

March 27th Worship – Fourth Sunday in Lent
Introduction to the Day

The psalm sets the tone this day: “Happy are they whose transgressions are forgiven, and whose sin is put away!” Happy are those who have “become the righteousness of God” in the merits of Christ Jesus. Happy are those for whom the forgiveness of God has “rolled away . . . the disgrace” of former times. Happy is the father at the return of his prodigal son. Happy are we that our sins are forgiven for Jesus’ sake. Rejoice!

Confession and Forgiveness

In the name of God,
who makes a way in the wilderness,
walks with us,
and guides us in our pilgrimage.

Amen.

Silence is kept for reflection.

Holy One,
we confess that we have wandered far from you:
we have not trusted your promises,
we have ignored your prophets in our own day,
we have squandered our inheritance of grace,
we have failed to recognize you in our midst.
Have mercy on us!

Forgive us and turn us again to you.

Teach us to follow in your ways,
assure us again of your love,
and help us to love our neighbor.

Amen.

Beloved in Christ,
the Word draws near to you,
and all who call out to God shall be saved.
In Jesus, God comes to you again and again
and gathers you under wings of love.
In † Jesus’ name, your sins are forgiven.
God journeys with you and teaches you how to live
in love.

Amen.

Gathering Song

“Christ, Be Our Light”

#715, vs. 1,2,5

Prayer of the Day

God of compassion, you welcome the wayward, and you embrace us all with your mercy. By our baptism clothe us with garments of your grace, and feed us at the table of 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.

Lesson – Psalm 32

¹Happy are they whose transgressions are forgiven,
and whose sin is put away!

²Happy are they to whom the LORD imputes no
guilt, and in whose spirit there is no guile!

³While I held my tongue, my bones withered
away, because of my groaning all day long.

⁴For your hand was heavy upon me day and
night; my moisture was dried up as in the heat of
summer.

⁵Then I acknowledged my sin to you, and did not
conceal my guilt. I said, “I will confess my
transgressions to the LORD.” Then you forgave me
the guilt of my sin.

⁶Therefore all the faithful will make their prayers to
you in time of trouble; when the great waters
overflow, they shall not reach them.

⁷You are my hiding-place; you preserve me from
trouble; you surround me with shouts of
deliverance.

⁸“I will instruct you and teach you in the way that
you should go; I will guide you with my eye.

⁹Do not be like horse or mule, which have
no understanding; who must be fitted with bit and
bridle, or else they will not stay near you.”

¹⁰Great are the tribulations of the wicked;
but mercy embraces those who trust in the LORD.

¹¹Be glad, you righteous, and rejoice in the LORD;
shout for joy, all who are true of heart.

Gospel – Luke 15:1-3, 11b-32

¹Now all the tax collectors and sinners were coming near to listen to [Jesus.] ²And the Pharisees and the scribes were grumbling and saying, “This fellow welcomes sinners and eats with them.”

³So he told them this parable: ^{11b}“There was a man who had two sons. ¹²The younger of them said to his father, ‘Father, give me the share of the property that will belong to me.’ So he divided his property between them. ¹³A few days later the younger son gathered all he had and traveled to a distant country, and there he squandered his property in dissolute living. ¹⁴When he had spent everything, a severe famine took place throughout that country, and he began to be in need. ¹⁵So he went and hired himself out to one of the citizens of that country, who sent him to his fields to feed the pigs. ¹⁶He would gladly have filled himself with the pods that the pigs were eating; and no one gave him anything. ¹⁷But when he came to himself he said, ‘How many of my father’s hired hands have bread enough and to spare, but here I am dying of hunger! ¹⁸I will get up and go to my father, and I will say to him, “Father, I have sinned against heaven and before you; ¹⁹I am no longer worthy to be called your son; treat me like one of your hired hands.”’ ²⁰So he set off and went to his father. But while he was still far off, his father saw him and was filled with compassion; he ran and put his arms around him and kissed him. ²¹Then the son said to him, ‘Father, I have sinned against heaven and before you; I am no longer worthy to be called your son.’ ²²But the father said to his slaves, ‘Quickly, bring out a robe—the best one—and put it on him; put a ring on his finger and sandals on his feet. ²³And get the fatted calf and kill it, and let us eat and celebrate; ²⁴for this son of mine was dead and is alive again; he was lost and is found!’ And they began to celebrate.

²⁵“Now his elder son was in the field; and when he came and approached the house, he heard music and dancing. ²⁶He called one of the slaves and asked what was going on. ²⁷He replied, ‘Your brother has come, and your father has killed the fatted calf, because he has got him back safe and sound.’ ²⁸Then he became angry and refused to go in. His father came out and began to plead with him. ²⁹But he answered his father, ‘Listen! For all these years I have been working like a slave for you, and I have never disobeyed your command; yet you have never given me even a young goat so that I might celebrate with my friends. ³⁰But when this son of yours came back, who has devoured your property with prostitutes, you killed the fatted calf for him!’ ³¹Then the father said to him, ‘Son, you are always with me, and all that is mine is yours. ³²But we had to celebrate and rejoice, because this brother of yours was dead and has come to life; he was lost and has been found.’”

Message

People of God, grace to you and peace from God, and from our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ. Amen

If ever there were a Gospel story of what it means to be loved, in the context of being KNOWN and SEEN, it is this one.

The story of the Prodigal Son. The story of the son who takes his inheritance and squanders it. The story of the other brother who does everything that he is to do. And the story of the father, who when he sees the son, whom he presumed was dead, runs to meet him at the end of the driveway.

Not only is the story of the Prodigal Son, in the context of being KNOWN and SEEN, the perfect story of what it means to be loved, it is also the perfect story of what it means to be a church that meets people right where they are at.

There are moments in life where this story is quite relatable for us. As we have made our way through both of our Lent themes, our Mission Statement and what it means to be broken and loved by God in spite of it, we have essentially been imagining this very story.

We carry with us those things that we tell ourselves make us broken. Our imperfections, our guilt, our shame. Those things that we tell ourselves separate us from the love of Christ. And, we have been reminded, again and again and again, that we are indeed loved by God who knows far more about us than we could ever imagine, who sees us for what we were made to be and comes running to the end of the driveway when we return home.

Because we all do it. We all need it. And it is God's desire to have that embrace.

So often, as church, we are the other brother. We live in a "what have you done for me lately" world. And that seeps into our mindset as church. As people who call this place home, and have called it home for years, we still revert back to the thinking of "what has been done for me lately." We see the church pivoting towards, or simply putting some focus on, those "others" and wonder why we have been forgotten.

And, when I say church, I mean church universal. It isn't just Lutheran Church of the Good Shepherd, but church in general. We all have those feelings, and they aren't necessarily wrong.

But, our mission statement here at Good Shepherd does indeed proclaim that we are a neighborhood church where each is KNOWN, SEEN, and LOVED!

To be a church where each is loved, is to again acknowledge that we are a church made up of people who themselves are known far greater by God who made us than we know ourselves, and are seen by God for who God made us to be, and LOVED all the same.

As church we live this Prodigal Son story each day. And we are any one of the characters.

Yes, there are days where we are that son who asks for the inheritance only to squander it on loose living, only to come crawling back appearing dead to the Father.

Yes, there are days where we are the Father who worries for the Son that we have not seen, while the other son is with us each day doing the work of the kingdom.

And, there are days where we are the other brother that wonders why the loose living other gets the embrace that we so deserve.

As people of faith, Jesus calls us into this story to offer that embrace.

Jesus calls us to set aside those things we have done and the feelings of that which we deserve, to open our arms to offer that embrace that the father offers when he sees his son return.

And today, if you identify with the Prodigal Son, the one who feels as though he's squandered God's grace and mercy, know this: You are LOVED.

Come. Receive that embrace. The embrace of a church that is your neighborhood church who comes to meet you in your despair. The embrace of a church that wants you to know and feel that you are loved.

That is God's love.

Thanks be to God. Amen

Song of the Day

"Tree of Life and Awesome Mystery"

#334 vs. 1,3, Lent 4,5

Apostle's Creed

Prayers

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

Jesus formed the disciples in the ways of extravagant mercy and profound welcome. Lead your church to be a community marked by forgiveness, hospitality, and celebration. Send us to transform a world plagued by fear and condemnation. Merciful God,

receive our prayer.

You make the land to produce a harvest that sustains your entire creation. Equip farmers and farm workers who till the soil. Nourish the earth with ample rainfall and abundant sunshine. Heal grounds tainted by pollution or misuse. Merciful God,

receive our prayer.

Countries are divided and leaders often harbor grudges. Reconcile nations that experience conflict (*especially*). Act quickly to bring an end to war. Anoint peacemakers trained in the art of diplomacy and foster a spirit of collaboration among political rivals. Merciful God,

receive our prayer.

Your people cry for help in times of distress. Resolve disagreements among family members. Save those experiencing financial hardship. Hear our prayers for those who are sick or grieving (*especially for Gena, Peyton, Kathy, Matt, Bob and Joanne, Jim and Sandy, Bob, Joe, Bill and Bonnie, David, Cassie, Keith and JoJo, Sherm and Mary, Frank and Heather*). Console us with the promise that everything can become new. Merciful God,

Merciful God,

receive our prayer.

Your love comes to us when a table is set and a feast is prepared. Bless the feeding ministries of this congregation (*especially*). Bring an end to hunger in our community and around the world. Merciful God,

receive our prayer.

The one who was dead is alive again. We give thanks for those who have died, confident that steadfast love surrounds them. Shelter them in your love until we are gathered at your heavenly banquet. Merciful God,

receive our prayer.

Accept the prayers we bring, O God, on behalf of a world in need, for the sake of Jesus Christ.

Amen.

Offering

Offertory Prayer

Extravagant God,
you have blessed us with the fullness of creation.

Now we gather at your feast
where you offer us the food that satisfies.

Take and use what we offer here, come among us,
and feed us with the body and blood of Christ,

in whose name we pray.

Amen.

Words of Institution – We invite you to find bread and wine or juice and partake in this Holy Meal.

(Holding the bread) In the night in which we was betrayed, our Lord Jesus took bread and broke it, gave thanks and gave it for all to eat saying, “This is my body broken for you. Do this in remembrance of me.”

(Holding the cup) Again after supper he took the cup, and after giving thanks he 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 sins. So often as you do this, remember me.”

Once you’ve taken the elements say, Blessed Jesus, in this rich meal of grace, you have fed us with your body, the bread of life. Now send us forth to bear your life-giving hope to a world in need.

Amen.

Lord's Prayer

Sending Song

"Let Us Ever Walk with Jesus"

#802 vs. 1

Blessing

You are children of God,
anointed with the oil of gladness
and strengthened for the journey.

Almighty God,
motherly, majestic, and mighty,
✠ bless you this day and always.

Amen.

Go in peace. Jesus meets you on the way. **Thanks be to God.**

Announcements

Lent

Our theme for Lent this year is "In spite of..."

In spite of all of the reasons we might give ourselves for NOT being worthy of what comes at Easter, it still happens. So, let's talk about it.

Join us each Wednesday evening at 6:30 p.m. in person or online.

Tulip Sale

The Playground Committee at Roosevelt Elementary has partnered with Brent Douglas Flowers (an alum of Roosevelt) for this sale. All orders must be confirmed by **March 27 for you to pickup on Thursday, April 14** at Roosevelt. Call the church office if you would like to order a bunch of 10 tulips for \$10 (normally \$15); 2 bunches for \$16 or you can donate a bunch to Good Shepherd Senior Apartments for \$6. Order flowers for your table for Easter!

(Or you can order yourself by going to: <https://ecroosevelt.memberhub.com/store>)

FREE Foot and Nail Care Clinic

University of Wisconsin-Eau Claire, Continuing Education will offer free foot and nail care clinics for community members April 26-29. During the clinic, nurses will assess your foot and nail health and determine areas that need attention. Appointments range from 20 to 60 minutes depending on the level of care required. Registered nurses will perform foot and nail care services as part of a certification program. The clinic will be supervised by nurse instructors certified in foot and nail care.

Next sessions:

Tuesday, April 26, 2022

Wednesday, April 27, 2022

Thursday, April 25, 2022

Friday, April 26, 2022 (7:30 a.m.-1:30 p.m.)

Time: 7:30 a.m. to 5:30 p.m.

Location: Grace Lutheran Church

202 West Grand Avenue

How to schedule an appointment:

The services are free. **Appointments are required and will be accepted beginning: Monday, April 11, at 8:30 a.m.**

To schedule an appointment or request accommodations for disabilities, call UW-Eau Claire Continuing Education at 715-836-3636.

*To ensure the safety of our clients, nurses, and staff, masks are required at the clinical.

Holy Week at Good Shepherd



Palm Sunday
Shout Hosanna
9 am - April 10



Maundy Thursday
Love and Forgiveness
6:30 pm - April 14



Good Friday
7 Last Words
6:30 pm - April 15

