

***CONFESSION AND FORGIVENESS**

As we come before God this Lent, let us pray together.

Almighty God, you know us from before we are born. You are always with us in our past, present, and future. You know our joys and our flaws. You know our outward successes and our innermost failings. We come before you now wanting to spend time with you and worship you. Forgive us when we stray in our relationship with you. Bring us closer to your Spirit once again. **Amen.**

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

God of mercy,

We confess that we have not always stayed close to you, God.

We do not always trust in your path for our lives.

We do not always follow your call for us.

We let worry and fear consume us.

We do not always treat our neighbors as ourselves.

For the sake of your Son, have mercy on us.

Forgive us, renew us, and lead us, so that we may return to you again and glorify your holy name in all that we say and do. Amen.

God is merciful and just. Christ was crucified and died for us and for all our sins.

As a minister of the church of Christ, I declare to you that God forgives all of your sins, in the name of the Father, and of the † Son, and of the Holy Spirit.

God never leaves us or forsakes us. Return to the Lord your God with a new spirit, ready to accept God's gift of grace. **Amen**

PRAYER OF THE DAY

Let us pray together.... **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.**

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. The word of the Lord. **Thanks be to God.**

PSALM: Psalm 51:1-12

¹Have mercy on me, O God, according to your | steadfast love;
in your great compassion blot out | my offenses.

²**Wash me through and through | from my wickedness, / and cleanse me | from my sin.**

³For I know | my offenses, / and my sin is ev- | er before me.

⁴**Against you only have I sinned and done what is evil | in your sight;
so you are justified when you speak and right | in your judgment.**

⁵Indeed, I was born | steeped in wickedness, / a sinner from my | mother's womb.

⁶**Indeed, you delight in truth | deep within me,
and would have me know wisdom | deep within.**

⁷Remove my sins with hyssop, and I | shall be clean;
wash me, and I shall be pur- | er than snow.

⁸**Let me hear | joy and gladness; / that the body you have broken | may rejoice.**

⁹Hide your face | from my sins, / and blot out | all my wickedness.

¹⁰**Create in me a clean | heart, O God, / and renew a right spir- | it within me.**

¹¹Cast me not away | from your presence, and take not your Holy Spir- | it from me.

¹²**Restore to me the joy of | your salvation / and sustain me with your boun- | tiful 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.
The word of the Lord. **Thanks be to God.**

***GOSPEL: John 3:14-21:20-33**

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. 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. The Gospel of the Lord. **Praise to you, O Christ.**

APOSTLES’ CREED

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

OFFERING PRAYER

Let us pray. All-Knowing God,

You are Creator of all that is in heaven and on earth. We rejoice that we are able to give back some of our blessings to you. You have changed our lives forever with your mercy and grace. Give us opportunities to change the lives of others with your Gospel message. Bless our congregation, this community, and everything we give back to you to continue your holy work, through Jesus Christ, our Lord. Amen.

PRAYERS OF INTERCESSION

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

A brief silence.

Leader: 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. Hear us, O God.

Your mercy is great.

Leader: 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. Hear us, O God.

Your mercy is great.

Leader: You promise to write your law on our hearts. Guide citizens throughout the world to shape communities that reflect your mercy, justice, and peace, and give them creativity to work for the welfare of all. Hear us, O God.

Your mercy is great.

Pastor: 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 we name....*). Hear us, O God.

Your mercy is great.

Leader: 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. Hear us, O God.

Your mercy is great.

Leader: 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. Hear us, O God.

Your mercy is great.

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

LORD'S PRAYER

Lord, remember us in your kingdom and teach us to pray.

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.

SENDING PRAYER

Let us pray.

Lord God, we are living in difficult times. As we have worshipped with you this day, you have refreshed us with your Word and given us new hope. Send us into the next week as witnesses of your Gospel message, that we may be light for the world, as we continue through this season of Lent. **Amen.**

***BLESSING**

May the Almighty God bless you and keep you.

May Christ's mercy and forgiveness remind you to go and sin no more.

May the Spirit guide you and keep you safe from evil in the world.

And finally, may God's love bring you comfort and ✠ give you hope. **Amen.**

DISMISSAL

Go in the humbleness of the Lenten season and serve God with kindness!

Thanks be to God!