



Sunday, February 25, 2024
Second Sunday in Lent

All Saints Lutheran Church,
ELCA

Meeting people where they're
at and connecting them to
the Full LIFE of Christ.

CENTERING SONG

DON'T BE AFRAID

ACS 1027

Don't be a-fraid. My love is stron-ger, my love is stron-ger than your
fear. Don't be a-fraid. My love is stron-ger and
I have prom-ised, prom-ised to be al-ways near.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

INTRODUCTION

The second covenant in this year's Lenten readings is the one made with Abraham and Sarah: God's promise to make them the ancestors of many, with whom God will remain in everlasting covenant. Paul says this promise comes to all who share Abraham's faith in the God who brings life into being where there was no life. We receive this baptismal

promise of resurrection life in faith. Sarah and Abraham receive new names as a sign of the covenant, and we too get new identities in baptism, as we put on Christ.

CALL TO WORSHIP

People of God,
we gather for worship to practice joy:
not because our lives are perfect,
but because joy is resilient,
God's gift for every season
and the wellspring at the heart of our faith.

When our sins feel heavy,
we practice joy.
When floods rise and fall,
we practice joy.
When hope surprises us,
we practice joy.
When God sets people free,
we practice joy.
When Jesus heals us,
we practice joy.
When we are called,
we practice joy.
When we endure,
we practice joy.
We practice joy together,
and God is with us.

CONFESSION AND FORGIVENESS

People of God, the Merciful One already knows everything we confess. By naming our sins and hearing words of forgiveness, we are drawn deeper into relationship with God and one another. Let's bring before God what we have done wrong and what we've failed to do, trusting that we will receive the joy of being forgiven.

Brief silence for reflection.

God of abundant goodness,
we have hurt those we love,
those far from us,
Ourselves, and your creation
by what we do and by what we neglect.
We cling to disappointments, judgments, and failures
and refuse to enjoy what you give.
We are too content when injustice, violence, and hardship
plague our neighbors.
We ignore the gift of your presence
in times both tragic and triumphant.
Forgive us for what we have done
and for what we have failed to do.
Pour out on us the joy of your presence
and heal what we have harmed.

Friends, receive these joyful words:
You are entirely and completely forgiven for all of your sins.
You are entirely and completely welcomed as God's beloved
child. You are released to live out God's love in a world that
needs such joy.

Amen.

OPENING HYMN

O WORD OF GOD INCARNATE

ELW 514

1 ○ Word of God incarnate, ○ Wisdom from on high,
 ○ Truth unchanged, unchanging, ○ Light of our dark sky:
 we praise you for the radiance that from the hallowed
 page,

a lantern to our footsteps, shines on from age to age.

2 The church from you, dear Master, received the gift divine;
and still that light is lifted o'er all the earth to shine.

It is the chart and compass that, all life's voyage through,
mid mists and rocks and quicksands still guides, O Christ, to
you.

3 Oh, make your church, dear Savior, a lamp of burnished
gold
to bear before the nations your true light, as of old;
oh, teach your wand'ring pilgrims by this their path to trace,
till, clouds and darkness ended, they see you face to face.

PRAYER OF THE DAY

**Timeless God, you promise a joy-filled future against all
reason. Reach us with that expectant joy,
even here and now. As we follow Jesus to the cross through
an unsettled present, help us rejoice
that we will rejoice. Amen.**

CHILDREN'S MESSAGE

TRAVELING SONG: JESUS LOVES ME

ELW 595

*JESUS LOVES ME! THIS I KNOW, FOR THE BIBLE TELLS ME SO; LITTLE ONES TO
HIM BELONG, THEY ARE WEAK, BUT HE IS STRONG.*

HEAR THE WORD OF GOD THROUGH SCRIPTURE

First Reading: Genesis 17:1-7, 15-16

As with Noah, God makes an everlasting covenant with Abraham and Sarah. God promises this old couple that they will be the ancestors of nations, though they have no child together. God will miraculously bring forth new life from Sarah's womb. The name changes emphasize the firmness of God's promise.

1When Abram was ninety-nine years old, the LORD appeared to Abram, and said to him, "I am God Almighty; walk before me, and be blameless. 2And I will make my covenant between me and you, and will make you exceedingly numerous." 3Then Abram fell on his face; and God said to him, 4"As for me, this is my covenant with you: You shall be the ancestor of a multitude of nations. 5No longer shall your name be Abram, but your name shall be Abraham; for I have made you the ancestor of a multitude of nations. 6I will make you exceedingly fruitful; and I will make nations of you, and kings shall come from you. 7I will establish my covenant between me and you, and your offspring after you throughout their generations, for an everlasting covenant, to be God to you and to your offspring after you."

15God said to Abraham, "As for Sarai your wife, you shall not call her Sarai, but Sarah shall be her name. 16I will bless her, and moreover I will give you a son by her. I will bless her, and she shall give rise to nations; kings of peoples shall come from her."

Second Reading: Romans 4:13-25

Paul presents Abraham as the example for how a person comes into a right relationship with God not through works of the law but through faith. Though Abraham and Sarah were far too old for bearing children, Abraham trusted that God would accomplish what God had promised to accomplish.

13THE PROMISE THAT HE WOULD INHERIT THE WORLD DID NOT COME TO ABRAHAM OR TO HIS DESCENDANTS THROUGH THE LAW BUT THROUGH THE RIGHTEOUSNESS OF FAITH. **14**IF IT IS THE ADHERENTS OF THE LAW WHO ARE TO BE THE HEIRS, FAITH IS NULL AND THE PROMISE IS VOID. **15**FOR THE LAW BRINGS WRATH; BUT WHERE THERE IS NO LAW, NEITHER IS THERE VIOLATION.

16FOR THIS REASON IT DEPENDS ON FAITH, IN ORDER THAT THE PROMISE MAY REST ON GRACE AND BE GUARANTEED TO ALL HIS DESCENDANTS, NOT ONLY TO THE ADHERENTS OF THE LAW BUT ALSO TO THOSE WHO SHARE THE FAITH OF ABRAHAM (FOR HE IS THE FATHER OF ALL OF US, **17**AS IT IS WRITTEN, "I HAVE MADE YOU THE FATHER OF MANY NATIONS")—IN THE PRESENCE OF THE GOD IN WHOM HE BELIEVED, WHO GIVES LIFE TO THE DEAD AND CALLS INTO EXISTENCE THE THINGS THAT DO NOT EXIST.

18HOPING AGAINST HOPE, HE BELIEVED THAT HE WOULD BECOME "THE FATHER OF MANY NATIONS," ACCORDING TO WHAT WAS SAID, "SO NUMEROUS SHALL YOUR DESCENDANTS BE." **19**HE DID NOT WEAKEN IN FAITH WHEN HE CONSIDERED HIS OWN BODY, WHICH WAS ALREADY AS GOOD AS DEAD (FOR HE WAS ABOUT A HUNDRED YEARS OLD), OR WHEN HE CONSIDERED THE BARRENNESS OF SARAH'S WOMB. **20**NO DISTRUST MADE HIM WAVER CONCERNING THE PROMISE OF GOD, BUT HE GREW STRONG IN HIS FAITH AS HE GAVE GLORY TO GOD, **21**BEING FULLY CONVINCED THAT GOD WAS ABLE TO DO WHAT HE HAD PROMISED. **22**THEREFORE HIS FAITH "WAS RECKONED TO HIM AS RIGHTEOUSNESS." **23**NOW THE WORDS, "IT WAS RECKONED TO HIM," WERE WRITTEN NOT FOR HIS SAKE ALONE, **24**BUT FOR OURS ALSO. IT WILL BE RECKONED TO US WHO BELIEVE IN HIM WHO RAISED JESUS OUR LORD FROM THE DEAD, **25**WHO WAS HANDED OVER TO DEATH FOR OUR TRESPASSES AND WAS RAISED FOR OUR JUSTIFICATION.

WORD OF GOD, WORD OF LIFE. THANKS BE TO GOD.

GOSPEL ACCLAMATION

ELW PAGE 142, SETTING 3

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: MARK 8:31-38

After Peter confesses his belief that Jesus is the Messiah, Jesus tells his disciples for the first time what is to come. Peter's response indicates that he does not yet understand the way of the cross that Jesus will travel.

31[JESUS] BEGAN TO TEACH THEM THAT THE SON OF MAN MUST UNDERGO GREAT SUFFERING, AND BE REJECTED BY THE ELDERS, THE CHIEF PRIESTS, AND THE SCRIBES, AND BE KILLED, AND AFTER THREE DAYS RISE AGAIN.**32**HE SAID ALL THIS QUITE OPENLY. AND PETER TOOK HIM ASIDE AND BEGAN TO REBUKE HIM. **33**BUT TURNING AND LOOKING AT HIS DISCIPLES, HE REBUKED PETER AND SAID, "GET BEHIND ME, SATAN! FOR YOU ARE SETTING YOUR MIND NOT ON DIVINE THINGS BUT ON HUMAN THINGS."

34HE CALLED THE CROWD WITH HIS DISCIPLES, AND SAID TO THEM, "IF ANY WANT TO BECOME MY FOLLOWERS, LET THEM DENY THEMSELVES AND TAKE UP THEIR CROSS AND FOLLOW ME. **35**FOR THOSE WHO WANT TO SAVE THEIR LIFE WILL LOSE IT, AND THOSE WHO LOSE THEIR LIFE FOR MY SAKE, AND FOR THE SAKE OF THE GOSPEL, WILL SAVE IT. **36**FOR WHAT WILL IT PROFIT THEM TO GAIN THE WHOLE WORLD AND FORFEIT THEIR LIFE? **37**INDEED, WHAT CAN THEY GIVE IN RETURN FOR THEIR LIFE? **38**THOSE WHO ARE ASHAMED OF ME AND OF MY WORDS IN THIS ADULTEROUS AND SINFUL GENERATION, OF THEM THE SON OF MAN WILL ALSO BE ASHAMED WHEN HE COMES IN THE GLORY OF HIS FATHER WITH THE HOLY ANGELS."

Sermon

Expectant Joy

Pastor Wes

Sermon Hymn: In a Deep, Unbounded Darkness ACS1093

1 In a deep, unbounded darkness, long before the first light
 shone,

 you, O God, beyond all merit worked a wonder faith makes
 known:

 in your mercy, in your mercy, you embraced us as your own,
 evermore and evermore.

- 2 Though our world is everchanging, you are constant, firm,
and sure,
faithful to your cov'nant promise. Trusting you, we live,
secure:
singing praises, singing praises, long as heart and breath
endure,
evermore and evermore.
- 3 Joy transforms our lips to boasting only in your matchless
grace,
sending Christ to dwell among us, Word made flesh in time
and space:
Friend and Savior, Friend and Savior, in whose life we
glimpse your face,
evermore and evermore.
- 4 God of Hagar, God of Sarah, God of nomad Abraham;
God of Miriam, God of Moses, Fi'ry Pillar, great I AM:
lead us homeward, lead us homeward, to the love-feast of
the Lamb,
evermore and evermore.

PRAYERS OF THE PEOPLE

God of mercy and grace, you are present. You are within each
person here and you are among us as your gathered people.
Trusting in your presence, your promises, and your joy, even when

we cannot perceive them, we bring to you our gratitude for all you have done, and the burdens that weigh on our hearts.

We pray for creation.

Thank you for its beauty and bounty and for the ways it reminds us of your presence, through the persistent filling of our lakes that feed the Mississippi, the sweet goodness of the maple sap distilling into syrup, and the joy of a new pet in a family. Guide the work of those who advocate for the wellness of your wondrous creation, and help us to better tend and keep it. We pray for all habitats, creatures, and peoples harmed by natural disasters. This week we pray for the people of California displaced by mudslides and for those buried by the snow in the northeast.

God of unending joy,
answer us.

We pray for the nations and their leaders.

Thank you for cooperation among world leaders and for the ways people work together for the wellbeing of everyone. We pray for King Charles as he learns more about his cancer and continues to provide leadership for the country. We thank you for the continued bipartisan work in congress as they try to help fund relief for those impacted by warzones.

We pray for places that know violence, famine, and economic hardship. Today we pray especially for those suffering in Ukraine and Gaza, and for the ongoing work after the elections last week in Pakistan. Pour out your spirit of wisdom on all who govern, that they will care for the most vulnerable and work for the good of those they vowed to serve.

God of unending joy,
answer us.

We pray for peace throughout the earth.

Thank you for the gift of peace. We pray that you send peace with power into our world, our neighborhoods, into All Saints and Zion, our hearts, and our homes. Bring an end to gun violence. Stop cycles of domestic abuse. Give peace to every nation. God of unending joy,
answer us.

We pray for those who are vulnerable. Thank you for giving us gifts to share with others. Bring justice to anyone who has been used or abused. Feed those who are hungry for food or for companionship. House those who need shelter. Protect those who live in fear. Work through our hands and hearts to provide for them. God of unending joy,
answer us.

We pray for the church. Thank you for the goodness we know when we gather as your people, for the gifts of community, shared ministry, and the chance to pray for and with one another. We thank you for the work of the church around the world. Thank you for our partnership with Bega Kwa Bega and our sister congregations in Tanzania. We thank you also for the ways in which the church is at work close to home like the Planting Hope campaign here in the St. Paul Area Synod. Renew us in the promises of baptism and draw us into closer relationships with other people of faith. God of unending joy,
answer us.

We pray for healing and wholeness. Thank you for gifts of healing and recovery, for Mark Forsberg and all those in our community who have experienced healing. We pray also for all those known to us in need of healing and wholeness who we name aloud now. God of unending joy,

answer us.

God of abundant life, you bring a quiet, constant joy to our most trying times. Remind us of your goodness in grief and your presence in pain. **Amen.**

THE SHARING OF THE PEACE

OFFERING

BE THOU MY VISION

EUCCHARISTIC PRAYER

God is with you.

And also with you.

Rejoice with full hearts.

We offer them to God.

Let us give thanks to our God.

It is right to give God thanks and praise.

God, there is no time, no place
where you are not present,
and there is no time, no place
where we should not practice the joy of praising you:
even here, even now, in our ordinary lives.

God, our ancestors knew the long road toward joy.
Noah saw your rainbow after a devastating flood.
Sarah and Abraham found hope for their future
in a covenant promise.
Moses cradled your law in his arms
and the Israelites found wilderness life
where they should have died.
The prophets read your faithfulness
traced indelibly on their hearts.
Your love sent us Jesus
and his persistent, irrational joy:

dripping with the Jordan's baptismal flood,
teaching in the crowd's beating heart,
tossing the tables of empire and profit,
falling like a seed into warm dark soil
as he offered his life for us all.

On the last night of his life, as evening fell,
Jesus sat down to dinner with his friends.
He took the bread, gave thanks, broke it,
and passed it around the table for everyone to eat, saying,
This is my body, given for you.
Do this for the remembrance of me.

When the meal had ended, the shadows closing in,
Jesus took the cup, blessed it,
and invited everyone 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.

Send your Spirit upon this bread and cup,
Christ's body and blood,
the food that gives us the strength to persist
until joy appears.
Send your Spirit upon us
and fortify us to be your body, too,
a wellspring of hope for a world in need. **Amen.**

THE LORD'S PRAYER

COMMUNION MUSIC
Lamb of God

ELW 146, Setting 3

CREATE IN ME A CLEAN HEART

ELW 185

CREATE IN ME A CLEAN HEART, O GOD,
AND RENEW A RIGHT SPIRIT WITHIN ME.
CAST ME NOT AWAY FROM YOUR PRESENCE,
AND TAKE NOT YOUR HOLY SPIRIT FROM ME.
RESTORE TO ME THE JOY OF YOUR SALVATION,
AND UPHOLD ME WITH YOUR FREE SPIRIT.
CREATE IN ME A CLEAN HEART, O GOD,
AND RENEW A RIGHT SPIRIT WITHIN ME.

HOW FIRM A FOUNDATION

ELW 507

- 1 HOW FIRM A FOUNDATION, O SAINTS OF THE LORD,
IS LAID FOR YOUR FAITH IN HIS EXCELLENT WORD!
WHAT MORE CAN HE SAY THAN TO YOU HE HAS SAID
WHO UNTO THE SAVIOR FOR REFUGE HAVE FLED?
- 2 "FEAR NOT, I AM WITH YOU, OH, BE NOT DISMAYED,
FOR I AM YOUR GOD AND WILL STILL GIVE YOU AID;
I'LL STRENGTHEN YOU, HELP YOU, AND CAUSE YOU TO STAND,
UPHELD BY MY RIGHTEOUS, OMNIPOTENT HAND.
- 3 "WHEN THROUGH FIERY TRIALS YOUR PATHWAY SHALL LIE,
MY GRACE, ALL-SUFFICIENT, SHALL BE YOUR SUPPLY.
THE FLAMES SHALL NOT HURT YOU; I ONLY DESIGN
YOUR DROSS TO CONSUME AND YOUR GOLD TO REFINE.
- 4 "THROUGHOUT ALL THEIR LIFETIME MY PEOPLE SHALL PROVE
MY SOV'REIGN, ETERNAL, UNCHANGEABLE LOVE;
AND THEN, WHEN GRAY HAIRS SHALL THEIR TEMPLES ADORN,

LIKE LAMBS THEY SHALL STILL IN MY BOSOM BE BORNE."

TEXT: J. RIPPON, A SELECTION OF HYMNS, 1787, ALT.

BLESSING OF THE MEAL

Prayer After Communion

Heavenly Creator, we come to You in unity and reverence. We thank You for the gift of communion and the bond we share in our faith. May our love for You and each other draw us closer together. Guide us in our faith journey and help us remain humble and accepting of one another. May we be united in spirit, mind, and heart to honor You with our lives. Keep us in Your loving embrace, and let Your mighty power flow through us so that our unity can be a source of strength and **joy** for all. Amen.

Benediction

Go with blessing.

The One who wove joy throughout the whole cosmos weaves joy within your own heart.

The One who experienced all our human joys and sorrows travels right beside you.

The One who whispers joy to our hearts is present within you.

You are blessed in the name of God, Holy Three in One.

Amen.

Closing Hymn Will You Come and Follow Me ELW798

1 "Will you come and follow me if I but call your name?"

Will you go where you don't know and never be the same?

Will you let my love be shown, will you let my name be known,
will you let my life be grown in you and you in me?

2 "Will you leave yourself behind if I but call your name?

Will you care for cruel and kind and never be the same?

Will you risk the hostile stare, should your life attract or scare?

Will you let me answer pray'r in you and you in me?

5 Lord, your summons echoes true when you but call my name.

Let me turn and follow you and never be the same.

In your company I'll go where your love and footsteps show.

Thus I'll move and live and grow in you and you in me.

Sending of You, the Disciples of Christ

Practice joy. As you leave this place, go with the joy that looks forward with hope. **Thanks be to God.**