



“Just as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, so must the Son of Man be lifted up, that whoever believes in him may have eternal life.”

John 3:14-15

St. John Evangelical Lutheran Church
Forth Sunday in Lent – March 10, 2024
420 Beaver St., PO Box 411
Mars, PA 16046-0411
www.stjohnchurchmars.org
Phone: 724-625-1830 email: office@stjohnchurchmars.org
Rev. Katie McNeal, Presiding Minister
Maizy Fisher, Director of Music Ministries

*We are delighted to have you worship with us this morning!
Know that you are welcome here just as you are.*

*If you are looking for a church to call home, why not consider making this one your own? If this is your first time visiting us, please fill out the visitor information card stapled to your bulletin. Everything you need to follow worship can be found in this bulletin. As you are comfortable, please rise when there is an * and join in the congregational responses, noted in **bold**.*

All songs are marked with numbers. The red book in the pew has all the songs. Look for the large number in the upper corner of the page to find the correct song.

*During the time of **Peace**, you are invited to turn to those around you and offer a word of peace. We suggest a handshake and saying, "Peace be with you." You are also welcomed to offer another gesture of peace (wave, fist-bump, smile, etc.). Hand sanitizer is available in each pew.*

*At the time of **Offering**, you are invited to share a gift. You may also offer updates to our ongoing prayer list using the yellow cards in the pews and placing them in the offering plates. Visitor information cards and member attendance cards (attached to the front of the bulletin) may also be placed in the offering plates.*

*At the time of **Holy Communion**, all are welcome to come forward via the center aisle, receive the elements, and return via the side aisles. We begin at the front of the right side, commune all on the right side, then we will invite the left side forward. When you come forward, you may receive the bread from the pastor (gluten free wafers are available), then pre-filled cups with wine or grape juice from the assisting minister. You may consume the elements after receiving them then place the empty cup in the tray held by the acolyte. Those who do not receive Holy Communion are welcome to come forward for a blessing.*

If you need a restroom, restrooms are located on the bottom floor at the far side of the building from the elevator. Restrooms may be accessed either via the stairs in the rear of the sanctuary, the stairs by the Greeting Area, or the elevator.

As you prepare for worship, you are invited to fill out the blue prayer request forms located in each pew. The cards will be collected during our hymn of the day, and prayers will be offered during the prayers of intercession.

PRELUDE

ANNOUNCEMENTS

GATHERING

The Holy Spirit calls us together as the people of God.

***CONFESSION AND FORGIVENESS**

Blessed be the holy Trinity, + one God, who writes the law on our hearts, who calls all people together through Jesus.

Amen

Held in God's mercy, let us confess our sin in the presence of God and of one another.

Silence is kept for reflection

Holy God,

We confess that we are caught in the snares of sin and cannot break free.

We hoard resources while our neighbors are hungry and cold.

We speak in ways that silence others.

We are silent when we should speak up.

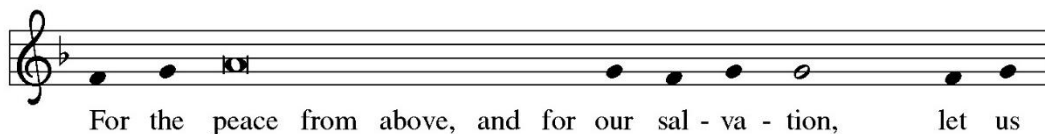
We keep score in our hearts.

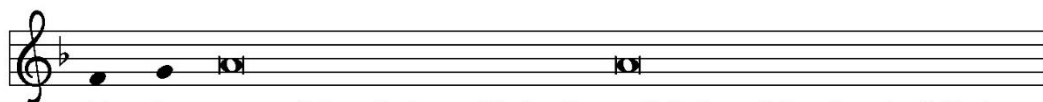
We let hurts grow into hatred.

We hear your call and invitation, yet we turn the other way.

For all these things and for the sins only you know,

have mercy on us and forgive us, Lord.





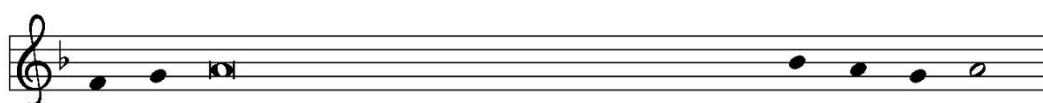
For the peace of the whole world, for the well-being of the church of God,



and for the u - ni - ty of all, let us pray to the Lord.



Lord, have mer - cy.



For this holy house, and for all who offer here their wor-ship and praise,



let us pray to the Lord. **Lord, have mer - cy.**



Help, save, comfort, and de - fend us, gra - cious Lord.



A - men.

Hear this good news:

God washes grace over us in abundance.

God promises to be with us until the end of the age, offering forgiveness and mercy.

God draws near to us, breaking every snare of sin, washing away our wrongs, and restoring life through Jesus Christ.

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

*CALL TO WORSHIP

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.

Lent calls us to journey, this and every day, following Jesus wherever he calls us.

Lent calls us to journey:

to the place where God covenants with us, to receive the new names we are given.

Lent calls us to worship together, to tell future generations the good news.

Lent calls us to practice justice, to bring God's hope to all people.

Lent calls us to faithful living, to trust the one who gives us life.

Lent calls each of us to take up our cross, to trust the one who bears it with us.

Lent calls us to journey with God.

Let us worship God, who walks with us, this and every day.

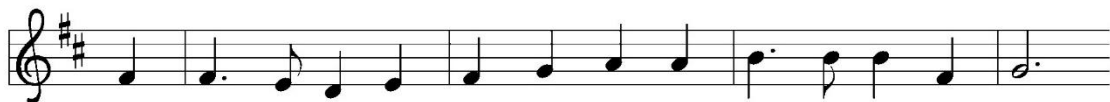
*GATHERING SONG *Beneath the Cross of Jesus* (ELW 338)



1 Be - neath the cross of Je - sus I long to take my stand;
2 Up - on the cross of Je - sus, my eye at times can see
3 I take, O cross, your shad - ow for my a - bid - ing place;



the shad - ow of a might - y rock with - in a wea - ry land,
the ver - y dy - ing form of one who suf - fered there for me.
I ask no oth - er sun - shine than the sun - shine of his face;



a home with - in a wil - der - ness, a rest up - on the way,
And from my con - trite heart, with tears, two won - ders I con - fess:
con - tent to let the world go by, to know no gain nor loss,



from the burn - ing of the noon - tide heat and bur - dens of the day.
the . . . won - der of his glo - rious love and my un - wor - thi - ness.
my . . . sin - ful self my on - ly shame, my glo - ry all, the cross.

***PRAYER OF THE DAY**

Let us pray, **O God, rich in mercy, by the humiliation of your Son you lifted up this fallen world and rescued us from the hopelessness of death. Lead us into your light, that all our deeds may reflect your love, through Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. Amen.**

WORD

God speaks to us in scripture reading, preaching, and song.

FIRST READING: Numbers 21:4-9

A reading from Numbers.

⁴From Mount Hor [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.

The word of the Lord.

Thanks be to God.

PSALM 107:1-3, 17-22

¹Give thanks to the LORD, for the LORD is good,
for God’s mercy endures forever.

²**Let the redeemed of the LORD proclaim
that God redeemed them from the hand of the foe,**

³gathering them in from the lands;
from the east and from the west, from the north and from the south.

¹⁷**Some were fools and took rebellious paths;
through their sins they were afflicted.**

¹⁸They loathed all manner of food
and drew near to death’s door.

¹⁹**Then in their trouble they cried to the LORD
and you delivered them from their distress.**

²⁰You sent forth your word and healed them
and rescued them from the grave.

²¹**Let them give thanks to you, LORD, for your steadfast love
and your wonderful works for all people.**

²²Let them offer sacrifices of thanksgiving
and tell of your deeds with shouts of joy.

SECOND READING: Ephesians 2:1-10

A reading from Ephesians.

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.

The word of the Lord.

Thanks be to God.

*GOSPEL ACCLAMATION



Let your stead - fast love come to us, O Lord.



Save us as you prom - ised; we will trust your word.



Save us as you prom - ised; we will trust your word.

*GOSPEL READING: John 3:14-21

The holy gospel according to John.

Glory to you, O Lord.

[Jesus said:] ¹⁴“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.

¹⁶“For 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.

¹⁷“Indeed, 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.”

The gospel of the Lord.

Praise to you, O Christ

CHILDREN'S SERMON

SERMON

***HYMN OF THE DAY *For by Grace You Have Been Saved* (ELW 598)**

(Blue prayer cards are collected during the song.)



1 For by grace you have been saved and e - ven faith is not your
 2 "So my grace is all - suf - fi - cient for each child who is my
 3 So this weak - ness with con - tent - ment I'll ac - cept now in my -



own, it's the gift of God for you and not the works that you have
 own, for my strength is now made per - fect for each child who is my
 self, all my hard - ships, pains, and griefs that still lie deep with - in my -



done. Don't let an - y - bod - y boast, for this is
 own. When you're weak, then you are strong, for this is
 self. When I'm weak, then I am strong, for this is



God's great gift. A - men.
 God's great gift." A - men.
 God's great gift. A - men. A - men.

***APOSTLES' CREED**

With the whole church, let us confess our faith.

**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**

Trusting in God's promise to reconcile all things, let us pray for the church, the well-being of creation, and a world in need. *A brief silence.*

You alone are God. We thank you for the gift of sabbath rest. Awaken the church to the mystery of your presence and give us glad hearts as we receive the good news of your deliverance. Hear us, O God.

Your mercy is great.

You renew creation. Drive out those who would make the earth a marketplace. Protect rainforests, mountaintops, oceans, and wilderness areas from commercial exploitation. Unite nations, policymakers, and businesses in efforts to reduce carbon emissions. Hear us, O God.

Your mercy is great.

You judge the nations. We pray for an end to war and strife in every land. Strengthen international efforts to negotiate peace and provide humanitarian aid to people fleeing from conflict. Hear us, O God.

Your mercy is great.

You bring healing and hope. We give thanks for physicians, nurses, researchers, therapists, and public health workers who prevent and treat illness. We pray for any who are sick especially Bob, Geneva, Cherry, Winnie, Henry, Harry, Ellen, Ruth, Sally, Katie, Debi, those on our prayer list, and all whom we remember aloud or in our hearts. Hear us, O God.

Your mercy is great.

You abide with your people. Sustain any in this community undergoing life transitions: marriage, divorce, childbirth, adoption, moving, graduation, employment change, or a death in the family. We pray for those preparing for baptism. Hear us, O God.

Your mercy is great.

You bring life from death. We remember our loved ones who have died, confident that they have new life in you. May we trust that nothing can separate us from your love. Hear us, O God.

Your mercy is great.

God of grace, accompany us on our journey and receive the prayers of our hearts and the prayers of the people brought forth today (*blue prayer cards are offered*). Trusting in your abiding presence, we offer this prayer to you, through Jesus Christ, our Savior.

Amen.

***SHARING THE PEACE**

The peace of Christ be with you always.

And also with you.

Let us share God's peace with one another

MEAL

God feeds us with the presence of Jesus Christ.

OFFERING

OFFERTORY HYMN *Amazing Grace, How Sweet the Sound* (ELW 779)

**Stand for the 5th verse*



1 A - maz - ing grace!— how sweet the sound— that
2 'Twas grace that taught my heart to fear, and
3 Through man - y dan - gers, toils, and snares I
4 The Lord has prom - ised good to me; his
5 When we've been there ten thou - sand years, bright



saved a wretch like me! I once was lost, but
grace my fears re - lieved; how pre - cious did that
have al - read - y come; 'tis grace has brought me
word my hope se - cures; he will my shield and
shin - ing as the sun, we've no less days to



now am found; was blind, but now I see.
grace ap - pear the hour I first be - lieved!
safe thus far, and grace will lead me home.
por - tion be as long as life en - dures.
sing God's praise than when we'd first be - gun.

***OFFERING PRAYER**

Let us pray.

God our provider, bless us and these your gifts, which we receive from your bounty so that all people may know your goodness. Jesus, the bread of life is the host of this meal of grace and life at which we gather. Nourish us with this holy food and fill us with hunger for justice and peace through Jesus Christ our Lord.

Amen.

*GREAT THANKSGIVING

The Lord is with you.

And also with you.

Lift up your hearts.

We lift them to the Lord.

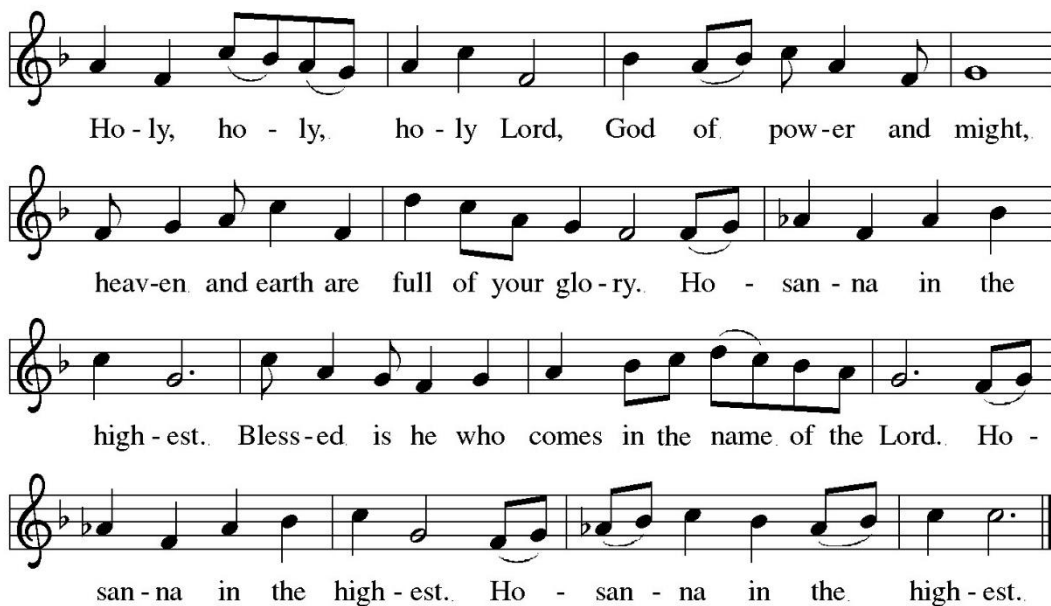
Let us give thanks to the Lord our God.

It is right to give our thanks and praise.

It is indeed right, our duty and our joy,
that we should at all times and in all places
give thanks and praise to you, almighty and merciful God,
through our Savior Jesus Christ.

You call your people to cleanse their hearts
and prepare with joy for the paschal feast,
that, renewed in the gift of baptism,
we may come to the fullness of your grace.

And so, with all the choirs of angels,
with the church on earth and the hosts of heaven,
we praise your name and join their unending hymn:



Ho - ly, ho - ly, ho - ly Lord, God of pow - er and might,
heav - en and earth are full of your glo - ry. Ho - san - na in the
high - est. Bless - ed is he who comes in the name of the Lord. Ho -
san - na in the high - est. Ho - san - na in the high - est.

Blessed are you, O God of the universe.
Your mercy is everlasting and your faithfulness endures from age to age.

Praise to you for creating the heavens and the earth.
Praise to you for saving the earth from the waters of the flood.
Praise to you for bringing the Israelites safely through the sea.
Praise to you for leading your people through the wilderness to the land of milk and honey.
Praise to you for the words and deeds of Jesus, your anointed one.
Praise to you for the death and resurrection of Christ.
Praise to you for your Spirit poured out on all nations.

In the night in which our Lord Jesus was betrayed,
he took bread, and gave thanks;
broke it, and gave it to his disciples, saying:
Take and eat; this is my body, given for you.
Do this for the remembrance of me.

Again, after supper, he took the cup, gave thanks,
and gave it for all to drink, saying:
This cup is the new covenant in my blood,
shed for you and for all people for the forgiveness of sin.
Do this for the remembrance of me.

With this bread and cup we remember our Lord's passover from death to life
as we proclaim the mystery of faith:
Christ has died. Christ is risen. Christ will come again.

O God of resurrection and new life:
Pour out your Holy Spirit on us and on these gifts of bread and wine.
Bless this feast. Grace our table with your presence.
Come, Holy Spirit.

Reveal yourself to us in the breaking of the bread.
Raise us up as the body of Christ for the world.
Breathe new life into us. Send us forth, burning with justice, peace, and love.
Come, Holy Spirit.

With your holy ones of all times and places,
with the earth and all its creatures,
with sun and moon and stars,
we praise you, O God, blessed and holy Trinity, now and forever.
Amen.

**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**

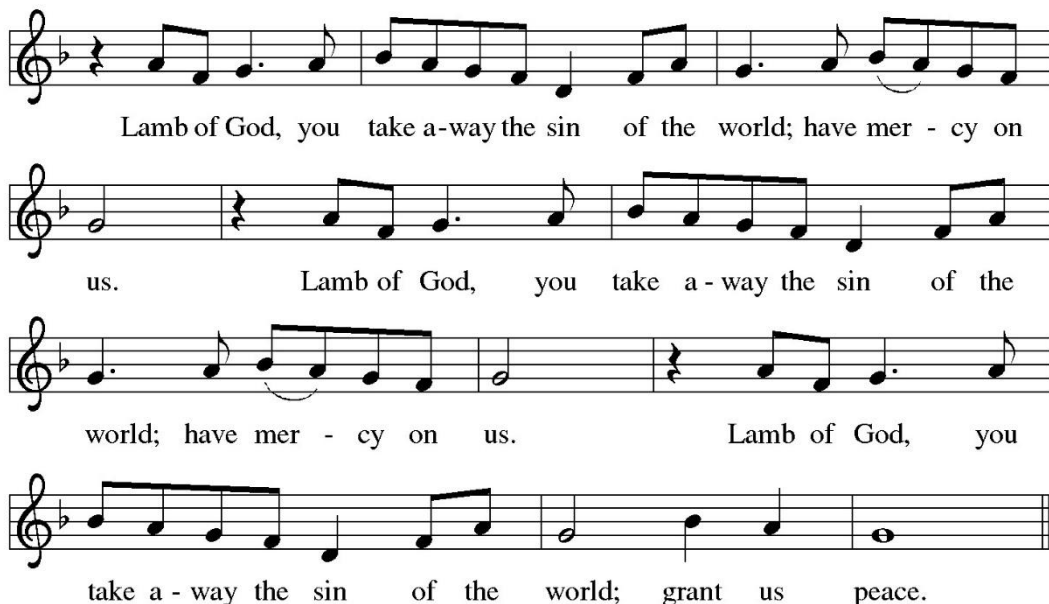
***INVITATION TO COMMUNION**

At this table there is abundance. Come and be nourished for the journey of faith.
Come to this feast for hungry hearts. Come!

Through this meal, we know forgiveness, life, and salvation as the blessings of God's sacramental grace. In response to Jesus' invitation, all are welcome to come forward and experience the real presence of Christ in the bread and wine. Those who do not receive the bread and wine are invited to come forward for a blessing.

Grape juice and gluten free wafers are available upon request. Communion may also be brought back to the pews for those who are unable to come forward.

COMMUNION SONG *Lamb of God*



The image shows the musical notation for the Communion Song 'Lamb of God'. It consists of four staves of music in a single system, all written in treble clef with a key signature of one flat (B-flat). The lyrics are written below the notes. The first staff begins with a treble clef, a key signature of one flat, and a common time signature. The lyrics for the first staff are: 'Lamb of God, you take a-way the sin of the world; have mer - cy on'. The second staff continues the lyrics: 'us. Lamb of God, you take a - way the sin of the'. The third staff continues: 'world; have mer - cy on us. Lamb of God, you'. The fourth staff concludes the lyrics: 'take a - way the sin of the world; grant us peace.' The music features a mix of quarter, eighth, and sixteenth notes, with some rests and phrasing slurs.

DISTRIBUTION OF COMMUNION

COMMUNION HYMN *Lamb of God* (ELW 336)

COMMUNION HYMN *That Priceless Grace* (ELW 591)

1 That price-less grace, that price-less grace, that price-less
2 That price-less blood, that price-less blood, that price-less
3 That pain - ful death, that pain - ful death, that pain - ful
4 That pre - cious word, that pre - cious word, that pre - cious

grace, which gave me life: Je - sus' life is price-less grace.
blood was shed for me: Je - sus' blood is price-less grace.
death took sins a - way: Je - sus' death is price-less grace.
word, which brought me light: Je - sus' word is price-less grace.

That price - less grace is life for me.

***POST-COMMUNION PRAYER**

God of abundance, in this meal you have drawn us to you and nourished us with your holy food. Sustain us in our Lenten journey and strengthen us through this gift, in faith toward you and in fervent love toward one another; for the sake of Jesus Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

SENDING

God blesses us and sends us in mission to the world.

***BLESSING**

Beloved, we are God's own people, holy, washed, and brought into new life.
May God bless you and keep you,
May God's voice draw you ever nearer.
And may God shower you with mercy,
fill you with courage,
and +give you peace.
Amen.

***SENDING SONG *Lift High the Cross* (ELW 660)**



Lift high the cross, the love of Christ pro - claim till



all the world a - dore his sa - cred name.



1 Come, Chris - tians, fol - low where our cap - tain trod,
2 All new - born ser - vants of the Cru - ci - fied
3 O Lord, once lift - ed on the glo - rious tree,
4 So shall our song of tri - umph ev - er be:

Refrain



our king vic - to - rious, Christ, the Son of God.
bear on their brows the seal of him who died.
as thou hast prom - ised, draw us all to thee.
praise to the Cru - ci - fied for vic - to - ry!

***DISMISSAL**

[Jesus said,] "I am the bread of life. Whoever comes to me will never be hungry, and whoever believes in me will never be thirsty. (*John 6:35*)

Go in peace. Share your bread. Christ is with you.

Thanks be to God.

POSTLUDE

Assisting in worship today:

Assisting Minister: Jonathan C

Acolyte: Nathan K

Greeter:

Ushers: David D

Offering: Ava N & Ella N

Attendance last week: 44 + 5 zoom

Notes for the day's texts:

The fourth of the Hebrew Bible readings during this year's Lenten season offers the promise God makes to Moses: those who look on the bronze serpent will live. In today's gospel Jesus says he will be lifted up on the cross like the serpent, so that those who look to him in faith will live. When we receive the sign of the cross in baptism, that cross becomes the sign we can look to in faith for healing, for restored relationship to God, for hope when we are dying. Always, God calls us to look to God for renewed life.

Today's Music

Beneath the Cross of Jesus. Text: Elizabeth C. Clephane, 1830–1869, Music: Frederick C. Maker, 1844–1927. Public Domain.

For by Grace You Have Been Saved. Text: Kari Tikka, b. 1946; tr. Michael Harper, Music: Kari Tikka. Boosey & Hawkes, Inc.

Amazing Grace, How Sweet the Sound. Text: John Newton, 1725-1807, alt., sts. 1-4; anonymous, st. 5, Music: W. Walker, Southern Harmony, 1835; arr. Edwin O. Excell, 1851-1921, alt. Public Domain.

Lamb of God. Text: Twila Paris, b. 1958, Music: Twila Paris. Capitol CMG Publishing.

That Priceless Grace. Text: Emmanuel F. Y. Grantson, b. 1949, Music: Ghanaian traditional. Augsburg Fortress / Public Domain.

Lift High the Cross. Text: George W. Kitchin, 1827-1912; rev. Michael R. Newbolt, 1874-1956, Music: Sydney H. Nicholson, 1875-1947. Hope Publishing Company (ASCAP).

Liturgy words and music taken from SundaysandSeasons.com Copyright © 2024 Augsburg Fortress. All rights reserved. Reprinted with permission.

Next Week's Readings

Jeremiah 31:31-34 A new covenant written on the heart

Psalms 51:1-12 Create in me a clean heart, O God

Hebrews 5:5-10 Through suffering Christ becomes the source of salvation

John 12:20-33 The grain of wheat dying in the earth