

St. Paul's Evangelical Lutheran Church

First Sunday in Lent + Sunday, February 21, 2021

Introduction to the day

On Ash Wednesday the church began its journey toward baptismal immersion in the death and resurrection of Christ. This year, the Sundays in Lent lead us to focus on five covenants God makes in the Hebrew Scriptures and to use them as lenses through which to view baptism. First Peter connects the way God saved Noah's family in the flood with the way God saves us through the water of baptism. The baptismal covenant is made with us individually, but the new life we are given in baptism is for the sake of the whole world.

GATHERING

WELCOME

Please like this page and leave your name(s) in the comment section. Feel free to greet your fellow worshipers, add your prayers and share messages of peace in the comments section. In addition, you may wish to follow this page or subscribe to this channel.

CONFESSION AND FORGIVENESS

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

Amen.

God of all mercy and consolation, come to the help of your people, turning us from our sin to live for you alone. Give us the power of your Holy Spirit that we may confess our sin, receive your forgiveness, and grow into the fullness of Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord.

Amen.

Let us confess our sin in the presence of God and of one another.

Most merciful God,

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.

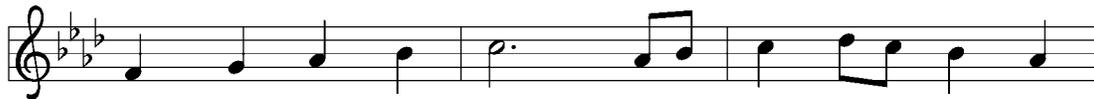
In the mercy of almighty God, Jesus Christ was given to die for us, and for his sake God forgives us all our sins. As a called and ordained minister of the church of Christ, and by his authority, I therefore declare to you the entire forgiveness of all your sins, in the name of the Father, and of the + Son, and of the Holy Spirit.

Amen.

GATHERING SONG *O Lord, throughout These Forty Days (CONSOLATION)*



1 O Lord, through - out these for - ty days you
2 You strove with Sa - tan, and you won; your
3 Though parched and hun - gry, yet you prayed and
4 Be with us through this sea - son, Lord, and



prayed and kept the fast; in - spire re - pen - tance
faith - ful - ness en - dured; lend us your nerve, your
fixed your mind a - bove; so teach us to de -
all our earth - ly days, that when the fi - nal



for our sin, and free us from our past.
skill and trust in God's e - ter - nal word.
ny our - selves that we may know God's love.
Eas - ter dawns, we join in heav - en's praise.

Text: based on Claudia F. Hernaman, 1838–1898; para. Gilbert E. Doan Jr., b. 1930
Music: CONSOLATION, A. Davisson, *Kentucky Harmony*, 1816
Text © 1978 *Lutheran Book of Worship*, admin. Augsburg Fortress

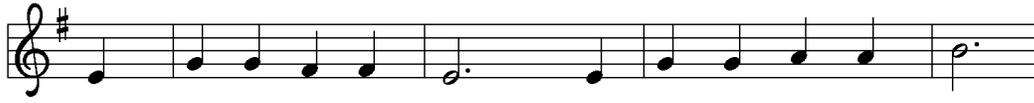
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GREETING

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

And also with you.

KYRIE



- 1 Have mer - cy on us, Lord, and hear our sol - emn prayer.
2 Have mer - cy on us, Christ, and wash a - way our sin.
3 Have mer - cy on us, Lord; make sin and shame de - part.



We come to hear your liv - ing word; it saves us from de - spair.
Pour out your grace and make us whole that new life may be - gin.
Re - new us with your sav - ing pow'r; cre - ate in us new hearts!

PRAYER OF THE DAY

Let us pray.

Holy God, heavenly Father, in the waters of the flood you saved the chosen, and in the wilderness of temptation you protected your Son from sin. Renew us in the gift of baptism. May your holy angels be with us, that the wicked foe may have no power over us, through Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever.

Amen.

WORD

FIRST READING: Genesis 9:8-17

Today's reading is the conclusion to the flood story. Because of human sin, God destroys the earth by flood, saving only Noah, his family, and the animals on the ark. Yet divine destruction gives way to divine commitment. As in the first creation, God blesses humanity and establishes a covenant with all creatures.

A reading from Genesis.

⁸God said to Noah and to his sons with him, ⁹"As for me, I am establishing my covenant with you and your descendants after you, ¹⁰and with every living creature that is with you, the birds, the domestic animals, and every animal of the earth with you, as many as came out of the ark. ¹¹I establish my covenant with you, that never again shall all flesh be cut off by the waters of a flood, and never again shall there be a flood to destroy the earth." ¹²God said, "This is the sign of the covenant that I make between me and you and every living creature that is with you, for all future generations: ¹³I have set my bow in the clouds, and it shall be a sign of the covenant between me and the earth. ¹⁴When I

bring clouds over the earth and the bow is seen in the clouds, ¹⁵I will remember my covenant that is between me and you and every living creature of all flesh; and the waters shall never again become a flood to destroy all flesh. ¹⁶When the bow is in the clouds, I will see it and remember the everlasting covenant between God and every living creature of all flesh that is on the earth." ¹⁷God said to Noah, "This is the sign of the covenant that I have established between me and all flesh that is on the earth."

The word of the Lord.

Thanks be to God.

PSALM: Psalm 25:1-10

¹To you, O LORD,

I lift up my soul.

²**My God, I put my trust in you; let me not be put to shame,
nor let my enemies triumph over me.**

³Let none who look to you be put to shame;
rather let those be put to shame who are treacherous.

⁴**Show me your ways, O LORD,
and teach me your paths.**

⁵Lead me in your truth and teach me,
for you are the God of my salvation; in you have I trusted all the day long.

⁶**Remember, O LORD, your compassion and love,
for they are from everlasting.**

⁷Remember not the sins of my youth and my transgressions;
remember me according to your steadfast love
and for the sake of your goodness, O LORD.

⁸**You are gracious and upright, O LORD;
therefore you teach sinners in your way. R**

⁹You lead the lowly in justice
and teach the lowly your way.

¹⁰All your paths, O LORD, are steadfast love and faithfulness
to those who keep your covenant and your testimonies.

SECOND READING: 1 Peter 3:18-22

As God acted through Christ's suffering and death to bring us to God, so God acts through baptism to save us from a sinful existence. This spiritual cleansing marks our new life in Christ.

A reading from 1 Peter.

¹⁸Christ also suffered for sins once for all, the righteous for the unrighteous, in order to bring you to God. He was put to death in the flesh, but made alive in the spirit, ¹⁹in which also he went and made a proclamation to the spirits in prison, ²⁰who in former

times did not obey, when God waited patiently in the days of Noah, during the building of the ark, in which a few, that is, eight persons, were saved through water. ²¹And baptism, which this prefigured, now saves you—not as a removal of dirt from the body, but as an appeal to God for a good conscience, through the resurrection of Jesus Christ, ²²who has gone into heaven and is at the right hand of God, with angels, authorities, and powers made subject to him.

The word of the Lord.

Thanks be to God.

GOSPEL ACCLAMATION



We are turn - ing, Lord, to hear you; you are mer - ci - ful and kind -



slow to an - ger, rich in bless - ing, and with love to us in - clined.

GOSPEL: Mark 1:9-15

The Spirit that comes upon Jesus at his baptism sustains him when he is tested by Satan so that he might proclaim the good news of God's reign.

The holy gospel according to Mark.

Glory to you, O Lord.

⁹In those days Jesus came from Nazareth of Galilee and was baptized by John in the Jordan. ¹⁰And just as he was coming up out of the water, he saw the heavens torn apart and the Spirit descending like a dove on him. ¹¹And a voice came from heaven, "You are my Son, the Beloved; with you I am well pleased."

¹²And the Spirit immediately drove him out into the wilderness. ¹³He was in the wilderness forty days, tempted by Satan; and he was with the wild beasts; and the angels waited on him.

¹⁴Now after John was arrested, Jesus came to Galilee, proclaiming the good news of God, ¹⁵and saying, "The time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God has come near; repent, and believe in the good news."

The gospel of the Lord.

Praise to you, O Christ.

SERMON

A STORY ABOUT GOD, FROM GOD'S PERSPECTIVE

You are most likely very familiar with the story of Noah's Ark and with the main objects we discover in this story: Noah and his family, The Ark, all those animals, and finally a rainbow. Because of its popularity with children, we usually stay playing on the surface of this story. Let's think a little deeper about this story and what its communicating about God and human beings and all the creatures within God's good creation. Here are some questions to consider. Feel free to post your questions and comments about this story, too.

Today we pick up the story at its end, after the flood and as the creatures are emerging from the ark and into a new post-flood life. What reason does God give for unleashing the waters of the flood? What purpose did God achieve through the flood?

God establishes a covenant with humans AND with every living creature that has emerged from the ark. Explore the simple terms of this covenant by asking: What does God promise to do for earth's creatures? What are human beings to do to fulfill their commission in this covenant? What is the nature of the relationship between God, humans and every living creature does this covenant describe?

Through one righteous man God redeems and saves all life on this planet. Spend some time exploring the connections between Noah, the Ark, the covenant and the rainbow on one hand, and Jesus, the cross and resurrection, and our baptism on the other other hand.

What part do you have to play in the covenant God made with humans and the other living creatures on this planet? What does God desire and expect from all human beings?

The hymn on the next page compares dawn to the start of a new creation. How is our baptismal life like emerging from the ark and into the dawn of a new creation?

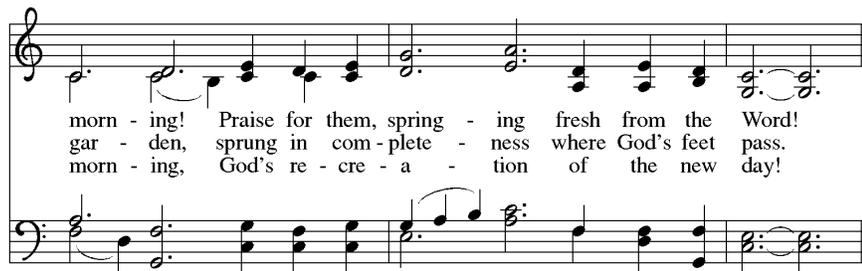
HYMN OF THE DAY *Morning Has Broken* (ELW 556)



1 Morn - ing has bro - ken like the first morn - ing; black - bird has
2 Sweet the rain's new fall, sun - lit from heav - en, like the first
3 Mine is the sun - light! Mine is the morn - ing, born of the



spo - ken like the first bird. Praise for the sing - ing! Praise for the
dew - fall on the first grass. Praise for the sweet - ness of the wet
one light E - den saw play! Praise with e - la - tion, praise ev - 'ry



morn - ing! Praise for them, spring - ing fresh from the Word!
gar - den, sprung in com - plete - ness where God's feet pass.
morn - ing, God's re - cre - a - tion of the new day!

Text: Eleanor Farjeon, 1881–1965
Music: BUNESSAN, Gaelic tune; arr. hymnal version
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Arr. © 2006 Augsburg Fortress.

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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,

**he is seated at the right hand of the Father,
and he will come 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.**

PRAYERS OF INTERCESSION

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

In Jesus your realm has come near to us in every place and time. Give your church throughout the world a spirit of humility and repentance; teach us to trust always in the good news of your salvation. Hear us, O God.

Your mercy is great.

You have made a covenant of mercy with every living creature. Protect all the earth's creatures from destruction. Empower the work of biologists, conservationists, and science educators, and give us an awareness of our place and vocation within your good creation. Hear us, O God.

Your mercy is great.

All your paths are steadfast love and faithfulness. Direct the words and actions of leaders in our community and throughout the world, that they may maintain justice for the lowly and lead us away from violence and toward healing and reconciliation. Hear us, O God.

Your mercy is great.

Even in the wilderness you are with us. Walk alongside migrants and refugees who throughout the world this day are crossing dangerous lands. Tend to those whose lives feel desolate. Give healing and strength to all who suffer, *especially those we name before you now ... (as names are listed, please add the names of people you are praying for today by using the comment section)* Hear us, O God.

Your mercy is great.

In the covenant of baptism you claim us as beloved children. Nurture us in our baptismal identity and teach us to live within it for the sake of others. Strengthen this congregation's ministries of care and concern. Hear us, O God.

Your mercy is great.

In baptism you join us to the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ. We praise you for all those who have died trusting in your faithfulness. Bring us with them to the fullness of your reign. Hear us, O God.

Your mercy is great.

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

Amen.

PEACE

The peace of Christ be with you always.

And also with you.

THANKSGIVING

OFFERING

We give our offerings in praise and thanksgiving for all that God has done for us in Jesus Christ and for the sake of Jesus' ongoing mission and ministry in this world. We have been entrusted to carry out this mission Jesus' name, bringing the good news of Jesus to the people of this community and around the world. Please, take a minute of your time to make an electronic gift through the St. Paul's Website www.stpauls-edison.org/online-giving.html. Please consider making this gift a recurring gift, and look for ways to grow in your giving for the sake of Christ's mission through this congregation in 2021. You may also mail your offering to St. Paul's Lutheran Church, 445 Old Post Rd., Edison NJ 08817.

OFFERING SONG



Cre - ate in me a clean heart, O God, and re - new a right
spir - it with - in me. Cast me not a - way from your pres - ence, and take
not your Ho - ly Spir - it from me. Re - store to me the joy of
your sal - va - tion, and up - hold me with your free Spir - it.

OFFERING PRAYER

Let us pray.

God our provider, you have not fed us with bread alone, but with words of grace and life. Bless us and these your gifts, which we receive from your bounty, through Jesus Christ our Lord.

Amen.

THANKSGIVING FOR THE WORD

Gracious God, we have heard your Word of Life today. While our sin is great, your determination to save has proven greater. Thank you for Jesus who leads us out of the wilderness and into the community declaring, "The kingdom of God has come near." Embolden us with the gift of your Holy Spirit that we may share your love and salvation with all creation, through Jesus Christ in whose name we pray.

Amen.

LORD'S PRAYER

Gathered into one by the Holy Spirit, let us pray as Jesus taught us.

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.

Save us from the time of trial

and deliver us from evil.

For the kingdom, the power,

and the glory are yours,

now and forever. Amen.

SENDING

ANNOUNCEMENTS

Congregation Budget Meeting, February 28, at 1:00 p.m. We will gather online as a congregation to vote on the 2021 Budget on Sunday, February 28, 2021, at 1:00 p.m.

Meeting ID: 871 5553 3287 + Passcode: 435233

You may participate over the phone, a smart phone or tablet, or a computer.

Wednesdays in Lent (Starting this week). Fellowship + Learning + Prayer. Every Wednesday evening from 7:00 p.m. to 8:30 p.m. We are getting together on Zoom to encourage and support each other and to participate in a conversation about what it means to live “in Christ” be part of Christ’s church and how to put the pieces of this community back together again. We have divided the night into 3 x 30 minute sessions, starting at 7:00 p.m. for a time of fellowship, followed at 7:30 p.m. by an exploration of life together “in Christ” using Paul’s letter to the Ephesians, and closing with a service of evening prayer at 8:00 p.m. You may join the gathering at any of the break points. To participate by computer, laptop, mobile device or phone use the following Zoom codes.

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/83603453712?pwd=ZXhHVDFOdUwydkluZVAxTVkrNklWUT09>

Meeting ID: 836 0345 3712

Passcode: 509603

Bedtime Prayers on Zoom. Every evening at 9:00 p.m. (e-mail PastorJim2006@icloud.com to request log in links and/or phone number)

In-Person Gatherings. The St. Paul’s community will continue to gather online as its primary place of assembly until the risk of developing and spreading COVID-19 is greatly diminished. To supplement our online gatherings, we are offering an in-person service indoors on Saturday evenings. Our Sunday morning services will continue online, live-streamed at 10:00 a.m. on Facebook and available on YouTube and the St. Paul’s Web site on Sunday afternoon.

For these services we ask that you sign up in advance so we know who and how many people are planning to attend. To sign up to attend, please use the registration link in the e-mail announcement, your virtual bulletin or by calling the church office. We are asking that all who attend, in-person services abide by these three simple rules: 1) Always wear a face covering; 2) Maintain social distancing by giving your neighbor at least six-feet of personal space; 3) Treat your fellow worshipers with love and respect by actively looking out for their safety and well being.

BLESSING

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.

Amen.

SENDING SONG *Go, My Children, with My Blessing* (ELW 543)



1 "Go, my chil - dren, with my bless - ing, nev - er a - lone.
2 "Go, my chil - dren, sins for - giv - en, at peace and pure.
3 "Go, my chil - dren, fed and nour - ished, clos - er to me.



Wak - ing, sleep - ing, I am with you, you are my own.
Here you learned how much I love you, what I can cure.
Grow in love and love by serv - ing, joy - ful and free.



In my love's bap - tis - mal riv - er I have made you mine for - ev - er.
Here you heard my dear Son's sto - ry, here you touched him, saw his glo - ry.
Here my Spir - it's pow - er filled you, here my ten - der com - fort stilled you.



Go, my chil - dren, with my bless - ing, you are my own."
Go, my chil - dren, sins for - giv - en, at peace and pure."
Go, my chil - dren, fed and nour - ished, joy - ful and free."

DISMISSAL

Go in peace. Share the good news.

Thanks be to God.