

Jesus has invited us. To repentance. Out of our shame. To wonder and dream about what could be. And now, to rest. What does it mean that Jesus invites us to bring all that burdens us, and he will give us rest. What does it mean that Jesus urges those who are weary, to rest. What does rest look like for us today?

### 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

“You Are Holy”

#525

### Prayer of the Day

O God, with steadfast love you draw us to yourself, and in mercy you receive our prayers. Strengthen us to bring forth the fruits of the Spirit, that through life and death we may live in your Son, 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 51:1-12

<sup>1</sup>Have mercy on me, O God, according to your steadfast love; in your great compassion blot out my offenses.

<sup>2</sup>**Wash me through and through from my wickedness, and cleanse me from my sin.**

<sup>3</sup>For I know my offenses, and my sin is ever before me.

<sup>4</sup>**Against you only have I sinned and done what is evil in your sight;  
so you are justified when you speak and right in your judgment.**

<sup>5</sup>Indeed, I was born steeped in wickedness, a sinner from my mother's womb.

<sup>6</sup>**Indeed, you delight in truth deep within me, and would have me know wisdom deep within.**

<sup>7</sup>Remove my sins with hyssop, and I shall be clean; wash me, and I shall be purer than snow.

<sup>8</sup>**Let me hear joy and gladness; that the body you have broken may rejoice.**

<sup>9</sup>Hide your face from my sins, and blot out all my wickedness.

<sup>10</sup>**Create in me a clean heart, O God, and renew a right spirit within me.**

<sup>11</sup>Cast me not away from your presence, and take not your Holy Spirit from me.

<sup>12</sup>**Restore to me the joy of your salvation and sustain me with your bountiful Spirit.**

The Word of the Lord

**Thanks be to God.**

### **Holy Gospel according to Saint Matthew 11:25-30**

<sup>25</sup> At that time Jesus said, “I thank you, Father, Lord of heaven and earth, because you have hidden these things from the wise and the intelligent and have revealed them to infants; <sup>26</sup> yes, Father, for such was your gracious will. <sup>27</sup> All things have been handed over to me by my Father, and no one knows the Son except the Father, and no one knows the Father except the Son and anyone to whom the Son chooses to reveal him.

<sup>28</sup> “Come to me, all you who are weary and are carrying heavy burdens, and I will give you rest. <sup>29</sup> Take my yoke upon you, and learn from me, for I am gentle and humble in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. <sup>30</sup> For my yoke is easy, and my burden is light.”

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

As people of faith, and looking through the lens of faith, when we think of rest, we think of sabbath. That mandate by God to take time to do nothing. To rest. To recuperate. All with the purpose of connecting to God our creator, who, on the seventh day...rested.

And rest is Good. But, our understanding of that sabbath rest, the reconnecting to God our creator, has evolved. And, we've started to justify other things as being those reconnecting efforts that we need in our lives of faith. And rest, in that sense, starts to lose a little bit of its purpose.

On the seventh day, God rested. Did nothing. And the commandment that came from that was for that purpose, the purpose of restoration. Restoration of the body, mind, and soul...as well as the relationship that we have with God our creator.

The rest that Jesus invites us to here is a touch different.

To this point in our Season of Lent, this the last Sunday before Holy Week, we have heard Jesus' invite us...

- To repent. In the story of the adulterous woman brought before Jesus in the temple is a story in which Jesus invites us to look at what it is that we need to repent from before looking at our neighbor.
- Out of shame. The woman at the well went when she went hoping to avoid a crowd that knew far too much about her. But Jesus invites her out of her shame into the goodness of God's grace and mercy.
- To be Genuine. Jesus shows us, he doesn't just talk about, how it is that we ought to be. We are called to care for our neighbor, not because we think Jesus wants us to, but because our neighbor needs us to.
- To dream. Story after story that Jesus tells are stories of Jesus' dream, his vision, for the Kingdom of Heaven. Not this mystical place we hope to get to, but the world we live in here and now.

And now, Jesus invites us to rest. Again, not the sabbath rest, the break from our earthly work and a chance to reconnect with God our creator...

But to take a rest from all that makes us weary. Take a rest from all that burdens us.

Our gospel text is seemingly split into two sections. The first section seems to be Jesus in somewhat of a moment of prayer. Jesus thanks God for God has “hidden these things from the wise and intelligent and revealed them to infants.” Scripturally speaking, when we hear references such as these to “infants” it is more so talking about those who are new to the faith, and not some 1 year old in their midst. In this case, Jesus

teaching, the Good News of God's Love for God's people, is revealed to those new to the faith. Those who are curious. Those who ask the questions. Those that think there may just be another way to go about this life of faith that they live. As opposed to those who are so bound to their understanding of the way that it has to be that anyone who proposes a new way may be seen as a threat.

Jesus then goes into the untamable beast of navigating the God and Jesus, divine and human, relationship. Who knows what and what knows who and who's on first and I don't know is on third, and it is confusing. It never seems to make sense when Jesus tries to explain this relationship.

BUT, those who know the Father are those that the Son CHOOSES to reveal him.

Hmm. We wonder who that could be. It is curious language.

But, the text goes on. <sup>28</sup>“Come to me, all you who are weary and are carrying heavy burdens, and I will give you rest.” Any of you ever experiences weariness? How about the feeling of carrying heavy burdens? We can relate. Yes? Jesus says this right after the curious language of “those whom the Son CHOOSES to reveal him. It is those who are weary. Those who are heavy burdened. It is to them that the goodness of God's grace and mercy is revealed.

Our text goes on, <sup>29</sup>“Take my yoke upon you, and learn from me, for I am gentle and humble in heart, and you will find rest for your souls.” There is that word. Rest. But it is coupled with the word yoke. A yoke is what is used to bring together the forces and strength of two oxen, or more, to carry a heavy load. The oxen are yoked together to accomplish the task...whatever it may be. The language of yoke likely confused folks.

They likely also knew that the “yoke” is what is used by the teachers, the rabbis, to refer to the task of obeying the Torah – God's instruction or law. So a couple of understandings of what yoke is referring to, neither of which seems light.

But Jesus says, <sup>30</sup>“For my yoke is easy, and my burden is light.”

The yoke of which Jesus speaks is his teaching. Jesus teaching is contrary to what they knew to be true up to this point. They have lived under the heavy understanding of the laws in scripture and have yet to hear of the goodness of grace and mercy.

And the yoke. The first understanding of it being a tool to carry a heavy load. That yoke is the community to which we are called to live in. The yoke of the community of faith, community of caring individuals, lightens the load and burden of the weary soul.

The teaching of Jesus calls us into relationship, into community, with one another. Carrying the burdens of one another. Lightening the load of those around us...

Knowing full well that the time is going to come when we are going to need to be the ones not carrying our weight, but it is the support of community that keeps this thing going forward, that welcomes us back to the embrace when we are ready. And we are ready on our own time.

The teaching of Jesus compared to what they knew is light. It is fulfilling. It is refreshing.

Jesus invites us to find rest in that teaching. It restores the weary soul making right our relationships with God our Creator.

Thanks be to God. AMEN

**Mission Offering – Northwest Synod of Wisconsin Endowment Fund Appeal**

**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.*

God of the covenant, through the church you draw us into community. We give thanks for the means of grace around which we gather. Inspire writers, musicians, and artists whose creative gifts adorn our worship. Hear us, O God.

**Your mercy is great.**

God of all that exists, you lavish the earth with extravagant beauty. Preserve the rich and complex diversity of living things. Support local, national, and international efforts to protect the environment for future generations. Hear us, O God.

**Your mercy is great.**

God of the nations, you desire peace and plenty for all people. Defend those who challenge oppression and expose corruption. Support advocates for human rights, social justice, and the welfare of children (*organizations may be named*). Hear us, O God.

**Your mercy is great.**

God of good will, you restore what is broken. We pray for any experiencing estrangement, conflict, or abuse in families and intimate relationships. Protect and comfort all who are vulnerable, especially those living in institutions. Hear us, O God.

**Your mercy is great.**

God of every time and place, you are with us. Support ministries of prayer and presence in this congregation (*specific ministries may be named*). (*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.**

God of promise, we give thanks for the saints whose faith inspires us (*especially Patrick, missionary to Ireland, whom we commemorate today*). Grant us faith to trust in your everlasting love. 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 & #474**

## 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 "Lift High the Cross" #660 vs. 1,3,4**

## 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:



It's crazy to think that Shepherd's Kids are nearing the end of their program year with only a couple of units remaining. This unit is focusing on Peace, and how we are connected through the peace of living in harmony with those around us. Your generosity makes Shepherd's Kids Faith Formation possible with the purchase of our curriculum and the partnership that we have that prepares that curriculum for our volunteers!

**THANK YOU!!**

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Monthly Financials to date:	Total Revenue	Total Expenses	Difference
	<b>\$14,035</b>	<b>\$11,481</b>	<b>\$2,554</b>
	2023: \$22,024	2023: \$25,072	Checkbook thru February \$25,942



Holy Week  
at Good Shepherd  
Jesus Invites Us...  
Into the Story  
Palm Sunday - 9 am  
Maundy Thursday - 6:30 pm  
Good Friday - 6:30 pm



Join us for Palm Sunday Breakfast following 9 am worship



**CREATED**  
**TO BE**  
**STORYTELLERS**

Easter at Lutheran Church of the Good Shepherd  
9 am - Sunday, March 31st

