



Sunday, March 17, 2024

Festival of St. Patrick

At sixteen Patrick was kidnapped by Irish pirates and sold into slavery in Ireland. He himself admitted that up to this point he cared little for God. He escaped after six years, returned to his family in southwest Britain, and began to prepare for ordained ministry. He later returned to Ireland, this time to serve as a bishop and missionary. He made his base in the north of Ireland and from there made many missionary journeys with much success. In his autobiography he denounced the slave trade, perhaps from his own experience of being enslaved. Patrick's famous baptismal hymn to the Trinity, "I bind unto myself today" (ELW 450), can be used as meditation on Lent's call to return to our baptism.

GATHERING

WELCOME

This is the day the Lord has made.
We will rejoice and be glad in it.

CONFESSION AND ABSOLUTION

All may make the sign of the cross in remembrance of baptism:

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 ELW 556 vs. 1,3 *Morning Has Broken*

- 1 Morning has broken like the first morning;
blackbird has spoken like the first bird.
Praise for the singing! Praise for the morning!
Praise for them, springing fresh from the Word!
- 3 Mine is the sunlight! Mine is the morning,
born of the one light Eden saw play!
Praise with elation, praise ev'ry morning,
God's recreation of the new day!

Text: Eleanor Farjeon, 1881-1965

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GREETING

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.

CANTICLE OF PRAISE ELW 751 *O Lord, Hear My Prayer (first verse only, repeat)*

O Lord, hear my prayer,
O Lord, hear my prayer:
when I call, answer me.
O Lord, hear my prayer,
O Lord, hear my prayer:
come and listen to me.

Text: Psalm 102:1-2; Taizé Community, adapt.

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PRAYER OF THE DAY

God of grace and might, we praise you for your servant Patrick, to whom you gave gifts to make the good news known to the people of Ireland.

Raise up, we pray, in every country, heralds and evangelists of your kingdom, so that the world may know the immeasurable riches of our Savior, Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

(Please be seated)

WORD

SPECIAL MUSIC

Reading: Isaiah 62:1-7

The people's return to Judah after the exile was marred by economic and political troubles. Nevertheless, the prophet declares, Jerusalem and Judah will be restored. God will rejoice over Jerusalem as a bridegroom rejoices over the bride, and the people are called to the celebration.

¹For Zion's sake I will not keep silent,
and for Jerusalem's sake I will not rest,
until her vindication shines out like the dawn,
and her salvation like a burning torch.

²The nations shall see your vindication,
and all the kings your glory;
and you shall be called by a new name

that the mouth of the LORD will give.
³You shall be a crown of beauty in the hand of the LORD,
 and a royal diadem in the hand of your God.
⁴You shall no more be termed Forsaken,
 and your land shall no more be termed Desolate;
 but you shall be called My Delight Is in Her,
 and your land Married;
 for the LORD delights in you,
 and your land shall be married.
⁵For as a young man marries a young woman,
 so shall your builder marry you,
 and as the bridegroom rejoices over the bride,
 so shall your God rejoice over you.
 Upon your walls, O Jerusalem,
 I have posted sentinels.
 All day and all night
 they shall never be silent.
 You who remind the LORD,
 take no rest,
 And give him no rest
 until he establishes Jerusalem.
 And makes it renowned throughout the earth.
 Word of God. Word of Life.
Thanks be to God.

(Please stand as you are able)

GOSPEL ACCLAMATION *Return to the Lord*

Return to the Lord, your God,
 For he is gracious and merciful,
 Slow to anger, and abounding in steadfast love,
 And abounding in steadfast love.

Text: Evangelical Lutheran Worship

Gospel: Luke 24:44-53

On the day of his ascension, Jesus leaves his disciples with a commission, a blessing, and a promise of the Holy Spirit.

⁴⁴[Jesus said to the eleven and those with them,] “These are my words that I spoke to you while I was still with you—that everything written about me in the law of Moses, the prophets, and the psalms must be fulfilled.”⁴⁵Then he opened their minds to understand the scriptures, ⁴⁶and he said to them, “Thus it is written, that the Messiah is to suffer and to rise from the dead on the third day, ⁴⁷and that repentance and forgiveness of sins is to be proclaimed in his name to all nations, beginning from Jerusalem. ⁴⁸You are witnesses of these things. ⁴⁹And see, I am sending upon you what my Father promised; so stay here in the city until you have been clothed with power from on high.”

⁵⁰Then he led them out as far as Bethany, and, lifting up his hands, he blessed them. ⁵¹While he was blessing them, he withdrew from them and was carried up into heaven. ⁵²And they worshiped him, and returned to Jerusalem with great joy; ⁵³and they were continually in the temple blessing God.

The gospel of the Lord.
Praise to you, O Christ.

(Please be seated)

Music: Jesus Loves Me – ELW #595

CHILDREN'S SERMON

Music: *Lord, Listen to your Children Praying* – ELW #752

SERMON

SONG OF THE DAY ELW #793 vs.1,4 *Be Thou My Vision*

- 1 Be thou my vision, O Lord of my heart;
naught be all else to me, save that thou art:
thou my best thought both by day and by night,
waking or sleeping, thy presence my light.
- 4 Light of my soul, after victory won,
may I reach heaven's joys, O heaven's Sun!
Heart of my own heart, whatever befall,
still be my vision, O Ruler of all.

Text: Irish, 8th cent.; vers. Eleanor H. Hull, 1860-1935, alt.; tr. Mary E. Byrne, 1880-1931

(Please stand as you are able)

Let us confess our faith in the words of the

NICENE CREED

We believe in one God,

**the Father, the Almighty, maker of heaven and earth,
of all that is, seen and unseen.**

We believe in one Lord, Jesus Christ,

**the only Son of God, eternally begotten of the Father,
God from God, Light from Light, true God from true God,
begotten, not made, of one Being with the Father;
through him all things were made.**

For us and for our salvation he came down from heaven,

was incarnate of the Holy Spirit and the Virgin Mary and became truly human.

**For our sake he was crucified under Pontius Pilate;
he suffered death and was buried.**

**On the third day he rose again
in accordance with the Scriptures;
he ascended into heaven**

and is seated at the right hand of the Father.

**He will come again in glory to judge the living and the dead,
and his kingdom will have no end.**

We believe in the Holy Spirit, the Lord, the giver of life,

**who proceeds from the Father and the Son,
who with the Father and the Son is worshiped and glorified,
who has spoken through the prophets.**

We believe in one holy catholic and apostolic Church.

We acknowledge one baptism for the forgiveness of sins.

**We look for the resurrection of the dead,
and the life of the world to come. Amen**

(Please stand as you are able)

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 of the covenant, through the church you draw us into community. We give thanks for the means of grace around which we gather. Inspire writers, musicians, and artists whose creative gifts adorn our worship. Hear us, O God.

Your mercy is great.

God of all that exists, you lavish the earth with extravagant beauty. Preserve the rich and complex diversity of living things. Support local, national, and international efforts to protect the environment for future generations. Hear us, O God.

Your mercy is great.

God of the nations, you desire peace and plenty for all people. Defend those who challenge oppression and expose corruption. Support advocates for human rights, social justice, and the welfare of children. Hear us, O God.

Your mercy is great.

God of good will, you restore what is broken. We pray for any experiencing estrangement, conflict, or abuse in families and intimate relationships. Protect and comfort all who are vulnerable, especially those living in institutions. Hear us, O God.

Your mercy is great.

God of every time and place, you are with us. Support ministries of prayer and presence in this congregation. Move us to reach out to any who are homebound, lonely, grieving, in treatment, or ill. Hear us, O God.

Your mercy is great.

Here other intercessions may be offered.

Accept our thanksgiving for the people you surround us with, especially for those who celebrate their lives and birth this week:

Katy Sojka

Wanda Brogren

enrich them with a sense of joy and grace for yet another year. Hear us, O God.

Your mercy is great.

We pray for the end of gun violence, especially where it concerns children. We pray for the family of Barry, a Decatur student killed Monday. Surround his family and friends with comfort and care, and allow something good to come for this tragedy. Hear us, O God.

Your mercy is great.

Save us from ourselves, from racism in all its hidden forms, from hollow words without actions, forgive us, renew us, call us to action. Hear us, O God.

Your mercy is great.

For those fighting cancer and other serious illnesses, grant strength and grace. We pray for doctors, nurses, technicians, researchers and all who work toward treatments and cures. Hear us, O God.

Your mercy is great.

For police officers and firefighters, for peacekeepers and military personnel, and for the leaders of governments, that they provide protection to all people, especially the most vulnerable. Hear us, O God.

Your mercy is great.

For your people in the midst of war, civil unrest, or conflict, grant protection, strength and hope for a better tomorrow. Bring peace and an end to the conflict. Hear us, O God.

Your mercy is great.

For Vicar Tom Helmich this year, may your Spirit surround him with all that is needful and joy-filled. Hear us, O God.

Your mercy is great.

God of promise, we give thanks for the saints whose faith inspires us especially Patrick, missionary to Ireland, whom we commemorate today. Grant us faith to trust in your everlasting love. 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.

PEACE

The peace of the Lord be with you always.

And also with you.

Share the peace ...

(Please be seated)

MEAL

OFFERING

The Worship/Communion Registration Card may be placed in the offering plate as it is passed.

Thank you for your support of our ministry.

(Please stand as you are able)

OFFERTORY ELW #186 *Create In Me a Clean Heart*

Create in me a clean heart, O God,
and renew a right spirit within me.

Cast me not away from your presence,
and take not your Holy Spirit from me.

Restore to me the joy of your salvation,
and uphold me with your free Spirit.

Text: Lutheran Book of Worship

THE LORD'S SUPPER: Words of Institution

Grace at the table: 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

(Please stand as you are able)

COMMUNION SONG *Lamb of God*

Lamb of God, you take away the sin of the world; have mercy on us.

Lamb of God, you take away the sin of the world; have mercy on us.

Lamb of God, you take away the sin of the world; grant us peace, grant us peace.

Text: Evangelical Lutheran Worship

COMMUNION BLESSING

POST COMMUNION CANTICLE ELW #208 *Praise to You, O God of Mercy*

Praise to you, O God of mercy:

thanks be to you forever!
Raising high the weak and lowly:
thanks be to you forever!

Text: *Now the Feast and Celebration*, Marty Haugen, b. 1950

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SENDING

(Please be seated)

ANNOUNCEMENTS

BLESSING

May the Lord bless you and keep you,
may the Lord smile upon you and be gracious to you,
may the Lord look upon you with favor and give you peace. + Amen.

SENDING SONG ELW 742 vs. 1 *What a Friend We Have in Jesus*

1 What a friend we have in Jesus,
all our sins and griefs to bear!
What a privilege to carry
ev'rything to God in prayer!
Oh, what peace we often forfeit;
oh, what needless pain we bear--
all because we do not carry
ev'rything to God in prayer!

Text: Joseph Scriven, 1820-1886

DISMISSAL

Go in peace. Share your bread.

Thanks be to God.

ADDITIONAL READINGS FOR THE DAY

Jeremiah 31:31-34
Psalm 51:1-12, 17-22
Psalm 119:9-16(alternate)
Hebrews 5:5-10
John 12:20-33

NEXT WEEK'S READINGS FOR

March 24, 2024

Palm Sunday

Isaiah 50:4-9a

The servant of the LORD submits to suffering

Psalm 31:9-16

Into your hands, O LORD, I commend my spirit. (Ps. 31:5)

Philippians 2:5-11

Humbled to the point of death on a cross

Mark 14:1--15:47

The passion of the Lord

Mark 15:1-39 [40-47] (alternate)

The passion of the Lord

GOSPEL MESSAGE

March 17, 2024

FIFTH SUNDAY IN LENT

Called Where Jesus Goes

It isn't only the first disciples who become uncomfortable when Jesus talked about his approaching death. We often do as well. Perhaps focusing on the crucifixion seems gruesome. Perhaps it conjures in us the (false) story of a divine parent who cannot forgive without punishing someone, with Jesus standing in as that one. Maybe it feels like a morbid emphasis on sin.

Jesus did not understand himself as the victim of divine punishment. He entered into suffering as a part of his glorification, working with—not against—his Father. He knows that human life has become twisted under the powers of sin and death so that if we grasp onto our “life in this world,” we will miss God’s gracious intention for us. Christ’s judgment of sin is not for our exclusion. Jesus never seeks to shame us, but condemns sin in order to deliver us from its power.

Perhaps, however, we shy away from talk of Christ’s death because we sense, on some level, that if our Lord must go to the cross, then so too must we. Jesus declares, “Whoever serves me must follow me.” Discipleship is a summons to die to ourselves and lose our life on this world’s terms. Paradoxically, this cruciform journey is the road to true fruitfulness and flourishing. It begins in our baptism and is nourished at the Lord’s table. It is sustained by the fellowship of faith, where together we hear the life-giving word of Jesus. It will find completion on the day of resurrection.

Our souls long for this way of salvation. Deep within us all, a voice whispers, “We wish to see Jesus.” God knows this need, so Jesus is lifted up to drive out the powers of sin and death. God’s unending mercy is displayed. For the same reason, we come together so that in hearing the word and sharing the eucharistic meal, and in our prayers, laments, and praises, Jesus may be lifted up to draw us, and all people, to salvation.

From sundaysandseasons.com.

Upcoming Commemorations

Gregory the Great, Bishop of Rome, died 604

Tuesday, March 12, 2024

Born into wealth and power, Gregory was for a time the chief administrator of the city of Rome. Giving this up for a life in the church, he was elected pope in 590. He influenced public worship through the establishment of a lectionary and prayers to correlate with the readings. Gregorian chant is named in his honor.

Patrick, bishop, missionary to Ireland, died 461

Sunday, March 17, 2024

A native of Britain, Patrick was kidnapped by pirates at age sixteen and sold into slavery in Ireland. After a few years, he escaped, returned home, and entered the ministry. Returning to Ireland, he successfully served as a bishop and missionary there.

Joseph, Guardian of Jesus

Tuesday, March 19, 2024

Though the Bible tells us little about the husband of Jesus' mother Mary, we know that he was a carpenter or builder by trade. He is also shown as being devoted both to God and to Mary and Jesus. It is assumed that he died before Jesus became an adult.

Thomas Cranmer, Bishop of Canterbury, martyr, died 1556

Thursday, March 21, 2024

Cranmer's lasting achievement is contributing to and overseeing the creation of the Book of Common Prayer, which remains (in revised form) the worship book of the Anglican Communion. He was burned at the stake under Queen Mary for his support of the Protestant Reformation.

Jonathan Edwards, teacher, missionary to American Indians, died 1758

Friday, March 22, 2024

A Puritan minister in Connecticut, Edwards is remembered as being a great preacher. Though his most famous sermon talks at length about hell, he was more concerned with God's love. He served both as missionary to the Housatonic people in Massachusetts, and as president of the future Princeton University.