

*4th Sunday in Lent*  
*Adaptive Worship Service*  
*March 14, 2021*



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Welcome! The fourth of the Old Testament promises, each providing 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.

This is a special bulletin for Grace Lutheran Church. This bulletin is designed to be used at home by anyone who is baptized serving as the Worship Leader. If you use this bulletin for worship, either by itself or alongside our service on YouTube, please fill out the Attendance Record Form on our website: [GraceCLW.com](http://GraceCLW.com)

## ADAPTIVE SERVICE OF THE WORD

### GREETING

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

**Congregation: And also with you.**

### PRAYER OF THE DAY

Worship Leader: 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.

**Congregation: Amen.**

### FIRST READING

#### Numbers 21:4-9

Introduction to the Lesson: *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.*

Reader: 4 The Israelites left Mount Hor by the road that leads to the Gulf of Aqaba, in order to go around the territory of Edom. But on the way the people lost their patience 5 and spoke against God and Moses. They complained, "Why did you bring us out of Egypt to die in this desert, where there is no food or water? We can't stand any more of this miserable food!" 6 Then the Lord sent poisonous snakes among the people, and many Israelites were bitten and died. 7 The people came to Moses and said, "We sinned when we spoke against the Lord and against you. Now pray to the Lord to take these snakes away." So Moses prayed for the people. 8 Then the Lord told Moses to make a metal snake and put it on a pole, so that anyone who was bitten could look at it

and be healed. 9 So Moses made a bronze snake and put it on a pole. Anyone who had been bitten would look at the bronze snake and be healed.

*After the reading...*

Reader: The word of the Lord.

**Congregation: Thanks be to God.**

## **GOSPEL LESSON**

**John 3:14-21**

Introduction to the Gospel: *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.*

Worship Leader: The Holy Gospel according to John the 3rd chapter.

**Congregation: Glory to you, O Lord.**

Worship Leader: 14 As Moses lifted up the bronze snake on a pole in the desert, in the same way the Son of Man must be lifted up, 15 so that everyone who believes in him may have eternal life. 16 For God loved the world so much that he gave his only Son, so that everyone who believes in him may not die but have eternal life. 17 For God did not send his Son into the world to be its judge, but to be its savior.

18 Those who believe in the Son are not judged; but those who do not believe have already been judged, because they have not believed in God's only Son. 19 This is how the judgment works: the light has come into the world, but people love the darkness rather than the light, because their deeds are evil. 20 Those who do evil things hate the light and will not come to the light, because they do not want their evil deeds to be shown up. 21 But those who do what is true come to the light in order that the light may show that what they did was in obedience to God.

*After the reading...*

Worship Leader: The gospel of the Lord.

**Congregation: Praise to you, O Christ.**

## **GOSPEL MESSAGE—From Sundays and Seasons**

### **Look and Live**

The cure for the ancient Israelites, following Moses, is to look directly at what is killing them, rather than avoid or hide from it. Healing occurs in the confrontation.

In today's gospel, Jesus likens his crucifixion to Moses lifting up the serpent in the wilderness so the Israelites might be saved from the venom of desert snakes. In doing so, Jesus communicates that he came so we might look at what is killing us. He came to shine a light on that which poisons our lives so we might live.

In today's gospel, we catch Jesus in the middle of a conversation with a Pharisee named Nicodemus, who is slinking around in the night to get a word in with Jesus, presumably so he is not seen. In this conversation Jesus gives a judgment that shines a light on Nicodemus: you, Nicodemus, seem to prefer the darkness because there is something you are doing that you want to hide, thus making it easier for you to live in the dark. This sounds an awful lot like the experience of shame. Jesus is naming the way shame has dictated Nicodemus's life, relegating him to shadows where he will not be seen for what he really is. Notice the lack of condemnation. Jesus is simply a light, showing Nicodemus to himself.


Jesus is also a light to us, showing us to ourselves. Looking at Jesus lifted up on the cross, we see the poison that is killing us: power used to protect the status quo; our instinct to blame one in order to save the rest. We see the fruit of our defenses against what the light reveals: the death of an innocent man at the hands of those in power.

Christ has come so that we will see what is poisoning us and that, in seeing, we might turn and live.


## SERMON

### HYMN OF THE DAY


### *Lift High the Cross vs. 1 & 3*



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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## **PRAYERS OF INTERCESSION**

Worship Leader: Guided by Christ made known to the nations, let us offer our prayers for the church, the world, and all people in need.

Prayer Leader: By grace we have been saved. Fill this congregation to overflowing with that grace, that we show mercy to others. Nourish any in our midst who are hungry, especially children, and bless our ministries of feeding and shelter (especially). Give us patience and courage when the way seems long, especially during this pandemic. Lord, in your mercy,

**Congregation: hear our prayer.**

Prayer Leader: You sustained your people in the wilderness. Give courage to all who lead in times of crisis and scarce resources. Prosper the work of those who aid victims of famine and drought (especially). Bring peace in places where scarce resources cause violence. Lord, in your mercy,

**Congregation: hear our prayer.**

Prayer Leader: Your mercy endures forever. Deliver all who cry to you, especially those who are hungry or without homes. Give life in places where death seems triumphant; give healing to those who are sick and comfort to those who mourn (especially Marc Calhoun, Linda Almond, Barbara Haseley, Duke Tieman, Betty Biddle, Cathi Adams, Michael Morales, Wade Buehler, Gloria Holtzclaw, Betty Daege, Dianne William, Rosemarie & George Smith, Gary Neal, Karen Bates, Rev. Lydia Villanueva and family, Don Eunis, Lorraine Reinhard, Bonnie Redler, Kathy Leotta, Brytt Mathis, Joseph Valentin, Rita Burneik, Bobby Schlegel, Hilda Taylor, George Clark, Jill Grote, Larry Timmons, Carl Stone, Neftali Garcia & family, Kelly Sullivan, Susan Gunn, Roy Pruitt, Iris Valentin, Deacon Connie Puls, Joan Keeton, Steve Davis, Rose Marie Piff, Gary Mostrum, Vicki Kennedy, Gail Elder, Valerie Smutko, Jason Meadows, Missy, Penny, & Henry, Lisa & Ty Hauschild, Bishop Pedro Suarez, Pastor Courtney Erzkus and family, Ralph Burson, Luanne Sekel, Lorraine Chavez, Pat Fredell, Sunday and Eric Falco, the family and friends of Harry Schipper, and all those suffering from natural disasters [including all those impacted by COVID-19 and other natural disasters], violence, & terror, and the family & friends of the 500,000+ people in the US & the 2.4 million+ people worldwide who have died from COVID-19). Lord, in your mercy,

**Congregation: hear our prayer.**

Worship Leader: Receive these prayers, O God, and those too deep for words; through Jesus Christ our Lord.

**Congregation: Amen.**

## **OFFERING**

*Offerings to the mission and ministry of Grace can be made online at [GraceCLW.com](http://GraceCLW.com) (look for the "Donate" button), or (for now) by mailing a check to Grace Lutheran Church, 1812 N. Highland Ave. Clearwater FL 33755. Thank you for your continued financial support during these uncertain times. You can fill out your attendance form on our website as well.*

## **OFFERING PRAYER**

Prayer Leader: Blessed are you, O God, maker of all things. Through your goodness you have blessed us with these gifts: our selves, our time, and our possessions. Use us, and what we have gathered, in feeding the world with your love, through the one who gave himself for us, Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord.

**Congregation: Amen.**

## **THANKSGIVING FOR THE WORD**

Worship Leader: Let us pray. O God of justice and love, we give thanks to you that you illumine our way through life with the words of your Son. Give us the light we need, awaken us to the needs of others, and at the end bring all the world to your feast; through Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord, to whom, with you and the Holy Spirit, be honor and glory forever.

**Congregation: Amen.**

## **LORD'S PRAYER**

Worship Leader: Lord, remember us in your kingdom and teach us to pray in the language closest to our hearts.

**Congregation: 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.**

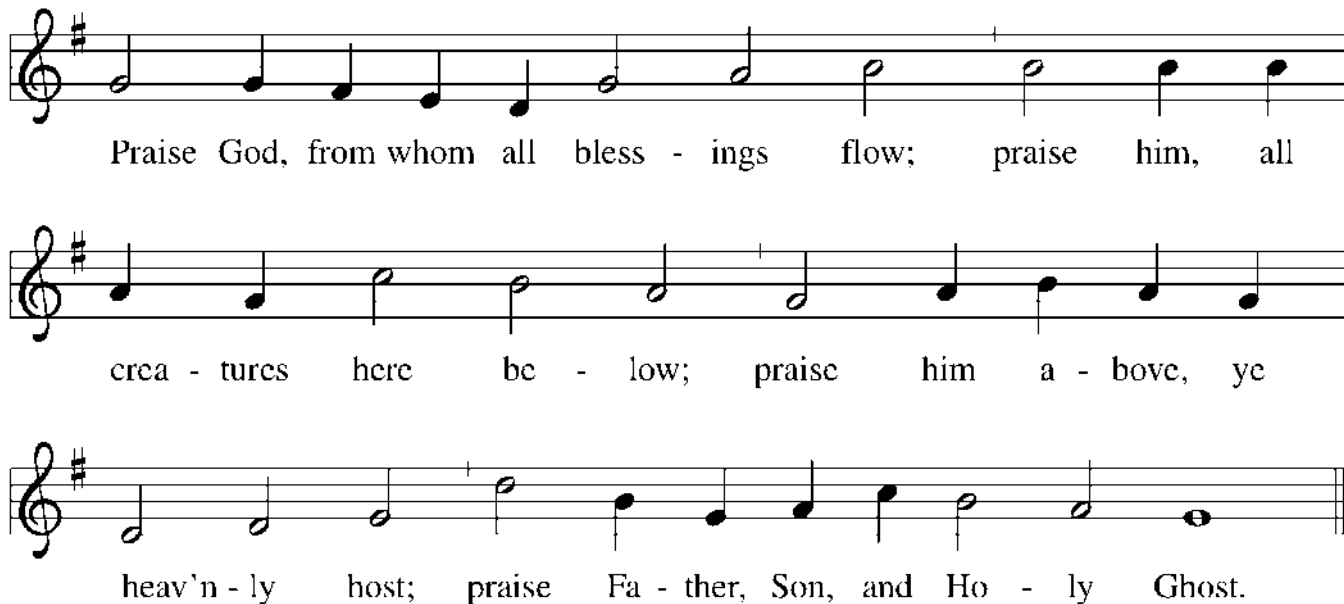
## **BLESSING**

Worship Leader: 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 .

**Congregation: Amen.**

## SENDING SONG

## *The Doxology*



Praise God, from whom all bless - ings flow; praise him, all  
crea - tures here be - low; praise him a - bove, ye  
heav'n - ly host; praise Fa - ther, Son, and Ho - ly Ghost.

Text: Thomas Ken, 1637–1711

Music: OLD HUNDREDTH, Louis Bourgeois, 1510–1561

## DISMISSAL

**Pastor:** Together we have heard God's Word and joined in prayer, we have given and have been forgiven. Now our service of worship has ended, and our service to the world begins! Go in peace. Be the light of Christ.

**Congregation: Thanks be to God!**

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heav'n - ly host; praise Fa - ther, Son, and Ho - ly Ghost.

The image shows a single line of musical notation on a five-line staff. The key signature is one sharp (F#), and the time signature is not explicitly shown but appears to be common time. The melody consists of ten notes: a quarter note G4, a quarter note A4, a quarter note B4, a half note C5, a quarter note D5, a quarter note E5, a quarter note F#5, a quarter note G5, a quarter note F#5, and a half note E5. The lyrics are written below the notes, with hyphens indicating syllables that span across notes.

Text: Thomas Ken, 1637–1711

Music: OLD HUNDREDTH, Louis Bourgeois, 1510–1561