

First St. John Lutheran Church

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Rev. Jerald K. Rayl, Pastor

Dr. Joan Walldorf, Director of Music
Dr. Anthony Pattin, Church Musician
Cheri Sergent, Bell Choir, Director
Jennifer Hess, Office Manager



March 17, 2024

Fifth Sunday in Lent

Welcome to First St. John Lutheran Church! We offer two services with Sunday School for youth and adults and catechism. Our regular Sunday schedule is:

8:00 am	Early Worship
9:15 am	JAM Sunday School
9:15 am	Adult Bible Study
10:30 am	Late Worship
11:45 am	2nd Year Catechism (every other Sunday)
2:00 pm	Chapel Communion (2nd Sunday of the month)

LIVESTREAM AND RECORDED WORSHIP: We livestream the service on our church website at www.firststjohn.com. Also, the service will be recorded and published to the website

SMILE! YOU'RE ON CAMERA: Please remember you may be on camera during the livestream and the recording of the service.

IMPORTANT REMINDER: Please remember to silence your cell phone before church begins. Thanks!

ADULT SUNDAY SCHOOL meets at 9:15 am in the lounge every Sunday.

CHILDREN AGES 3 THROUGH 5TH GRADE will meet at 9:15 am for Sunday School in the basement of the church (JAM Room).

2ND YEAR CATECHISM CLASSES: Second year class will meet every other Sunday at 11:45 am.

NURSERY is in the church basement and is currently unstaffed; you are welcome to sit with your child. A diaper changing table is available in the ladies restroom in the basement of the church.

RESTROOMS are in the church basement. Go to the Narthex (lobby) and take either set of steps to the basement hallway. The ladies room is at one end, and the men's room is at the other.

FLOWERS: If you would like to sign up for altar flowers, there is a book in the lounge. Or, you can call the church office during the week to check on availability.

MEMORIALS: If you wish to give a memorial in honor or memory of a loved one, you may mail it in or pick up a memorial card in the church office.

Called through faith; Gathered in worship; Serving the community

March 17, 2024 - 10:30 am

ORDER OF WORSHIP—10:30 am

Prelude Nancy Russell

Ring of the Bell (Please stand)

Opening Hymn "In the Cross of Christ I Glory" No. 324

Confession and Forgiveness

The assembly stands. All may make the sign of the cross, the sign that is marked at baptism, as the presiding minister begins.

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

C: Amen.

P: Almighty God, to whom all hearts are open, all desires known, and from whom no secrets are hid: cleanse the thoughts of our hearts by the inspiration of your Holy Spirit, that we may perfectly love you and worthily magnify your holy name, through Jesus Christ our Lord.

C: Amen.

(silence is kept for reflection.)

P: Most merciful God,

C: we confess that we are captive to sin and cannot free ourselves. We have sinned against you in thought, word, and deed, by what we have done and by what we have left undone. We have not loved you with our whole heart; we have not loved our neighbors as ourselves. For the sake of your Son, Jesus Christ, have mercy on us. Forgive us, renew us, and lead us, so that we may delight in your will and walk in your ways, to the glory of your holy name. Amen.

P: God, who is rich in mercy, loved us even when we were dead in sin, and made us alive together with Christ. By grace you have been saved. In the name of † Jesus Christ, your sins are forgiven. Almighty God strengthen you with power through the Holy Spirit, that Christ may live in your hearts through faith.

C: Amen.

Sharing of the Peace

P: The peace of Christ be with you always.

C: And also with you.

P: Let us share the peace of the Lord.

The congregation may greet one another by shaking hands, fist bumping, or any other form of greeting with the words, "Peace be with you." We conclude the sharing of the peace by singing:

Hymn of Praise

Assisting minister
Glory to God in the highest, and peace to God's peo - ple on earth.

All
Lord God, heav - en - ly King, al - might - y God and Fa - ther,
we wor - ship you, we give you thanks, we praise you for your glo - ry.

Lord Je - sus Christ, on - ly Son of the Fa - ther, Lord God, Lamb of God,
you take a - way the sin of the world: have mer - cy on us;
you are seat - ed at the right hand of the Fa - ther: re - ceive our prayer.

For you a - lone are the Ho - ly One, you a - lone are the Lord,
you a - lone are the Most High, Je - sus Christ, with the Ho - ly Spir - it,
in the glo - ry of God the Fa - ther. A - men.

Greeting

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: Let us 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.

C: Amen.

(Please be seated)

Announcements

Introduction

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.

FIRST READING: Jeremiah 31:31-34

The Judeans in Babylon blamed their exile on their ancestors, who had broken the covenant established at Sinai. Here the prophet looks to a day when God will make a new covenant with the people. There will be no need to teach the law, because God will write it on their hearts.

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.

Reader: Word of God. Word of Life.

C: Thanks be to God.

PSALMS: Psalms 51:1-12— Congregation responds in **BOLD**.

¹Have mercy on me, O God,
according to your steadfast love;
according to your abundant mercy
blot out my transgressions.

²**Wash me thoroughly from my iniquity,
and cleanse me from my sin.**

³For I know my transgressions,
and my sin is ever before me.

⁴**Against you, you alone, have I sinned,
and done what is evil in your sight,
so that you are justified in your sentence
and blameless when you pass judgment.**

⁵Indeed, I was born guilty,
a sinner when my mother conceived me.

⁶**You desire truth in the inward being;
therefore teach me wisdom in my secret heart.**

⁷Purge me with hyssop, and I shall be clean;
wash me, and I shall be whiter than snow.

⁸**Let me hear joy and gladness;
let the bones that you have crushed rejoice.**

⁹Hide your face from my sins,
and blot out all my iniquities.

¹⁰**Create in me a clean heart, O God,
and put a new and right spirit within me.**

¹¹Do not cast me away from your presence,
and do not take your holy spirit from me.

¹²**Restore to me the joy of your salvation,
and sustain in me a willing spirit.**

SECOND READING: Hebrews 5:5-10

Using priestly imagery and references to the Old Testament, the author explains how Christ lived in trusting obedience to God, and so God has made Christ the source of our eternal salvation.

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.

Reader: Word of God. Word of Life.

C: Thanks be to God.

(Please stand)

Gospel Acclamation

Re - turn to the Lord, your God, for he is gra - cious and
mer - ci - ful, slow to an - ger, and a - bound - ing in
stead - fast love, and a - bound - ing in stead - fast love.

Gospel Announcement

P: The Gospel according to St. John Chapter 12.

C: Glory to you, O Lord.

GOSPEL: John 12:20-33

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.

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.

²⁸“Father, 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.

Gospel Response

P: This is the Gospel of the Lord.

C: Praise to you, O Christ.

(Please be seated)

SERMON

Pastor Rayl

Sermon Hymn

“Alas! Did My Savior Bleed”

No.337

(Please stand)

Apostles' 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,
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.

(Please be seated)

The Offering

Offertory Music

“Such Love” FSJ Chancel Choir
Dr. Joan Walldorf, Director of Music

(Please stand)

Offering Prayer

P: Let us pray, Blessed are you, O God, maker of all things.
Through your goodness you have blessed us with these gifts:
ourselves, our time, and our possessions. Use us, and what we
have gathered, in feeding the world with your love, through the one
who gave himself for us, Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord.

C: Amen.

Pastoral Prayer *(Each petition concludes with this response)*

P: Merciful God,

C: Receive our prayer.

The Lord’s Prayer *(prayed by all)*

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.

Blessing

P: Beloved, we are God’s own people, holy, washed, renewed. God
bless you and keep you, shower you with mercy, fill you with
courage, and † give you peace.

C: Amen.

Closing Hymn “Christ, the Life of All the Living” No.339

Dismissal

P: Go in peace. Share the good news.

C: Thanks be to God.

Postlude

Nancy Russell

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PARTICIPANTS IN TODAY’S SERVICE

ELDERS

Bob Haar, Sherrie Haar

READER

Bob Haar

SOUND BOARD

Dave Wilbarger

2024 EASTER FLOWER SALE
 SPONSORED BY THE ALTAR GUILD
ORDERS DUE TODAY!



It's time to order flowers that will decorate the church on Easter morning, March 31st. The price is \$15.00 per plant. You can choose a lily, daffodil, hyacinth, or tulip. Fill out the order form below and place it in the offering plate or mail it to the church. The final Sunday to order will be March 17th. Payment must accompany your order. Make checks out to: **First St. John Lutheran** and write "Easter Flowers" on the memo line.

Deadline for placing orders is Sunday, March 17th.

Number of plants @ \$15.00 each _____ Enclosed: \$ _____

Type of plant: _____
(lily, daffodil, hyacinth, tulip)

Name _____

Address _____

City _____ Zip Code _____

Phone _____

In Loving Memory of (Deceased) _____

In Honor of (Living) _____

March 17, 2024

FIFTH SUNDAY IN LENT

Follow Me

On the rear wall of the Chapel of the Incarnation at Luther Seminary in St. Paul hangs a bronze crucifix. Abstractly conceived, the crucified Jesus is caught suspended just above a second free-form bronze outline of the Christ, arms outstretched, clearly broken but clearly rising. One piece rises out of the other, yet both are one. This visual representation of motion, struggle, and victory may evoke these words from today's gospel: "I, when I am lifted up from the earth, will draw all people to myself" (John 12:32).

This sculpture in the seminary chapel is in memory of a student who died in a battle with cancer. He was a gifted and enthusiastic musician who was endowed with a dry wit and great passion for his calling to empower the people of God in song. In the evening at the hospice facility he would sing the liturgy of compline with his guests, allowing the liturgy of the church to inform and comfort all present.

The sculpture, a broken body, recalls Ash Wednesday's words, "Remember that you are dust, and to dust you shall return." With all creation we pray that God's victory will have full reign in the face of all kinds of death that surround us. In today's gospel Jesus speaks of the great mystery which is about to unfold, and we get a hint that death is not the final word: "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." Jesus succumbed to the powers of death. It is nearly impossible to comprehend this selfless act. Our hope is in this one who draws all of us to himself across the chasm that separates the living from the dead. This is the ultimate hope of the gospel, that in the letting go of our earthly life we find Life.