

3rd Sunday in Lent

March 7, 2021



1812 North Highland Avenue
Clearwater, Florida 33755
Ministers: The People of Grace Lutheran Church

727-446-5026
office@GraceCLW.com
Pastor: Rev. Jefferson Cox

Welcome! 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.

This is a special bulletin for Grace Lutheran Church. We have closed the Sanctuary to the general public amidst the COVID-19 pandemic. 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

SERVICE OF THE WORD

PRELUDE

CONFESSION AND FORGIVENESS

Worship Leader: Blessed be the holy Trinity, † one God, the keeper of the covenant, the source of steadfast love, our rock and our redeemer.

Congregation: Amen.

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

Silence is kept for reflection.

Worship Leader: 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.

Worship Leader: 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.

Congregation: Amen.

GATHERING HYMN

God of Grace and God of Glory

verses 1 & 3



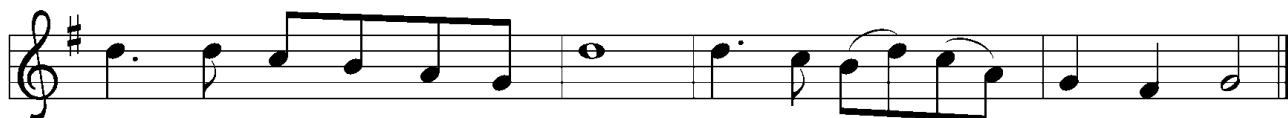
1 God of grace and God of glo - ry, on your peo - ple
2 Lo! The hosts of e - vil round us scorn the Christ, as -
3 Cure your chil - dren's war - ring mad - ness; bend our pride to
4 Save us from weak res - ig - na - tion to the e - vils



pour your pow'r; crown your an - cient chur - ch's sto - ry;
sail his ways! From the fears that long have bound us
your con - trol; shame our wan - ton, self - ish glad - ness,
we de - plore; let the gift of your sal - va - tion



bring its bud to glo - rious flow'r. Grant us wis - dom, grant us cour - age
free our hearts to faith and praise. Grant us wis - dom, grant us cour - age
rich in things and poor in soul. Grant us wis - dom, grant us cour - age,
be our glo - ry ev - er - more. Grant us wis - dom, grant us cour - age,



for the fac - ing of this hour, for the fac - ing of this hour.
for the liv - ing of these days, for the liv - ing of these days.
lest we miss your king - dom's goal, lest we miss your king - dom's goal.
serv - ing you whom we a - dore, serv - ing you whom we a - dore.

Text: Harry E. Fosdick, 1878–1969

Music: CWM RHONDDA, John Hughes, 1873–1932

APOSTOLIC 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: Let us pray together the Prayer of the Day.

Congregation: 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.

FIRST READING

Exodus 20:1-17

Introduction to the Lesson: *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.*

Reader: ¹God spoke all these words:

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

⁴You 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. ⁵You 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, ⁶but showing steadfast love to the thousandth generation of those who love me and keep my commandments.

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

⁸Remember the sabbath day, and keep it holy. ⁹Six days you shall labor and do all your work. ¹⁰But 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. ¹¹For 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.

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

¹³You shall not murder.

¹⁴You shall not commit adultery.

¹⁵You shall not steal.

¹⁶You shall not bear false witness against your neighbor.

¹⁷You 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.

After the reading...

Reader: The word of the Lord.

Congregation: Thanks be to God.

PSALM: Psalm 19

The psalm for the day is read responsively with Lenten refrain sung first and then at each R:



Cre - ate in me a clean heart O God and re-new a right spi-rit with-in ___ me.

Reader: ¹The heavens declare the glory of God,
and the sky proclaims its maker's handiwork.

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

³Although they have no words or language,
and their voices are not heard,

**⁴their 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.**

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

**⁶It 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.**

⁷The teaching of the LORD is perfect and revives the soul;
the testimony of the LORD is sure and gives wisdom to the simple.

**⁸The statutes of the LORD are just and rejoice the heart;
the commandment of the LORD is clear and gives light to the eyes. R**

⁹The fear of the LORD is clean and endures forever;
the judgments of the LORD are true and righteous altogether.

**¹⁰More to be desired are they than gold, more than much fine gold,
sweeter far than honey, than honey in the comb.**

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

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

¹³Above 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.

¹⁴Let the words of my mouth and the meditation of my heart be acceptable in your sight,
O LORD, my strength and my redeemer. R

SECOND READING 1 Corinthians 1:18-25

Introduction to the Lesson: *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.*

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

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

²⁰Where 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? ²¹For 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. ²²For Jews demand signs and Greeks desire wisdom, ²³but we proclaim Christ crucified, a stumbling block to Jews and foolishness to Gentiles, ²⁴but to those who are the called, both Jews and Greeks, Christ the power of God and the wisdom of God. ²⁵For God's foolishness is wiser than human wisdom, and God's weakness is stronger than human strength.

After the reading...

Reader: The word of the Lord.

Congregation: Thanks be to God.

LENTEN VERSE



Let your stead-fast love come to us, O Lord. Save us as you prom-ised. We will trust your word.

GOSPEL LESSON John 2:13-22

Introduction to the Gospel: *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.*

Worship Leader: The Holy Gospel according to John in the 2nd chapter.

Congregation:



Glo - ry to you, O Lord.

Worship Leader: ¹³The Passover of the Jews was near, and Jesus went up to Jerusalem. ¹⁴In the temple he found people selling cattle, sheep, and doves, and the money changers seated at their tables. ¹⁵Making 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. ¹⁶He told those who were selling the doves, “Take these things out of here! Stop making my Father’s house a marketplace!” ¹⁷His disciples remembered that it was written, “Zeal for your house will consume me.” ¹⁸The Jews then said to him, “What sign can you show us for doing this?” ¹⁹Jesus answered them, “Destroy this temple, and in three days I will raise it up.” ²⁰The Jews then said, “This temple has been under construction for forty-six years, and will you raise it up in three days?” ²¹But he was speaking of the temple of his body. ²²After 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.

After the reading...

Worship Leader: The gospel of the Lord.

Congregation: A musical staff in G major (one sharp) and 4/4 time. The melody consists of quarter notes: G4, A4, B4, C5, B4, A4, G4, F4, E4, D4, C4. The notes are connected by stems and beams. The piece ends with a double bar line.
Pra-ise to— you—, O— Christ.

GOSPEL MESSAGE—From Sundays and Seasons

God’s Love Is Not for Sale

The trouble isn’t that there are people buying and selling animals and exchanging money in the temple. Those things have always happened in the temple. No one is being corrupt; no one is getting rich. These are facets of temple life that exist to uphold God’s law.

The trouble is that something has gone haywire: we have allowed our experience of the marketplace to shape the way we see God; if I give God this, God will give me that. Instead of God informing our understanding of the marketplace, it has come to be the other way around. Jesus has come to turn this haywire understanding on its head.

In the face of trouble, promising to give God something as a down payment will not make God any more likely to come to your aid. God has already come and made a home with you in your trouble.

In the face of death, bargaining with God will not attract God’s favor for you, because God is already there. Your death is forever wedded to Christ’s death, and likewise your resurrection to his resurrection.

In the face of helplessness, negotiating with God for help is useless because God was your helper long before you even asked.

Do you see? God’s love is not to be bought or sold, only given freely and lavishly, even to those who could never pay if they wanted to.

As a result, the body of Christ today, the church, sets out to live in ways that are unfathomable to the modern-day market. We spend our communal life on hungry people who will never be able to invite us to their own tables, and on children who cannot contribute to our offering plate, on dying people who after receiving our most prized treasures are not there to enjoy them. Our life is senseless lived by the rules of the marketplace. Thanks be to God that Christ comes to overturn it.

SERMON

HYMN OF THE DAY *Christ Is Made the Sure Foundation vs. 1 & 2*



1 Christ is made the sure foun - da - tion, Christ, our head and
 2 To this tem - ple, where we call you, come, O Lord of
 3 Here be - stow on all your ser - vants what they seek from
 4 Praise and hon - or to the Fa - ther, praise and hon - or



cor - ner - stone, cho - sen of the Lord and pre - cious,
 hosts, and stay; come with all your lov - ing - kind - ness,
 you to gain; what they gain from you, for - ev - er
 to the Son, praise and hon - or to the Spir - it,



bind - ing all the church in one; ho - ly Zi - on's
 hear your peo - ple as they pray; and your full - est
 with the bless - ed to re - tain; and here - af - ter
 ev - er three and ev - er one: one in might and



help for - ev - er and our con - fi - dence a - lone.
 ben - e - dic - tion shed with - in these walls to - day.
 in your glo - ry ev - er - more with you to reign.
 one in glo - ry while un - end - ing a - ges run!

Text: Latin hymn, c. 7th cent.; tr. John Mason Neale, 1818–1866, alt.

Music: WESTMINSTER ABBEY, Henry Purcell, 1659–1695; arr. Ernest Hawkins, 1802–1868

PRAYERS OF INTERCESSION

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

A brief silence.

Prayer Leader: Your 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. Lord, in your mercy,

Congregation: hear our prayer.

Prayer Leader: 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. Lord, in your mercy,

Congregation: hear our prayer.

Prayer Leader: 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. Lord, in your mercy,

Congregation: hear our prayer.

Prayer Leader: Your weakness is stronger than human strength. Protect those who are vulnerable and give courage to all who are suffering (*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, Lisa & Ty Hauschild, Bishop Pedro Suarez, Pastor Courtney Erzkus and family, Ralph Burson, Ellen Duncan, Luanne Sekel, Lorraine Chavez, Pat Fredell, Skylar Favos, the family and friends of Harry Schipper (Margaret Cox's father), and all those suffering from natural disasters [including all those affected by COVID-19 and severe winter weather], from violence, & terror, and the family & friends of the 490,000+ people in the US & the 2,400,000+ people worldwide who have died from COVID-19). Defend victims of crime and give sabbath rest to all who labor. Lord, in your mercy,

Congregation: hear our prayer.

Prayer Leader: 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. Lord, in your mercy,

Congregation: hear our prayer.

Here other intercessions may be offered.

Prayer Leader: The cross of Christ is your power for all who are being saved. Thank you for Perpetua, Felicity, and all the martyrs whose witness reveals the power of the cross. Give us the same trust in life and in death. Lord, in your mercy,

Congregation: hear our prayer.

Worship Leader: Merciful God, hear the prayers of your people, spoken or silent, for the sake of the one who dwells among us, your Son, Jesus Christ our Savior.

Congregation: Amen.

OFFERING

*Offerings to the mission and ministry of Grace can be made online at GraceCLW.com (look for the "Donate" button), or 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 also fill out your attendance form on our website.***

OFFERTORY *God Whose Giving Knows No Ending vs. 1*



1 God, whose giv-ing knows no end-ing, from your rich and end-less store:



na-ture's won-der, Je - sus' wis-dom, cost-ly cross, grave's shat-tered door,



gift-ed by you, we turn to you, of-f'ring up our-selves in praise;



thank-ful song shall rise for - ev - er, gra-cious do - nor of our days.

OFFERING PRAYER

Prayer Leader: Merciful God, receive the sacrifice of our praise and thanksgiving and the offering of our lives, that following in the way of the cross, we may know the joy of the resurrection; through Christ our Lord.

Congregation: Amen.

THANKSGIVING FOR THE WORD

Worship Leader: 

The Lord be with you.

Congregation: 

And al- so with you.

W. Leader: 

Lift— up— your hearts.

Cong.: 

We lift them to the Lord.

W. Leader: 

Let us give thanks to the Lord our God.

Cong.: 

It is right to give our__ thanks and praise.

Worship Leader: 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.

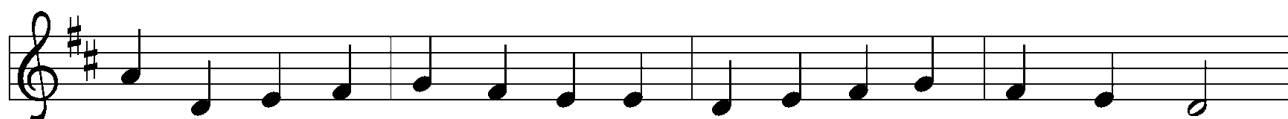
BLESSING

Worship Leader: 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.

Congregation: Amen.

SENDING HYMN

Let Us Ever Walk with Jesus vs. 1 & 2



1 Let us ev - er walk with Je - sus, fol - low his ex - am - ple pure,
2 Let us suf - fer here with Je - sus, and with pa - tience bear our cross.



through a world that would de - ceive us and to sin our spir - its lure.
Joy will fol - low all our sad - ness; where he is there is no loss.



On - ward in his foot - steps tread - ing, trav - 'lers here, our home a - bove,
Though to - day we sow no laugh - ter, we shall reap ce - les - tial joy:



full of faith and hope and love, let us do our Sav - ior's bid - ding.
all dis - com - forts that an - noy shall give way to mirth here - af - ter.



Faith - ful Lord, with me a - bide; I shall fol - low where you guide.
Je - sus, here I share your woe; help me there your joy to know.

DISMISSAL

Worship Leader: Together we have heard God's Word and joined in prayer, we have given and have been forgiven. Now as this service of worship is ending, this week's service to the world is beginning! Go in peace. Share the Good News.

Congregation: Thanks be to God.