

RETURN to the LORD



Lent Midweek #2
March 03, 2021
7:00 p.m.

St. Paul's Lutheran Church (LCMS)

Growing Christ in Us and Us in the World

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ST PAUL'S LUTHERAN CHURCH

Growing...One Friend at a Time!

Our Lenten Midweek Worship Series:

Return to the LORD

Through the words of the prophet Joel, God called to His people and commanded that they turn from their sinful ways and return to Him for His grace and blessings. The images the prophet uses are vivid and disturbing. The situation of God's people is desperate and needs immediate attention. This is a time for listening and responding to the call to return to faithfulness to the God who has ever been faithful to His people. "Return to the Lord, your God" is more than a verse or part of a liturgy. It is a heartfelt directive for our lives as together we follow the pathway of Lent.

Lenten Midweek Worship Schedule

Date	Location	Theme
February 17 <small>(Ash Wed)</small>	St Paul's, Holtville	<i>A Call to Return</i> (Matt. 6:1-6, 16-21)
February 24	Grace, El Centro	<i>Return to Prayer</i> (Matt. 36:36-46)
March 3	St Paul's, Holtville	<i>Return from Betrayal</i> (John 18:1-11)
March 10	Grace, El Centro	<i>Return from False Witness</i> (Matt. 26:57-68)
March 17	St Paul's, Holtville	<i>Return from Denial</i> (Luke 22:54-62)
March 24	Grace, El Centro	<i>Return to the Kingdom of God</i> (John 18:28)
April 1 <small>(Maundy Thursday)</small>	St Paul's, Holtville	<i>Return to the Table</i> (Mark 14:12-26)
April 2 <small>(Good Friday)</small>	St Paul's, Holtville	<i>Return to the Truth</i> (John 19:1-16)

AS WE ARE GATHERED *Return from Betrayal*

In the Transfiguration hymn "Swiftly Pass the Clouds of Glory," hymnwriter Thomas Troeger portrays the days of the Lord's Passion as that time when Jesus' disciples are to be "following the Savior Through the valley to the cross and . . . testing faith's resilience Through betrayal, pain, and loss" (*LSB* 416:2). The weekly reading of the Gospel account of Holy Week reveals how the disciples do and do not meet the challenges of following their Lord. The witness of Scripture also shows how in every situation Jesus remains faithful to His own even in the face of betrayal, pain, and loss. The season of Lent gives us the opportunity to reflect on our discipleship and to test the resiliency of our faith as well.

Lent Midweek #2

RETURN FROM BETRAYAL

Even my close friend in whom I trusted, who ate my bread, has lifted his heel against me.
But You, O Lord, be gracious to me, and raise me up...

Psalm 41:9-10

+ PREPARATION +

INVOCATION

In the name of the Father and of the (+) Son and of the Holy Spirit.

Amen.

OPENING SENTENCES

Joel 2:13; Titus 2:13b-14; 2 Timothy 2:11, 13

Return to the Lord, your God, for He is gracious and merciful,
slow to anger, and abounding in steadfast love, and repents of evil.

Jesus Christ gave Himself for us to redeem us from all lawlessness
**and to purify for Himself a people for His own possession who are
zealous for good works.**

The saying is trustworthy for: If we have died with Him, we will also live with Him;
if we are faithless, He remains faithful—for He cannot deny Himself.

CONFESSION AND ABSOLUTION

Let us make our confession to our God, seeking His grace and forgiveness.

Silence for reflection on God's Word and for self-examination.

Most merciful God,

**we confess that we are by nature sinful and unclean. We have sinned
against You in thought, word, and deed, by what we have done and by
what we have left undone. We have not loved You with our whole heart;
we have not loved our neighbors as ourselves. We justly deserve Your
present and eternal punishment. For the sake of Your Son, Jesus Christ,
have mercy on us. Forgive us, renew us, and lead us, so that we may
delight in Your will and walk in Your ways to the glory of Your holy
name. Amen.**

In the mercy of almighty God, Jesus Christ was given to die for us, and for His sake God forgives us all our sins. To those who believe in Jesus Christ He gives the power to become the children of God and bestows on them the Holy Spirit. May the Lord, who has begun this good work in us, bring it to completion in the day of our Lord Jesus Christ.

Amen.

+ WORD +

PRAYER OF THE DAY

The Lord be with you.

And also with you.

O God, who gives strength to the weak and light to those who are in darkness, grant us to know Your Son, Jesus Christ, that through Him we may know You. By Your Spirit, direct our lives so that we never betray our Lord or turn away from following Him throughout our lives. This we ask through Jesus Christ, our blessed Savior.

Amen.

FIRST READING

2 Samuel 15:12; 17:1–4

¹²And while Absalom was offering the sacrifices, he sent for Ahithophel the Gilonite, David's counselor, from his city Giloh. And the conspiracy grew strong, and the people with Absalom kept increasing.

¹Moreover, Ahithophel said to Absalom, "Let me choose twelve thousand men, and I will arise and pursue David tonight. ²I will come upon him while he is weary and

discouraged and throw him into a panic, and all the people who are with him will flee. I will strike down only the king, ³and I will bring all the people back to you as a bride comes home to her husband. You seek the life of only one man, and all the people will be at peace." ⁴And the advice seemed right in the eyes of Absalom and all the elders of Israel.

This is the Word of the Lord.

Thanks be to God.

PSALM

Psalm 41

Blessèd is the one who considers the poor! In the day of trouble the LORD delivers him;

the LORD protects him and keeps him alive; he is called blessèd in the land; You do not give him up to the will of his enemies.

The LORD sustains him on his sickbed; in his illness You restore him to full health.
As for me, I said, “O LORD, be gracious to me; heal me, for I have sinned against You!”

My enemies say of me in malice, “When will he die and his name perish?”
And when one comes to see me, he utters empty words, while his heart gathers iniquity; when he goes out, he tells it abroad.

All who hate me whisper together about me; they imagine the worst for me.
They say, “A deadly thing is poured out on him; he will not rise again from where he lies.”

Even my close friend in whom I trusted, who ate my bread, has lifted his heel against me.
But You, O Lord, be gracious to me, and raise me up, that I may repay them!

By this I know that You delight in me:
my enemy will not shout in triumph over me.
But You have upheld me because of my integrity,

**and set me in Your presence forever.
Blessèd be the LORD, the God of Israel,
from everlasting to everlasting!
Amen and Amen.**

**Glory be to the Father and to the Son and to the Holy Spirit;
as it was in the beginning, is now, and will be forever. Amen.**

SECOND READING

Acts 3:14–19

¹⁴“But you denied the Holy and Righteous One, and asked for a murderer to be granted to you, ¹⁵and you killed the Author of life, whom God raised from the dead. To this we are witnesses. ¹⁶And His name—by faith in His name—has made this man strong whom you see and know, and the faith that is through Jesus has given the man this perfect health in the presence of you all.

¹⁷“And now, brothers, I know that you acted in ignorance, as did also your rulers. ¹⁸But what God foretold by the mouth of all the prophets, that His Christ would suffer, He thus fulfilled. ¹⁹Repent therefore, and turn again, that your sins may be blotted out.”

This is the Word of the Lord.

Thanks be to God.

VERSE FOR LENT

Joel 2:13

Return to the Lord, your God,
**for He is gracious and merciful, slow to anger,
and abounding in steadfast love**

HOLY GOSPEL

John 18:1-11

The Holy Gospel according to St. John, the eighteenth chapter.
Glory to You, O Lord.

¹When Jesus had spoken these words, He went out with His disciples across the Kidron Valley, where there was a garden, which He and His disciples entered. ²Now Judas, who betrayed Him, also knew the place, for Jesus often met there with His disciples. ³So Judas, having procured a band of soldiers and some officers from the chief priests and the Pharisees, went there with lanterns and torches and weapons. ⁴Then Jesus, knowing all that would happen to Him, came forward and said to them, "Whom do you seek?" ⁵They answered Him, "Jesus of Nazareth." Jesus said to them, "I am He." Judas, who betrayed Him, was standing with them. ⁶

When Jesus said to them, "I am He," they drew back and fell to the ground. ⁷So He asked them again, "Whom do you seek?" And they said, "Jesus of Nazareth." ⁸Jesus answered, "I told you that I am He. So, if you seek Me, let these men go." ⁹This was to fulfill the word that He had spoken: "Of those whom You gave Me I have lost not one." ¹⁰Then Simon Peter, having a sword, drew it and struck the high priest's servant and cut off his right ear. (The servant's name was Malchus.) ¹¹So Jesus said to Peter, "Put your sword into its sheath; shall I not drink the cup that the Father has given Me?"

This is the Gospel of the Lord.
Praise to You, O Christ.

CHILDREN'S SERMON

Go to Dark Gethsemane

Lutheran Service Book pg. 436

Go to dark Gethsemane, All who feel the tempter's pow'r;
Your Redeemer's conflict see; Watch with Him one bitter hour;
Turn not from His griefs away; Learn of Jesus Christ to pray.

Follow to the judgment hall; View the Lord of life arraigned;
O the worm-wood and the gall! O the pangs His soul sustained!
Shun not suffering, shame, or loss; Learn from Him to bear the cross.

Calv'ry's mournful mountain climb There' adoring at His feet,
Mark the miracle of time, God's own sacrifice complete:
"It is finished!" Hear Him cry; Learn of Jesus Christ to die.

Early hasten to the tomb Where they laid his breathless clay;
All is solitude and gloom; Who has taken Him away?
Christ is ris'n! He meets our eyes: Savior, teach us so to rise.

SERMON

Rev. Doug Griebenaw (Grace Lutheran, El Centro)

Return From Betrayal.

Even my close friend in whom I trusted, who ate my bread, has lifted his heel against me.
But You, O Lord, be gracious to me, and raise me up...

Psalm 41:9-10

PRAYERS *are offered the whole world, the church of God, and for all people according to their needs*

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.**

CLOSING COLLECT

Let us pray.

I thank You, my heavenly Father, through Jesus Christ, Your dear Son, that You have kept me this night from all harm and danger; and I pray that You would keep me this day also from sin and every evil, that all my doings and life may please You. For into Your hands I commend myself, my body and soul, and all things. Let Your holy angel be with me, that the evil foe may have no power over me. Amen.

BLESSING

The blessing of almighty God, the Father, the (+) Son, and the Holy Spirit be and remain with you always.

Amen.

Glory Be to Jesus

Lutheran Service Book pg. 433

Glory be to Jesus, Who in bitter pains
Poured for me the lifeblood From His sacred veins!

Grace and life eternal In that blood I find;
Blest be His compassion, Infinitely kind!

Blest through endless ages Be the precious stream
Which from endless torment Did the world redeem!

Abel's blood for vengeance Pleaded to the skies;
But the blood of Jesus For our pardon cries.

Oft as earth exulting Wafts its praise on high,
Angel hosts rejoicing Make their glad reply.

Lift we, then, our voices, Swell the mighty flood;
Louder still and louder Praise the precious blood!

Acknowledgments

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