

Worship Plan for Sunday, March 8, 2020

2 Lent

Second Sunday in Lent

ELW Holy Communion Setting One

Sunday, March 8, 2020

Introduction to the day

During Lent we journey with all those around the world who will be baptized at the Easter Vigil. In today's gospel Jesus tells Nicodemus that he must be born of water and Spirit. At the font we are given a new birth as children of God. As God made a covenant with Abraham, in baptism God promises to raise us up with Christ to new life. From worship we are sent forth to proclaim God's love for all the world.

PRAYER OF THE DAY

Let us pray.

O God, our leader and guide, in the waters of baptism you bring us to new birth to live as your children. Strengthen our faith in your promises, that by your Spirit we may lift up your life to all the world through 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: Genesis 12:1-4a

The reading may be announced:

A reading from Genesis.

God's call of Abram and Sarai has a clear purpose—that through them all the families of the earth would gain a blessing. As they set out on their journey, they are accompanied by promises of land, nation, and a great reputation.

¹The LORD said to Abram, "Go from your country and your kindred and your father's house to the land that I will show you. ²I will make of you a great nation, and I will bless you, and make your name great, so that you will be

a blessing. ³I will bless those who bless you, and the one who curses you I will curse; and in you all the families of the earth shall be blessed.”

^{4a}So Abram went, as the LORD had told him; and Lot went with him.

The reading may be concluded:

Word of God, word of life.

The assembly responds:

Thanks be to God.

PSALM: Psalm 121

I lift up my eyes to the hills; my help comes from the LORD. (*Ps. 121:1, 2*)

¹I lift up my eyes | to the hills;

from where is my | help to come?

²**My help comes | from the LORD,
the maker of heav- | en and earth.**

³The LORD will not let your | foot be moved
nor will the one who watches over you | fall asleep.

⁴**Behold, the keep- | er of Israel
will neither slum- | ber nor sleep; R**

⁵the LORD watches | over you;
the LORD is your shade at | your right hand;

⁶**the sun will not strike | you by day,
nor the | moon by night.**

⁷The LORD will preserve you | from all evil
and will | keep your life.

⁸**The LORD will watch over your going out and your | coming in,
from this time forth for- | evermore. R**

SECOND READING: Romans 4:1-5, 13-17

The reading may be announced:

A reading from Romans.

In the person and example of Abraham we discover that a right relationship with God does not involve earning a reward from God but entails trusting God's promises. Abraham is the forebear and model for both Jews and

Gentiles, because we too trust that ours is a God who gives life to the dead.

¹What then are we to say was gained by Abraham, our ancestor according to the flesh? ²For if Abraham was justified by works, he has something to boast about, but not before God. ³For what does the scripture say? “Abraham believed God, and it was reckoned to him as righteousness.” ⁴Now to one who works, wages are not reckoned as a gift but as something due. ⁵But to one who without works trusts him who justifies the ungodly, such faith is reckoned as righteousness.

¹³For the promise that he would inherit the world did not come to Abraham or to his descendants through the law but through the righteousness of faith. ¹⁴If it is the adherents of the law who are to be the heirs, faith is null and the promise is void. ¹⁵For the law brings wrath; but where there is no law, neither is there violation.

¹⁶For this reason it depends on faith, in order that the promise may rest on grace and be guaranteed to all his descendants, not only to the adherents of the law but also to those who share the faith of Abraham (for he is the father of all of us, ¹⁷as it is written, “I have made you the father of many nations”)—in the presence of the God in whom he believed, who gives life to the dead and calls into existence the things that do not exist.

The reading may be concluded:

Word of God, word of life.

The assembly responds:

Thanks be to God.

GOSPEL: John 3:1-17

The gospel is announced.

The holy gospel according to John.

Glory to you, O Lord.

A curious Pharisee visits Jesus by night to learn from the teacher his friends reject. Jesus speaks to him about life in the Spirit and the kingdom of God.

¹Now there was a Pharisee named Nicodemus, a leader of the Jews. ²He came to Jesus by night and said to him, “Rabbi, we know that you are a teacher who has come from God; for no one can do these signs that you do apart from the presence of God.” ³Jesus answered him, “Very truly, I tell you, no one can see the kingdom of God without being born from above.” ⁴Nicodemus said to him, “How can anyone be born after having grown old? Can one enter a second time into the mother’s womb and be born?” ⁵Jesus answered, “Very truly, I tell you, no one can enter the kingdom of God without being born of water and Spirit. ⁶What is born of the flesh is flesh, and what is born of the Spirit is spirit. ⁷Do not be astonished that I said to you, ‘You must be born from above.’ ⁸The wind blows where it chooses, and you hear the sound of it, but you do not know where it comes from or where it goes. So it is with everyone who is born of the Spirit.” ⁹Nicodemus said to him, “How can these things be?” ¹⁰Jesus answered him, “Are you a teacher of Israel, and yet you do not understand these things?

¹¹“Very truly, I tell you, we speak of what we know and testify to what we have seen; yet you do not receive our testimony. ¹²If I have told you about earthly things and you do not believe, how can you believe if I tell you about heavenly things? ¹³No one has ascended into heaven except the one who descended from heaven, the Son of Man. ¹⁴And 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.”

The gospel concludes:

The gospel of the Lord.

Praise to you, O Christ.

PRAYERS OF INTERCESSION

The prayers are prepared locally for each occasion. The following examples may be adapted or used as appropriate.

Turning our hearts to God who is gracious and merciful, we pray for the church, the world, and all who are in need.

A brief silence.

God of rebirth, empower your church throughout the world to be a voice of hope for those who fear judgment or condemnation. Assure us of your faithfulness and give us confidence to proclaim your salvation for all. Hear us, O God.

Your mercy is great.

God of rebirth, your Spirit hovered over the waters and you called creation into being. Nurture and bless all signs of rebirth around us: budding trees and new shoots, thawing lakes and warm breezes, and animals awaking from hibernation. Hear us, O God.

Your mercy is great.

God of rebirth, lead the nations in your way of righteousness. Protect those who advocate for the needs of children, migrants, and victims of violence. Give courage to lawmakers, lawyers, judges, and law enforcement officers, guiding them to do justice and to love mercy. Hear us, O God.

Your mercy is great.

God of rebirth, give us a new vision of your healing power among us. Restore hope to those who remain in the depths of depression or despair. Bring mercy and relief to those who are injured, sick, or suffering (*especially*). Hear us, O God.

Your mercy is great.

God of rebirth, we thank you for the children of this community and for the people and ministries that care for them (*individuals and ministries in the congregation may be named*). Bless new and expectant parents. Console those who have lost children and those whose desire for children remains unfulfilled. Hear us, O God.

Your mercy is great.

Here other intercessions may be offered.

God of rebirth, by wind and spirit you call us into life renewed. We give you thanks for all your saints who have inherited your promises (*especially*). Bring us, with them, into your everlasting kingdom. Hear us, O God.

Your mercy is great.

According to your steadfast love, O God, hear these and all our prayers as we commend them to you; through Christ our Lord.

Amen.

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