

Fifth Sunday in Lent

03 April 2022



This is the Kvindherred Church in Rosendal, Norway established in 1255. Many of our early pioneers were baptized and confirmed in this church. On leaving Norway, some of our people carried letters written by the Kvindherred pastor attesting to their membership.



Our Savior's Lutheran Church
Evangelical Lutheran Church in America

Service of Holy Communion

Evangelical Lutheran Worship, Setting 3

*The liturgy is in the front of the ELW with numbers at the bottom of the pages.
The hymns begin in the middle of the ELW with numbers at the top of the pages.*

Prelude

Ringling of the Bell

Welcome and Announcements

Confession and Forgiveness (pages 94-96)

P: In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit.

C: Amen.

P: God of all mercy and consolation, come to the help of your people, turning us from our sin to live for you alone. Give us the power of your Holy Spirit that we may confess our sin, receive your forgiveness, and grow into the fullness of Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord.

C: Amen.

P: Let us confess our sin in the presence of God and one another.
There is a time of silence for reflection.

P: Most merciful God,

C: we confess that we are captive to sin and cannot free ourselves. 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. 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.

P: In the mercy of almighty God, Jesus Christ was given to die for us, and for his sake God forgives us all our sins. As a called and ordained minister of the church of Christ, and by his authority, I therefore declare to you the entire forgiveness of all your sins, in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit.

C: Amen.

Hymn #324 “In the Cross of Christ I Glory”

Greeting (page 138)

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

C: And also with you.

Kyrie (pages 138-139; spoken responsively)

P: In peace, let us pray to the Lord.

C: Lord, have mercy.

P: For the peace from above, and for our salvation,
let us pray to the Lord.

C: Lord, have mercy.

P: For the peace of the whole world, for the well-being of the
church of God, and for the unity of all, let us pray to the Lord.

C: Lord, have mercy.

P: For this holy house, and for all who offer here their worship and
praise, let us pray to the Lord.

C: Lord, have mercy.

P: Help, save, comfort, and defend us, gracious Lord.

C: Amen.

Prayer of the Day

Readings

L: The Word of the Lord. **C: Thanks be to God.**

Gospel Acclamation (page 142)

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

Gospel

P: The Holy Gospel according to John. **C: Glory to you, O Lord.**

P: The Gospel of the Lord. **C: Praise to you, O Christ.**

Children’s Sermon – Pastor Roberta

Sermon – Pastor Roberta

Hymn #754 “Jesus, the Very Thought of You”

Confession of Faith: Apostles' Creed (page 105)

**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

(Each petition ends: P: Merciful God, C: receive our prayer.)

Offering/Offertory Prayer

Great Thanksgiving (page 144; spoken responsively)

P: The Lord be with you.

C: And also with you.

P: Lift up your hearts.

C: We lift them to the Lord.

P: Let us give thanks to the Lord our God.

C: It is right to give our thanks and praise.

P: It is indeed right....and join their unending hymn:

**♪ Holy, holy, holy Lord, God of pow'r and might,
Heaven and earth are full of your glory.
Hosanna, Hosanna. Hosanna in the highest.**

**Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord.
Hosanna in the highest.**

Words of Institution

Lord's Prayer (page 145)

**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.**

Holy Communion is celebrated today.

*All who are baptized into Christ Jesus are invited to receive Holy Communion
Gluten-free wafers and white grape juice are available.*

"Lamb of God..." (page 146)

**✠ Lamb of God, you take away the sin of the world;
have mercy on us.
Lamb of God, you take away the sin of the world;
have mercy on us.
Lamb of God, you take away the sin of the world;
grant us peace.**

Hymn #685 "Take My Life, That I May Be"

Post Communion Blessing & Prayer

Blessing

Hymn #338 "Beneath the Cross of Jesus"

Dismissal

P: Go in peace. Jesus meets you on the way. C: **Thanks be to God!**

Ring of the Bell / Postlude

Pastor: Rev. Roberta Pierce
Organist: Jason Bousselot or Linda Whitman
Acolyte: Faith Will
Lector: Joyce McCutcheon
Communion Assistant: Cindy Burke
Usher: Brian Bousselot
Cleaners: Deb and Ray Detlefs

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This Week At A Glance

Wednesday	6:30 pm	Lenten Worship at Our Savior's
	7:00 pm	Bible Jam at Our Savior's
Saturday	8:30 am	Spring Clean-Up at Our Savior's
Sunday	8:00 am	Worship Service at Faith
	9:25 am	Sunday School at Our Savior's
	10:30 am	Worship Service at Our Savior's

Those to keep in prayer: the family of Lisa Elias, the family of Sis Youngers, Lucy Lee Petersen, Paul Rock, Megan Mineck Wentland, Ryan Dick, Neil Mason, Betty Schau, Tim Burke, Jim Goddard, Barb Johnson; the homebound: Bus Seastrand, Rusty Porth, Hazel Richards, Ron Gasper, Norman Bousselot, Joan Shelton, and Myrna Kay Petersen; and those serving in the military.

Fifth Sunday in Lent

by Timothy Siburg | www.timothysiburg.com

On this Fifth Sunday in Lent, familiar stories abound in the lectionary- setting the stage for the move that begins Holy Week in just another week with Palm Sunday. As we always do, we'll take the stories in order and note any thing that draws our attention sparking curiosity or reflection.

Now as for my thoughts and reactions, our first story comes from the prophet Isaiah. We read, "Thus says the Lord, who makes a way in the sea, a path in the mighty waters, who brings out chariot and horse, army and warrior; they lie down, they cannot rise, they are extinguished, quenched like a wick: Do not remember the former things, or consider the things of old. **I am about to do a new thing; now it springs forth, do you not perceive it? I will make a way in the wilderness and rivers in the desert.** The wild animals will honor me, the jackals and the ostriches; **for I give water in the wilderness, rivers in the desert, to give drink to my chosen people, the people whom I formed for myself so that they might declare my praise**" (Isaiah 43:16-21, NRSV).

I think it should surprise no one that I love Isaiah 43. My favorite part of that chapter is where we hear the words of promise that God will walk with God's people in the waters and the fires, and God's people will not be consumed. This week's section doesn't include that imagery, but it's equally as powerful and timely. God through Isaiah says, "I am about to do a new thing." What might God be bringing about that is new in our lives and world? It builds off of the theme from the second lesson last week about a new creation and all things are being made new in Christ Jesus. There's some commonality here then in the lectionary from week to week. The imagery though is largely about water in this portion of the story. God will make a way. Water will flow, especially the water of life to a parched and weary world. In Nebraska right now I hear these words as words of hope and promise amid a time of severe

drought. Here's hoping the spring rains come soon. Otherwise, the grass will likely never turn green this year. Anyway, God is saying that something new is coming, God will provide. That provision will include the water of life that God alone can provide. From a stewardship perspective, as the reading closes, it's clear that the people's response for this will (and can only be) one of praise and gratitude.

The themes and imagery of Isaiah 43, seem to be connected and expanded upon in this week's appointed Psalm, Psalm 126. The psalmist proclaims, "When the Lord restored the fortunes of Zion, we were like those who dream. Then our mouth was filled with laughter, and our tongue with shouts of joy; then it was said among the nations, **'The Lord has done great things for them. The Lord has done great things for us, and we rejoiced. Restore our fortunes, O Lord, like the watercourses in the Negeb. May those who sow in tears reap with shouts of joy. Those who go out weeping, bearing the seed for sowing, shall come home with shouts of joy, carrying their sheaves'**" (Psalm 126:1-6, NRSV).

"The Lord has done great things for them... for us." Indeed. With the psalmist, we rejoice. That's the stewardship response. Joy. Gratitude. Thanks. Praise. Or as I like to often put it in this blog, it's our joyful response for all that God has done, continues to do, and will do for all of God's beloved. As disciples and stewards we're entrusted with the stories of God's life giving and life saving work. The work of turning sadness and mourning into dancing and joy. The work of sowing seeds, and caring for them as God is the gardener, waterer, and provider growing the seeds into God's good and beloved creation. For all of this and so much more, we can't help but share the Good News about what God has done. And then often feel so moved, that we come and see, then follow, and then even join in as part of God's on-going work in the world here and now today.

The second lesson for this week comes from Paul's letter to the Philippians. Paul writes, "If anyone else has reason to be confident in the flesh, I have more: circumcised on the eighth day, a member of the people of Israel, of the tribe of Benjamin, a Hebrew born of Hebrews; as to the law, a Pharisee; as to zeal, a persecutor of the church; as to righteousness under the law, blameless. **Yet whatever gains I had, these I have come to regard as loss because of Christ.** More than that, I regard everything as loss because of the surpassing value of knowing Christ Jesus my Lord. For his sake I have suffered the loss of all things, and I regard them as rubbish, in order that I may gain Christ and be found in him, **not having a righteousness of my own that comes from the law, but one that comes through faith in Christ, the righteousness from God based on faith. I want to know Christ and the power of his resurrection and the sharing of his sufferings by becoming like him in his death, if somehow I may attain the resurrection from the dead.** Not that I have already obtained this or have already reached the goal; but I press on to make it my own, because Christ Jesus has made me his own. Beloved, I do not consider that I have made it my own; but this one thing I do: forgetting what lies behind and straining forward to what lies ahead, **I press on toward the goal for the prize of the heavenly call of God in Christ Jesus**" (Philippians 3:4b-14, NRSV).

Paul is writing and sharing classic Pauline theology here. "Yet whatever gains I had, these I have come to regard as loss because of Christ." Paul is embodying the discipleship move here, where we turn outward from ourselves to the God and the neighbor. Instead of being focused on our own gifts, doings, abilities, and accomplishments, we turn toward the one who makes all of them (and so much more) possible. Paul exemplifies this so well, of course, because he wasn't born a follower of Jesus but became one in the most dramatic of circumstances. We need not recount the conversion of Saul story here, but I suspect that experience is especially shaping his writing in this passage. That and his move to remember and articulate that righteousness no longer comes just

from the law or one's own ability or faith or duty, but through faith in Christ.

If you're a Lutheran, this seems like an obvious point of connection with concept of "**Justification by Faith alone.**" If that holds, faith and life are really pure gifts which God provides out of deep grace and love. For them, Paul gives praise, but he also commits to continue in his work, as he writes "I press on toward the goal..." Paul has made the discipleship move, knowing he follows Jesus, but also the stewardship one. He has given thanks and praise, and then can't help but join in with some of God's work in the world in his own time. Thus, he cares for the people in Philippi and writes them this letter all about his understanding of God's love and desire to be in relationship with God's people.

That brings us to the gospel lesson for this week, from John 12. Within this familiar story, Jesus concludes with some of his most unfortunate words (that are likely always taken out of context). We read, "**Six days before the Passover Jesus came to Bethany, the home of Lazarus, whom he had raised from the dead.** There they gave a dinner for him. Martha served, and Lazarus was one of those at the table with him. **Mary took a pound of costly perfume made of pure nard, anointed Jesus' feet, and wiped them with her hair.** The house was filled with the fragrance of the perfume. But Judas Iscariot, one of his disciples (the one who was about to betray him), said, '**Why was this perfume not sold for three hundred denarii and the money given to the poor?**' (He said this not because he cared about the poor, but because he was a thief; he kept the common purse and used to steal what was put into it.) Jesus said, '**Leave her alone. She bought it so that she might keep it for the day of my burial. You always have the poor with you, but you do not always have me**'" (John 12:1-8, NRSV).

As I said above, these are familiar stories this week, and this one in particular. Jesus is back with his friends, Mary, Martha, and

Lazarus. It's still not clear how Lazarus is feeling about having been brought back to life. I kind of would love to get his side of the story. Oh well. All that aside, it's obvious why this story is set in the lectionary for the Fifth and final Sunday in Lent. It sets the stage for the events of the passion which begin in just one week's time. The perfume which will be used for Jesus' burial, will be used not too long from now, and Jesus knows that well. I wonder if all those with him knew how quick the cross was coming at this point? It seems the writer of John, knows Judas knows something about this. He's the one in this story today too who raises the question about the perfume and the poor. The writer of this gospel gives him no credit for that though saying, "He said this not because he cared about the poor, but because he was a thief..." Well then. John certainly has no love loss for Judas.

To this exchange though, Jesus says the words that I think most of us in ministry wish he would have rephrased or never uttered.

"You always have the poor with you, but you do not always have me." There's nothing factually wrong with this. But the sad piece is, that these words have been misused, taken out a context, and used as a cop out by churches, people of faith, and leaders in government to justify for years, decades, and centuries decisions which ultimately end up perpetuating poverty and cycles of poverty. I don't think at all that Jesus was trying to justify the existence of people continually being stuck in poverty, or minimizing the needs to take care of them.

Jesus, himself, was always concerned about the poor. But in this terse reply, I think he is probably staring down at Judas knowing full well what Judas is about to do, and sees through Judas' insincere question and calls it out for what it is. He's also trying to make the point that God in Christ's presence won't always be as it has been with the disciples. He knows that the events of the cross lie shortly ahead. But it's a real shame that these words that Jesus utters have been misused ever since. Perhaps that's also a warning

to all of us in leadership and ministry, and on social media.
Whatever we say and do will or may be quoted (and misquoted).

If I were preaching this week, I think I'd have to deal with this reality of the text. And to affirm our call and commitment to counter poverty, to care for the poor and the oppressed, and to share God's love and abundance with all those in need. And we do this, precisely because we are Jesus' hands and feet in the world now today as the Body of Christ.

Whatever story or stories grab your attention and imagination this week, may you point to God's love and promises for all of God's beloved, and may you too experience and know them to be true for yourself.