

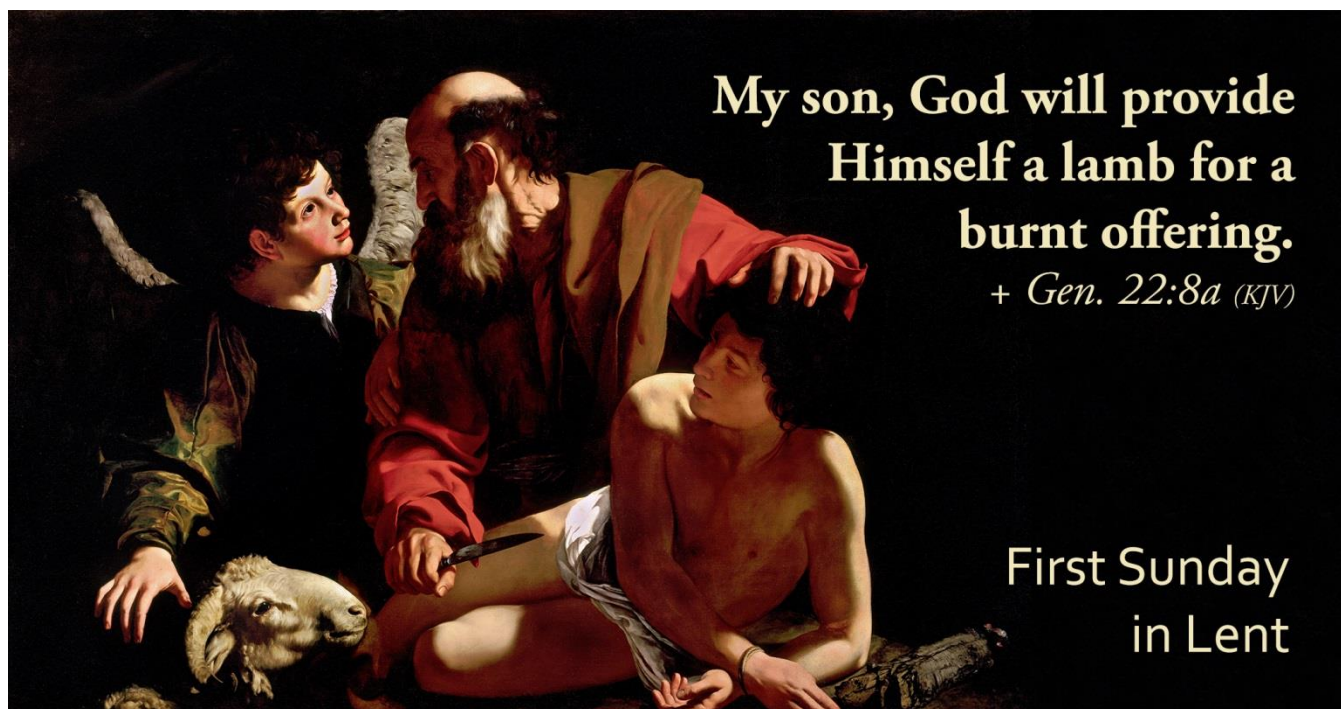


Put on the whole armor of God,
that you may be able to stand against
the schemes of the devil.

+ *Ephesians 6:11*

THE FIRST SUNDAY IN LENT

February 21, 2021



The Sacrifice of Isaac by Caravaggio, circa 1603, Public Domain

Dear brothers and sisters in Christ,

“Lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil,” Jesus taught us to pray. The First Sunday in Lent holds before us delivery from our daily enemies—evil and temptation, Satan and sin. We dare not forget that we are at war against such a lethal foe. Yet, as we hear in today’s Introit, it is God Himself fighting for us: “When he calls to Me, I will answer him; I will be with him in trouble; I will rescue him and honor him.”

Fresh from His Baptism and driven by the Spirit, Jesus enters the wilderness to be tempted by Satan. Our God and our substitute did not enjoy the paradise of Eden where Adam once fell, but the wild-animal wilderness, similar to the wilderness Israel passed through to reach the Promised Land. Unlike both Adam and the Israelites, Jesus does not succumb. He marks the only path through the wilderness of this world toward the glory of the world to come.

And when James writes about “the man who remains steadfast under trial,” he is talking about Jesus, who gives to all who love Him the crown of life. Even while our fallen will yields to temptation that gives birth to sin and brings death, the Lord’s will “[brings] us forth by the word of truth” as “firstfruits of His creatures” (James 1:18).

This is our hope and our confidence! Yes, we mourn our sins throughout these 40 days of Lent, but we rejoice all the more knowing that “we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous. (1 John 2:1)”

Yours in Christ Jesus,
+Pastor Griebenaw

Pastor’s phone: 760-679-3699

Pastor’s email: pastor@gracelutheranelcentro.org

✠ 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 91:9–13; antiphon: vv. 15–16

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

(Antiphon) When he calls to Me, I will answer him; I will be with him in | trouble;*

I will rescue him and | honor him.

With long life I will sat- | isfy him*

and show him My sal- | vation.

⁹ Because you have made the LORD your | dwelling place—*
the Most High, who is my | refuge—

¹⁰ no evil shall be allowed to be- | fall you,*
no plague come | near your tent.

¹¹ For He will command His angels con- | cerning you*
to guard you in | all your ways.

¹² On their hands they will | bear you up,*
lest you strike your foot a- | gainst a stone.

¹³ You will tread on the lion and the | adder;*
the young lion and the serpent you will trample | underfoot.

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.

O Lord God, You led Your ancient people through the wilderness and brought them to the promised land. Guide the people of Your Church that following our Savior we may walk through the wilderness of this world toward the glory of the world to come; 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

Genesis 22:1–18

P The Old Testament Reading is from Genesis, chapter 22.

¹After these things God tested Abraham and said to him, “Abraham!” And he said, “Here am I.”
²He said, “Take your son, your only son Isaac, whom you love, and go to the land of Moriah, and offer him there as a burnt offering on one of the mountains of which I shall tell you.”
³So Abraham rose early in the morning, saddled his donkey, and took two of his young men with him, and his son Isaac. And he cut the wood for the burnt offering and arose and went to the place of which God had told him.
⁴On the third day Abraham lifted up his eyes and saw the place from afar.
⁵Then Abraham said to his young men, “Stay here with the donkey; I and the boy will go over there and worship and come again to you.”
⁶And Abraham took the wood of the burnt offering and laid it on Isaac his son. And he took in his hand the fire and the knife. So they went both of them together.
⁷And Isaac said to his father Abraham, “My father!” And he said, “Here am I, my son.” He said, “Behold, the fire and the wood, but where is the lamb for a burnt offering?”
⁸Abraham said, “God will provide for Himself the lamb for a burnt offering, my son.” So they went both of them together.

⁹When they came to the place of which God had told him, Abraham built the altar there and laid the wood in order and bound Isaac his son and laid him on the altar, on top of the wood.
¹⁰Then Abraham reached out his hand and took the knife to slaughter his son.
¹¹But the Angel of the LORD called to him from heaven and said, “Abraham, Abraham!” And he said, “Here am I.”
¹²He said, “Do not lay your hand on the boy or do anything to him, for now I know that you fear God, seeing you have not withheld your son, your only son, from Me.”
¹³And Abraham lifted up his eyes and looked, and behold, behind him was a ram, caught in a thicket by his horns. And Abraham went and took the ram and offered it up as a burnt offering instead of his son.
¹⁴So Abraham called the name of that place, “The-LORD-Will-Provide”; as it is said to this day, “On the mount of the LORD it shall be provided.”

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, despise- | ing the shame,*

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

EPISTLE

James 1:12–18

P The Epistle is from James, chapter one.

¹²Blessed is the man who remains steadfast under trial, for when he has stood the test he will receive the crown of life, which God has promised to those who love him. ¹³Let no one say when he is tempted, “I am being tempted by God,” for God cannot be tempted with evil, and He Himself tempts no one. ¹⁴But each person is tempted when he is lured and enticed by his own desire. ¹⁵Then desire when it has conceived gives birth to sin, and sin when it is fully grown brings forth death.

¹⁶Do not be deceived, my beloved brothers. ¹⁷Every good gift and every perfect gift is from above, coming down from the Father of lights with whom there is no variation or shadow due to change. ¹⁸Of His own will He brought us forth by the word of truth, that we should be a kind of firstfruits of His creatures.

P This is the Word of the Lord.

C Thanks be to God.

Stand

VERSE

Ephesians 6:11

Put on the whole armor of God, that you may be able to stand against the schemes of the devil.

HOLY GOSPEL

Mark 1:9–15

P The Holy Gospel according to Saint Mark, chapter one.

C Glory be to Thee, O Lord.

⁹In those days Jesus came from Nazareth of Galilee and was baptized by John in the Jordan. ¹⁰And when He came up out of the water, immediately He saw the heavens opening and the Spirit descending on Him like a dove. ¹¹And a voice came from heaven, “You are My beloved Son; with You I am well pleased.”

¹²The Spirit immediately drove Him out into the wilderness. ¹³And He was in the wilderness forty days, being tempted by Satan. And He was with the wild animals, and the angels were ministering to Him.

¹⁴Now after John was arrested, Jesus came into Galilee, proclaiming the gospel of God, ¹⁵and saying, “**The time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God is at hand; repent and believe in the gospel.**”

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: Lord, throughout These Forty Days

LSB 418

1 O Lord, through - out these for - ty days You
2 You strove with Sa - tan, and You won; Your
3 Though parched and hun - gry, yet You prayed And
4 Be with us through this sea - son, Lord, And

prayed and kept the fast; In - spire re - pen - tance
faith - ful - ness en - dured; Lend us Your nerve, Your
fixed Your mind a - bove; So teach us to de -
all our earth - ly days, That when the fi - nal

for our sin, And free us from our past.
skill and trust In God's e - ter - nal Word.
ny our - selves, Since we have known God's love.
Eas - ter dawns, We join in heav - en's praise.

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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.
- C** Amen.

Philippians 4:7

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** For the Lord to remember us according to His steadfast love and goodness in Christ and to instruct and lead us by His Spirit in His ways, that we may repent and believe the Gospel, let us pray to the Lord:
C **Lord, have mercy.**
- P** For the Lord who placed the wood of the cross on the back of His only begotten Son to bless His Church and all those called to preach and teach with the certainty that the gates of hell cannot prevail against them; and for bold faith to trample every power of the enemy underfoot, let us pray to the Lord:
C **Lord, have mercy.**
- P** To the Father of lights, from whom every good and perfect gift comes, that He would keep us from being enticed by our own desires to misuse His gifts in sin; for His help to use them rightly in service to Him and our neighbor; and for Him to bless Joseph, our President, Gavin, our Governor, Cheryl, our Mayor, and all our leaders, that we may be governed wisely and justly for the good of this present generation and all those to come, let us pray to the Lord:
C **Lord, have mercy.**
- P** For all children and their parents, for new converts and those mature in the faith, and for every Christian home, that God would preserve them from the assaults of the evil one and, as Christ overcame Satan in the desert by the Word of God, give us the victory through Him and His Word, let us pray to the Lord:
C **Lord, have mercy.**
- P** To the Most High, who is our refuge in every trouble and has promised to hear us when we call to Him, that He would command His angels to minister to our brothers and sisters and all who suffer in our midst, and keep them from every evil that can befall mind, body, or soul, let us pray to the Lord:
C **Lord, have mercy.**
- P** For all who commune, since the time is fulfilled and the kingdom of God is at hand as His beloved Son comes to us here at the altar, that God would grant us by His Holy Spirit to receive Christ in repentance and believe the Gospel proclaimed to us in His body given and His blood shed, let us pray to the Lord:
C **Lord, have mercy.**
- P** In thanksgiving for those before us whom God brought forth by the Word of truth and who now live and reign in His presence with His Son; and that the Lord would bring us to full maturity by this same Word, which brought us forth in Baptism, that we, too, may be gathered with them to His Son on the glorious harvest of the Last Day, 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,

I never get tired of this cartoon!

This little gem brings some levity to our Old Testament reading (known as “The Binding of Isaac”). I wish I could give the artist credit but I’ve never been able to figure out who drew this little gem. I see it floating around Facebook all the time and always chuckle when I see it.

Some might say that we shouldn’t be making light of this story—that this isn’t a laughing matter . . . except Isaac’s name means “he laughs” so, from a linguistic standpoint, this really IS a “laughing” matter! LOL!



All joking aside, this is a profoundly important event in Holy Scripture! God—Father, Son, and Holy Spirit—has given Abraham (by his lived experience) and us (by the inspired Word) a transcendent way of knowing His fundamental essence: LOVE! As Saint John tells us: “God is love. In this the love of God was made manifest among us, that God sent His only Son into the world, so that we might live through Him” (1 John 4:8b-9).

One thing that I want to point out about the Old Testament reading (Gen. 22:1–18) that is a bit obscure—the Angel of the LORD that calls to Abraham, staying his hand from slaying Isaac, is none other than the Preincarnate Christ (the very Son of God who WILL be sacrificed for all of us at the Cross)! Note that when He speaks to Abraham, He says, “I know that you fear God, seeing you have not withheld your son, your only son, from Me” (Gen. 22:12). He identifies Himself as God and by this we know the Angel to be Jesus, but we might miss this truth with just a cursory reading of the text, especially since most ESV translations do not capitalize Me.

I sincerely hope that you’ll join me for our Lenten Bible Study meeting on “Zoom” every Tuesday at Noon. We’re looking at God’s historic call to His people to repent and return to Him, and looking at how the things of this world try to get in the way of our own returning to God.

- 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 each Wednesday for our Midweek Prayer Service at 7:00pm, both streaming on Facebook and in-person. Pastor Beyer (Saint Paul’s Lutheran Church in Holtville) and I are teaming up and hosting this midweek service at each other’s congregations, alternating weekly. This week, February 24, we’ll be at Grace and Pastor Beyer 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