

## **Third Sunday in Lent Sunday, March 7, 2021**

### **Introduction to the day**

The third covenant in this year's Lenten readings is the central one of Israel's history: the gift of the law to those God freed from slavery. The commandments begin with the statement that because God alone has freed us from the powers that oppressed us, we are to let nothing else claim first place in our lives. When Jesus throws the merchants out of the temple, he is defending the worship of God alone and rejecting the ways commerce and profit-making can become our gods. The Ten Commandments are essential to our baptismal call: centered first in God's liberating love, we strive to live out justice and mercy in our communities and the world.

### **ANNOUNCEMENTS**

### **CONFESSION AND FORGIVENESS**

Blessed be the holy Trinity, one God, the keeper of the covenant, the source of steadfast love, our rock and our redeemer. **Amen.**

God hears us when we cry, and draws us close in Jesus Christ. Let us return to the one who is full of compassion.

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 forgiven, and God remembers them no more. Journey in the way of Jesus. **Amen.**

### **GREETING**

The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, the love of God, and the communion of the Holy Spirit be with you all. **And also with you.**

### **KYRIE**

Kyrie eleison: **Lord, have mercy.**

Christe eleison: **Christ, have mercy.**

Kyrie eleison: **Lord, have mercy.**

## **CANTICLE OF PRAISE: Lift High the Cross**

### *Refrain*

Lift high the cross, the love of Christ proclaim  
till all the world adore his sacred name.

- 1 Come, Christians, follow where our captain trod,  
our king victorious, Christ, the Son of God. *Refrain*
- 2 All newborn servants of the Crucified  
bear on their brows the seal of him who died. *Refrain*
- 3 O Lord, once lifted on the glorious tree,  
as thou hast promised, draw us all to thee. *Refrain*
- 4 So shall our song of triumph ever be:  
praise to the Crucified for victory! *Refrain*

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## **PRAYER OF THE DAY**

Let us pray. Holy God, through your Son you have called us to live faithfully and act courageously. Keep us steadfast in your covenant of grace, and teach us the wisdom that comes only through Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. **Amen.**

## **SPECIAL MUSIC: More Precious than Silver with When I Survey the Wondrous Cross (Deshazo/Pethel) Worship Team**

### **FIRST READING: Exodus 20:1-17**

A reading from Exodus.

*After escaping from slavery, the Israelites come to Mount Sinai, where God teaches them how to live in community. The Ten Commandments proclaim that God alone is worthy of worship. Flowing from God, the life of the community flourishes when based on honesty, trust, fidelity, and respect for life, family, and property.*

<sup>1</sup>God spoke all these words:

<sup>2</sup>I am the LORD your God, who brought you out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of slavery; <sup>3</sup>you shall have no other gods before me.

<sup>4</sup>You shall not make for yourself an idol, whether in the form of anything that is in heaven above, or that is on the earth beneath, or that is in the water under the earth. <sup>5</sup>You shall not bow down to them or worship them; for I the LORD your God am a jealous God, punishing children for the iniquity of parents, to the third and the fourth generation of those who reject me, <sup>6</sup>but showing steadfast love to the thousandth generation of those who love me and keep my commandments.

<sup>7</sup>You shall not make wrongful use of the name of the LORD your God, for the LORD will not acquit anyone who misuses his name.

<sup>8</sup>Remember the sabbath day, and keep it holy. <sup>9</sup>Six days you shall labor and do all your work.

<sup>10</sup>But the seventh day is a sabbath to the LORD your God; you shall not do any work—you, your son or your daughter, your male or female slave, your livestock, or the alien resident in your towns. <sup>11</sup>For in six days the LORD made heaven and earth, the sea, and all that is in them, but rested the seventh day; therefore the LORD blessed the sabbath day and consecrated it.

<sup>12</sup>Honor your father and your mother, so that your days may be long in the land that the LORD your God is giving you.

<sup>13</sup>You shall not murder.

<sup>14</sup>You shall not commit adultery.

<sup>15</sup>You shall not steal.

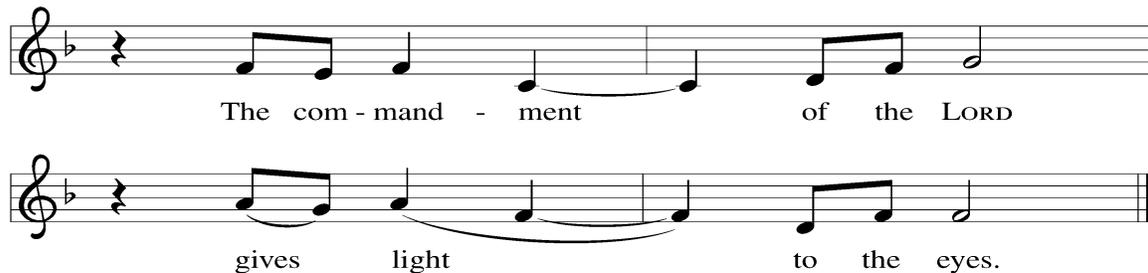
<sup>16</sup>You shall not bear false witness against your neighbor.

<sup>17</sup>You shall not covet your neighbor's house; you shall not covet your neighbor's wife, or male or female slave, or ox, or donkey, or anything that belongs to your neighbor.

Word of God, word of life. **Thanks be to God.**

### PSALM: Psalm 19

#### (Refrain)



Psalm 19:8

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<sup>1</sup>The heavens declare the glory of God,  
and the sky proclaims its maker's handiwork.

<sup>2</sup>**One day tells its tale to another,  
and one night imparts knowledge to another.**

<sup>3</sup>Although they have no words or language,  
and their voices are not heard,

<sup>4</sup>**their sound has gone out into all lands, and their message to the ends of the world,  
where God has pitched a tent for the sun.**

<sup>5</sup>It comes forth like a bridegroom out of his chamber;  
it rejoices like a champion to run its course.

<sup>6</sup>It goes forth from the uttermost edge of the heavens and runs about to the end of it again;  
nothing is hidden from its burning heat. **(Refrain)**

<sup>7</sup>The teaching of the LORD is perfect and revives the soul;  
the testimony of the LORD is sure and gives wisdom to the simple.  
<sup>8</sup>**The statutes of the LORD are just and rejoice the heart;  
the commandment of the LORD is clear and gives light to the eyes.**  
<sup>9</sup>The fear of the LORD is clean and endures forever;  
the judgments of the LORD are true and righteous altogether.  
<sup>10</sup>**More to be desired are they than gold, more than much fine gold,  
sweeter far than honey, than honey in the comb. (Refrain)**

<sup>11</sup>By them also is your servant enlightened,  
and in keeping them there is great reward.

<sup>12</sup>**Who can detect one's own offenses?  
Cleanse me from my secret faults.**

<sup>13</sup>Above all, keep your servant from presumptuous sins; let them not get dominion over me;  
then shall I be whole and sound, and innocent of a great offense.

<sup>14</sup>**Let the words of my mouth and the meditation of my heart be acceptable in your sight,  
O LORD, my strength and my redeemer. (Refrain)**

## **SECOND READING: 1 Corinthians 1:18-25**

A reading from 1 Corinthians.

*The word of the cross is pure foolishness and nonsense to the world because it claims that God is mostly revealed in weakness, humiliation, and death. But through such divine foolishness and weakness, God is working to save us. The center of Paul's preaching is Christ crucified.*

<sup>18</sup>The message about the cross is foolishness to those who are perishing, but to us who are being saved it is the power of God. <sup>19</sup>For it is written,

“I will destroy the wisdom of the wise,  
and the discernment of the discerning I will thwart.”

<sup>20</sup>Where is the one who is wise? Where is the scribe? Where is the debater of this age? Has not God made foolish the wisdom of the world? <sup>21</sup>For since, in the wisdom of God, the world did not know God through wisdom, God decided, through the foolishness of our proclamation, to save those who believe. <sup>22</sup>For Jews demand signs and Greeks desire wisdom, <sup>23</sup>but we proclaim Christ crucified, a stumbling block to Jews and foolishness to Gentiles, <sup>24</sup>but to those who are the called, both Jews and Greeks, Christ the power of God and the wisdom of God. <sup>25</sup>For God's foolishness is wiser than human wisdom, and God's weakness is stronger than human strength.

Word of God, word of life. **Thanks be to God.**

## **GOSPEL: John 2:13-22**

The holy gospel according to John. **Glory to you, O Lord.**

*Jesus attacks the commercialization of religion by driving merchants out of the temple. When challenged, he responds mysteriously, with the first prediction of his own death and resurrection. In the midst of a seemingly stable religious center, Jesus suggests that the center itself has changed.*

<sup>13</sup>The Passover of the Jews was near, and Jesus went up to Jerusalem. <sup>14</sup>In the temple he found people selling cattle, sheep, and doves, and the money changers seated at their tables. <sup>15</sup>Making a whip of cords, he drove all of them out of the temple, both the sheep and the cattle. He also poured out the coins of the money changers and overturned their tables. <sup>16</sup>He told those who were selling the doves, "Take these things out of here! Stop making my Father's house a marketplace!" <sup>17</sup>His disciples remembered that it was written, "Zeal for your house will consume me." <sup>18</sup>The Jews then said to him, "What sign can you show us for doing this?" <sup>19</sup>Jesus answered them, "Destroy this temple, and in three days I will raise it up." <sup>20</sup>The Jews then said, "This temple has been under construction for forty-six years, and will you raise it up in three days?" <sup>21</sup>But he was speaking of the temple of his body. <sup>22</sup>After he was raised from the dead, his disciples remembered that he had said this; and they believed the scripture and the word that Jesus had spoken.

The gospel of the Lord. **Praise to you, O Christ.**

## **SERMON "CLEANSING THE TEMPLE. CLEANSING OUR DEVOTION"**

### **HYMN OF THE DAY: Change My Heart, O God**

Change my heart, O God;  
make it ever true.  
Change my heart, O God;  
may I be like you.  
You are the potter;  
I am the clay.  
Mold me and make me;  
this is what I pray.  
Change my heart, O God;  
make it ever true.  
Change my heart, O God;  
may I be like you.

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### **CREED**

**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 to the dead.**

**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.**

### **PRAYERS OF INTERCESSION**

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

There is no God before you. Purify the faith of your church, that your people place their trust in nothing beside you. Your name is holy. Guide your church, that in every situation your people's words and actions honor your name. Hear us, O God. **Your mercy is great.**

The heavens declare your glory. Renew your creation. Provide leaders in the struggle for clean air and water; protect creatures and crops that rely on healthy ecosystems; give all people the willingness to repent when our way of life pollutes the earth and skies. Hear us, O God. **Your mercy is great.**

Your foolishness is wiser than human wisdom. Fill leaders with the foolishness of your peace and mercy. Your law defends the vulnerable. Work through legislators, judicial systems, and systems of law enforcement to protect the wellbeing and freedom of all. Hear us, O God. **Your mercy is great.**

Your weakness is stronger than human strength. Protect those who are vulnerable and give courage to all who are suffering. Defend victims of crime and bring redemption to those who have harmed others. Give sabbath rest to all who labor. Hear us, O God. **Your mercy is great.**

You call us to proclaim Christ crucified. Give clarity to this congregation and our leaders, so that we might follow Christ beyond our own habits and comfort. Clear out anything in our common life that would obscure the gospel or that serves our own interests. Hear us, O God. **Your mercy is great.**

The cross of Christ is your power for all who are being saved. Thank you for all the martyrs whose witness reveals the power of the cross. Give us the same trust in life and in death. 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.**

### **PEACE**

The peace of Christ be with you always. **And also with you.**

### **OFFERING**

Faithful God, you walk beside us in desert places, and you meet us in our hunger with bread from heaven. Accompany us in this meal, that we may pass over from death to life with Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord. **Amen.**

### LORD'S PRAYER



Our Fa - ther in heav - en, hal - lowed be your name,  
your king - dom come, your will be done, on earth as in heav - en.  
Give us to - day our dai - ly bread. For - give us our sins as we  
for - give those who sin a - gainst us. Save us from the time of tri - al  
and de - liv - er us from e - vil. For the king - dom, the pow'r,  
and the glo - ry are yours, now and for - ev - er. A - men.

### BLESSING

You are what God made you to be: created in Christ Jesus for good works, chosen as holy and beloved, freed to serve your neighbor. God bless you that you may be a blessing, in the name of the holy and life-giving Trinity. **Amen.**

## **SENDING: GRACE ALONE**

### *verse 1*

Ev'ry promise we can make.  
Ev'ry prayer and step of faith,  
Ev'ry difference we will make  
is only by His grace.  
Ev'ry mountain we can climb,  
Ev'ry ray of hope we shine  
Ev'ry blessing left behind  
is only by His grace

### *refrain*

Grace alone, which God supplies  
strength unknown, He will provide  
Christ in us, — our cornerstone  
We will go forth — in grace alone.

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## **DISMISSAL**

Go in peace. Share the good news. **Thanks be to God.**

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