

Elim Lutheran Church  
Service for the Fourth Sunday in Lent  
March 14, 2020

**Announcement**

Please join our live-streamed Midweek Lenten worship on Wednesday, the 10<sup>th</sup> at 6:30.  
There will be no in person worship.

Today we will be celebrating Holy Communion together. If you'd like to participate, have a small cup of wine or juice and a piece of bread or cracker handy. We will commune later in the service.

**Greeting**

The grace and peace of the Lord, our God, who is gracious and merciful, slow to anger, and abounding in steadfast love.

**Gathering Hymn**

*Lamb of God*

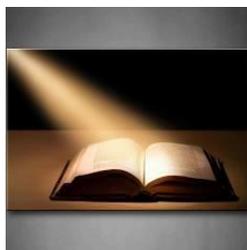
Music: Jeremy Young

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Lamb of God, you take away  
the sin of the world;  
have mercy on us.

Lamb of God, you take away  
the sin of the world;  
have mercy on us.

Lamb of God, you take away  
the sin of the world;  
grant us peace,  
grant us peace.



### **The Word**

The Old Testament reading for today is from the 21st Chapter of Numbers.

<sup>4</sup>From 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. <sup>5</sup>The 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.” <sup>6</sup>Then the LORD sent poisonous serpents among the people, and they bit the people, so that many Israelites died. <sup>7</sup>The 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. <sup>8</sup>And 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.” <sup>9</sup>So 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. (Numbers 21:4-9)

This ends the Old Testament reading.

Today’s Psalm is from the 107<sup>th</sup> Chapter of Psalms.

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

<sup>2</sup>Let the redeemed of the LORD proclaim  
that God redeemed them from the hand of the foe,

<sup>3</sup>gathering them in from the lands;  
from the east and from the west, from the north and from the south.

<sup>17</sup>Some were fools and took rebellious paths;  
through their sins they | were afflicted.

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

- <sup>19</sup>Then in their trouble they cried | to the LORD  
and you delivered them from | their distress.
- <sup>20</sup>You sent forth your word and healed them  
and rescued them from the grave.
- <sup>21</sup>Let them give thanks to you, LORD, for your steadfast love  
and your wonderful works for all people.
- <sup>22</sup>Let them offer sacrifices of thanksgiving  
and tell of your deeds with shouts of joy. (Psalm 107:1-3, 17-22)

This is the reading from the Book of Psalms.

Today's reading from the New Testament is from the 2nd Chapter of Ephesians.

<sup>1</sup>You were dead through the trespasses and sins <sup>2</sup>in 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. <sup>3</sup>All 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. <sup>4</sup>But God, who is rich in mercy, out of the great love with which he loved us <sup>5</sup>even when we were dead through our trespasses, made us alive together with Christ—by grace you have been saved—<sup>6</sup>and raised us up with him and seated us with him in the heavenly places in Christ Jesus, <sup>7</sup>so that in the ages to come he might show the immeasurable riches of his grace in kindness toward us in Christ Jesus. <sup>8</sup>For by grace you have been saved through faith, and this is not your own doing; it is the gift of God—<sup>9</sup>not the result of works, so that no one may boast. <sup>10</sup>For we are what he has made us, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand to be our way of life. (Ephesians 2:1-10)

Here ends the reading from the New Testament.

The Gospel reading for today is from 3rd Chapter of John.

**Glory to You, O Lord.**

[Jesus said:] <sup>14</sup>“Just 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.

<sup>16</sup>“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.

<sup>17</sup>“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. <sup>18</sup>Those 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. <sup>19</sup>And this is the judgment, that the light has come into the world, and people loved darkness rather than light because their deeds were evil. <sup>20</sup>For all who do evil hate the light and do not come to the light, so that their deeds may not be exposed. <sup>21</sup>But 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.” (John 3:14-21)

Word of God. Word of Life.

**Praise to you, O Christ.**

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### Message



When I was a child, I was not a fan of insects, bugs of any kind. I was especially frightened by the big ones and the ones that bit or stung - like moths, mosquitos, biting flies, and wasps. And then there's the issue of opening windows or doors, particularly if there's a light coming from inside the house. The bugs would hang around the door and fly into the house with no remorse. And of course, it's rare to see them in the house. What invariably happened is when I'd go to bed at night, the mosquitos would come into my room and buzz around my ears. Did I mention I hate bugs?

Of course, bugs are drawn to light. When reading today's Gospel, where Jesus says, <sup>21</sup>“But 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.” Maybe it would be better to look at *coming to the light* not so much with reference to insects, but in a new, better way.

How about when we hear or read about near death experiences or going to the light? This one is more comforting than bugs, for here we are, able to see whether it’s symbolism or not, the light as a warm and inviting presence. I’m honestly not sure that God’s image is really light, but it seems possible. Besides, I like it.

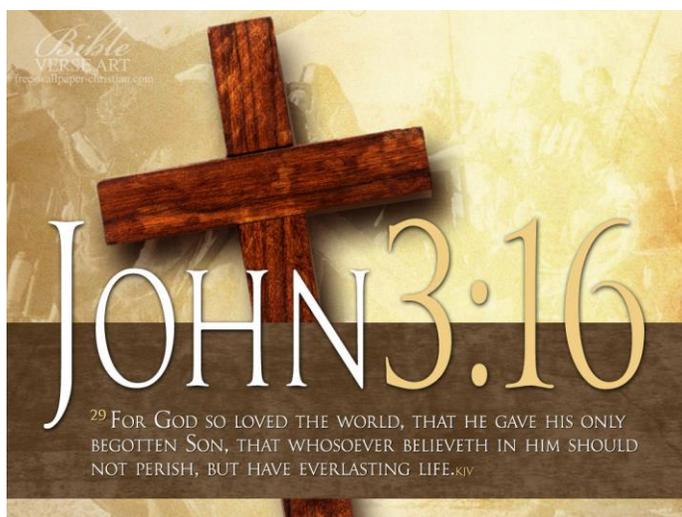
In today’s Gospel, we hear the voice of Jesus saying, “The serpent raised up by Moses saved those who looked at it. It is the same for those who behold Christ on the cross.” We are saved because of Christ lifted up on the cross. This is accomplished by God’s gift of grace and through our faith – not about the good works we do. Our good works reflect how God’s grace is at work in our lives. Because we are dead in our sins, we are made alive by God’s gift of grace which flows abundantly from Jesus. We do because God has done.

A couple of weeks ago, we talked about the cross being a horrible image of torture and death to the early Christians. For us, the cross is a thing of beauty. In our baptisms, we receive the sign of the cross on our foreheads, which is a sign of hope for those who suffer. This cross represents a restored relationship with God daily.

But where does the light come into play in all this? Just light from the sun – SUN – gives life to plants and creatures. The Son-shine (SON), which beams radiantly from

Jesus' face, is the light of life. Let each of us be drawn to the glorious Light of God and the light of Christ which saves.

All this brings us to John 3:16, probably the most famous of all verses from the Bible. We've seen it at sporting events on placards held by fans, on license plates, on billboards, and bumper stickers; "For God so loved the world, that he gave his only Son. That whoever believes in him will not die but have eternal life." God gave us his Son. And when we believe, when we have faith, we will live forever. Let us all come to the Light so we will live. Amen.



### **Sermon Hymn**

*Amazing Grace*

Text: John Newton

Music: W. Walker

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Amazing grace! how sweet the sound,  
That saved a wretch; like me!  
I once was lost, but now am found,  
Was blind, but now I see.

'Twas grace that taught my heart to fear,  
 And grace my fears relieved;  
 How precious did that grace appear  
 The hour I first believed!

Through many danger, toils, and snares  
 I have already come;  
 'Tis grace has brought me safe thus far,  
 And grace will lead me home.

The Lord hath promised good to me,  
 His word my hope secures;  
 He will my shield and portion be  
 As long as life endures.

When we've been there ten thousand years,  
 Bright shining as the sun,  
 We've no less days to sing God's praise  
 Than when we first begun.

### **Nicene Creed**

We believe in one God,  
 the Father, the almighty,  
 maker of heaven and earth,  
 of all that is seen and unseen.

We believe in one Lord, Jesus Christ,  
 the only Son of God,  
 eternally begotten of the Father,

God from God,  
 Light from Light,  
 true God from true God,  
 begotten, not made;  
 of one being with the Father;  
 through him all things were made.  
 For us and for our salvation

he came down from heaven;  
 was incarnate of the Holy Spirit and the virgin Mary  
 and became truly human.

For our sake he was crucified under Pontius Pilate;  
 he suffered death and was buried.

On the third day he rose again in

accordance with the Scriptures;

He ascended to heaven

and is seated at the right hand of the Father.

He will come again with glory

to judge the living and the dead.

and his kingdom will have no end.

We believe in the Holy Spirit,

the Lord, the giver of life.

who proceeds from the Father and the Son,

who with the Father and the Son is worshiped and glorified.

who had spoken through the prophets.

We believe in one holy catholic and apostolic church.

We acknowledge one baptism for the forgiveness of sins.

We look for the resurrection of the dead,

And the life of the world to come. Amen.

### Prayers of the People

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

*A brief silence.*

You sent your Son that the world might be saved through him. Inspire the witness of the church throughout the world. Empower missionaries, Bible translators, and ministries of service in your name. Bless our partners in ministry, our ELCA global partner churches, and Young Adults in Global Mission. Hear us, O God. **Your mercy is great.**

From east to west your steadfast love is shown. Nourish seas and deserts, wilderness areas and cities. Give water to thirsty lands; nurture spring growth that feeds hungry

creatures; bless farmers as they prepare for the growing season. Hear us, O God. **Your mercy is great.**

You sustained your people in the wilderness. Give courage to all who lead in times of crisis and scarce resources. Prosper the work of those who aid victims of famine and drought. Bring peace in places where scarce resources cause violence. Hear us, O God. **Your mercy is great.**

Your mercy endures forever. Deliver all who cry to you, especially those who are hungry or without homes. Give life in places where death seems triumphant; give healing to those who are sick and comfort to those who mourn. Hear us, O God. **Your mercy is great.**

In Jesus you joined humanity in suffering and death. Reveal to all the depth of your love shown on the cross. Accompany all who suffer in body, mind, and spirit. Restore all who are sick, especially especially LouAnn Dutt's son, Paul III, and her two sons-in-law Mike Block and Cory Weiss, Linda Ness – Karen Lind's sister, Liz Anderson – Ron Anderson's sister-in-law, Clifford Berkhus - LaVonne Black's cousin, Gayle Lee – friend of Connie Rawls, Tom Phillips - family of Scott and Pastor Caroline Strand, Marilyn Dolezal, Jeanne Roen, Edna Mae Lewis, Judy - Curt Meyer's sister, Rose – Lenora Scheer's niece, Greg Turner, Fern Softing, all who are suffering with COVID, and those we name in our hearts before you; Hear us, O God. **Your mercy is great.**

By grace we have been saved. Fill this congregation to overflowing with that grace, that we show mercy to others. Nourish any in our midst who are hungry, especially children, and bless our ministries of feeding and shelter Emergency Food Pantry and Churches United. Give us patience and courage when the way seems long. Hear us, O God. **Your mercy is great.**

Your Son was lifted up that whoever believes might have eternal life. We praise you for all who have died in Christ. Bring us with all the saints into the fullness of your promises. 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.**



### **Holy Communion**

#### The Great Thanksgiving

The Lord be with you. **And also with you.**

Lift up your hearts. **We lift them to the Lord.**

Let us gift thanks to the Lord our God. **It is right to give our thanks and praise.**

#### Lenten Preface

It is indeed 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:

(spoken together)

**Holy, holy, holy Lord,  
God of power and might,**

**Heaven and earth are full of your glory.**

**Hosanna in the highest.**

**Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord.**

**Hosanna in the highest.**

**Hosanna in the highest.**

#### Words of Institution

On the night our Lord was betrayed, he took bread, blessed it and broke it, and gave it to his disciples saying, "Take and eat. This is my body which is given for you. Do this in remembrance of me."

After supper, our Lord took the cup gave thanks and blessed it and said to his disciples, "This cup is the new promise in my blood which is shed for you and for ALL people for

the forgiveness of sins. When you drink from this cup, remember me, for I will not drink from it until I return.”

### The Lord's Prayer

As we have been gathered into one by the Holy Spirit, let us pray together the pray we have been taught.

Our Father, who art in heaven hallowed by 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. Lead us not into temptation and deliver us from evil. For thine is the kingdom and the power and the glory. Forever and ever. Amen.

### Invitation to Communion

Jesus draws the whole world to himself.  
Come to this meal and be fed.

### We eat and drink together

The body of our Lord given for you.  
The blood of Christ shed for you.

### Prayer after Communion

God of steadfast love,  
at this table you gather your people  
into one body for the sake of the world.  
Send us in the power of your Spirit,  
that our lives bear witness to the love that has made us new  
in Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord.

**Amen.**

## Sending Hymn

### *My Hope Is Built on Nothing Less*

Text: Edward Mote

Music: John B. Dykes

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My hope is built on nothing less  
Than Jesus' blood and righteousness  
No merit of my own I claim  
But wholly lean on Jesus' name  
On Christ the solid rock I stand  
All other ground is sinking sand

When darkness veils his lovely face  
I rest on His unchanging grace  
In every high and stormy gale  
My anchor holds within the veil  
On Christ the solid rock I stand  
All other ground is sinking sand

His oath, his covenant, his blood  
Sustain me in the raging flood  
When all are washed away  
He then is all my hope and stay  
On Christ the solid rock I stand  
All other ground is sinking sand

When He shall come with trumpet sound  
Oh may I then in Him be found  
Clothed in his righteousness alone  
Redeemed to stand before the throne  
On Christ the solid rock I stand  
All other ground is sinking sand

## Sending

### Blessing

You have been called to live faithfully and act courageously. We are to be steadfast trusting God's covenant of grace. 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.**

### Dismissal

Go in peace. Share the Good News. **Thanks be to God.**



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