



Return  
from  
EXILE

**LENTEN MIDWEEK 5**

ASCENSION LUTHERAN CHURCH

*"A Church for Families, a Family for Everyone"*

April 6, 2022

## LENTEN MIDWEEK 5

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**Welcome** to all who are attending our service today. We are glad you are with us! To all guests and visitors, we especially extend our hands of friendship. May God bless the worship time for each one of you. Please come again!

**NURSERY AVAILABLE** We have an unstaffed nursery for your convenience and privacy. The nursery has audio and video so you may hear and see the worship service while attending to your child.

**Holy Communion** is celebrated at the 8:30 service on the 1<sup>st</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> Sundays of the month, and at the 11:00 service on the 2<sup>nd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> Sundays.

(**P**) = Pastor, (**C**) = Congregation, (**A**) = Reader/Assisting)

✠ PREPARATION ✠

RETURN FROM EXILE

**“DEATH TO RESURRECTION:  
THE WILDERNESS TO THE PROMISED LAND”**

**AS WE GATHER:** The journey through a desolate place causes concern. In the midst of a desert, we wonder if we have enough water and food. In the middle of a drive across the wilderness of the western plains, we repeatedly check the fuel gauge. We know that death awaits the unprepared in the wilds and woolies. Indeed, the wilderness has always been considered a place of death and separation, a place of exile from all that we long for and hold dear, even our life. A journey through the wilderness is dangerous, but what waits for those who arrive at the other side? New life, a resurrection, a promised land where the Lord provides all good things, all life-giving and life-sustaining things; these are the blessings that come to the people of God from the hand of God as He brings us out of the wilderness of sin and into the paradise purchased by His Son. From the wilderness to the promised land—from death to life—a return from exile!

## HYMN

### **“We Are Exiles From The Garden”** (Tune: “Stricken, Smitten And Afflicted”)

We are exiles from the garden,  
Banished by our sinful choice,  
Terrified to seek His pardon,  
Hiding from our Father’s voice.  
Underneath the branches swaying,  
Sweat and blood fall to the ground.  
In the darkness, Christ is praying;  
He comes forward to be bound.

Leaves will fail our vain concealing  
Our true nakedness and shame.  
We must rend our hearts, revealing  
All our guilt and sinful blame.  
Jesus takes our flesh and sentence  
As His clothes are claimed below.  
We fall down in true repentance;  
His new robe He will bestow.

On the mount, the Lord is waiting  
For the proper sacrifice.  
What is worth His wrath abating?  
Who could pay the dreadful price?  
God the Son will be the scion.  
God the Father will provide.  
God the Spirit points to Zion;  
There, with God, we will abide.

On this journey we are taking,  
We fear not what lies in store.  
Though our feeble wills are breaking,  
We know Christ has gone before.  
As we walk the way completed,  
On His throne, the Savior waits.  
Death and hell have been unseated.  
We behold the open gates!

## INVOCATION

- P** In the name of the Father, and of the ✠ Son, and of the Holy Spirit.
- C** **Amen.**

## OPENING SENTENCES

- P** Hear my prayer, O Lord, and give ear to my cry; hold not Your peace at my tears!
- C** **For I am a sojourner with You, a guest, like all my fathers.**  
*Ps. 39:12*
- P** Thus declares the Lord of hosts: Return to Me, says the Lord of hosts,
- C** **and I will return to you, says the Lord of hosts.** *Zech. 1:3*
- P** Let the wicked forsake his way, and the unrighteous man his thoughts;
- C** **let him return to the Lord, that He may have compassion on him, and to our God, for He will abundantly pardon.**  
*Is. 55:7*

## CONFESSION

- P** We are on a journey from a deserved exile to a gracious promised land. Although we merit nothing, because our heavenly Father promises forgiveness and mercy to all who call on Him for Jesus' sake, let us go to Him, confessing our sin.
- Silence for reflection on God's Word and for self-examination*
- P** Heavenly Father, we are fallen creatures, prone to hiding our faults from one another, yet knowing our sins are laid bare before You.
- C** **Forgive us and clothe us with Christ's own righteousness.**
- P** We have erred and strayed from Your way.
- C** **Forgive us and turn our feet toward the paradise You promise.**

- P** We have attempted to placate Your just demands by our own efforts.
- C** **Forgive us for the sake of Your Son's sacrifice in our stead.**
- P** We have often failed to reflect the new life You granted us in our Baptism.
- C** **Forgive us and drown the old Adam within us.**
- P** We have eaten "forbidden fruit" in our disobedient thinking, speaking, and acting.
- C** **Forgive us and grant us the new life won on the tree of the cross.**
- P** We have failed to trust Your care and protection as we journey through this wilderness.
- C** **Forgive us and accompany us on our pilgrim way.**

## FORGIVENESS

- P** Our gracious God, even when we were dead in our trespasses, has made us alive together with Christ (*Eph. 2:5*). You who once were far off have been brought near by the blood of Christ (*Eph. 2:13*). May He who began this good work in you bring it to completion in the day of our Lord Jesus Christ (*Phil. 1:6*). In the stead and by the command of my Lord Jesus Christ, I therefore forgive you all your sins in the name of the Father and of the † Son and of the Holy Spirit.
- C** **Amen.**

## † THE WORD †

### PSALM 66



- <sup>1</sup> When the LORD restored the fortunes of | Zion,\*  
we were like | those who dream.
- <sup>2</sup> **Then our mouth was filled with | laughter,\*  
and our tongue with | shouts of joy;**

then they said among the nations,  
“The LORD has done great | things for them.”\*  
    <sup>3</sup> The LORD has done great things  
    for us; | we are glad.

**4 Restore our fortunes, | O LORD,\*  
    like streams in the | Negeb!**

<sup>5</sup> Those who | sow in tears\*  
    shall reap with | shouts of joy!

**6 He who goes out weeping,  
bearing the seed for | sowing,\*  
    shall come home with shouts of joy,  
    bringing his | sheaves with him.**

**Glory be to the Father and | to the Son\*  
    and to the Holy | Spirit;  
as it was in the be- | ginning,\*  
    is now, and will be forever. | Amen.**

## OLD TESTAMENT READING

Joshua 3:1–6 (ESV)

<sup>1</sup> Then Joshua rose early in the morning and they set out from Shittim. And they came to the Jordan, he and all the people of Israel, and lodged there before they passed over. <sup>2</sup> At the end of three days the officers went through the camp <sup>3</sup> and commanded the people, “As soon as you see the ark of the covenant of the LORD your God being carried by the Levitical priests, then you shall set out from your place and follow it. <sup>4</sup> Yet there shall be a distance between you and it, about 2,000 cubits in length. Do not come near it, in order that you may know the way you shall go, for you have not passed this way before.” <sup>5</sup> Then Joshua said to the people, “Consecrate yourselves, for tomorrow the LORD will do wonders among you.” <sup>6</sup> And Joshua said to the priests, “Take up the ark of the covenant and pass on before the people.” So they took up the ark of the covenant and went before the people.

**P** O Lord, have mercy on us.

**C** Thanks be to God.

## EPISTLE

Philippians 3:12–21 (ESV)

<sup>12</sup> Not that I have already obtained this or am already perfect, but I press on to make it my own, because Christ Jesus has made me His own. <sup>13</sup> Brothers, I do not consider that I have made it my own. But one thing I do: forgetting what lies behind and straining forward to what lies ahead, <sup>14</sup> I press on toward the goal for the prize of the upward call of God in Christ Jesus. <sup>15</sup> Let those of us who are mature think this way, and if in anything you think otherwise, God will reveal that also to you. <sup>16</sup> Only let us hold true to what we have attained. <sup>17</sup> Brothers, join in imitating me, and keep your eyes on those who walk according to the example you have in us. <sup>18</sup> For many, of whom I have often told you and now tell you even with tears, walk as enemies of the cross of Christ. <sup>19</sup> Their end is destruction, their god is their belly, and they glory in their shame, with minds set on earthly things. <sup>20</sup> But our citizenship is in heaven, and from it we await a Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ, <sup>21</sup> who will transform our lowly body to be like His glorious body, by the power that enables Him even to subject all things to Himself.

**P** O Lord, have mercy on us.

**C** **Thanks be to God.**

## HOLY GOSPEL

**Matthew 3:13; 4:1–2 (ESV)**

<sup>3:13</sup> Then Jesus came from Galilee to the Jordan to John, to be baptized by him.

<sup>4:1</sup> Then Jesus was led up by the Spirit into the wilderness to be tempted by the devil. <sup>2</sup> And after fasting forty days and forty nights, He was hungry.

**P** O Lord, have mercy on us.

**C** **Thanks be to God.**

## HYMN “Mark How The Lamb Of God’s Self-Off’ring”

Mark how the Lamb of God’s self-off’ring  
Our human sinfulness takes on  
In the birthwaters of the Jordan  
As Jesus is baptized by John.  
Hear how the voice from heaven thunders,  
“Lo, this is My beloved Son.”  
See how in dovelike form the Spirit

Descends on God's Anointed One.

From this assurance of God's favor  
Jesus goes to the wilderness,  
There to endure a time of testing  
That readied Him to teach and bless.  
So we, by water and the Spirit  
Baptized into Christ's ministry,  
Are often led to paths of service  
Through mazes of adversity.

Grant us, O God, the strength and courage  
To live the faith our lips declare;  
Bless us in our baptismal calling;  
Christ's royal priesthood help us share.  
Turn us from ev'ry false allegiance,  
That we may trust in Christ alone:  
Raise up in us a chosen people  
Transformed by love to be Your own.

**SERMON**  
**Joshua 3:1–6**

**“The Wilderness to the Promised Land”**  
**Pastor Jim Sprenkle**

**CANTICLE**

**“Come, My Soul, With Every Care”**

**Come, my soul, with ev'ry care, Jesus loves to answer prayer.  
He Himself has bid thee pray, Therefore will not turn away.**

**While I am a pilgrim here, Let Thy love my spirit cheer;  
As my guide, my guard, my friend, Lead me to my journey's end.**

**PRAYER OF THE CHURCH**

**P** We are returning from exile, listening to the inviting Word of God, full of grace and truth. Let us respond to Him in prayer.

Gracious God, offering full and free forgiveness, we come in spiritual sackcloth and ashes, painfully aware of our sins and failings. Graciously wash us and clothe us with the robe of Christ's own righteousness,

**C** **so that we may live eternally with all Your saints.**

- P** Eden's Lord and ours, hear us and all who call out to You in pain and sorrow, sweat or tears. Remind us of Your painful victory over every temptation,
- C** **and strengthen us to follow where You have led the way.**
- P** Loving Father, calling us to Mount Calvary, remove from us our fear of Your righteous judgment for our sins; strengthen our faith
- C** **in the all-availing sacrifice of Your Son in our stead.**
- P** Spirit of life, remind us again of our Baptism, in which our old Adam was drowned; strengthen us
- C** **to live in the freedom of the children of God.**
- P** Lord Jesus, Savior and Guide, give us the eyes of faith to see the tree of life awaiting us in heaven, and guide us
- C** **to follow where You have led the way.**
- P** Protecting Father, assure us of Your presence on our journey through the desert of this world and bring us at last
- C** **to the paradise purchased by Your Son.**
- P** O Holy Spirit, nourish our faith and restore our souls each time we come to the Table of the Lord and receive His body and blood,
- C** **a foretaste of the feast to come.**
- P** Holy and merciful Lord over all, we feel the burden of our sin; renew in us the firm faith that Your Son has borne our griefs and carried our sorrows,
- C** **giving His life for ours.**
- P** Everlasting Father, our Savior has conquered death. Fill us with rejoicing, confident that we shall therefore gather around the eternal throne of the Lamb, Your Son, who with You and the Holy Spirit are one God, now and forever.
- C** **Amen.**

## LORD'S PRAYER

**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.**

## BENEDICTION

- P** The almighty and merciful Lord, the Father, and † Son, and the Holy Spirit, bless you and keep you
- G** Amen.

## HYMN

### “To Jordan Came the Christ, Our Lord”

To Jordan came the Christ, our Lord,  
To do His Father's pleasure;  
Baptized by John, the Father's Word  
Was given us to treasure.  
This heav'nly washing now shall be  
A cleansing from transgression  
And by His blood and agony  
Release from death's oppression.  
A new life now awaits us.

These truths on Jordan's banks were shown  
By mighty word and wonder.  
The Father's voice from heav'n came down,  
Which we do well to ponder:  
“This man is My beloved Son,  
In whom my heart has pleasure.  
Him you must hear, and Him alone,  
And trust in fullest measure  
The word that He has spoken.”

To His disciples spoke the Lord,  
“Go out to ev’ry nation,  
And bring to them the living Word  
And this My invitation:  
Let ev’ryone abandon sin  
And come in true contrition  
To be baptized and thereby win  
Full pardon and remission  
And heav’nly bliss inherit.”

## DISMISSAL

- P** Go in peace. Serve the Lord.  
**C** Thanks be to God!

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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