

Return  
from  
EXILE

**LENTEN MIDWEEK 4**

ASCENSION LUTHERAN CHURCH

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

March 30, 2022

## LENTEN MIDWEEK 4

March 30, 2022

**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

“TREE TO TREE: THE TREE OF LIFE TO THE CROSS”

**AS WE GATHER:** God created man, and man began his journey in the Garden of Eden. In the midst of that garden were two trees more beautiful than the rest. The tree of the knowledge of good and evil and the tree of life—what joy for man to come to these trees and worship, giving thanks to God for His good and gracious gifts. But one day there was an unwelcome visitor to their worship service—Satan. He had things to say, wise things to share with man. They were lies, but man followed. Sin came, and Adam and Eve were exiled from the garden and from the tree of life. How they longed to return to the garden and the beautiful tree, and God promised that He would lead the way. Jesus Christ leads us from one garden to the next and from one tree to the tree of life in the courts of heaven. It was a hard and treacherous journey for our Leader, and it required a stop at another tree, the cross. But the evil Satan, who used a tree to bring sin into world, was conquered by another tree, and our sin was washed away.

## 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.**

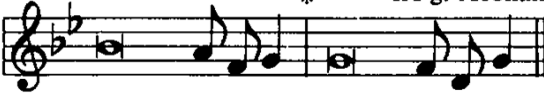
## FORGIVENESS

- 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 25:1-7; 20-22

\* IX g: Aeolian



<sup>1</sup> To You, | O LORD,\*  
I lift | up my soul.

<sup>2</sup> **O my God, in You I trust;  
let me not be | put to shame;\*  
let not my enemies exult | over me.**

<sup>3</sup> Indeed, none who wait for You  
shall be | put to shame; \*  
they shall be ashamed who are  
wantonly | treacherous.

<sup>4</sup> **Make me to know Your ways, | O Lord;\*  
teach me | Your paths.**

<sup>5</sup> Lead me in Your truth and teach me,  
for You are the God of my sal- | vation; \*  
for You I wait all the | day long.

<sup>6</sup> **Remember Your mercy, O Lord,  
and Your | steadfast love,\*  
for they have been | from of old.**

<sup>7</sup> Remember not the sins of my youth  
or my trans- | gressions; \*  
according to Your steadfast love remember me,  
for the sake of Your goodness, | O LORD!

<sup>20</sup> **Oh, guard my soul, and de- | liver me!\*  
Let me not be put to shame,  
for I take ref- | uge in You.**

<sup>21</sup> May integrity and uprightness pre- | serve me,\*  
for I | wait for You.

<sup>22</sup> **Redeem Israel, | O God,\*  
out of all his | troubles.**

**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

Genesis 2:15; 3:22–24 (ESV)

<sup>2:15</sup> The LORD God took the man and put him in the garden of Eden to work it and keep it.

<sup>3:22</sup> Then the LORD God said, “Behold, the man has become like one of us in knowing good and evil. Now, lest he reach out his hand and take also of the tree of life and eat, and live forever—” <sup>23</sup> therefore the LORD God sent him out from the garden of Eden to work the ground from which he was taken. <sup>24</sup> He drove out the man, and at the east of the garden of Eden he placed the cherubim and a flaming sword that turned every way to guard the way to the tree of life.

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

**C** Thanks be to God.

## EPISTLE

1 Peter 2:21–25 (ESV)

<sup>21</sup> For to this you have been called, because Christ also suffered for you, leaving you an example, so that you might follow in His steps.

<sup>22</sup> He committed no sin, neither was deceit found in His mouth.

<sup>23</sup> When He was reviled, He did not revile in return; when He suffered, He did not threaten, but continued entrusting Himself to Him who judges justly. <sup>24</sup> He Himself bore our sins in His body on the tree, that we might die to sin and live to righteousness. By His wounds you have been healed. <sup>25</sup> For you were straying like sheep, but have now returned to the Shepherd and Overseer of your souls.

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

**C** Thanks be to God.

## HOLY GOSPEL

John 3:14–15 (ESV)

<sup>14</sup> And as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, so must the Son of Man be lifted up, <sup>15</sup> that whoever believes in Him may have eternal life.

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

**C** Thanks be to God.

## **HYMN**

### **“When I Survey The Wondrous Cross”**

When I survey the wondrous cross  
On which the Prince of Glory died,  
My richest gain I count but loss  
And pour contempt on all my pride.

Forbid it, Lord, that I should boast  
Save in the death of Christ, my God;  
All the vain things that charm me most,  
I sacrifice them to His blood.

See, from His head, His hands, His feet  
Sorrow and love flow mingled down!  
Did e'er such love and sorrow meet  
Or thorns compose so rich a crown?

Were the whole realm of nature mine,  
That were a tribute far too small;  
Love so amazing, so divine,  
Demands my soul, my life, my all!

## **SERMON**

### **“Tree to Tree: The Tree of Life to the Cross”**

**Genesis 2:15; 3:22-24**

**Pastor Jim Sprengle**

## **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

**C** Amen.

## HYMN

### **“In the Cross Of Christ I Glory”**

In the cross of Christ I glory,  
towering o'er the wrecks of time;  
all the light of sacred story  
gathers round its head sublime.

When the woes of life o'ertake me,  
hopes deceive, and fears annoy,  
never shall the cross forsake me.  
Lo! it glows with peace and joy.

When the sun of bliss is beaming  
light and love upon my way,  
from the cross the radiance streaming  
adds more luster to the day.

Bane and blessing, pain and pleasure,  
by the cross are sanctified;  
peace is there that knows no measure,  
joys that through all time abide.

## DISMISSAL

**P** Go in peace. Serve the Lord.

**C** **Thanks be to God!**

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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# Ascension Lutheran Church

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Church: 503-665-8821 · Childcare Center: 503-667-6750

Web Site: [www.alcportland.org](http://www.alcportland.org)

Church Office Hours: Monday–Friday 9am to 3pm

## Our Mission Statement:

*~Go and Share Jesus Christ~*

## Our Vision Statement:

*“Take part...Join Jesus on His mission”*

The members of Ascension Lutheran Church are committed to being God ‘s witnesses in Gresham, and in all of Portland and the Northwest, and to the ends of the earth (Acts 1:8):

With the universal Christian Church, we believe, teach and respond to the love of the Triune God— the Father, Creator of all that exists; the Son Jesus Christ, Who left His home in Heaven to become flesh and blood, to suffer and die for the sins of all peoples of the world, and Who rose from the grave, victorious over sin, death and the devil, that we too might live with Him in Heaven; and the Holy Spirit, Who creates faith in our hearts in Christ Jesus through God ‘s Word and Sacrament. The three Persons of the Holy Trinity are one God, co-equal and co-eternal. The core teachings of our faith from the Lutheran perspective can be summarized in three short phrases: Grace alone, Scripture alone, Faith alone.

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