

3rd Sunday in Lent

March 20, 2022

Mark 2:4 Adaptive Worship Service



1812 North Highland Avenue

Clearwater, Florida 33755

Ministers: The People of Grace Lutheran Church

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Pastor: Rev. Jefferson Cox

Welcome! The warnings are plentiful and blunt on the third Sunday in Lent. Cut it out or get cut down! The warnings are accompanied by God's invitation to attentiveness: "Incline your ear, and come to me; listen, so that you may live." The landowner's ultimatum is forestalled by the gardener's readiness to till the ground one more year. That is good news for all of us. Thanks be to God!

There are a few things to know about this service: you are not required to stand at any point though you can move around anytime you want or need, prayer slips are available for your prayers to be included in Prayer Time, and Holy Communion is served with gluten-free bread and grape juice.

GATHERING SONG

All Are Welcome

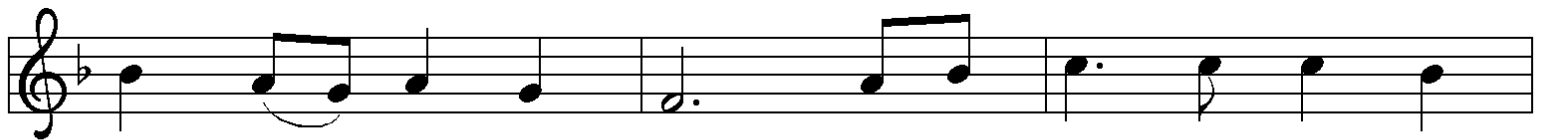
Verses 1 & 3



1 Let us build a house where love can dwell and all can safe - ly



live, a place where saints and chil - dren tell how



hearts learn to for - give. Built of hopes and dreams and



vi - sions, rock of faith and vault of grace; here the love of



Christ shall end di - vi - sions: All are wel - come,



all are wel - come, all are wel - come in this place.

4 Let us build a house where hands will reach
beyond the wood and stone
to heal and strengthen, serve and teach,
and live the Word they've known.
Here the outcast and the stranger
bear the image of God's face;
let us bring an end to fear and danger :
All are welcome, all are welcome,
all are welcome in this place.

Text: Marty Haugen, b. 1950

Music: TWO OAKS, Marty Haugen

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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. Eternal God, your kingdom has broken into our troubled world through the life, death, and resurrection of your Son. Help us to hear your word and obey it, and bring your saving love to fruition in our lives, 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

Isaiah 55:1-9

Introduction to the Lesson: *To those who have experienced long years in exile, the return to their homeland is a celebration of abundant life. God calls them into an everlasting covenant of love. Those who return to God will enjoy new life and forgiveness, because God's ways are not our ways.*

Reader: The Lord says, “Come, everyone who is thirsty— here is water! Come, you that have no money— buy grain and eat! Come! Buy wine and milk— it will cost you nothing! 2 Why spend money on what does not satisfy? Why spend your wages and still be hungry? Listen to me and do what I say, and you will enjoy the best food of all. 3 “Listen now, my people, and come to me; come to me, and you will have life! I will make a lasting covenant with you and give you the blessings I promised to David. 4 I

made him a leader and commander of nations, and through him I showed them my power. 5 Now you will summon foreign nations; at one time they did not know you, but now they will come running to join you!

I, the Lord your God, the holy God of Israel, will make all this happen; I will give you honor and glory.”

6 Turn to the Lord and pray to him, now that he is near. 7 Let the wicked leave their way of life and change their way of thinking. Let them turn to the Lord, our God; he is merciful and quick to forgive. 8 “My thoughts,” says the Lord, “are not like yours, and my ways are different from yours. 9 As high as the heavens are above the earth, so high are my ways and thoughts above yours.

After the reading...

Reader: The word of the Lord.

Congregation: Thanks be to God.

GOSPEL LESSON

Luke 13:31-35

Introduction to the Gospel: *Neither Herod's plotting nor Jerusalem's resistance to maternal love will deter Jesus from his sacrificial mission.*

Worship Leader: The Holy Gospel according to Luke in the 13th chapter.

Congregation: Glory to you, O Lord.

Pastor: At that time some people were there who told Jesus about the Galileans whom Pilate had killed while they were offering sacrifices to God. 2 Jesus answered them, “Because those Galileans were killed in that way, do you think it proves that they were worse sinners than all other Galileans? 3 No indeed! And I tell you that if you do not turn from your sins, you will all die as they did. 4 What about those eighteen people in Siloam who were killed when the tower fell on them? Do you suppose this proves that they were worse than all the other people living in Jerusalem? 5 No indeed! And I tell you that if you do not turn from your sins, you will all die as they did.”

6 Then Jesus told them this parable: “There was once a man who had a fig tree growing in his vineyard. He went looking for figs on it but found none. 7 So he said to his gardener, ‘Look, for three years I have been coming here looking for figs on this fig tree, and I haven't found any. Cut it down! Why should it go on using up the soil?’ 8 But the gardener answered, ‘Leave it alone, sir, just one more year; I will dig around it and put in some fertilizer. 9 Then if the tree bears figs next year, so much the better; if not, then you can have it cut down.’”

After the reading...

Worship Leader: The gospel of the Lord.

Congregation: Praise to you, O Christ.

GOSPEL MESSAGE—From Sundays and Seasons

When Bad Things Happen

Do you think some people suffer because they are worse sinners than others? It's an uncomfortable question that usually goes unspoken, but Jesus poses it directly. Terrible things happen in this world, and human minds seek and invent patterns to find reasons for such catastrophes so we can be confident that we might prevent them from happening to us.

While we know from experience that some of our actions cause us to suffer, we cannot reason backwards from that. We cannot assume that if someone is suffering, it's because they did something wrong. The rain falls on the just and the unjust.

While Jesus asserts that no one is a worse sinner for being on the receiving end of suffering, he complicates matters by adding, "But unless you repent, you will all perish as they did" (Luke 13:3). *Repentance*—*metanoia* in Greek—literally means "turning around." A sense of urgency comes into the story, and a sense of personal accountability. Jesus is calling us to quit trying to infer from other people's suffering what they might have done wrong. Instead, Jesus says, *Look at yourself and your own actions and their natural consequences. Are you living the way God calls you to live?*

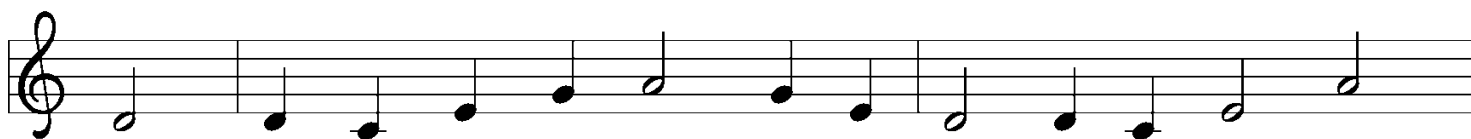
Lutheran theology teaches that baptism is a lifelong process. It is a daily invitation to repent, to let go of what fails us and let the grace of God refresh us like a cool drink on a hot day.

Bad things happen to good people because bad things happen to all of us sooner or later. Every day, however, we are invited into a fresh start, a choice of how we want to live, and the unyielding love of God gives us strength to carry on.

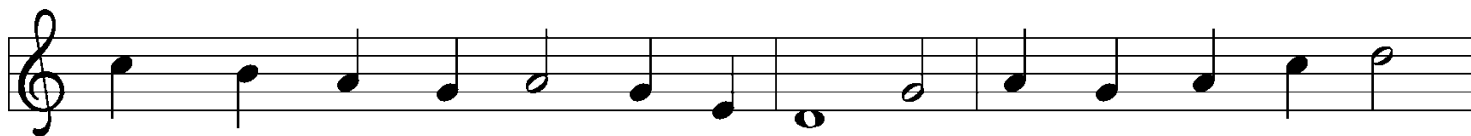
SERMON

HYMN OF THE DAY

What Wondrous Love Is This vs. 1 & 2



1 What won-drous love is this, O my soul, O my soul! What
2 When I was sink - ing down, sink - ing down, sink - ing down, when
3 To God and to the Lamb I will sing, I will sing; to
4 And when from death I'm free, I'll sing on, I'll sing on; and



won - drous love is this, O my soul! What won-drous love is this
I was sink - ing down, sink - ing down, when I was sink - ing down
God and to the Lamb I will sing; to God and to the Lamb,
when from death I'm free, I'll sing on; and when from death I'm free,



that caused the Lord of bliss to bear the dread-ful curse for my
be - neath God's righ-teous frown, Christ laid a - side his crown for my
who is the great I AM, while mil - lions join the theme, I will
I'll sing God's love for me, and through e - ter - ni - ty I'll sing



soul, for my soul, to bear the dread-ful curse for my soul?
soul, for my soul, Christ laid a - side his crown for my soul.
sing, I will sing, while mil - lions join the theme, I will sing.
on, I'll sing on; and through e - ter - ni - ty I'll sing on.

Text: North American folk hymn, 19th cent., alt.
Music: WONDROUS LOVE, W. Walker, *Southern Harmony*, 1835

PRAYERS OF INTERCESSION

Worship Leader: Drawn close to the heart of God, we offer these prayers for the church, the world, and all who are in need.

A brief silence.

Prayer Leader: We pray for the church around the world in all its forms: for pastors, deacons, bishops, chaplains, and mission developers; for church councils, committee chairs, and all lay ministry leaders; for congregations that contemplate difficult decisions about the future of their ministry. Lord, in your mercy,

Congregation: hear our prayer.

Prayer Leader: For those called into positions of civic responsibility: for judges, attorneys, and court administrators tasked with uncovering truth and delivering justice; for activists and community leaders who cast a vision of a more compassionate and equitable society. Lord, in your mercy,

Congregation: hear our prayer.

Prayer Leader: For those who call upon you for mercy: for all who live in poverty and experience hunger; for any who feel tested beyond their strength; for those who are hospitalized or near death, and for all in need of healing especially those on the prayer list of our congregation, all those suffering from violence, terror, and natural disasters (including all those impacted by COVID-19), and those we name now with our lips or in our hearts..... Lord, in your mercy,

Congregation: hear our prayer.

Worship Leader: Since we have such great hope in your promises, O God, we lift these and all of our prayers to you in confidence and faith; through 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 (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.

HOLY COMMUNION

Pastor: The Lord be with you.

Congregation: And also with you.

Pastor: Lift up your hearts.

Congregation: We lift them to the Lord.

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

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

Pastor: It is indeed right, our duty and our joy, that we should at all times and in all places give thanks and praise to you, almighty and merciful God, through our Savior Jesus Christ. You call your people to cleanse their hearts and prepare with joy for the paschal feast, that, renewed in the gift of baptism, we may come to the fullness of your grace. And so, with all the choirs of angels, with the church on earth and the hosts of heaven, we praise your name.

Pastor: In the night in which he was betrayed, our Lord Jesus took bread, and gave thanks; broke it, and gave it to his disciples, saying: Take and eat; this is my body, given for you. Do this for the remembrance of me.

Pastor: Again, after supper, he took the cup, gave thanks, and gave it for all 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.

Pastor: Pour out upon us the Spirit of your love, O Lord, and unite the wills of all who share this heavenly food, the body and blood of Jesus Christ, our Lord; to whom, with you and the Holy Spirit, be all honor and glory, now and forever.

Congregation: Amen.

LORD'S PRAYER

Pastor: 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.

PRAYERS AFTER COMMUNION

Prayer Leader: Let us pray. We give you thanks, almighty God, that you have refreshed us through the healing power of this gift of life. In your mercy, strengthen us through this gift, in faith toward you and in fervent love toward one another.

Congregation: Amen.

Pastor: Gracious God, loving all your family with a mother's tender care: As you sent the angel to feed Elijah with heavenly bread, help those who go to share your word and sacrament with those who are sick, homebound, or imprisoned. In your love and care, nourish and strengthen those who will receive this sacrament, and give us all the comfort of your everlasting presence through the body and blood of your Son, Jesus Christ, our Lord. **Congregation: 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.

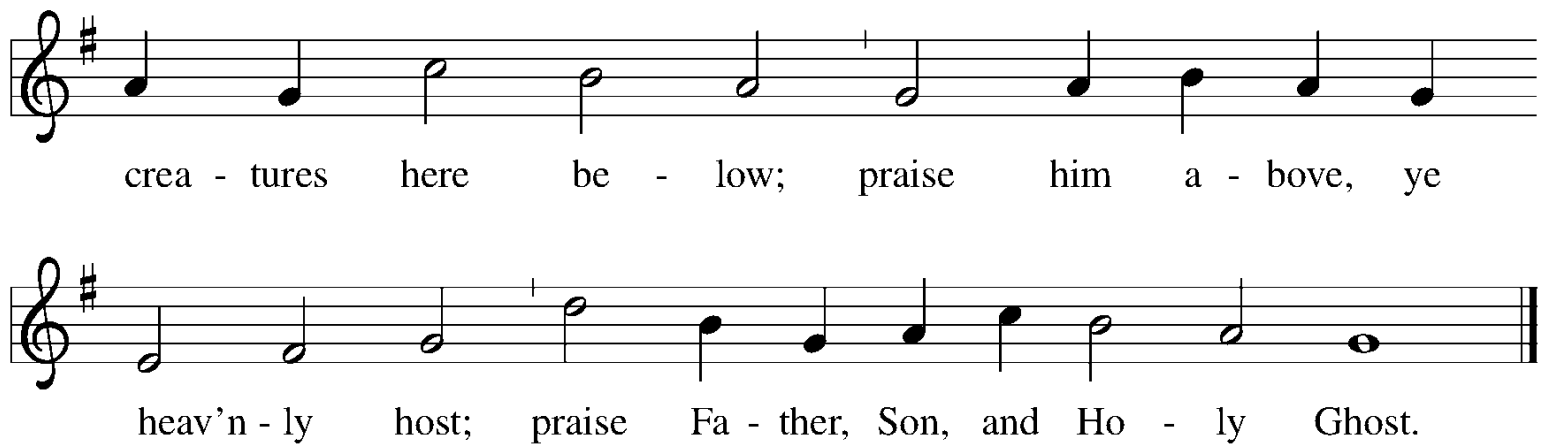
SENDING SONG

The Doxology



Praise God, from whom all bless - ings flow; praise him, all

The image shows a musical staff with a treble clef and a key signature of one sharp (F#). The melody consists of a series of eighth notes: G4, A4, B4, C5, D5, E5, F#5, G5, A5, B5, C6, D6, E6, F#6, G6, A6, B6, C7. The lyrics are placed below the staff, with hyphens under 'bless - ings' and '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. Share the Good News.

Congregation: Thanks be to God!

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