

† HOME SERVICE OF WORD AND PRAYER †
Fourth Sunday in Lent
March 14, 2021

PRELUDE

Nettleton

John Eggert

INVOCATION and CONFESSION

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

C **Amen.**

P If we say we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us.

C **But if we confess our sins, God, who is faithful and just, will forgive our sins and cleanse us from all unrighteousness.**

P Let us then confess our sins to God our Father.

C **Most merciful God, we confess that we are by nature sinful and unclean. 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. We justly deserve Your present and eternal punishment. 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 Almighty God in His mercy has given His Son to die for us, and for His sake forgives us all our sins. As a called and ordained servant of Christ, and by His authority, I therefore forgive you all your sins, in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit.

C **Amen.**

OPENING HYMN

Come, Thou Fount of Every Blessing

Come, Thou Fount of ev'ry blessing, tune my heart to sing Thy grace;
streams of mercy, never ceasing, call for songs of loudest praise.
While the hope of endless glory fills my heart with joy and love,
teach me ever to adore Thee; may I still Thy goodness prove.

Here I raise my Ebenezer, hither by Thy help I've come;
and I hope, by Thy good pleasure, safely to arrive at home.
Jesus sought me when a stranger, wand'ring from the fold of God;
He, to rescue me from danger, interposed His precious blood.

Oh, to grace how great a debtor daily I'm constrained to be;
let that grace now like a fetter bind my wand'ring heart to Thee:
Prone to wander, Lord, I feel it; prone to leave the God I love.
Here's my heart, O take and seal it, seal it for Thy courts above.

PRAYER OF THE DAY

P The Lord be with you.

C And also with you.

P Let us pray:

C God of grace, by sending us Your Son, You lifted up this fallen world and rescued us from the hopelessness of death. Grant that we may always recognize Your merciful goodness, give thanks for all Your blessings, and cheerfully serve You and one another; through Jesus Christ, Your Son our Lord, who lives and reigns with You and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. Amen.

OLD TESTAMENT LESSON

Numbers 21:4-9

⁴From Mount Hor [Moses and the Israelites] set out by the way to the Red Sea, to go around the land of Edom; but the people became impatient on the way. ⁵The people spoke against God and against Moses, "Why have you brought us up out of Egypt to die in the wilderness? For there is no food and no water, and we detest this miserable food." ⁶Then the Lord sent poisonous serpents among the people, and they bit the people, so that many Israelites died. ⁷The people came to Moses and said, "We have sinned by speaking against the Lord and against you; pray to the Lord to take away the serpents from us." So Moses prayed for the people. ⁸And the Lord said to Moses, "Make a poisonous serpent, and set it on a pole; and everyone who is bitten shall look at it and live." ⁹So Moses made a serpent of bronze, and put it upon a pole; and whenever a serpent bit someone, that person would look at the serpent of bronze and live.

L This is the Word of the Lord.

C Thanks be to God.

EPISTLE

Ephesians 2:1-10

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 This is the Word of the Lord.

C Thanks be to God.

VERSE

P Return to the Lord, your God, for He is gracious and merciful,

C slow to anger and abounding in steadfast love.

GOSPEL

John 3:14-21

P The Holy Gospel according to St. John, the 3rd chapter.

C Glory to You, O Lord.

¹⁴[Jesus said to Nicodemus,] "And 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. ¹⁶For 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. ¹⁷Indeed, 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 This is the Gospel of the Lord.

C Praise to You, O Christ.

HYMN OF THE DAY

Christ, the Life of All the Living

Christ, the life of all the living, Christ, the death of death, our foe.

who, Thyself for me once giving to the darkest depths of woe:

Through Thy suff'rings, death, and merit I eternal life inherit.

Thousand, thousand thanks shall be, dearest Jesus, unto Thee.

Thou hast borne the smiting only that my wounds might all be whole;

Thou hast suffered, sad and lonely, rest to give my weary soul;

yea, the curse of God enduring, blessing unto me securing.

Thousand, thousand thanks shall be, dearest Jesus, unto Thee.

SERMON

"Snakes and More Snakes"

Rev. Dr. Robert Hartwell

THE APOSTLES' CREED

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

And 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 sits at the right hand of God the Father almighty.
From thence 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.**

PRAYERS OF THE CHURCH

P Let us pray for the whole Church of God in Christ Jesus and for all people according to their needs.

P Holy God, You loved the world by giving Your only Son, that whoever believes in Him might be saved. Bless the work of Your Church and all who are called to share the Gospel. By Your Spirit, create and sustain saving faith within us and all who hear Your Word. Lord, in Your mercy,

C **hear our prayer.**

P O Lord, in these Lenten days we pray that You would draw us into Your light. Expose what we have thought, spoken or done against You, that we might look to Your Son lifted up on the cross and find life. Lord, in Your mercy,

C **hear our prayer.**

P You made us alive in Christ even when we were dead in our trespasses and sins. Set Your Spirit at work within us, that we may resist what is evil and carry out the good works You desire us to do. We pray especially for our Lenten mission projects and our ongoing social ministries. Lord, in Your mercy,

C **hear our prayer.**

P Bless and sustain all who serve in government, that they may act wisely and in accordance with Your will. Support those who defend, protect and attend to our needs while we continue to navigate through this pandemic, especially first responders, medical professionals, and funeral home personnel. Lord, in Your mercy,

C **hear our prayer.**

P O God, You are our light and our salvation. Hide in the shelter of Your wings any who are suffering in body, mind or spirit. Keep them from fear and uphold them with the healing power of Christ. We pray especially for all on our prayer line and those we remember before You now...(PAUSE). Lord, in Your mercy,

C **hear our prayer.**

P Your steadfast love endures forever. We give You thanks for our community of faith, for the believers of every generation, and especially for the family and friends dear to us. Keep us in Your faith and favor, that we may abide in Your eternal peace now and forever. Lord, in Your mercy,
C **hear our prayer.**

P All these things and whatever else You know that we need, grant us for the sake of Jesus Christ, our Lord and Savior, who taught us to pray:
C **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.**

CLOSING HYMN

By Grace I'm Saved

By grace I'm saved, grace free and boundless; my soul, believe and doubt it not. Why stagger at this word of promise? Has Scripture ever falsehood taught? No! Then this word must true remain: By grace you, too, will life obtain.

By grace! None dare lay claim to merit; our words and conduct have no worth. God in His love sent our Redeemer, Christ Jesus, to this sinful earth; His death did for our sins atone, and we are saved by grace alone.

By grace! This ground of faith is certain; as long as God is true, it stands. What saints have penned by inspiration, what in His Word our God commands, our faith in what our God has done depends on grace – grace through His Son.

BENEDICTION

P The Lord bless you and keep you. The Lord make His face shine on you and be gracious to you. The Lord look upon you with favor and give you peace.

C **Amen.**

P Go in peace to serve the Lord.

C **Thanks be to God.**

POSTLUDE

By Grace I'm Saved

Kevin Hildebrand

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Special thanks to our additional participant in today's service:

Lector Lauren Perotto

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