

Fourth Sunday in Lent – Sunday, March 10th, 2024

As we've heard the last couple of weeks, Jesus has invited us to repent, has called us out of our shame, and showed us what it looks like to live the life Jesus preaches. Now, we are invited to dream. To wonder what life could be like, but more so, what Jesus hopes and dreams life would be like for us. The Kingdom of Heaven is like...this is not a dream of the place we one day get to, but a dream for the world, here and now!

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

And also with you

Announcements

Blessed be the holy Trinity, † one God,
who writes the law on our hearts,
who draws all people together through Jesus.
Amen.

Held in God's mercy, let us confess our sin
in the presence of God and of one another.

Silence is kept for reflection.

Holy God,
**we confess that we are caught in snares of sin
and cannot break free.
We hoard resources while our neighbors
are hungry and cold.**

**We speak in ways that silence others.
We are silent when we should speak up.
We keep score in our hearts.
We let hurts grow into hatred.
For all these things and for sins only you know,
forgive us, Lord.**

Amen.

Here is a flood of grace:
Out of love for the whole world,
God draws near to us,
breaks every snare of sin,
washes away our wrongs,
and restores the promise of life through † Jesus
Christ.

Amen.

Gathering Hymn

“Lord, I Lift Your Name on High”

#857

Prayer of the Day

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.

Amen.

Children's Message

Psalm 107:1-3, 17-22

¹Give thanks to the LORD, for the LORD is good, for God's mercy endures forever.

²**Let the redeemed of the LORD proclaim that God redeemed them from the hand of the foe,**

³gathering them in from the lands; from the east and from the west, from the north and from the south.

¹⁷**Some were fools and took rebellious paths; through their sins they were afflicted.**

¹⁸They loathed all manner of food and drew near to death's door.

¹⁹**Then in their trouble they cried to the LORD and you delivered them from their distress.**

²⁰You sent forth your word and healed them and rescued them from the grave.

²¹**Let them give thanks to you, LORD, for your steadfast love and your wonderful works for all people.**

²²Let them offer sacrifices of thanksgiving and tell of your deeds with shouts of joy.

The Word of the Lord
Thanks be to God.

Holy Gospel according to Saint Luke 15:1-10

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

³ So he told them this parable: ⁴ “Which one of you, having a hundred sheep and losing one of them, does not leave the ninety-nine in the wilderness and go after the one that is lost until he finds it? ⁵ And when he has found it, he lays it on his shoulders and rejoices. ⁶ And when he comes home, he calls together his friends and neighbors, saying to them, ‘Rejoice with me, for I have found my lost sheep.’ ⁷ Just so, I tell you, there will be more joy in heaven over one sinner who repents than over ninety-nine righteous persons who need no repentance.

⁸ “Or what woman having ten silver coins, if she loses one of them, does not light a lamp, sweep the house, and search carefully until she finds it? ⁹ And when she has found it, she calls together her friends and neighbors, saying, ‘Rejoice with me, for I have found the coin that I had lost.’ ¹⁰ Just so, I tell you, there is joy in the presence of the angels of God over one sinner who repents.”

The Gospel of the Lord.
Praise to You, O Christ

Sermon

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

Our text begins with the all too familiar situation of Jesus being challenged by the Pharisees and Tax Collectors. The crowd around Jesus has started to grow to include tax collectors and sinners. They were starting to hear that the message that Jesus preached was a message for them, and the Pharisees and Tax Collectors started to grumble.

This past week we started our First Communion instruction, and the book that we use for that time of learning together is called, “A Place for You,” and that book would refer to this group of grumblers as “The Crabby People.”

As this book quickly goes through the life of Jesus and his ministry and who it is that he always gathers around food with, in the background is always this group of “Crabby People” and, as we have come to learn about them, they are always skeptical of and challenging what Jesus is up to. And, that is the case here.

The Pharisees and Scribes were grumbling and saying, “This fellow welcomes sinners and eats with them.”

Now, imagine just for a moment, being so upset that the love of Christ extends to sinners and those that we might not like. Surely, we can’t fathom what that would be like...there is some sarcasm there.

But, Jesus is challenged, and in being challenged because he has extended God’s grace to sinners and tax collectors, Jesus tells them a couple of parables.

And, in telling them these parables Jesus invites us to wonder. To dream. To think about what the Kingdom of Heaven might be like, but also what exactly the Kingdom of Heaven is.

First, Jesus tells the parable of the lost sheep and follows that up with the parable of the lost coin.

Both of these parables are stories of things of great value. For the shepherd, the sheep is his livelihood. For the woman, that lost coin represents one day’s worth of work.

Both of these people leave everything else that they have and to find that one that is missing, and this is the image that Jesus paints of the Kingdom of Heaven, the Body of Christ. That, when there is one missing, the lost is sought out and found.

AND, when that one is found and returns to the fold, there is rejoicing.

Both of these two stories share a refrain. Once the one that is lost is found, the one who was searching for them calls the community together. "Rejoice with me."

This encourages us to wonder. It encourages us to dream. But maybe not the kind of wonder or dreaming we were initially thinking.

The parable that follows these two is the familiar story of the Prodigal and his Brother. We know that story, yes? The father gives the sons their inheritance. The one stays around home, continues to work and earn favor with his father. The other leaves home and squanders everything that he has been given. Wastes his inheritance on questionable living and finds himself living with and eating the meals of pigs.

His father assumed he had lost him. He was gone. Until the day that he is out working in the yard and he sees coming down the driveway the son that he assumed was dead. And what does he do?

He sends his other son, the obedient one, the one that has always been there and was wise with his inheritance, to go and prep a massive party for the community.

So, to, is how it is in the Kingdom of Heaven.

And I wonder, I dream about what Jesus means when he speaks of the Kingdom of Heaven. Because it is heaven we immediately think of the place we believe we go to when we die. And, when we get there pain is no more. Suffering is no more. Social hierarchy is no more. And this is good and it is wonderful to dream of that place.

But, when Jesus speaks of the Kingdom of Heaven Jesus is speaking of His dream, God's dream, for the here and now.

So I ask you. I wonder with you. What is the lost sheep in my life? What is my lost coin? What if we thought of those as relationships and not individuals?

What relationships have I lost that I need to seek out? I wonder what brokenness in my life I need to seek out to repair.

And, in doing so I find myself dreaming of what the Body of Christ might look like if we joined in communal celebration at the repairs that we can, and should, make amid the brokenness of life.

Yes, people may very well grumble and get upset. The Crabby People are all around. But God calls us into holy relationships. God longs for us to repair where reparations can be made. And, when it happens God calls us into communal celebration.

Because when there is healing there is wholeness and when there is wholeness the Kingdom of Heaven is experienced here and now.

God invites us to dream of what that might look like.

Thanks be to God. AMEN

Mission Offering – Northwest Synod of Wisconsin Endowment Fund Appeal

Hymn of the Day

“What Wondrous Love Is This”

#666 vs. 1,2,3

Apostle's Creed

Prayers of Intercession

Trusting in God's promise to reconcile all things, let us pray for the church, the well-being of creation, and a world in need.

A brief silence.

Gracious God, your love unites. Give vision to the global church and foster cooperation in mission. Increase inter-religious understanding and ecumenical dialog. Make your church a sanctuary for all fleeing persecution, disaster, and war (*areas in crisis may be named*). Hear us, O God.

Your mercy is great.

Creating God, your love enlivens. Restore balance to the earth's fragile habitats. Preserve wilderness lands, rainforests, and wildlife. Cleanse oceans and rivers (*local water sources may be named*). Make us good stewards of the earth. Hear us, O God.

Your mercy is great.

Righteous God, your love liberates. We give thanks for those who courageously witness to your liberating love (*especially Harriet Tubman and Sojourner Truth, renewers of society, whom we commemorate today*). Free all people from the evils of racism, religious strife, and hatred. Hear us, O God.

Your mercy is great.

Merciful God, your love heals. Care tenderly for all whose loved ones perished from pandemic disease in every nation. Strengthen health care workers, first responders, and caregivers. Relieve all who live with chronic illness and pain. (*We pray especially for Matt, David, Clarice, Steve, Kathy, Val, Cherri, Peggy, John, Keith and JoJo, Bob and Joanne, Frank and Heather, Bob and Sonja, Bill and Betty, Tom and Kay, Sherm and Mary, Dan and Sharon, Roger and MaryLee*). Hear us, O God.

Your mercy is great.

Incarnate God, your love enlightens. Open our hearts and minds to fresh understandings of our faith. Deepen our love for you and for one another. Teach us to pray for our enemies. Hear us, O God.

Your mercy is great.

Abiding God, your love saves. Those who died in the faith are made alive in Christ. We give thanks for your promise that we also will be raised to newness of life. Hear us, O God.

Your mercy is great.

Accompany us on our journey, God of grace, and receive the prayers of our hearts, through Jesus Christ, our Savior.

Amen.

Offering

Offertory Prayer

Jesus, you are the bread of life
and the host of this meal.

Bless these gifts that we have gathered
that all people may know your goodness.

Feed us not only with this holy food
but with hunger for justice and peace.

We pray this in your name.

Amen.

Words of Institution

Lord's Prayer

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

Communion #471 & #466

Prayer

Generous God,
at this table we have tasted your immeasurable grace.

As grains of wheat are gathered into one bread,
now make us one loaf to feed the world;
in the name of Jesus, the Bread of life.

Amen.

Dismissal

Jesus invites us into the world! Go in peace!

Okay! We will! Thanks be to God!

And all of Good Shepherd said...

AMEN!

Sending Song "Sent Forth by God's Blessing" #547

Blessing

Beloved,
we are God's own people,
holy, washed, renewed.
God bless you and keep you,
shower you with mercy,
fill you with courage,
and + give you peace.

Amen.

Your Generosity in Action:



As the quilters enjoyed this most delicious strawberry cake, thank you cards were passed around from various recipients of quilts in recent weeks. All while 6 more quilts were being loaded up to be brought to the Veterans Home in Chippewa Falls. Yes, the quilters enjoy a wonderful time of fellowship and treats, but the quilts they make have a huge impact in the community and beyond.

THANK YOU!!

Monthly Financials to date:	Total Revenue	Total Expenses	Difference
	\$8,755	\$1,522	\$7,233
	2023: \$22,024	2023: \$25,072	Checkbook thru February \$25,942



**GOOD SHEPHERD ~ GOOD FRIDAY
FISH FRY**

**MARCH 29
4- 6 PM**

FISH, POTATOES,
GREEN BEANS, COLE
SLAW, DINNER ROLLS,
DESSERT
FREE WILL DONATION

MAC & CHEESE AND
CHICKEN NUGGETS
KIDS MEAL

QUILT RAFFLE

SPONSORED BY: LUTHERAN CHURCH OF THE GOOD SHEPHERD ENDOWMENT

Take Out is available....

**GOOD FRIDAY QUILT RAFFLE QUILTS
ON DISPLAY IN THE FELLOWSHIP HALL**

\$10/ticket or 3 for \$20



Pieced, quilted and
donated by Betty Davey
60" x 80" (#1)



Pieced and tied by
LCGS Quilters
50" x 64" (#2)



Pieced and tied by
LCGS Quilters
59" x 59" (#3)



**MARK YOUR
CALENDARS!**

**APRIL 21 - GOOD SHEPHERD SUNDAY
DRAWN TO THE WORD
AT GOOD SHEPHERD**