

**April 3<sup>rd</sup> Worship – Fifth Sunday in Lent**  
**Introduction to the Day**

Our God makes all things new. In the first reading God promises it. In the gospel Mary anticipates it, anointing Jesus' feet with costly perfume in preparation for the day of his burial. In the second reading Paul recalls his transformation from the persecutor Saul into an apostle. In baptism, God's new person (you!) rises daily from the deadly mire of trespasses and sins.

**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**      **“All Are Welcome”**

**#641, vs. 1,3,5**

**Prayer of the Day**

Creator God, you prepare a new way in the wilderness, and your grace waters our desert. Open our hearts to be transformed by the new thing you are doing, that our lives may proclaim the extravagance of your love given to all through your Son, Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever.

**Amen.**

**Lesson – Isaiah 43:16-21**

<sup>16</sup>Thus says the LORD,  
who makes a way in the sea,  
a path in the mighty waters,  
<sup>17</sup>who brings out chariot and horse,  
army and warrior;  
they lie down, they cannot rise,  
they are extinguished, quenched like a wick:  
<sup>18</sup>Do not remember the former things,  
or consider the things of old.  
<sup>19</sup>I am about to do a new thing;

now it springs forth, do you not perceive it?  
I will make a way in the wilderness  
and rivers in the desert.  
<sup>20</sup>The wild animals will honor me,  
the jackals and the ostriches;  
for I give water in the wilderness,  
rivers in the desert,  
to give drink to my chosen people,  
<sup>21</sup>the people whom I formed for myself  
so that they might declare my praise.

Children's Message

## **Gospel – John 12:1-8**

<sup>1</sup>Six days before the Passover Jesus came to Bethany, the home of Lazarus, whom he had raised from the dead. <sup>2</sup>There they gave a dinner for him. Martha served, and Lazarus was one of those at the table with him. <sup>3</sup>Mary took a pound of costly perfume made of pure nard, anointed Jesus' feet, and wiped them with her hair. The house was filled with the fragrance of the perfume. <sup>4</sup>But Judas Iscariot, one of his disciples (the one who was about to betray him), said, <sup>5</sup>“Why was this perfume not sold for three hundred denarii and the money given to the poor?” <sup>6</sup>(He said this not because he cared about the poor, but because he was a thief; he kept the common purse and used to steal what was put into it.) <sup>7</sup>Jesus said, “Leave her alone. She bought it so that she might keep it for the day of my burial. <sup>8</sup>You always have the poor with you, but you do not always have me.”

### **Message**

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

Poet Mary Oliver, in one of my favorite poems, titled “The Summer Day” writes:

Who made the world?  
Who made the swan, and the black bear?  
Who made the grasshopper?  
This grasshopper, I mean –  
The one who has flung herself out of the grass,  
the one who is eating sugar out of my hand,  
who is moving her jaws back and forth instead of up and down –  
who is gazing around with her enormous and complicated eyes.  
Now she lifts her pale forearms and thoroughly washes her face.  
Now she snaps her wings open, and floats away.  
I don't know exactly what a prayer is.  
I do know how to pay attention, how to fall down  
into the grass, how to kneel down in the grass,  
how to be idle and blessed, how to stroll through the fields,  
which is what I have been doing all day.  
Tell me, what else should I have done?  
Doesn't everything die at last, and too soon?  
Tell me, what is it you plan to do  
with your one wild and precious life?

To be a church that is concerned with EACH, is to be a church that is concerned with and for the other.

As we have heard over the last few weeks we EACH come to the table, this table, God's table, with our own baggage. We EACH have our own stories, some we'd love to embrace, and others we'd much rather forget. But, they are our stories. They are who we are, and they make us the church that we are, God's church.

Again, the truth is, we so often get this wrong. As church we so often forget about the other. We get bogged down in knowing ourselves. We get lost in our worry and fear of what others see about us. We tell ourselves that those truths that we know of our being, are too much for us to be loved not only by a community of faith, but by a God who brought it all together.

Our Gospel story for this Sunday has Jesus returning to the home of a dear friend, a dear friend whom, just a fun fact to share, he had raised from the dead. And they invited him in for dinner. Jesus, you'll notice, loved to dine with people. He loved the fellowship. And, though it is the case here, it wasn't always with people that we would expect him to dine with. And, often, those whom he chose to dine with were questioned in some way, shape, or form.

This dinner gathering is no different. Again, he is not dining with strangers. He is dining with close friends. Lazarus, the one whom Jesus wept for. Who loved ones Jesus consoled, only to bring back from the dead. Mary and Martha, who were along for much of Jesus' ministry were there as well. Jesus knew what was coming. And he was enjoying a meal with some of his closest friends not named the 12 disciples.

We do learn that the disciples were, in fact, present. And, we learn that Judas, the thief, was not pleased with what was taking place.

We ought to appreciate the literary aside here where it tells us *WHY* Judas is actually questioning Mary's actions. We don't always get this from scripture, so we should really give thanks when these explanations are offered.

<sup>5</sup>“Why was this perfume not sold for three hundred denarii and the money given to the poor?” <sup>6</sup>(He said this not because he cared about the poor, but because he was a thief; he kept the common purse and used to steal what was put into it.)”

As people of faith we know the story of Judas and the role it plays in the greater Jesus story. We know that he will become a rather large player in the arrest of Jesus. We, those who are familiar with the larger Jesus story, know Judas. This literary aside serves as a reminder for us that he is up to no good, but also a warning to first time hearers that Judas is probably up to something, that we should look out for him.

And Jesus, in his response, tell us what it means to be concerned with EACH of God's children, and not just ourselves. Jesus points to Mary's actions as being ritual. This costly perfume that Judas hoped to exploit was not for personal gain, but was a show of respect. It was her way of honoring and caring for Jesus. It was how she was to praise and remember him. What concern is that to Judas? That is Jesus question, and it is a question that he asks of us as well.

It is a stern warning, no doubt. Jesus tells Judas, straight up, in the face of his scheme to make *himself* rich, “you always have the poor with you, but you will not always have me.”

Jesus speaks directly into Judas scheme to use the plight of the poor to make himself better, by telling him that there will always be opportunities to care for the poor.

As 21<sup>st</sup> century people of faith we have come to understand how we treat Jesus as how we treat those who have been othered. As Jesus puts it, “what you have done for the least of these among you, you have done for me.”

We see the face of God in the face of our neighbor. It is our call as church to be a church that is for EACH of those who have been othered in our community and in our world. And, it is to be reminded that if you count yourself among those who have been othered, that God's church is a church for you, that we count you among the EACH who are known – seen – loved.

A church that knows that you come into the embrace with a story of your own.

A church that sees you as God's wonderfully and beautifully crafted creation.

And a church that loves you all the same.

Thanks be to God. Amen

**Song of the Day**      **“What Wondrous Love Is This”**

**#666 vs. 1,3,4**

## 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.

Do a new thing in the church. Free us from paradigms that no longer serve the gospel and bring forward leaders who imagine fresh ways of doing ministry. Give us courage in the face of change. Merciful God,  
**receive our prayer.**

Do a new thing for creation. Reverse the trajectory of climate change and environmental catastrophe. Revive habitats already impaired by human disregard. Amplify the voices of climate scientists and researchers working to chart a new course. Merciful God,  
**receive our prayer.**

Do a new thing in our world. Break barriers that prevent political enemies from working together for the well-being of all. Make a way for peace and collaboration among the nations. Merciful God,  
**receive our prayer.**

Do a new thing for those who suffer. Reveal a path for any who are unemployed or underemployed, for those experiencing homelessness, and for all who struggle with money. Comfort those who grieve and restore those who are sick (*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, Durost family and Matton family*). Merciful God,  
**receive our prayer.**

Do a new thing within us. Direct us into encounters that broaden our understanding of the human experience. Amplify voices that are ignored or devalued. Deliver us especially from the scourge of racism. Merciful God,  
**receive our prayer.**

Do a new thing in our death. Fill us with the knowledge of Christ and the power of his resurrection as we give thanks for (*names and*) all the saints who have attained the prize of their heavenly call. 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**

**"Shout to the Lord"**

**#821**

## 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.

**Easter morning** – 8 a.m. rolls and coffee. Join friends and family before worship at 9!

### 100<sup>TH</sup> Birthday Party for Bob Anderson

April 19, 2-5 p.m. at Good Shepherd

### Stand in the Light Memory Choir concert

Thursday, April 21

10 a.m. dress rehearsal open to the public

6:30 p.m. concert

**FREE BUT TICKETS ARE REQUIRED. Call 715-210-4165.**

### Stand in the Light Memory Choir with Luther College Nordic Choir

At the Pablo Center | May 23 | RCU Theatre

**FREE BUT TICKETS ARE REQUIRED – Contact the Pablo Center (715) 492-0240.**

### I WON'T FORGET - MEMORIES AND MUSIC

Join us for an evening of choral music featuring the Luther College Nordic Choir from Decorah, Iowa and the Stand In The Light Memory Choir from Eau Claire, Wisconsin. This performance is in support of the Standing in the Light Memory Choir and the Aging & Disability Resource Center of Eau Claire County. Their work raises awareness and supports a strong community for adults with memory loss and those with disabilities.