



And this is the judgment, that the light has come into the world [John 3:19]

DOVE OF PEACE LUTHERAN CHURCH
March 21, 2021
The Fifth Sunday in Lent

Sunday, March 21, 2021

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WELCOME AND INTRODUCTION TO THE DAY

Pastor Stephen Springer

Today we use the readings and prayers for the fourth Sunday in Lent (out of sequence).

Another Old Testament promise with a baptismal lens this Lent is the promise God makes to Moses: those who look on the bronze serpent will live. In today's gospel Jesus says he will be lifted up on the cross like the serpent, so that those who look to him in faith will live. When we receive the sign of the cross in baptism, that cross becomes the sign we can look to in faith for healing, for restored relationship to God, for hope when we are dying.

Thomas Cranmer, Bishop of Canterbury, martyr, died 1556

Cranmer's lasting achievement is contributing to and overseeing the creation of the Book of Common Prayer, which remains (in revised form) the worship book of the Anglican Communion. He was burned at the stake under Queen Mary for his support of the Protestant Reformation.

PROLOGUE

Kevin Seal, pipe organ

Andante (from Sonata no. 4 in E minor, BWV 528)

Johann Sebastian Bach (1685-1750)

Today we celebrate the 336th birthday of the greatest composer who ever lived (with apologies to Beethoven, Mozart, and Brahms), a man who has been referred to in Lutheran writings as the "Fifth Evangelist". Johann Sebastian Bach was born on March 21st, 1685 in Eisenach, Germany. His parents were Johann Ambrosius Bach, the town music director, and his wife Maria Elisabeth Lämmerhirt. Both of Bach's parents died when he was nine years old, 8 months apart, and thereafter he was raised by an older brother. While Bach was a skilled violinist, and played harpsichord and clavichord as well, his primary art as a performer was playing the pipe organ, and his organ music represents the pinnacle of the High Baroque style. This Sunday our organist will be presenting two pieces by Bach. The prologue is Dr. Seal's favorite slow movement from Bach's monumental trio sonatas, and the epilogue is perhaps the most famous piece of organ music in existence.

CONFESSION AND FORGIVENESS

Blessed be the holy Trinity,
✠ one God,
who creates, redeems, and sustains us
and all of creation.

Amen.

Let us confess our sin in the presence of God and of one another.
Silence is kept for reflection.

To you, O God,
all hearts are open, to you all desires known. We come to you, confessing our sins. Forgive us in your mercy, and remember us in your love. Show us your ways; teach us your paths; and lead us in justice and truth, for the sake of your goodness in Jesus Christ our Savior.
Amen.

By water and the Holy Spirit God gives you a new birth, and through the death and resurrection of ✠ Jesus Christ, God forgives you all your sins. The God of mercy and might strengthen you in all goodness and keep you in eternal life.
Amen.

Lord, have mer - cy. Lord, have mer - cy.

Christ, have mer - cy. Christ, have mer - cy.

Lord, have mer - cy. Lord, have mer - cy.

Lord, have mer - cy, have mer - cy.

Music: *Deutsche Messe*, Franz Schubert, 1797–1828; adapt. Richard Proulx, b. 1937
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GREETING AND PRAYER OF THE DAY

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.

Let us pray.

O God, rich in mercy, by the humiliation of your Son you lifted up this fallen world and rescued us from the hopelessness of death. Lead us into your light, that all our deeds may reflect your love, through Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever.

Amen.

FIRST READING: Numbers 21:4-9

Though God provides food and water for the Israelites in the wilderness, they whine and grumble. They forget about the salvation they experienced in the exodus. God punishes them for their sin, but when they repent God also provides a means of healing: a bronze serpent lifted up on a pole.

A reading from Numbers.

⁴From Mount Hor [the Israelites] set out by the way to the Red Sea, to go around the land of Edom; but the people became impatient on the way. ⁵The people spoke against God and against Moses, “Why have you brought us up out of Egypt to die in the wilderness? For there is no food and no water, and we detest this miserable food.” ⁶Then the Lord sent poisonous serpents among the people, and they bit the people, so that many Israelites died. ⁷The people came to Moses and said, “We have sinned by speaking against the Lord and against you; pray to the Lord to take away the serpents from us.” So Moses prayed for the people. ⁸And the Lord said to Moses, “Make a poisonous serpent, and set it on a pole; and everyone who is bitten shall look at it and live.” ⁹So Moses made a serpent of bronze, and put it upon a pole; and whenever a serpent bit someone, that person would look at the serpent of bronze and live.

The Word of the Lord.

Thanks be to God.

PSALMODY (ELW): Psalm 107:1-3, 17-22

The refrain is first introduced by the leader, then repeated by the assembly.



Psalm 107:19

Psalm refrain reproduced from *Psalter for Worship Year B* © 2008 Augsburg Fortress.
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¹Give thanks to the LORD, for the | LORD is good,
for God's mercy en- | dures forever.

²**Let the redeemed of the | LORD proclaim
that God redeemed them from the hand | of the foe,**

³gathering them in | from the lands;
from the east and from the west, from the north and | from the south.

¹⁷**Some were fools and took re- | bellious paths;
through their sins they | were afflicted.**

¹⁸They loathed all man- | ner of food
and drew near | to death's door.

¹⁹**Then in their trouble they cried | to the LORD**

and you delivered them from | their distress. REFRAIN

²⁰You sent forth your | word and healed them
and rescued them | from the grave.

²¹**Let them give thanks to you, LORD, for your | steadfast love
and your wonderful works | for all people.**

²²Let them offer sacrifices | of thanksgiving
and tell of your deeds with | shouts of joy. **REFRAIN**

SECOND READING: Ephesians 2:1-10

While we were dead in our sinfulness, God acted to make us alive as a gift of grace in Christ Jesus. We are saved not by what we do but by grace through faith. Thus our good works are really a reflection of God's grace at work in our lives.

A reading from Ephesians.

¹You were dead through the trespasses and sins ²in which you once lived, following the course of this world, following the ruler of the power of the air, the spirit that is now at work among those who are disobedient. ³All of us once lived among them in the passions of our flesh, following the desires of flesh and senses, and we were by nature children of wrath, like everyone else. ⁴But God, who is rich in mercy, out of the great love with which he loved us ⁵even when we were dead through our trespasses, made us alive together with Christ—by grace you have been saved—⁶and raised us up with him and seated us with him in the heavenly places in Christ Jesus, ⁷so that in the ages to come he might show the immeasurable riches of his grace in kindness toward us in Christ Jesus. ⁸For by grace you have been saved through faith, and this is not your own doing; it is the gift of God—⁹not the result of works, so that no one may boast. ¹⁰For we are what he has made us, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand to be our way of life.

The Word of the Lord.
Thanks be to God.

GOSPEL ACCLAMATION

ELW #177

The assembly sings the acclamation.



Cantor: God so loved the world that he gave his | only Son,*
so that everyone who believes in him should not perish, but have e- | ternal life.
(John 3:16)

GOSPEL: John 3:14-21

To explain the salvation of God to the religious leader, Nicodemus, Jesus refers to the scripture passage quoted in today's first reading. Just as those who looked upon the bronze serpent were healed, so people will be saved when they behold Christ lifted up on the cross.

The Holy Gospel according to John.

Glory to you, O Lord.

[Jesus said:] ¹⁴“Just as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, so must the Son of Man be lifted up, ¹⁵that whoever believes in him may have eternal life.

¹⁶“For God so loved the world that he gave his only Son, so that everyone who believes in him may not perish but may have eternal life.

¹⁷“Indeed, God did not send the Son into the world to condemn the world, but in order that the world might be saved through him. ¹⁸Those who believe in him are not condemned; but those who do not believe are condemned already, because they have not believed in the name of the only Son of God. ¹⁹And this is the judgment, that the light has come into the world, and people loved darkness rather than light because their deeds were evil. ²⁰For all who do evil hate the light and do not come to the light, so that their deeds may not be exposed. ²¹But those who do what is true come to the light, so that it may be clearly seen that their deeds have been done in God.”

The Gospel of the Lord.

Praise to you, O Christ.

SERMON

Pastor Steve Springer



1 God loved the world so that he gave his on - ly
2 Christ Je - sus is the ground of faith, who was made
3 If you are ill, if death draws near, this truth your
4 Be of good cheer, for God's own Son for - gives all
5 All glo - ry to the Fa - ther, Son, and Ho - ly



Son the lost to save, that all who would in
flesh and suf - fered death; all who con - fide in
trou - bled heart can cheer: Christ Je - sus res - cues
sins that you have done, and jus - ti - fied by
Spir - it, Three in One! To you, O bless - ed



him be - lieve should ev - er - last - ing life re - ceive.
Christ a - lone are built on this chief cor - ner - stone.
us from death; that is the firm - est ground of faith.
Je - sus' blood, your bap - tism grants the high - est good.
Trin - i - ty, be praise now and e - ter - nal - ly!

Text: *Gesangbuch*, Bollhagen, 1791; tr. August Crull, 1846–1923, alt.
Music: ROCKINGHAM OLD, Edward Miller, 1731–1807, adapt.

PRAYERS OF INTERCESSION

As we may and must, let us pray.

O Gd,

your word has been sent forth and we hear again and again of your steadfast love. Fix the gift of that grace deep in our mind and heart that by thankful living we embody its blessing in daily habits of healing in our life together with those we know and those we meet.

Lord in your mercy, **hear our prayer.**

O Gd,

when things are not to our choosing, lead us from complaining to learning, that with patience for endurance, courage for change, and vision for your gracious presence we follow the path of self-giving rather than self-interest.

Lord in your mercy, **hear our prayer.**

O Gd,

we pray that the world be a safe place, that we learn to pay attention to what is harmful, what is helpful, that we open our eyes to see with unblinking clarity the poisonous character of deceit that seems always underfoot. And we pray, raise our vision to find, lifted high above the troubles, the sacrificial love from you and for us that redeems with truth a wounded life and makes things whole. Align our wills to be upright, wise and bold so we live out your grace and join your good work of delivering a ground safe for all to walk and find their life.

Lord in your mercy, **hear our prayer.**

O Gd,

our times are in your hands. We pray, show yourself in rich mercy to those we may not know, but whose great needs are surely understood: the hungry, the wandering, the oppressed, the forgotten and lonely, the wounded, and the poor.

Lord your mercy, **hear our prayer.**

Finally, O Gd,

we pray for all who have entered this Lenten journey, longing to take their stand beneath the cross. We pray that our purposeful steps, guided along the right path, may render us ready, and seeing and thankful for the signs of your steadfast love.

Lord in your mercy, **hear our prayer.**

THE 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.**

MEDITATION

Members of the Dove of Peace Chancel Choir

Beneath the Cross of Jesus
Setting by Dale Wood (1934-2003)

On this Sunday in which the Gospel proclaims God's sacrifice of his Son for the sake of the world, the Chancel Choir offers a fresh arrangement of an old chestnut that asks us to consider the wonder of Jesus's glorious love and our unworthiness.

COMMISSION

Pastor Stephen Springer

BLESSING

The Lord bless you and keep you.
The Lord's face shine on you with grace and mercy.
The Lord look upon you with favor and ☩ give you peace.
Amen.



Lift high the cross, the love of Christ pro - claim till



all the world a - dore his sa - cred name.



1 Come, Chris - tians, fol - low where our cap - tain trod,
2 All new - born ser - vants of the Cru - ci - fied
3 O Lord, once lift - ed on the glo - rious tree,
4 So shall our song of tri - umph ev - er be:

Refrain



our king vic - to - rious, Christ, the Son of God.
bear on their brows the seal of him who died.
as thou hast prom - ised, draw us all to thee.
praise to the Cru - ci - fied for vic - to - ry!

Text: George W. Kitchin, 1827–1912; rev. Michael R. Newbolt, 1874–1956

Music: CRUCIFER, Sydney H. Nicholson, 1875–1947

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Toccata and Fugue in D minor
BWV 565, J. S. Bach

For many people, Bach's Toccata and Fugue in D minor is the piece that best represents the pipe organ. Made popular during the 20th century by its inclusion in film from the advent of the art form, as well as by Leopold Stokowski's 1927 orchestration, this piece has come to represent spookiness and horror. However, it is unlikely that this was Bach's original intent with the piece. Little is known about its inception. Some scholars believe it was a transcription of a work for solo violin. Some scholars believe it was written as early as 1704, while some place it near the end of Bach's life in the 1740s. In the opinion of our organist, this piece shows all the hallmarks of Bach's early organ compositions: dramatic shifts in both tempo and direction, experimental textures, and youthful exuberance. The toccata is quite short and virtuosically expounds upon a simple chord progression, while the fugue is constructed on a grander scale, featuring episodes that exploit the dynamic changes capable with the pipe organ. It ends with a brilliant coda, showing Bach's mastery of the Stylus Fantasticus.

DISMISSAL

Go in peace. Remember the poor.

Thanks be to God.

John Hoelter, Assisting Minister
Dianne Huston, Lector
Eric Holtan, Cantor and Director of Choirs
Kevin Seal, Organ