to decide what each should take.

²⁵It was nine o'clock in the morning when they crucified him. ²⁶The inscription of the charge against him read, "The King of the Jews." ²⁷And with him they crucified two bandits, one on his right and one on his left. ²⁹Those who passed by derided him, shaking their heads and saying, "Aha! You who would destroy the temple and build it in three days, ³⁰save yourself, and come down from the cross!" ³¹In the same way the chief priests, along with the scribes, were also mocking him among themselves and saying, "He saved others; he cannot save himself. ³²Let the Messiah, the King of Israel, come down from the cross now, so that we may see and believe." Those who were crucified with him also taunted him.

³³When it was noon, darkness came over the whole land until three in the afternoon. ³⁴At three o'clock Jesus cried out with a loud voice, "Eloi, Eloi, lema sabachthani?" which means, "My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?" ³⁵When some of the bystanders heard it, they said, "Listen, he is calling for Elijah." ³⁶And someone ran, filled a sponge with sour wine, put it on a stick, and gave it to him to drink, saying, "Wait, let us see whether Elijah will come to take him down." ³⁷Then Jesus gave a loud cry and breathed his last. ³⁸And the curtain of the temple was torn in two, from top to bottom. ³⁹Now when the centurion, who stood facing him, saw that in this way he breathed his last, he said, "Truly this man was God's Son!"

⁴⁰There were also women looking on from a distance; among them were Mary Magdalene, and Mary the mother of James the younger and of Joses, and Salome. ⁴¹These used to follow

him and provided for him when he was in Galilee; and there were many other women who had come up with him to Jerusalem.

⁴²When evening had come, and since it was the day of Preparation, that is, the day before the sabbath, ⁴³Joseph of Arimathea, a respected member of the council, who was also himself waiting expectantly for the kingdom of God, went boldly to Pilate and asked for the body of Jesus. ⁴⁴Then Pilate wondered if he were already dead; and summoning the centurion, he asked him whether he had been dead for some time. ⁴⁵When he learned from the centurion that he was dead, he granted the body to Joseph. ⁴⁶Then Joseph bought a linen cloth, and taking down the body, wrapped it in the linen cloth, and laid it in a tomb that had been hewn out of the rock. He then rolled a stone against the door of the tomb. ⁴⁷Mary Magdalene and Mary the mother of Jesus saw where the body was laid.

The gospel of the Lord.

Praise to you, O Christ.

SERMON

Holy God, source of all life, send to us your Spirit that we might have in us the same mind as Christ, full of humility and servanthood. Awaken our ears and open our hearts and strengthen us with the power of your Word: Jesus Christ our Saviour and Lord. **Amen.**

So last week I mentioned briefly that one of my uncles wasn't doing so well in the hospital, and that he could go at any moment. And while that wasn't really the point of my sermon, I appreciated the show of support and sympathy from many of you afterwards. So I thought I should just update you all that my uncle did in fact pass away about 2 days later. This was my dad's oldest brother, and he has grandkids around the same age that my kids were when my dad passed away. So I can imagine what difficulties my cousin might be having while trying to deal with this whole situation with her little ones.

Because death is a tough one, isn't it. I mean, we try to shield our kids from being exposed to it to a certain extent, we protect ourselves from it happening to us, and it just in general makes us feel uncomfortable. We don't really understand it, but we know for sure that it hurts and we don't like it. We don't like it when it happens. We don't like thinking about it. We don't even like to say the words so we clean it up by using softer terms like "left" or "passed away" (both of which I've already used in this sermon alone, by the way). So death is just tough because on the most part, we don't really know what to do with it, because in most of our minds, dying is bad and living is way better.

So we might avoid death and anything that might resemble it. We might dodge its realities and having to deal with it. We might just pretend that it doesn't exist or won't happen to us. We wish people to live long and happy lives.

Well, maybe not as much anymore, at least. I know I haven't spent a great deal of time on this planet, but I know that even in my short years that the quality of life here on earth has gone downhill a great deal. With the climate change, the political landscape the way it is in this country and globally, and how people even after all these years can't seem to put aside their differences and get along, it's getting more and more scary just to imagine what a long life would even bring.

Don't get me wrong, I'm not wishing death on anyone, nor am I saying that I'd rather be gone than here. I'm just saying that life is pretty hard as it is right now and it only seems to be getting worse. So I worry about the future for our kids. I worry about the lives they will have to lead. I worry about where this world is heading and how for a lot of people death actually is the only way to escape the horrors and atrocities that come with life.

Well, this is a pretty dark way to commemorate Palm/Passion Sunday, I guess.

But it makes sense, I suppose. I mean the Passion part of today is about the death of Jesus, I'm sure you all got that after that super long reading. But also today, much to my chagrin that I talk about almost every year, is about the Palm part, the Triumphal Entry, the moment when Jesus is recognised for all that he is and all that he came to do. Let's not forget about that and let it be marred by the jeers and insults of the crowds so shortly after, calling for the crucifixion of him to whom they were just pleading to save them.

While normally I talk about this strange plot twist in the story, this time around I want to focus on something different. This is something that I didn't quite notice before, like ever from what I remember, but I think it adds quite a bit to the story. See in our processional gospel that we got for today, we all know that Jesus comes in triumphantly into Jerusalem on a donkey or colt or whatever, and the people are elated and give him a royal welcome. That is great and all, but what caught me is what happened at the end of this passage.

In verse 11 it says that Jesus looked around and left. Jesus saw what was going on in the temple and removed himself from it. Jesus, this man who was just honoured as a prophet and Messiah in this great holy city, took in the sights and sounds and decided that he wasn't going to stay there.

He probably could have if he wanted to. I'm sure someone would be happy to put him up for a couple of days, what, with the fanfare that he received just moments earlier. But the text is clear that he didn't. Instead he returned to Bethany for the night. Maybe it's because he just wanted to stay with his friends Mary and Martha who lived in Bethany. Maybe he had to go return that donkey they borrowed before a certain time to avoid the late fees. Or maybe he saw the state of the city that he loves, maybe he saw how the people treated each other, maybe he saw the world for what it became... that is, full of corruption, greed, hate, and reasons to not want to be here any longer.

Again, don't get me wrong, I'm not saying that Jesus wanted to die or planned to get killed. But what I'm saying is that even the few chapters that we have between the Palm and Passion texts are full of the people trying to trap Jesus, trying to discredit him and make him look like the traitor and the antagonist, trying to prove that he is worthy of the cross. So I imagine the frustration of Jesus going through this. I imagine how fed up he must have been. I imagine the humble obedience and servitude to God that it took for him to willingly walk to the death they wanted for him.

Because as difficult as it was for Jesus to see just how things were, as hard as it must have been for Jesus to accept that society had been so shot to heck in spite of the best intentions of prophets and people of faith, as darned near impossible as it was for Jesus to show these people their value and worth, Jesus decided to love them anyway.

He still loves them all anyway.

And he showed that love not by setting everyone straight through brute force or disciplinary punishment. He revealed that love not through guilting and sin shaming the people. He proved his love for all, including those who were actively setting him up to die, by being a part of this world, by being susceptible to the suffering caused by the corruption, by being a victim of the evil that ran rampant throughout all of our hearts, and with God's help, showed us how it all can be forgiven.

See while the world wanted him dead, Jesus didn't stay that way.

So in this dichotomy of the Palm and Passion narratives, both remembered on the same day, we can see the movement from the entry to the exit, the praising to the punishing, the celebration to the crucifixion. And in it, we can see Jesus gently teaching us all that even when the world can be difficult, even when the anger all around is too much, even when death seems to lurk around every corner and might even seem enticing, that life continues to be worth living.

Because life is not just what happens in our time here on earth, but it is what happens eternally through us, through our community to which we belong and contribute to, through the difference that we make even in the time that we're given, allowing us to be part of a greater story of the human race that includes us all. This is the promise of the cross, this is the hope in our redemption, this is the message of the gospel. That while the world was seeped in sin, God has decided to love and save it anyway.

So as we embark on this holiest of weeks, may we see the love that is greater than any hatred, the light that is greater than any darkness, the good that is greater than any evil, and embrace it knowing that we are welcomed, accepted, and saved by the God full of grace, mercy, and compassion, forgiving us all. Thanks be to God. Amen.

HYMN OF THE DAY: Go to Dark Gethsemane (#347)

CREED (p. 105)

Together with all contemplating the cross this day, let us confess the Christian faith with the Apostle's 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

Trusting in God's promise to reconcile all things, let us pray for the church, the well-being of creation, and all those in need. Each petition will end with "hear us, O God," and you are all invited to respond with **your mercy is great**. Hear us, O God, **your mercy is great**.

O Lord, you have mercy on us when we are in trouble and rescue us and lead us into safety. Expand our ministry and may the knowledge of your love and grace be spread to all the world. We lift in prayer this day our neighbouring faith communities; those who use this building for worship, work, and play; our partners Anglican Church of Canada and Moravian Church in Canada; and our bishops, rostered ministers, congregations, and ministries of the ELCIC. In particular, we pray for Living Faith Lutheran Church in Sechelt and their interim pastor Richard Hergesheimer, and United interim pastor Glenn Inglis; and for Lord of Life Mission in Sandspit and their interim pastor Jim Whaley. Hear us, O God, **your mercy is great**.

O Lord, our trust is in you for you have shown us your love through all of creation. May our care for all that you have made and have entrusted to us be pleasing to you, as we continue with consideration of the wellbeing of the future generations. Hear us, O God, **your mercy is great**.

O Lord, this world is full of reasons to be afraid as the nations plot against nations and citizens act with prejudice against other citizens. Instill in all world leaders and politicians your wisdom and grace, that their judgments and policies be for the good of all. We also pray for the continued support of those that we've sponsored to come into our country: Abraham Barhane; and Solyana Amanuel; as well as for those who have yet to arrive: Maekele Kiflu, Selam Haile and their children; and Filimon Abraha. Hear us, O God, **your mercy is great**.

O Lord, in our grief and afflictions we sometimes feel like we are forgotten and out of mind. Remind us all that you do not forget us, but you hold us in your loving arms of healing and wholeness forever. Especially we pray for Kathy and Raj; Bryan and Chona; Bev and family; Ron, Tess, and Mineko; Beulah; Sukhwant; John and Betty; Laura; Kandie; Thomas; William; Chris; Larry; Walter; Piet; Allan's family; Jeanette; Pat and Patty; Perry; and all those we name aloud or quietly in our hearts at this time...
Hear us, O God, **your mercy is great**.

O Lord, your face shines upon us and you save us with your steadfast love, joining us with you and all the saints forever. May our connection to you and them always inform us in our faith, service, and community life. Hear us, O God, **your mercy is great**.

Into your hands, O God, we commend all for whom we pray, trusting that you will accompany us on this journey of life, through Jesus Christ our Lord. **Amen**.

PEACE (p. 143)

The peace of Christ be with you always.

And also with you.

MEAL

DIALOGUE (p. 144)

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 our thanks and praise.

PREFACE

It is indeed right, our duty, and our joy, that we should at all times and places give thanks and praise to you, almighty God, through our Saviour Jesus Christ, whose suffering and death revealed to us all the gracious salvation that you offer, that joins us with the choirs of angels, the hosts of heaven, and the whole church on earth, allowing us to together praise your name with this unending hymn:

HOLY, HOLY, HOLY (p. 144)

THANKSGIVING AT THE TABLE

O Lord, your mercy can be seen even in our times of trouble, sorrow, and grief, and you strengthen us even in our times of affliction. In our brokenness, we feel the sting of death and the fear of shame, but you have shown us that you are faithful and trustworthy. We believe that our time is in your hands, and you rescue us from oppression and persecution by sending to us your Son Jesus to be one of us, to teach, to serve, and to love.

For on the night that he was betrayed, your Son Jesus sat with his friends for a meal, where he took the bread, gave thanks, and shared it with them all saying, "Take and eat, this is my body broken for you. Do this for the remembrance of me."

Then after they ate, he took the cup, gave thanks, and shared that around the table for them to drink from saying, "This cup is the new covenant in my blood, shed for you and for all people for the forgiveness of sin. Do this for the remembrance of me."

It is through this food that we share where we can see God's face shining on us and saving us with a steadfast love, even as we together proclaim this mystery of faith:

Christ has died.

Christ is risen.

Christ will come again.

In Christ's death we see our guilt. In Christ's rising we see your grace. In Christ's promised return we see our hope, knowing that we are not alone, but surrounded by the cloud of witnesses for all that you are and all that you do. So all honour and glory belong to you, O God, through Jesus Christ, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, now and forever.

Amen.

LORD'S PRAYER (p. 145)

Gathered at the foot of the cross, let us pray as Jesus taught us.

**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.**

INVITATION TO COMMUNION

Taste and see, God's steadfast grace and mercy.

Thanks be to God.

COMMUNION

COMMUNION HYMNS: Lamb of God (p. 146)

O Sacred Head, Now Wounded (#351)

PRAYER AFTER COMMUNION

Compassionate God, you have fed us and nourished us again with your Word and truth. Sustain us as we enter into this holiest of weeks, looking ahead to the redemptive resurrection of Christ, that we be strengthened for your service and the proclamation of your grace and mercy to all the world, through Jesus our Saviour and Lord. **Amen.**

SENDING

BLESSING

May the Creator God who defeats all evil,
the Christ God who bears our pain,
and the Comforter God who abides with us forever,
bless you with a zeal for justice, a humility for forgiveness, and a passion for peace, now and forever. **Amen.**

SENDING SONG: Where Charity and Love Prevail (#359)

DISMISSAL

Go in peace, serve the Lord with the humility of Christ.

Thanks be to God.