

WELCOMING WORD *God promises Jeremiah that a “new covenant” will be made in the future: a covenant that will allow all the people to know God by heart. The church sees this promise fulfilled in Christ, who draws all people to himself when he is lifted up on the cross. Our baptismal covenant draws us to God’s heart through Christ and draws God’s love and truth into our hearts. We join together in worship, sharing in word, song, and meal, and leave strengthened to share God’s love with all the world.*

CALL TO WORSHIP

L: Let me hear joy and gladness;
C: that the body you have broken may rejoice.

L: Hide your face from my sins,
C: and blot out all my wickedness.

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

L: Restore to me the joy of your salvation
C: and sustain me with your bountiful Spirit.

OPENING HYMN #107 *Beneath the Cross of Jesus*

Beneath the cross of Jesus I long to take my stand;
The shadow of a mighty rock within a weary land,
A home within a wilderness, a rest upon the way,
From the burning of the noontide heat and burdens of the day.

Upon the cross of Jesus, my eye at times can see
The very dying form of one who suffered there for me.
And from my contrite heart, with tears, two wonders I confess:
The wonder of his glorious love and my unworthiness.

I take, O cross, your shadow for my abiding place.
I ask no other sunshine than the sunshine of his face.
Content to let the world go by, to know no gain nor loss,
My sinful self my only shame, my glory all, the cross.

Baptism of Emersyn Jo Kling

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.

Pause for silence and 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.

C: Amen.

INVOCATION

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.**

PRAYER OF THE DAY

P: O God,

C: **with steadfast love you draw us to yourself, and in mercy you receive our prayers. Strengthen us to bring forth the fruits of the Spirit, that through life and death we may live in your Son, Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. Amen.**

FIRST LESSON: Jeremiah 31:31-34 ³¹The days are surely coming, says the LORD, when I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel and the house of Judah. ³²It will not be like the covenant that I made with their ancestors when I took them by the hand to bring them out of the land of Egypt—a covenant that they broke, though I was their husband, says the LORD. ³³But this is the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel after those days, says the LORD: I will put my law within them, and I will write it on their hearts; and I will be their God, and they shall be my people. ³⁴No longer shall they teach one another, or say to each other, “Know the LORD,” for they shall all know me, from the least of them to the greatest, says the LORD; for I will forgive their iniquity, and remember their sin no more.

SECOND LESSON: Hebrews 5:5-10 ⁵Christ did not glorify himself in becoming a high priest, but was appointed by the one who said to him, “You are my Son, today I have begotten you”; ⁶as he says also in another place, “You are a priest forever, according to the order of Melchizedek.” ⁷In the days of his flesh, Jesus offered up prayers and supplications, with loud cries and tears, to the one who was able to save him from death, and he was heard because of his reverent submission. ⁸Although he was a Son, he learned obedience through what he suffered; ⁹and having been made perfect, he became the source of eternal salvation for all who obey him, ¹⁰having been designated by God a high priest according to the order of Melchizedek.

GOSPEL: John 12:20-33 ²⁰Now among those who went up to worship at the festival were some Greeks. ²¹They came to Philip, who was from Bethsaida in Galilee, and said to him, “Sir, we wish to see Jesus.” ²²Philip went and told Andrew; then Andrew and Philip went and told Jesus. ²³Jesus answered them, “The hour has come for the Son of Man to be glorified. ²⁴Very truly, I tell you, unless a grain of wheat falls into the earth and dies, it remains just a single grain; but if it dies, it bears much fruit. ²⁵Those who love their life lose it, and those who hate their life in this world will keep it for eternal life. ²⁶Whoever serves me must follow me, and where I am, there will my servant be also. Whoever serves me, the Father will honor.

²⁷“Now my soul is troubled. And what should I say—‘Father, save me from this hour’? No, it is for this reason that I have come to this hour. ²⁸Father, glorify your name.” Then a voice came from heaven, “I have glorified it, and I will glorify it again.” ²⁹The crowd standing there heard it and said that it was thunder. Others said, “An angel has spoken to him.” ³⁰Jesus answered, “This voice has come for your sake, not for mine. ³¹Now is the judgment of this world; now the ruler of this world will be driven out. ³²And I, when I am lifted up from the earth, will draw all people to myself.” ³³He said this to indicate the kind of death he was to die.

MESSAGE Pastor John Twiton

HYMN #148 *Now the Green Blade Rises*

Now the green blade rises from the buried grain,
Wheat that in dark earth many days has lain;
Love lives again, that with the dead has been.

REFRAIN Love is com again like wheat arising green.

In the grave the laid him, love by hatred slain,
Thinking that he would never wake again,
Laid in the earth like grain that sleeps unseen. **REFRAIN**

Forth he came at Easter, like the risen grain,
He that for three days in the grave had lain,
Raised from the dead, my living Lord is seen. **REFRAIN**

When our hearts are wintry, grieving or in pain,
Your touch can call us back to life again,
Fields of our hearts that dead and bare have been. **REFRAIN**

CONFESSION OF FAITH

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.

OFFERTORY PRAYER Faithful God, you walk beside us in desert places, and you meet us in our hunger with bread from heaven. Accompany us in our Lenten journey, that we may pass over from death to life with Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord. Amen.

PRAYERS OF THE CHURCH

P: Relying on the promises of God, we pray boldly for the church, the world, and all in need.

A brief silence.

You wash us through and through and remember our sin no more. Make your church a community of forgiveness throughout the world. Give your people courage to forgive; through them show the world new possibilities. Bless ministries of repentance and reconciliation. Lord, in your mercy,

C: hear our prayer.

P: You fill the earth—from tiny grains of wheat to the mighty thunder—with your presence, and you call us to attend to your will for all creation. Grant weather that prepares the soil for seeds; protect all from violent storms, flooding, and wildfires. Lord, in your mercy,

C: hear our prayer.

P: You promise to write your law on our hearts. Guide people throughout the world to shape communities that reflect your mercy, justice, and peace, and give them creativity to work for the welfare of all. Lord, in your mercy,

C: hear our prayer.

P: You sustain us with your bountiful Spirit. Restore the joy of all who need to know your presence: those who are lonely or feel unforgivable, those who need healing of mind or body, those who are dying, and all who grieve (*especially*). Lord, in your mercy,

C: hear our prayer.

P: Jesus calls us to follow him in life and death. Empower this congregation in discipleship. Equip children and teachers in Sunday school, confirmation, and learning ministries. Give us your truth and wisdom and teach us to follow Jesus. Lord, in your mercy,

C: hear our prayer.

P: In the cross of Christ, your name is glorified. We praise you for those who have given us words to worship you. With all those who have died in Christ, bring us into life everlasting. Lord in your mercy,

C: hear our prayer.

P: We entrust ourselves and all our prayers to you, O faithful God, through Jesus Christ our Lord.

C: Amen.

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. 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.

BENEDICTION *May the blessing of God our creator, the love of Jesus Christ our redeemer, and the presence of the Holy Spirit the comforter, surround you and sustain you until we gather again. Amen.*

CLOSING HYMN: #797 God Beyond All Praising

O God beyond all praising, we worship you today
And sing the love amazing that songs cannot repay;
For we can only wonder at ev'ry gift you send,
At blessings without number and mercies without end.
We lift our hearts before you and wait upon your Word.
We honor and adore you, our great and mighty Lord.

Then hear, O gracious Savior, accept the love we bring,
That we who know your favor may serve you as our king;
And whether our tomorrows be fill'd with good or ill,
We'll triumph through our sorrows and rise to bless you still;
To marvel at your beauty and glory in your ways,
And make a joyful duty our sacrifice of praise.



OUR SYMPATHIES & PRAYERS are with the family and friends of Beverly Luhman (Kristy Schulenberg's mother). Beverly recently passed away.

PLEASE KEEP IN YOUR PRAYERS:

Bonnie Bender
Norbert Haag (brother of Virgil Haag)
Allen Olson (father of Ingrid Frank)
Delores Bryant
Brock Howe
Brian Marshall (friend of Kim Kelliher)
Jeannie U'Ren
Mike Olson (Wendy Rasmussen's brother)
Irene Bruflat
Connie Fausett (sister of Diane Twiton & Jean Bower)
Harlan Oimoen
Grace Aavang

Ginger Quaderer (Diane Mueller's cousin)
Richard Schuhler (friend of Ron & Bonny Kellogg)
Agnes Robertson (friend of Holly Thompson)
Makenzee Smith
Dianne Haskins (friend of Char Smith)
Mary Krantz
Ruth Ann Nemet
Sally Gaard (friend of Margie Kahl)
Laurie Duden (Brenda Martin's aunt)
Bill Steinhauer
Peter Toniazzo
Shirley Thompson

Our partner congregation IGLESIA EVANGÉLICA LUTERANA DIVINO SALVADOR (Divine Savior Lutheran Church) in Cataño, P.R

ANNOUNCEMENTS

PARKING LOT WORSHIP We are planning to have parking lot worship March 28th.



FUSE NIGHTS on ZOOM Youth, who are 9th - 12th graders are welcome to join our high school group on ZOOM, **Tuesday, March 23rd at 7 pm.** Time for games and a chance to connect. Email Brenda for the link.

YOUTH WEEKLY CLASSES ON ZOOM:

SUNDAY SCHOOL meets on Sundays at 9 am

CONFIRMATION meets on Wednesdays at 7 pm.

ELC 'COFFEE TIME' on ZOOM Join us on Wednesdays at 10 AM each week to catch up with our church family. Time to connect and see each other! Zoom link is emailed each week. If you need the link, contact Pastor John, Tamara or Brenda.

CONFIRMATION CAMP (SAVE THE DATE) ELC will be attending the Confirmation Camp at Sugar Creek Bible Camp the week of July 25 - July 30. 7th-8th graders are encouraged to attend. Register online: <http://wp.sugarcreek bible camp.org>.

SUGAR CREEK "BACK IN THE SADDLE" Online Registrations are now available for Sugar Creek Bible Camp Summer programs. They have a variety of programs (new & favorites) listed on their website, <http://wp.sugarcreek bible camp.org>, for youth

From the Property Ministry

Significant construction projects are planned for the next two weeks that have an impact on the south side of the building and entry from 4th Street to Front Street.

Monday March 22, the project to replace the eaves and downspouts will start. Most of the work will be done from the roof, but a big lift will be installed outside the chapel on Front Street. Entry to Front Street will be open, with swerving around the lift through the angle parking. The lift will be in place for two days. This project is anticipated to take the entire week.

Then, Thursday April 1 (yes, April Fools' Day) Front street will be blocked off to vehicle traffic. This is to allow Boley Tree company to remove the diseased fir tree on the corner and prune and repair the two large maple trees at the angle parking. Duluth has been notified (even though they're not supposed to use that as entry to their part of the parking lot). This is during the break so no impact to Agape.

These projects have been in the planning stages and are approved by the Council.

Any concerns should be directed to Diane Bartz - barbaradbartz@gmail.com.

Thank you for your attention to these probable irritants.



DEVOTIONS FOR THE WEEK OF MARCH 21, 2021

SHARE: What was a high point of your day? What was a low point?

READ: Read the following daily readings to deepen your understanding

Monday, Psalm 119:9-16, The Goodness of God's Instruction

Tuesday, Acts 2:14-24, Peter's Pentecost Sermon

Wednesday, Haggai 2:1-9, 20-23, The Future Glory of the Temple

Thursday, Luke 1:26-38, The Birth of Jesus Foretold

Friday, Philippians 2:12-18, Shining as God's Lights

Saturday, Jeremiah 33:10-16, A Promised Time of Restoration

TALK: Consider some of these ideas: "Very truly, I tell you, unless a grain of wheat falls into the earth and dies, it remains just a single grain; but if it dies, it bears much fruit." (John 12:24). *Jesus entered Jerusalem for the last time to celebrate the Passover festival. Here Jesus' words about seeds planted in the ground turn the disaster of his death into the promise of a harvest in which everyone will be gathered.*

- Where do you see news signs of life in yourself and world around you?
- Who first brought you to 'see' who Jesus is?
- Have you helped others to 'see' Jesus?

PRAY: O God, with steadfast love you draw us to yourself, and in mercy you receive our prayers. Strengthen us to bring forth the fruits of the Spirit, that through life and death we may live in your Son, Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. **Amen.**

BLESS: 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. **Amen.**