



*“Grow in the grace and knowledge of our  
Savior Jesus Christ.”*

*2 Peter 3:18*

Third Sunday in Lent

March 19, 2017



## **TREE OF LIFE LUTHERAN CHURCH**

A member of the Wisconsin Evangelical Lutheran Synod (WELS)

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### **Welcome!**

Thank you for joining us for worship this morning. In our service today we gather before our heavenly Father to offer him our worship and praise. We also gather to strengthen ourselves through the study of God's holy and powerful Word. May he bless our worship and study today!

### **For Your Convenience**

- Kid's church is available for children 3 years old to 2nd grade prior to the sermon.
- Restrooms are available down the hallway on the right.
- If you would like a hearing device to assist you for worship, please speak with one of the ushers.
- The ushers are at the entrance of the sanctuary to answer any other questions you might have.

### **Today's Focus**

The light of the world brings sight to the blind and judgment to the blinded. Faith means seeing Jesus as Savior: like the bronze serpent, we look on him and live (Verse of the Day). We were born in the blindness of sin, and without the light of Christ we could not find a way to safety. Christ comes to shine his light into our darkened eyes that we might see him and live. Yet for those who refuse to see their Savior in Christ, the blindness of unbelief remains. He gives gracious sight to the blind who trust in him; he gives blinding judgment on those who reject him; finally, he displays the work of God in the lives of those who now walk in the light of Christ.

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#### **ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS**

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## OPENING HYMN

Lord Jesus Christ, My Savior Blest

*Christian Worship Hymn 362*

Lord Jesus Christ, my Savior blest, My Hope and my Salvation!  
Lord, hear my plea: Deliver me From misery!  
Your Word brings consolation.

Lord, as you will, So lead me still; Your mercy fails me never.  
My God, I pray: Teach me your way To my last day;  
From evil keep me ever.

I have your Word, Christ Jesus, Lord: You never will forsake me!  
This will I plead In time of need. Oh, help with speed  
When troubles overtake me!

Now henceforth must I put my trust In you, O dearest Savior.  
Your gracious choice, Your Word and voice, Make me rejoice  
Though sinful my behavior.

Grant, Lord, I pray, Your grace each day, That I, your name revering,  
Your glory see And happy be Eternally,  
Before your throne appearing.

Text: Hans C. Sthen, b. c. 1540, abr.; tr. Harriet R. K. Spaeth, 1845–1925, alt.

## INVOCATION

L: In the name of the Father and of the Son † and of the Holy Spirit.

C: Amen.

## CONFESSION OF SINS

L: The shadow of the cross reveals both the darkness of sin and the bright light of God's love. Our sins led Jesus to the cross where the love of God was displayed for all to see. God now calls to us to stand at the foot of the cross to confess our sins and have them washed away in the blood of Jesus.

**C: Dear Lord Jesus, it is for our sake that you suffered under the hands of the rulers and the soldiers. It is for our sake that you allowed them to nail you to the cross even though you could have walked away. It is for our sake that God the Father laid on you the iniquity of us all. It is with repentant hearts that we fall before your cross pleading, "Lord have mercy on us sinners." It is with humble hearts that we ask you to hear us as we confess to you.**

## ABSOLUTION OF SINS

L: The thief on the cross asked Jesus to remember him when he came into heaven. Jesus did. The soldiers and religious leaders sinned unknowingly against Jesus, yet Jesus said, "Father forgive them." It is the same mercy and grace that Jesus now gives to you. For sins, known or unknown, he speaks to you, "You are forgiven." For comfort and certainty that your sins no longer separate you from God he says, "You will be with me in paradise." Receive this promise of forgiveness with a heart of faith in the name of the Father, and of the Son † and of the Holy Spirit.

**C: Amen**

## PRAYER OF THE DAY

L: Let us pray...

Almighty God, look with favor on your humble servants and stretch out the right hand of your power to defend us against all our enemies; through Jesus Christ, your Son, our Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever.

**C: Amen.**

## FIRST LESSON

Isaiah 42:14-21

<sup>14</sup> “For a long time I have kept silent, I have been quiet and held myself back. But now, like a woman in childbirth, I cry out, I gasp and pant. <sup>15</sup> I will lay waste the mountains and hills and dry up all their vegetation; I will turn rivers into islands and dry up the pools. <sup>16</sup> I will lead the blind by ways they have not known, along unfamiliar paths I will guide them; I will turn the darkness into light before them and make the rough places smooth. These are the things I will do; I will not forsake them. <sup>17</sup> But those who trust in idols, who say to images, ‘You are our gods,’ will be turned back in utter shame. <sup>18</sup> “Hear, you deaf; look, you blind, and see! <sup>19</sup> Who is blind but my servant, and deaf like the messenger I send? Who is blind like the one committed to me, blind like the servant of the LORD? <sup>20</sup> You have seen many things, but have paid no attention; your ears are open, but you hear nothing.” <sup>21</sup> It pleased the LORD for the sake of his righteousness to make his law great and glorious. (NIV 1984)

## PSALM OF THE DAY

Psalm 143

*Christian Worship page 118*

O LORD, hear my prayer, listen to my cry for mercy; in your faithfulness and righteousness come to my relief.

Do not bring your servant into judgment, for no one living is righteous before you.

My spirit grows faint within me; my heart within me is dismayed.

Answer me quickly, O LORD; do not hide your face from me.

Let the morning bring me word of your unfailing love, for I have put my trust in you.

Teach me to do your will, for you are my God; may your good Spirit lead me on level ground.

## SECOND LESSON

Ephesians 5:8-14

<sup>8</sup> For you were once darkness, but now you are light in the Lord. Live as children of light <sup>9</sup> (for the fruit of the light consists in all goodness, righteousness and truth) <sup>10</sup> and find out what pleases the Lord. <sup>11</sup> Have nothing to do with the fruitless deeds of darkness, but rather expose them. <sup>12</sup> For it is shameful even to mention what the disobedient do in secret. <sup>13</sup> But everything exposed by the light becomes visible, <sup>14</sup> for it is light that makes everything visible. This is why it is said: “Wake up, O sleeper, rise from the dead, and Christ will shine on you.” (NIV 1984)

## VERSE OF THE DAY

John 3:14,15

L: Just as Moses lifted up the snake in the desert, so the Son of Man must be lifted up, that everyone who believes in him may have eternal life.

## GOSPEL

John 9:1-7, 13-17, 34-39

<sup>1</sup> As he went along, he saw a man blind from birth. <sup>2</sup> His disciples asked him, “Rabbi, who sinned, this man or his parents, that he was born blind?”

<sup>3</sup> “Neither this man nor his parents sinned,” said Jesus, “but this happened so that the work of God might be displayed in his life. <sup>4</sup> As long as it is day, we must do the work of him who sent me. Night is coming, when no one can work. <sup>5</sup> While I am in the world, I am the light of the world.” <sup>6</sup> Having said this, he spit on the ground, made some mud with the saliva, and put it on the man’s eyes. <sup>7</sup> “Go,” he told him, “wash in the Pool of Siloam” (this word means Sent). So the man went and washed, and came home seeing....

<sup>13</sup> They brought to the Pharisees the man who had been blind. <sup>14</sup> Now the day on which Jesus had made the mud and opened the man’s eyes was a Sabbath. <sup>15</sup> Therefore the Pharisees also asked him how he had received his sight. “He put mud on my eyes,” the man replied, “and I washed, and now I see.” <sup>16</sup> Some of the Pharisees said, “This man is not from God, for he does not keep the Sabbath.” But others asked, “How can a sinner do such miraculous signs?” So they were divided. <sup>17</sup> Finally they turned again to the blind man, “What have you to say about him? It was your eyes he opened.”

The man replied, "He is a prophet."... <sup>34</sup> To this they replied, "You were steeped in sin at birth; how dare you lecture us!" And they threw him out.

<sup>35</sup> Jesus heard that they had thrown him out, and when he found him, he said, "Do you believe in the Son of Man?"

<sup>36</sup> "Who is he, sir?" the man asked. "Tell me so that I may believe in him."

<sup>37</sup> Jesus said, "You have now seen him; in fact, he is the one speaking with you."

<sup>38</sup> Then the man said, "Lord, I believe," and he worshiped him.

<sup>39</sup> Jesus said, "For judgment I have come into this world, so that the blind will see and those who see will become blind." (NIV 1984)

## **APOSTLES' CREED**

I believe in God, the Father almighty,  
maker of heaven and earth.

I believe in Jesus Christ, his 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 into hell.

The third day he rose again from the dead.

He ascended into heaven

and is seated at the right hand of God the Father almighty.

From there he will come to judge the living and the dead.

I believe in the Holy Spirit,  
the holy Christian Church,  
the communion of saints,  
the forgiveness of sins,  
the resurrection of the body,  
and the life everlasting. Amen.

## **CHILDREN'S MESSAGE**

**HYMN OF THE DAY**

Just As I Am, without One Plea  
*Christian Worship Hymn 397; st 1-4*

Just as I am, without one plea But that thy blood was shed for me  
And that thou bidd'st me come to thee, O Lamb of God, I come, I come.

Just as I am and waiting not To rid my soul of one dark blot,  
To thee, whose blood can cleanse each spot, O Lamb of God, I come, I come.

Just as I am, though tossed about With many a conflict, many a doubt,  
Fightings and fears within, without, O Lamb of God, I come, I come.

Just as I am, poor, wretched, blind; Sight, riches, healing of the mind,  
Yea, all I need, in thee to find, O Lamb of God, I come, I come.

**SERMON**

John 9:1-7, 13-17, 34-39

“Open the Eyes of the Blind”

**OFFERING**

**PRAYER OF THE CHURCH**

**LORD'S PRAYER**

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.  
Lead us not into temptation,  
but deliver us from evil.  
For the kingdom, the power,  
and the glory are yours  
now and forever. Amen.

## THE SACRAMENT

### PERSONAL PREPARATION FOR HOLY COMMUNION

L: What does God tell me about myself in his holy Word?

**C: He says that I am a sinner and deserve only his punishment.**

L: What should I do if I am not aware of my sins or am not troubled by them?

**C: I should examine myself according to the Ten Commandments and ask how well I have carried out my responsibilities as a husband or wife or single person, as a parent or child, an employer or employee, a teacher or student. Have I loved God with all my heart, gladly heard his Word, and patiently endured affliction? Have I been disobedient, proud, or unforgiving? Have I been selfish, lazy, envious, or quarrelsome? Have I lied or deceived, taken something not mine, or given anyone a bad name? Have I abused my body or permitted indecent thoughts to linger in my mind? Have I failed to do what is right and good?**

L: When I realize that I have sinned against God and deserve his punishment, what should I do?

**C: I will confess before God all my sins, those which I remember as well as those of which I am unaware. I will pray to God for his mercy and forgiveness.**

L: How do I receive his gracious forgiveness?

**C: His Word assures me that Jesus led a pure and holy life for me and died on the cross for me to pay the full price for all my sins. Through faith in Jesus, I have been clothed in my Savior's perfect righteousness and holiness.**

L: What further assurance do I have that Jesus is mine and I am his?

**C: In Holy Communion he gives me his body and blood together with the bread and wine as a truly life-giving food and drink to unite me with him and my fellow believers. By means of this sacrament, Jesus not only forgives my sins but sweeps away all my doubts about his love for me, gives me his own strength to live a God-pleasing life, and grants me a joyful foretaste of heaven.**

L: How can I be sure that I receive all these blessings in the Lord's Supper?

**C: I have his own word spoken as his last will and testament on the night before he died. There he tells me: "Take and eat; this is my body. Drink from it, all of you; this is my blood which is poured out for you for the forgiveness of sins. Do this in remembrance of me."**

L: How will I respond to this priceless gift from Jesus?

**C: I will daily thank and praise him for his love to me. With his help I will fight temptation, do my best to correct whatever wrongs I have done, and serve him and those around me with love and good works.**

**Lord Jesus, with joy and gratitude I now come to your table to receive the precious food of your life-giving body and blood. May it strengthen me to remain in you as you remain in me, so that I bear much fruit in devoted service to you and in acts of kindness to others. Amen.**

## **WORDS OF INSTITUTION**

L: Our Lord Jesus Christ, on the night he was betrayed, took bread; and when he had given thanks, he broke it and gave it to his disciples, saying, "Take and eat; this is my body, which is given for you. Do this in remembrance of me."

Then he took the cup, gave thanks, and gave it to them, saying, "Drink from it, all of you; this is my blood of the new covenant, which is poured out for you for the forgiveness of sins. Do this, whenever you drink it, in remembrance of me."

L: The peace of the Lord be with you always.

**C: Amen.**

## DISTRIBUTION

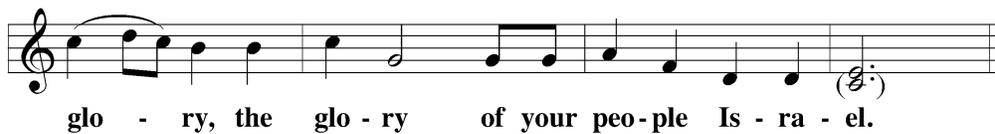
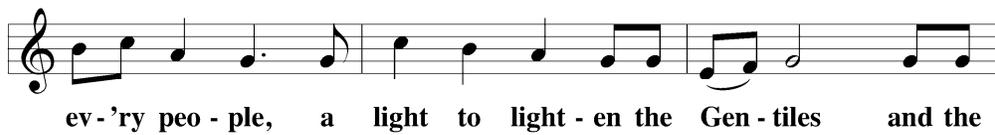
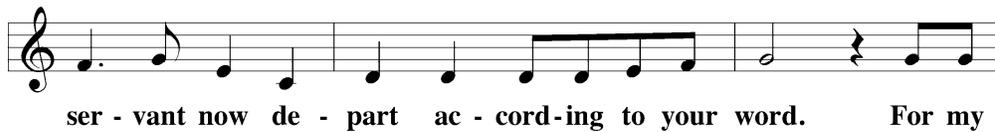
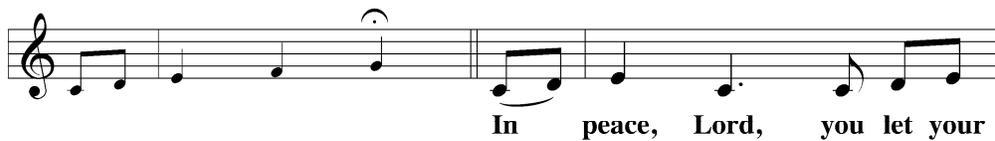
*The Lord's Supper is a blessing from God through which he strengthens our faith.*

*It is also an expression of our faith.*

*If we have not had the opportunity to talk to you about our beliefs, we ask that you wait before you join us for the Lord's Supper.*

## SONG OF SIMEON

*Nunc Dimittis*



L: O give thanks to the Lord, for he is good.

**C: And his mercy endures forever.**

### **CLOSING PRAYER**

L: We give thanks, almighty God, that you have refreshed us with this Holy Supper. We pray that through it you will strengthen our faith in you and increase our love for one another. We ask this in the name of Jesus Christ, our Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever.

**C: Amen.**

### **BLESSING**

L: The Lord bless you and keep you.

The Lord make his face shine on you and be gracious to you.

The Lord look on you with favor and † give you peace.

**C: Amen.**

### **CLOSING HYMN**

In the Cross of Christ I Glory  
*Christian Worship Hymn 345*

In the cross of Christ I glory, Tow'ring o'er the wrecks of time.  
All the light of sacred story Gathers round its head sublime.

When the woes of life o'ertake me, Hopes deceive and fears annoy,  
Never shall the cross forsake me; Lo, it glows with peace and joy.

When the sun of bliss is beaming Light and love upon my way,  
From the cross the radiance streaming Adds more luster to the day.

Bane and blessing, pain and pleasure By the cross are sanctified;  
Peace is there that knows no measure, Joys that through all time abide.