



“And as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness,
even so must the Son of Man be lifted up,
that whoever believes in Him should not perish
but have everlasting life.”

+ *John 3:14, 15*

THE FOURTH SUNDAY IN LENT

March 14, 2021

Dear brothers and sisters in Christ,

Our lectionary takes us back to the Israelites as they wandered in the wilderness. Look out! There were snakes biting them, sent by God as punishment for complaining about the manna, that miraculous food He gave on the way to the Promised Land.

But look up! See the bronze serpent Moses put on a pole. Everyone who looked up at the serpent will live. The serpent was a type of Christ, a parallel symbol in Holy Scripture.

We have snakes of our own—discontent with God’s daily blessings and lack of faith in His promises, we grumble and complain as did the Israelites of old.

Yet as we look up in faith to Jesus Christ on the cross we shall be saved. Faith is a gift of God in His grace and Jesus is the center of that gracious Good News.

As Saint Paul reminds us, we are God’s workmanship, “created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand, that we should walk in them” (Eph 2:10).

Looking to Jesus, we have not simply been made physically well (as with the Israelites) but have been given life everlasting!

“For God did not send His Son into the world to condemn the world, but that the world through Him might be saved” (John 3:17).

Yours in Christ Jesus,
+Pastor Griebenaw



Allegory of Salvation by Antonius Heusler, c. 1525, Public Domain

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✠ DIVINE SERVICE, SETTING THREE ✠

Stand – The sign of the cross may be made by all in remembrance of their Baptism.

CONFESSION AND ABSOLUTION

LSB 184

P In the name of the Father and of the ✠ Son and of the Holy Spirit. *Matthew 28:19b; [18:20]*

C Amen.

P Beloved in the Lord! Let us draw near with a true heart and confess our sins unto God our Father, beseeching Him in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ to grant us forgiveness. *[Hebrews 10:22]*

P Our help is in the name of the Lord,

C who made heaven and earth. *Psalm 124:8*

P I said, I will confess my transgressions unto the Lord,

C and You forgave the iniquity of my sin. *Psalm 32:5*

Kneel (or remain standing) — Silence for reflection on God's Word and for self-examination.

P Almighty God, our maker and redeemer, we poor sinners confess unto You that we are by nature sinful and unclean and that we have sinned against You by thought, word, and deed. Wherefore we flee for refuge to Your infinite mercy, seeking and imploring Your grace for the sake of our Lord Jesus Christ.

C O most merciful God, who has given Your only-begotten Son to die for us, have mercy upon us and for His sake grant us remission of all our sins; and by Your Holy Spirit increase in us true knowledge of You and of Your will and true obedience to Your Word, to the end that by Your grace we may come to everlasting life; through Jesus Christ, our Lord. Amen.

P Almighty God, our heavenly Father, has had mercy upon us and has given His only Son to die for us and for His sake forgives us all our sins. To those who believe on His name He gives power to become the children of God and has promised them His Holy Spirit. He that believes and is baptized shall be saved.

Grant this, Lord, unto us all. *Mark 16:16; John 1:12*

C Amen.

Stand

SERVICE OF THE WORD

INTROIT

Psalm 27:3–5; antiphon: v. 1

The pastor and congregation speak responsively. The antiphon is spoken by the pastor before and after the psalm.

(Antiphon) The LORD is my light and my salvation; whom shall I fear?

The LORD is the stronghold of my life; of whom shall I be afraid?

³ Though an army encamp against me, my heart shall not fear;
though war arise against me, yet I will be confident.

⁴ **One thing have I asked of the LORD, that will I seek after:
that I may dwell in the house of the LORD all the days of my life,
to gaze upon the beauty of the LORD and to inquire in His temple.**

⁵ For He will hide me in His shelter in the day of trouble;
He will conceal me under the cover of His tent; He will lift me high upon a rock.

**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.**

The antiphon is repeated.

KYRIE

Mark 10:47

C Lord, have mercy upon us.
Christ, have mercy upon us.
Lord, have mercy upon us.

The Gloria in Excelsis is omitted during Lent.

SALUTATION AND COLLECT OF THE DAY

P The Lord be with you.

C **And with thy spirit.**

P Let us pray.

Almighty God, our heavenly Father, Your mercies are new every morning; and though we deserve only punishment, You receive us as Your children and provide for all our needs of body and soul. Grant that we may heartily acknowledge Your merciful goodness, give thanks for all Your benefits, and serve You in willing obedience; through Jesus Christ, Your Son, our Lord, who lives and reigns with You and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever.

C **Amen.**

Sit

OLD TESTAMENT

Numbers 21:4–9

P The Old Testament Reading is from Numbers, chapter 21.

⁴From Mount Hor they set out by the way to the Red Sea, to go around the land of Edom. And the people became impatient on the way. ⁵And 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 loathe this worthless food.” ⁶Then the LORD sent fiery serpents among the people, and they bit the people, so that many people of Israel died.

⁷And the people came to Moses and said, “We have sinned, for we have spoken against the LORD and against you. Pray to the LORD, that He take away the serpents from us.” So Moses prayed for the people.

⁸And the LORD said to Moses, “Make a fiery serpent and set it on a pole, and everyone who is bitten, when he sees it, shall live.” ⁹So Moses made a bronze serpent and set it on a pole. And if a serpent bit anyone, he would look at the bronze serpent and live.

P This is the Word of the Lord.

C **Thanks be to God.**

GRADUAL

Hebrews 12:2

The pastor and congregation speak responsively by half-verse.

[O come, let us fix our eyes on] Jesus,

the founder and perfecter of our faith,

Who for the joy that was set before Him endure the cross, despising the shame,

and is seated at the right hand of the throne of God.

EPISTLE

Ephesians 2:1–10

P The Epistle is from Ephesians, chapter two.

¹And you were dead in the trespasses and sins ²in which you once walked, following the course of this world, following the prince of the power of the air, the spirit that is now at work in the sons of disobedience— ³among whom we all once lived in the passions of our flesh, carrying out the desires of the body and the mind, and were by nature children of wrath, like the rest of mankind.

⁴But God, being rich in mercy, because of the great love with which He loved us, ⁵even when we were dead in 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 coming ages 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 a result of works, so that no one may boast. ¹⁰For we are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand, that we should walk in them.

P This is the Word of the Lord.

C **Thanks be to God.**

Stand

VERSE

John 3:16 (NKJV)

For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son,
that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have everlasting life.

HOLY GOSPEL

John 3:14–21 (NKJV)

P The Holy Gospel according to Saint John, the third chapter.

C **Glory be to Thee, O Lord.**

¹⁴“And as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, even so must the Son of Man be lifted up,
¹⁵that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have eternal life. ¹⁶For God so loved the world,
that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have everlasting life.
¹⁷For God did not send His Son into the world to condemn the world, but that the world through Him
might be saved.

¹⁸“He who believes in Him is not condemned; but he who does not believe is condemned already,
because he has not believed in the name of the only begotten Son of God. ¹⁹And this is the condemnation,
that the light has come into the world, and men loved darkness rather than light, because their deeds were evil.
²⁰For everyone practicing evil hates the light and does not come to the light, lest his deeds should be
exposed. ²¹But he who does the truth comes to the light, that his deeds may be clearly seen, that they have
been done in God.”

P This is the Gospel of the Lord.

C **Praise be to Thee, O Christ.**

NICENE CREED

C **I believe in one God,
the Father Almighty,
maker of heaven and earth
and of all things visible and invisible.**

**And in one Lord Jesus Christ,
the only-begotten Son of God,
begotten of His Father before all worlds,
God of God, Light of Light,
very God of very God,
begotten, not made,
being of one substance with the Father,
by whom all things were made;
who for us men and for our salvation came down from heaven
and was incarnate by the Holy Spirit of the virgin Mary
and was made man;
and was crucified also for us under Pontius Pilate.
He suffered and was buried.
And the third day He rose again according to the Scriptures
and ascended into heaven
and sits at the right hand of the Father.
And He will come again with glory to judge both the living and the dead,
whose kingdom will have no end.**

**And I believe in the Holy Spirit,
the Lord and giver of life,
who proceeds from the Father and the Son,
who with the Father and the Son together is worshiped and glorified,
who spoke by the prophets.
And I believe in one holy Christian and apostolic Church,
I acknowledge one Baptism for the remission of sins,
and I look for the resurrection of the dead
and the life **✠** of the world to come. Amen.**

Sit

HYMN OF THE DAY: God Loved the World So That He Gave

LSB 571



1 God loved the world so that He gave His on - ly
 2 Christ Je - sus is the ground of faith, Who was made
 3 God would not have the sin - ner die; His Son with
 4 Be of good cheer, for God's own Son For - gives all



Son the lost to save, That all who would in
 flesh and suf - fered death; All then who trust in
 sav - ing grace is nigh; His Spir - it in the
 sins which you have done; And, jus - ti - fied by



Him be - lieve Should ev - er - last - ing life re - ceive.
 Him a - lone Are built on this chief cor - ner - stone.
 Word de - clares How we in Christ are heav - en's heirs.
 Je - sus' blood, Your Bap - tism grants the high - est good.

5 If you are sick, if death is near, △ 6 Glory to God the Father, Son,
 This truth your troubled heart can cheer: And Holy Spirit, Three in One!
 Christ Jesus saves your soul from death; To You, O blessèd Trinity,
 That is the firmest ground of faith. Be praise now and eternally!

Text and tune: Public Domain

SERMON

Rev. Griebenaw

After the sermon, the pastor may say:

P The peace of God, which passes all understanding,
 keep your hearts and minds in Christ Jesus.

Philippians 4:7

C Amen.

Stand

OFFERTORY

Psalm 51:10–12

C Create in me a clean heart, O God, and renew a right spirit within me.
 Cast me not away from Thy presence, and take not Thy Holy Spirit from me.
 Restore unto me the joy of Thy salvation, and uphold me with Thy free spirit. Amen.

Kneel (or remain standing)

PRAYER OF THE CHURCH

(1 Timothy 2:1–4)

P In peace, let us pray to the Lord:

C Lord, have mercy.

P That God would draw us into His light, exposing where we, like His people of old, have thought,
 spoken and acted against Him; and that in repentance we might look to His Son lifted up on the cross
 for our salvation and be saved from His righteous wrath, let us pray to the Lord:

C Lord, have mercy.

P That the Lord who by the straight way of faith led the saints to reach His heavenly city would also lead us
 to our heavenly home to join in eternal thanksgiving for His steadfast love and wondrous works
 to the children of men, let us pray to the Lord:

C Lord, have mercy.

P For the Church, that the God who loved the world by giving His only Son would bless her and the work
 of those called to preach the Gospel; and that His Spirit would create and sustain saving faith within us
 and all who hear this Word, let us pray to the Lord:

C Lord, have mercy.

P For us and all Christians, that God, who made us alive in Christ though we were dead in our sins, would cause His Spirit to be at work within us; that we would not carry out the sinful desires of our bodies and minds but be His workmanship in Christ Jesus; and that we would walk in the good works He has prepared for us to do in Him, let us pray to the Lord:

C Lord, have mercy.

P For the authorities God has set over us for our good, especially we pray for Joseph, our President, Gavin, our Governor, and Cheryl, our Mayor; that God would keep us from speaking against them and so against Him; and that God would bless and sustain them with all they need to govern us wisely and in accord with His will, let us pray to the Lord:

C Lord, have mercy.

P For all who suffer in mind, body, or soul, that they would be hid in the shelter of Christ, our light and salvation; and that God would keep them from falling into faithless fear in their day of trouble, upholding them in His peace, let us pray to the Lord:

C Lord, have mercy.

P For all communicants, that our Lord feed our hungering and thirsting souls from the depths of His enduring love, that we not faint within but be satisfied with the good things of His Son's true body and most precious blood to abide in His eternal peace now and forever, let us pray to the Lord:

C Lord, have mercy.

P All these things and whatever else You know that we need, grant us, Father, for the sake of Him who died and rose again and now lives and reigns with You and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever.

C Amen.

The live-stream service concludes with the following:

LORD'S PRAYER

Matthew 6:9-13

P Taught by our Lord and trusting His promises, we are bold to pray:

**C 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.

CONCLUDING COLLECT

P Let us pray.

Almighty and everlasting God, You willed that Your Son should bear for us the pains of the cross and so remove from us the power of the adversary. Help us so to remember and give thanks for our Lord's passion that we may receive forgiveness of sin and redemption from everlasting death; through Jesus Christ, our Lord.

C Amen.

Stand

BENEDICTION

Numbers 6:24-26

P The Lord bless you and keep you.
The Lord make His face shine upon you and be gracious unto you.
The Lord lift up His countenance upon you and **✠** give you peace.

C Amen.

The Divine Service continues with the Lord's Supper for those at the church. For all viewing from home, please come for Holy Communion between 10:30am and 11:30am, parking by the concrete ramp along Holt Avenue.

✠ SOLI DEO GLORIA ✠
(TO GOD ALONE BE THE GLORY)

SOME FINAL THOUGHTS FROM YOUR PASTOR

Brothers and Sisters,

As promised, part two of my rant about Daylight Savings Time: I'M SO BLOODY TIRED! That is all! LOL

Now on to something equally less-than-serious: today, March 14, is International Pi Day! You know, because 3-14 or 3.14 (the shorthand for Pi).

Being as I was a wee bit of a nerd back in the day (let's be honest, I still am), I had memorized Pi to the thirteenth number after the decimal point: 3.1415926535898 (yes, I typed that from memory). Side note: I believe Barbara Nilson can recite it to an even further numeral! Of course, the full value of Pi is inexpressible as an exact decimal (the number would go on forever and ever). Its true value is the result of taking the circumference of a circle and dividing that by the circle's diameter.

But I'm guessing the mathematic pi doesn't interest you as much as the delicacy pie! Me, too!



My favorite pie is pumpkin! But a close second is cherry! At my childhood home in Denver, Colorado, we had a cherry tree in the back yard—and then we had three more because my brother and I would have pit-spitting contests and some of those seeds ended up taking root!

I always looked forward to picking the cherries with my family. We would make cherry pies and cherry jelly and cherry preserves and any other thing my dad could think to make with all the cherries we had! To be honest, I wasn't very good at picking cherries because for every cherry that made it into the basket there were at least two or three that disappeared into my mouth. ;)

These cherries were a bit of an acquired taste because they were pie cherries (tarter than my other favorite cherry: the Bing cherry). Nonetheless, they were cherries and I gladly picked and ate them while playing in the back yard.

Speaking of pie and my childhood home—one of the best places for pies in Denver was Village Inn, especially the location at I-70 and Federal Boulevard (sadly, this location closed last year . . . the end of an era). My family would order pies there for family gatherings and whenever Holly and I went home to visit, our first stop was coffee and pie with family at Village Inn!



So what is your favorite pie? Perhaps more importantly, what is your favorite place to get pie? I might even stop in and see if I agree with your assessment! ;)

Now, while I can't offer you a slice of pie, I do hope that you'll join me this Tuesday for our Lenten Bible Study meeting at Noon on "Zoom." This week we'll be going through Luke 22:31-34, 54-62.

- To join the study on your computer, go to <https://us02web.zoom.us/j/7603525715>
- To join by phone, call either "669-900-9128" or "346-248-7799" and enter 7603525715#
- The password for both (computer or telephone) is "12345"

And then join me Wednesday at 7:00pm for our Midweek Prayer Service, both streaming on Facebook and in-person. This Wednesday, March 17 (don't forget to wear green because it'll be Saint Patrick's Day!), we'll be at Saint Paul's Lutheran Church in Holtville. Rev. Beyer will be the liturgist and I will deliver the homily. Regardless of location, you can always watch on our Facebook page.

Lastly, please continue to mail your tithes and offerings to the church's post office box: Grace Evangelical-Lutheran Church, PO Box 1530, El Centro, CA 92244-1530.

Yours in Christ Jesus,
+Pastor Griebenaw