

Ascension Lutheran Church

Fifth Sunday of Lent..... March 21, 2021

“Again and Again, We Are Reformed”

Welcome, All, In the Name of Jesus Christ our Lord!

God promises Jeremiah that a “new covenant” will be made in the future: a covenant that will allow all the people to know God by heart. The church sees this promise fulfilled in Christ, who draws all people to himself when he is lifted up on the cross. Our baptismal covenant draws us to God’s heart through Christ and draws God’s love and truth into our hearts. We join together in worship, sharing in word, song, and meal, and leave strengthened to share God’s love with all the world.

PRELUDE

CONFESSION AND FORGIVENESS

In the gospel of John, a group of Greek people approach the disciples and say, “We would like to see Jesus.”

It’s a brief, beautiful moment that the text doesn’t spend a lot of time on, And yet, it feels like “I want to see Jesus,” should be my constant prayer.

Help me see Jesus.

I’d like to see Jesus.

Bring me closer to Jesus.

In the prayer of confession, we take a moment to recognize how much space exists between us and those words, trusting that even when we forget to seek out God, God is seeking us out. So join me in the prayer of confession today as we take one step closer to the Divine ...

Silence is kept for reflection.

Fountain of living water,

pour out your mercy over us.

Our sin is heavy, and we long to be free.

Rebuild what we have ruined and mend what we have torn.

Wash us in your cleansing flood.

**Make us alive in the Spirit to follow in the way of Jesus,
as healers and restorers of the world you so love.**

Amen.

Beloved, God's word never fails. The promise rests on grace:
by the saving love of Jesus Christ, the wisdom and power of God,
your sins are \dagger forgiven, and God remembers them no more.
Journey in the way of Jesus.

Amen.

HYMN #338 **"Beneath the Cross of Jesus"**
Verses 1-2



1 Be - neath the cross of Je - sus I long to take my stand;
2 Up - on the cross of Je - sus, my eye at times can see
3 I take, O cross, your shad - ow for my a - bid - ing place;



the shad - ow of a might - y rock with - in a wea - ry land,
the ver - y dy - ing form of one who suf - fered there for me.
I ask no oth - er sun - shine than the sun - shine of his face;



a home with - in a wil - der - ness, a rest up - on the way,
And from my con - trite heart, with tears, two won - ders I con - fess:
con - tent to let the world go by, to know no gain nor loss,



from the burn - ing of the noon - tide heat and bur - dens of the day.
the . . . won - der of his glo - rious love and my un - wor - thi - ness.
my . . . sin - ful self my on - ly shame, my glo - ry all, the cross.

Text: Elizabeth C. Clephane, 1830–1869
Music: ST. CHRISTOPHER, Frederick C. Maker, 1844–1927

PRAYER OF THE DAY

Let us pray.

O God, with steadfast love you draw us to yourself, and in mercy you receive our prayers. You have promised through your Son to be with your church forever. We give you thanks for those who founded this community of believers and for the signs of your presence in our congregation. Increase in us the spirit of faith and love, and make our fellowship an example to all believers and to all nations. Strengthen us to bring forth the fruits of the Spirit, that through life and death we may live in your Son, Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever.

Amen.

ANNIVERSARY HYMN

to the tune of "Amazing Grace"

For ninety years the Grace of God
Is present in this place.
We feel His love, His strength, and might.
His fortress we embrace.

We thank you God. We give you praise.
We worship you this day.
We ask that You would bless Your home
As we gather here and pray.

We honor those who built with care,
This shelter in life's storm.
We bless their souls. Let us rejoice,
The day this church was born.

Come gather one. Come gather all.
Come find the Truth and Light.
God fills us with abundant Grace.
And makes each future bright.

READING: Jeremiah 31:31-34

A reading from Jeremiah.

³¹The days are surely coming, says the LORD, when I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel and the house of Judah. ³²It will not be like the covenant that I made with their ancestors when I took them by the hand to bring them out of the land of Egypt—a covenant that they broke, though I was their husband, says the LORD. ³³But this is the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel after those days, says the LORD: I will put my law within them, and I will write it on their hearts; and I will be their God, and they shall be my people. ³⁴No longer shall they teach one another, or say to each other, “Know the LORD,” for they shall all know me, from the least of them to the greatest, says the LORD; for I will forgive their iniquity, and remember their sin no more.

The Word of the Lord.

Thanks be to God.

GOSPEL: John 12:20-33

The holy gospel according to John, the twelfth chapter.

Glory to you, O Lord.

²⁰Now among those who went up to worship at the festival were some Greeks. ²¹They came to Philip, who was from Bethsaida in Galilee, and said to him, “Sir, we wish to see Jesus.” ²²Philip went and told Andrew; then Andrew and Philip went and told Jesus. ²³Jesus answered them, “The hour has come for the Son of Man to be glorified. ²⁴Very truly, I tell you, unless a grain of wheat falls into the earth and dies, it remains just a single grain; but if it dies, it bears much fruit. ²⁵Those who love their life lose it, and those who hate their life in this world will keep it for eternal life. ²⁶Whoever serves me must follow me, and where I am, there will my servant be also. Whoever serves me, the Father will honor.

²⁷“Now my soul is troubled. And what should I say—‘Father, save me from this hour’? No, it is for this reason that I have come to this hour. ²⁸Father, glorify your name.” Then a voice came from heaven, “I have glorified it, and I will glorify it again.” ²⁹The crowd standing there heard it and said that it was thunder. Others said, “An angel has spoken to him.” ³⁰Jesus answered, “This voice has come for your sake, not for mine. ³¹Now is the judgment of this world; now the ruler of this

world will be driven out. ³²And I, when I am lifted up from the earth, will draw all people to myself.” ³³He said this to indicate the kind of death he was to die.

The Gospel of the Lord.
Praise to you, O Christ.

SERMON **The Rev. Christina L. Auch**

HYMN #328 **“Restore In Us, O God”**
Verses 1-2



1 Re - store in us, O God, the splen-dor of your love; re -
2 O Spir - it, wake in us the won - der of your pow'r; from
3 Bring us, O Christ, to share the full - ness of your joy; bap -
4 Three-per - soned God, ful - fill the prom - ise of your grace, that



new your im - age in our hearts, and all our sins re - move.
fruit-less fear un - furl our lives like spring-time bud and flow'r.
tize us in the ris - en life that death can - not de - stroy.
we, when all our search-ing ends, may see you face to face.

Text: Carl P. Daw Jr., b. 1944
Music: BAYLOR, Hal H. Hopson, b. 1933
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APOSTLES' CREED

God has made us his people through our Baptism into Christ. Living together in trust and hope, we confess our faith...

I believe in God, the Father almighty, creator of heaven and earth.
I believe in Jesus Christ, God's only Son, our Lord,
who was conceived by the Holy Spirit,
born of the virgin Mary,
suffered under Pontius Pilate,
was crucified, died, and was buried;
he descended into hell.

On the third day he rose again;
he ascended into heaven,
he is seated at the right hand of the Father,
and he will come to judge the living and the dead.

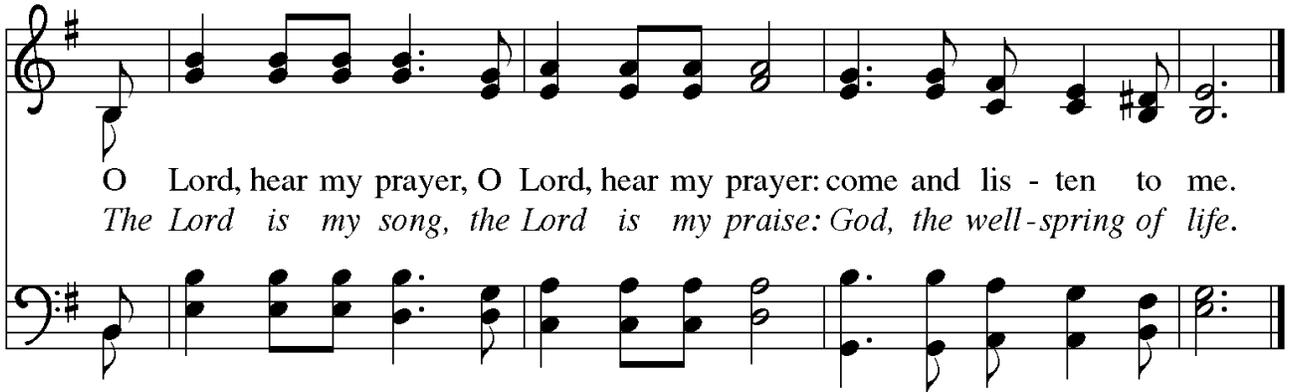
I believe in the Holy Spirit, the holy catholic Church,
the communion of saints, the forgiveness of sins,
the resurrection of the body, and the life everlasting.
Amen.

HYMN #751

“O Lord, Hear My Prayer”



O Lord, hear my prayer, O Lord, hear my prayer: when I call, an - swer me.
OR The Lord is my song, the Lord is my praise: all my hope comes from God.



O Lord, hear my prayer, O Lord, hear my prayer: come and lis - ten to me.
The Lord is my song, the Lord is my praise: God, the well-spring of life.

Text: Psalm 102:1–2; Taizé Community, adapt.
Music: HEAR MY PRAYER, Jacques Berthier, 1923–1994
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PRAYERS OF INTERCESSION

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

Silence is kept for reflection.

You wash us through and through and remember our sin no more. Make your church a community of forgiveness throughout the world. Give your people courage to forgive; through them show the world new possibilities. Bless ministries of repentance and reconciliation. Hear us, O God. **Your mercy is great.**

You fill the earth—from tiny grains of wheat to the mighty thunder—with your presence, and you call us to attend to your will for all creation. Grant weather that prepares the soil for seeds; protect all from violent storms, flooding, and wildfires. Hear us, O God. **Your mercy is great.**

You promise to write your law on our hearts. Guide citizens throughout the world to shape communities that reflect your mercy, justice, and peace, and give them creativity to work for the welfare of all. Hear us, O God. **Your mercy is great.**

You sustain us with your bountiful Spirit. Restore the joy of all who need to know your presence: those who are lonely or feel unforgivable, those who need healing of mind or body, those who are dying, and all who grieve. We pray especially those we name aloud or silently in our hearts...

Grant Adcock (Bob and Vicki Jones' grandson), **Kathy** Backof (Donna Lilly's friend), **Martha** Beam (Eleanor Hendrick's friend), **Dan** Birch (Carol Berger's brother-in-law), **Adam** Bridges & **Brittany** Smith (Libby Stone's cousin and his fiancé), **Cody** Bryant (Bob Bryant's grandson), **Kathy** Callahan (Ludie Wilkie's friend), **Mike** Callahan (Ludy Wilkie's friend), **Chris** Carman (Judy Bridges' friend), **Edna** Cooper (Bill Bridges' aunt), **The Davenport Family** (Dave and Priscilla Williams' friends), **Charles and Mary** Degree (Karen Long's friends), **Saher** Degree (Gail Sherman's friend), **Charles** Duval (Ludy Wilkie's friend), **Barbara Duval** (Ludy Wilkie's friends), **Tim** Farmer (Pastor Christina and Jamie's friend), **Avan** Fields (Carol Berger's friend), **Ann** Fitzsimmons (Steve and Jenny White's friend), **Carol Ann** Forgas (Bill Bridges' friend), **Chris** Galloway (Vicky Galloway's husband), , **Mike** Greene (Gail Sherman's friend), **Carl** Greenwald (DeBell's friend), **Richard** Hollifield (Ludy Wilkie's friend), **Joe** Hutchinson (William Coyne's friend), **Debbie** Irvin (Bill Bridges' friend), **Patti** Jenkins (Priscilla Williams' friend), **Kay** Johnson (Eleanor Hendrick's cousin), **Steve** Jolly (Ludy Wilkie's friend), **Shannon** Jones (Jennie Lambert's former co-worker), **Mark** Kent (Majorie Olsen's son), **Rachel** Kidwell (Dave William's niece), **Bryan** Legrand (Ludy Wilkie's friend), **Jim** Lilly (Dick and

Donna Lilly's son), **Sonya and Gerald** Lovelace (Bill Bridges friend), **Brenda** Lowery (Gail Sherman's friend), **Pam** Lucas (Ludy Wilkie's friend), **Eva** McCombs (Sandra Waldrop's mother), **Janice** McGoven (Eleanor Hendricks' sister), **Sheri Dawn** Mack (Relative of Karen Hubbard), **Maribeth** Norris Mies (Carol Berger's cousin), **Pat** Mullen (Johanna Gillespie's friend), **Wanda** Mullinax (Edith Kelly's niece), **Teresa** Olsen (Marjorie Olsen's daughter-in-law), **Bob** Patzer (Carol Berger's brother-in-law), **Linda** Patzer (Carol Berger's sister), **Gerard** Peruzzi (Carol Berger's brother), **Margaret** Peruzzi (Carol Berger's mother), **Liz and Ron** Dal Poggetto (Judy Bridges' friends), **Beth** Rhyne (Ladley and Jane Burn's friend), **Shannon** Sellers (Libby Stone's cousin), **Jean and Jim** Tesseneer (Bill Bridges friend), **Pam** Unger (Willi and Ray Lacy's friend), **Edith** Walker (Allen and Lisa Philbeck's friend's mother), **David** Waldrop (Sandra Waldrop's husband), **Molly and Darryl** Waterstraat (Karen Hubbard's friends), **Alfie** Welch (Renee Buchanan's brother), **Christopher** Willever (David Williams' grandson), **Mary Ann** Woolley (Sandra Waldrop's aunt)

Members: **Dean** Davis, **Lin** Washburn, **Dot** Paul, **Bob** Bryant, **William** Coyne, **Jim** Wilson, **Bobbie** Johnson, **Gerald** Washburn, **Ray** Valentine, **Lucinda** Wallen, **Lisa** Upton, **Sandy** Harman, **Kim** Lacy and family

In Undergraduate College: **Emma** Auch, **Brooke** Buchanan, **Samantha** Hoffman, **Jacob** Stone, **Catherine** Mae Lilly

Ministry Partners: Hospice Cleveland County staff, leaders and those they serve.

Hear us, O God. **Your mercy is great.**

Jesus calls us to follow him in life and death. Empower this congregation in discipleship. Give us your truth and wisdom and teach us to follow Jesus. Hear us, O God. **Your mercy is great.**

We give thanks to you for the members and the ministry of this congregation: for those who had the vision to begin this congregation 98 years ago, those who sustain its present ministry, and those who will carry its mission forward into the future. Hear us, O God. **Your mercy is great.**

In the cross of Christ, your name is glorified. We praise you for those who have given us words to worship you. With all those who have died in Christ, bring us into life everlasting. 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.

PASSING OF THE PEACE

The peace of Christ be with you always.

And also with you.

The people may greet one another with a sign of Christ's peace on video or say: "Peace be with you" from wherever you are or type it in the chat or comments.

OFFERING

Make a one time or recurring gift using **the website** or **the GivePlus app** on iPhone or Android. You can give using ACH (bank account), Visa, MasterCard, Discover or American Express.

Or text 844-906-2283 and enter the amount you wish to donate. Then click the registration link and enter your payment information. You will receive a verification text as well as an email receipt. For future giving, simply send a text to the same number with the amount you wish to give, and your donation will process automatically.

Or mail your regular tithe or offering to PO Box 266, Shelby, NC 28151.

OFFERTORY HYMN #186

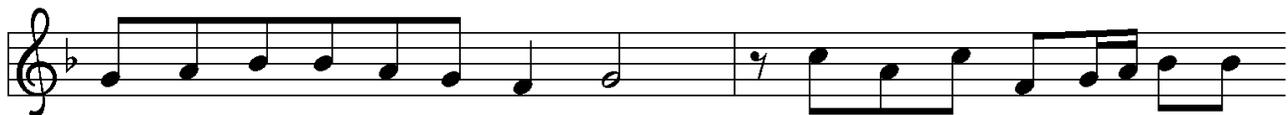
"Create In Me a Clean Heart"



Cre - ate in me a clean heart, O God, and re - new a right



spir - it with - in me. Cast me not a - way from your pres - ence, and take



not your Ho - ly Spir - it from me. Re - store to me the joy of



your sal - va - tion, and up - hold me with your free Spir - it.

Music: Richard W. Hillert, b. 1923. Music © 1978 *Lutheran Book of Worship*, admin. Augsburg Fortress. Used with permission.

THANKSGIVING FOR THE WORD

Let us pray...

Gracious God, we have heard your Word of Life today. While our sin is great, your determination to save has proven greater, again and again. Thank you for Jesus who leads us out of the wilderness and into the community declaring, “The kingdom of God has come near.” Embolden us with the gift of your Holy Spirit that we may share your love and salvation with all creation, through Jesus Christ in whose name we pray.

Amen.

LORD'S PRAYER

Gathered into one by the Holy Spirit, let us pray as Jesus taught us.

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.

SENDING OF HOME COMMUNION

When our congregation gathered for Holy Communion with all the saints from every time and place, we heard again the story of God’s mighty acts and the love shown us in Jesus’ life, death, and resurrection. The holy meal of the Lord’s supper was shared. Now we share this Word of life, and this bread and cup of blessing, that we may share in these same gifts and be strengthened by the Christian community, even though we gather separately for a time.

Gathered at the Lord's table, our congregation remembered with thanksgiving that "in the night in which he was betrayed, our Lord Jesus took bread, and gave thanks; broke it, and gave it to his disciples, saying: Take and eat; this is my body, given for you. Do this for the remembrance of me. Again, after supper, he took the cup, gave thanks, and gave it for all to drink, saying: This cup is the new covenant in my blood, shed for you and for all people for the forgiveness of sin. Do this for the remembrance of me."

This is the supper of our Lord Jesus Christ. This bread and cup, shared in our community of faith, are here given for you.

Share the bread, saying, "The body of Christ, given for you." And share the wine or grape juice, saying, "The blood of Christ, shed for you."

Let us pray.

Gracious God, in this meal you have drawn us to your heart, and nourished us at your table with food and drink, the body and blood of Christ. Now send us forth to be your people in the world, and to proclaim your truth this day and evermore, through Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord.

Amen.

BLESSING

As you leave this space,

May your mouth speak of God's goodness.

May your arms hold those in need. May your feet walk toward justice.

May your heart trust its worth. May your soul dance in God's grace.

And may this be your rhythm—

Again and again and again,

Until God's promised day.

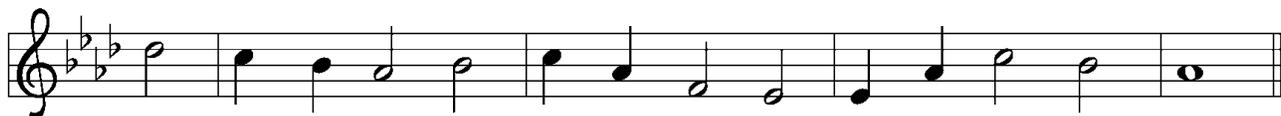
In the name of the holy, loving and life-giving Trinity itself,

Go with courage, go with heart, go in peace.

Amen.



- 1 Oh, that the Lord would guide my ways to keep his stat - utes still!
- 2 Or - der my foot-steps by your word and make my heart sin - cere;
- 3 As - sist my soul, too apt to stray, a strict - er watch to keep;
- 4 Make me to walk in your com-ands, 'tis a de-light - ful road;



Oh, that my God would grant me grace to know and do his will!
 let sin have no do - min-ion, Lord, but keep my con-science clear.
 and should I e'er for - get your way, re - store your wan-d'ring sheep.
 nor let my head or heart or hands of - fend a - gainst my God.

Text: Isaac Watts, 1674–1748, alt.

Music: EVAN, William H. Havergal, 1793–1870

DISMISSAL

Marked with the cross of Christ, go forth to love and serve the Lord.

Thanks be to God.

POSTLUDE

ANNOUNCEMENTS

Coronavirus Response: Our sanctuary remains closed, but the fellowship hall is available for small groups (less than 10) with social distancing and masks required. Contact Debby in the church office for more information.

Prayer Concerns: Please call or email the office or text Pastor Christina at 704-472-7783 to update prayer requests. You may leave a voicemail but please provide the spelling of any names, and your relationship to the person being prayed for.

Please continue your tithes and offerings. Make a one time or recurring gift using **the website** or **the GivePlus app** on iPhone or Android. You can give using ACH (bank account), Visa, MasterCard, Discover or American Express.

Or **text 844-906-2283** and enter the amount you wish to donate. Then click the registration link and enter your payment information. You will receive a verification text as well as an email receipt. For future giving, simply send a text to the same number with the amount you wish to give, and your donation will process automatically.

Or **mail your regular tithe or offering** to PO Box 266, Shelby, NC 28151.

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