

Fourth Sunday in Lent

March 14, 2021 (Real Church Virtual)



Confession and Forgiveness

P: Blessed be the holy Trinity, ☩ one God, the keeper of the covenant, the source of steadfast love, our rock and our redeemer.

C: Amen.

P: God hears us when we cry, and draws us close in Jesus Christ. Let us return to the one who is full of compassion.

Silence is kept for reflection

P: Fountain of living water,

C: pour out your mercy over us. Our sin is heavy, and we long to be free. Rebuild what we have ruined and mend what we have torn. Wash us in your cleansing flood. Make us alive in the Spirit to follow in the way of Jesus, as healers and restorers of the world you so love. Amen.

P: Beloved, God's word never fails. The promise rests on grace: by the saving love of Jesus Christ, the wisdom and power of God, your sins are ☩ forgiven, and God remembers them no more. Journey in the way of Jesus.

C: Amen.

Gathering Song – Amazing Grace, How Sweet the Sound

Verse 1

Amazing grace! – how sweet the sound – that saved a wretch like me! I once was lost, but now am found; was blind, but now I see.

Verse 2

'Twas grace that taught my heart to fear, and grace my fears relieved; how precious did that grace appear the hour I first believed!

Verse 3

Through many dangers, toils, and snares I have already come; 'tis grace has brought me safe thus far, and grace will lead me home.

Verse 4

The Lord has promised good to me; his word my hope secures; he will my shield and portion be as long as life endures.

Verse 5

When we've been there ten thousand years, bright shining as the sun, we've no less days to sing God's praise than when we'd first begun.

Greeting & Prayer of the Day

P: The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, the love of God, and the communion of the Holy Spirit, be with you all!

C: And also with you!

A: Let us pray together,

C: O God, rich in mercy, by the humiliation of your Son you lifted up this fallen world and rescued us from the hopelessness of death. Lead us into your light, that all our deeds may reflect your love, 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: Ephesians 2:1-10

While we were dead in our sinfulness, God acted to make us alive as a gift of grace in Christ Jesus. We are saved not by what we do but by grace through faith. Thus our good works are really a reflection of God's grace at work in our lives.

¹You were dead through the trespasses and sins ²in which you once lived, following the course of this world, following the ruler of the power of the air, the spirit that is now at work among those who are disobedient. ³All of us once lived among them in the passions of our flesh, following the desires of flesh and senses, and we were by nature children of wrath, like everyone else. ⁴But God, who is rich in mercy, out of the great love with which he loved us ⁵even when we were dead through our trespasses, made us alive together with Christ—by grace you have been saved—⁶and raised us up with him and seated us with him in the heavenly places in Christ Jesus, ⁷so that in the ages to come he might show the immeasurable riches of his grace in kindness toward us in Christ Jesus. ⁸For by grace you have been saved through faith, and this is not your own doing; it is the gift of God—⁹not the result of works, so that no one may boast. ¹⁰For we are what he has made us, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand to be our way of life.

L: The Word of the Lord

C: Thanks be to God

Psalmody: Psalm 107:1-3, 17-22

¹Give thanks to the Lord, for the Lord is good, for God's mercy endures forever.

²**Let the redeemed of the Lord proclaim that God redeemed them from the hand of the foe,**

³gathering them in from the lands; from the east and from the west, from the north and from the south.

¹⁷**Some were fools and took rebellious paths; through their sins they were afflicted.**

¹⁸They loathed all manner of food and drew near to death's door.

¹⁹**Then in their trouble they cried to the Lord and you delivered them from their distress.**

²⁰You sent forth your word and healed them and rescued them from the grave.

²¹**Let them give thanks to you, Lord, for your steadfast love and your wonderful works for all people.**

²²Let them offer sacrifices of thanksgiving and tell of your deeds with shouts of joy.

Gospel: John 3:14-21

To explain the salvation of God to the religious leader, Nicodemus, Jesus refers to the scripture passage quoted in today's first reading. Just as those who looked upon the bronze serpent were healed, so people will be saved when they behold Christ lifted up on the cross.

P: A reading from... **C: Glory to You, O Lord.**

Jesus said: ¹⁴"Just as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, so must the Son of Man be lifted up, ¹⁵that whoever believes in him may have eternal life. ¹⁶"For God so loved the world that he gave his only Son, so that everyone who believes in him may not perish but may have eternal life. ¹⁷"Indeed, God did not send the Son into the world to condemn the world, but in order that the world might be saved through him. ¹⁸Those who believe in him are not condemned; but those who do not believe are condemned already, because they have not believed in the name of the only Son of God. ¹⁹And this is the judgment, that the light has come into the world, and people loved darkness rather than light because their deeds were evil. ²⁰For all who do evil hate the light and do not come to the

light, so that their deeds may not be exposed. ²¹But those who do what is true come to the light, so that it may be clearly seen that their deeds have been done in God.”

P: The Gospel of the Lord.

C: Praise to you, O Christ.

Sermon – Pastor Paul

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.

Prayers of the Church / Sign of the Peace / Interlude

Words of Institution

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.

Final Blessing & Dismissal

P: You are what God made you to be: created in Christ Jesus for good works, chosen as holy and beloved, freed to serve your neighbor. God bless you ☩ that you may be a blessing, in the name of the holy and life-giving Trinity.

C: Amen.

A: Go in peace. Share the good news.

C: Thanks be to God.

Closing Song – Because of Your Love

Intro

Yeah, yeah, yeah, yeah.

Verse

As we come into Your presence, we remember ev'ry blessing that You've poured out so freely from above. Lifting gratitude and praises for compassion so amazing, Lord we've come to give You thanks for all You've done.

Chorus

Because of Your love, we're forgiven. Because of Your love, our hearts are clean. We lift You up with songs of freedom. Forever we're changed because of Your love. Yeah, yeah.

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Chorus

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Bethlehem
LUTHERAN CHURCH

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(231) 947-9880 www.bethlehemtc.org

March 14, 2021

"Table for 12": For the remaining Wednesdays in Lent (3/17 and 3/24) we will offer a special, in-person communion in the sanctuary for groups of up to 12 people, so 24 people per day. Pr. Paul will hold a brief, socially distant communion service from 11:15-11:30am and 5:15-5:30pm each Wednesday. **This will be by appointment, so please see the current Bethlehem Weekly to sign up online or by calling Barbara Oster on her home phone (231.668.7038).** This will be a brief 15–20-minute service, so please come at the beginning of the session.

"Zoom Bible Study" gathering via Zoom will continue on Wednesdays from noon until about 1:15pm. Besides the thought-provoking discussions, we also have great conversation and fellowship. We are using the book *The Great Conversation: Nature and the Care of the Soul* by Belden C. Lane. Please contact Pr. Paul if you are interested in joining.

The BLC Book Club continues to meet the 4th Tuesday of the month at 5:30 pm via ZOOM and made a last minute change in this month's book selection. On Mar. 23 we will discuss the book "Carnegie's Maid" by Marie Benedict. In this historical novel based on fact you can decide for yourself if a simple maid was the catalyst for Carnegie to become such an amazing philanthropist. Check the big box outside the front doors of church to see if there is a library book left for you to borrow. Even if you have not read the book you are welcome to join our discussion. If you are not on the contact list just send your email address to Cindy Monroe at cmonroe@chartermi.net so you can receive the ZOOM invite.

Help us decorate our church for Easter! We are suggesting a \$10 donation to help cover the cost of our Easter flowers. Instead of contacting the church office, please call Kate Holtfreter at 231-590-3946 before March 21st to order a plant and say who it is in honor of, in celebration of, etc. You will then send Kate a check for \$10.00 made out to Bethlehem Lutheran Church (or BLC) and write Easter flowers in the memo line.

Lent 2021 Season Schedule

Wed, March 17th (Week / Faithscape #4 - Spiritual Valley and Canyon

"Table for 12" (11:15 and 5:15), Virtual Fellowship (6:30pm) & Worship (7pm)

Wed, March 24th (Week / Faithscape #5 - Seashore and Lakeshore (Returning to the place/s Christ calls us)

"Table for 12" (11:15 and 5:15), Virtual Fellowship (6:30pm) & Worship (7pm)

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The MARCH issue of the STAR is ready! Feel free to check online at www.bethlehemtc.org < About Us > "The Online Bethlehem Star" or type this URL to get these directly: <http://www.bethlehemtc.org/the-bethlehem-star-newsletter>

The outdoor **"Shooting STAR Dispenser"** at BLC is now full with several paper publications, including the March STAR and the current week's worship folder/bulletin. If you would like a copy of a DVD, please contact the church and one will be produced for you.

Calling all Knitters!!: There is an overabundance of yarn skeins in the bin under the mailboxes in the narthex. PLEASE feel free to grab some to make hats, mittens, prayer shawls, etc.! The yarn is sorted according to kind, so you can be sure to find something appropriate for whatever project you have in mind. Questions? Call Betty R. (947-1013)

Christ in Our Home Devotionals for available for April/May/June. They can be picked up at the name tag table on Sunday mornings, from the STAR box below the outside mailbox, or during parking lot communion. The newest *Living Lutheran* magazine is also available in the same locations.

A big thank you to those who have turned in Oleson's receipts. For 2020, we received a total of \$545.66. Please continue saving your Oleson's receipts for Bethlehem. Please drop them off in the bin under the mailbox counter. Thanks.

Keep "Hope Spreading": Don't forget our blog "Hope Spreads Further" is still going strong! We've had many very inspiring entries and hope to read more. We invite you to help us build this blog or just read current entries at <http://www.bethlehemtc.org/hope-spreads-further>. Reach out to Pastor Paul at paul.busekist@bethlehemtc.org or Sharon at admin@bethlehemtc.org if you'd like to contribute to the blog!

The cold and gray days of mid-winter are here and many of our members have little to no contact with the outside world. Please use your church directory or the addresses below to send a cheery note or make a phone call to someone. Don't have much time and not sure who to contact? How about choosing those whose last name is closest in the alphabet to your own?

List of Home Bound Members of BLC 2021 BLC = Directory

Marlene Baesch - BLC

Marinan Bradford - Traverse Manor on Draka Rd. Traverse City, MI

Carol Collins – Burcham Assisted Living 2700 Burcham Dr. East Lansing, MI 48823

Brenda Denoyer - BLC

Richard Fernholz - BLC

Jacque Rossfeld – BLC

Corinne Hill - BLC

Christian Stretlien and Julie LaPeer - 14720 Mc Coll Ave. Thompsonville, MI 49683

Tom and Lee Miller – BLC

Nancy Smith - BLC

Lois Stretlien (Jan's sister in-law) - Traverse Manor Room #24

Ellie Tacke - BLC

Inge Thomas - BLC

Priscilla Thompson - Samaritas Assisted Living 4354 Mt. Hope Rd. Williamsburg MI 49690 BLC

Jan and Butch Waisanen - BLC

Dee and Bill Springer - Boardman Lake Glens 1400 Brigadoon Ct. TC 49684 BLC

Marjorie Whitney - Traverse Manor on Draka Rd. Traverse City, MI BLC