

Worship in the Home: March 7, 2021

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Worship in the Home

Third Sunday in Lent, Year B

March 7, 2021

In this time of world-wide crisis, congregations throughout this church are not able to gather for worship as the body of Christ. While you cannot be together in person, we can hear the word of God and hold each other in prayer. We offer this brief resource as an aid for prayer in the home. As with our prayers in the gathered assembly for worship, you are encouraged to prepare or adapt them locally for your context.

The third covenant in this year's Lenten readings is the central one of Israel's history: the gift of the law to those God freed from slavery. The commandments begin with the statement that because God alone has freed us from the powers that oppressed us, we are to let nothing else claim first place in our lives. When Jesus throws the merchants out of the temple, he is defending the worship of God alone and rejecting the ways commerce and profit-making can become our gods. The Ten Commandments are essential to our baptismal call: centered first in God's liberating love, we strive to live out justice and mercy in our communities and the world.

Find a peaceful place to pray, perhaps a table. You may wish to light a candle and place a bowl of water in remembrance of your baptism. One person may lead this acclamation and then pray the Prayer of the Day.

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

Amen.

Let us pray.

A brief silence is kept before the prayer.

Holy God, through your Son you have called us to live faithfully and act courageously. Keep us steadfast in your covenant of grace, and teach us the wisdom that comes only through Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever.

Amen.

First Reading: Exodus 20:1-17

After escaping from slavery, the Israelites come to Mount Sinai, where God teaches them how to live in community. The Ten Commandments proclaim that God alone is worthy of worship. Flowing from God, the life of the community flourishes when based on honesty, trust, fidelity, and respect for life, family, and property.

¹God spoke all these words: ²I am the LORD your God, who brought you out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of slavery; ³you shall have no other gods before me.

⁴You shall not make for yourself and idol, whether in the form of anything that is in heaven above, or that is on the earth beneath, or that is in the water under the earth. ⁵You shall not bow down to them or worship them; for I the LORD your God am a jealous God, punishing children for the iniquity of parents, to the third and the fourth generation of those who reject me, ⁶but showing steadfast love to the thousandth generation of those who love me and keep my commandments.

⁷You shall not make wrongful use of the name of the LORD your God, for the LORD will not acquit anyone who misuses the divine name.

⁸Remember the sabbath day, and keep it holy. ⁹Six days you shall labor and do all your work. ¹⁰But the seventh day is a Sabbath to the LORD your God; you shall not do any work—you, your son or your daughter, your male or female slave, your livestock or the alien resident in your towns. ¹¹For in six days the LORD made heaven and earth, the sea, and all that is in them, but rested the seventh day; therefore the LORD blessed the sabbath day and consecrated it.

¹²Honor your father and your mother, so that your days may be long in the land that the LORD your God is giving you.

¹³You shall not murder.

¹⁴You shall not commit adultery.

¹⁵You shall not steal.

¹⁶You shall not bear false witness against your neighbor.

¹⁷You shall not covet your neighbor's house; you shall not covet your neighbor's wife, or male or female slave, or ox, or donkey, or anything that belongs to your neighbor.

Word of God, word of life.

Thanks be to God.

Psalm 19

¹The heavens declare the glory of God,
and the sky proclaims its ¹maker's handiwork.

²One day tells its tale ¹to another,
and one night imparts knowledge ¹to another.

³Although they have no ¹words or language,
and their voices ¹are not heard,

⁴their sound has gone out into all lands, and their message to the ends ¹of the world,
where God has pitched a tent ¹for the sun.

⁵It comes forth like a bridegroom out ¹of his chamber;
it rejoices like a champion to ¹run its course.

⁶It goes forth from the uttermost edge of the heavens and runs about to the end of ¹it again;
nothing is hidden from its ¹burning heat.

⁷The teaching of the LORD is perfect and revives the soul;
the testimony of the LORD is sure and gives wisdom ¹to the simple.

⁸The statutes of the LORD are just and rejoice the heart;
the commandment of the LORD is clear and gives light ¹to the eyes.

⁹The fear of the LORD is clean and endures forever;
the judgments of the LORD are true and righteous ¹altogether.

¹⁰More to be desired are they than gold, more than ¹much fine gold,
sweeter far than honey, than honey ¹in the comb.

¹¹By them also is your servant enlightened,
and in keeping them there is ¹great reward.

¹²Who can detect one's¹ own offenses?

Cleanse me from my¹ secret faults.

¹³Above all, keep your servant from presumptuous sins; let them not get dominion¹ over me; then shall I be whole and sound, and innocent of a¹ great offense.

¹⁴Let the words of my mouth and the meditation of my heart be acceptable¹ in your sight, O LORD, my strength and¹ my redeemer.

Second Reading: 1 Corinthians 1:18-25

The word of the cross is pure foolishness and nonsense to the world because it claims that God is mostly revealed in weakness, humiliation, and death. But through such divine foolishness and weakness, God is working to save us. The center of Paul's preaching is Christ crucified.

¹⁸The message about the cross is foolishness to those who are perishing, but to us who are being saved it is the power of God. ¹⁹For it is written,

I will destroy the wisdom of the wise,
and the discernment of the discerning I will thwart."

²⁰Where is the one who is wise? Where is the scribe? Where is the debater of this age? Has not God made foolish the wisdom of the world? ²¹For since, in the wisdom of God, the world did not know God through wisdom, God decided, through the foolishness of our proclamation, to save those who believe. ²²For Jews demand signs and Greeks desire wisdom, ²³but we proclaim Christ crucified, a stumbling block to Jews and foolishness to Gentiles, ²⁴but to those who are the called, both Jews and Greeks, Christ the power of God and the wisdom of God. ²⁵For God's foolishness is wiser than human wisdom, and God's weakness is stronger than human strength.

Word of God, word of life.

Thanks be to God.

Gospel: John 2:13-22

The holy gospel according to John.

Glory to you, O Lord.

Jesus attacks the commercialization of religion by driving merchants out of the temple. When challenged, he responds mysteriously, with the first prediction of his own death and resurrection. In the midst of a seemingly stable religious center, Jesus suggests that the center itself has changed.

¹³The Passover of the Jewish people was near, and Jesus went up to Jerusalem. ¹⁴In the temple he found people selling cattle, sheep, and doves, and the money changers seated at their tables. ¹⁵Making a whip of cords, he drove all of them out of the temple, both the sheep and the cattle. He also poured out the coins of the money changers and overturned their tables. ¹⁶He told those who were selling the doves, "Take these things out of here! Stop making my Father's house a marketplace!" ¹⁷His disciples remembered that it was written, "Zeal for your house will consume me." ¹⁸The Judeans then said to him, "What sign can you show us for doing this?" ¹⁹Jesus answered them, "Destroy this temple, and in three days I will raise it up." ²⁰The Judeans then said, "This temple has been under construction for forty-six years, and will you raise it up in three days?" ²¹But Jesus was speaking of the temple of his body. ²²After he was raised from the dead, his disciples remembered that he had said this; and they believed the scripture and the word that Jesus had spoken.

The gospel of the Lord.

Praise to you, O Christ.

Reflection

Having read these readings, think on this:

While we may not buy cattle or doves to give to God, we too sometimes turn our religion into a negotiation with the divine — "I give to you, O God, so that you must give to me" — and we too sometimes seek to profit, like the moneychangers, from other people's religious negotiations. Christ ends all that. Though it looks like foolishness, his cross is the wisdom and power of God and the end of negotiations. Risen, he is our temple, the very place we meet God in the power of the

Spirit. What happens in that place, that temple that is Christ, is that God gives to us so that we may turn and give to others. When we were baptized into that house of God, the ten commandments were given to us as part of being baptized. They are a lively agenda for us, especially if, with Martin Luther, we continually reinterpret them for the present time. This agenda is founded in God's thousand-fold mercy, in which such mercy becomes our own way. Rather than coveting someone else's things, we engage in almsgiving. Rather than lying about someone else, we pray for them. Rather than misusing someone else, we fast from self-indulgence. And in it all Jesus Christ is our sabbath rest. The way of these commandments is the way of Lent and a way of joy. Such religion is light to our eyes.

If you have a hymnal, you may now sing or read "In the Cross of Christ I Glory" (Evangelical Lutheran Worship 324), "Canticle of the Turning" (Evangelical Lutheran Worship 723), "God Alone Be Praised" (All Creation Sings 1023). Selected hymns are provided below for those without a hymnal at home.

[In the Cross of Christ I Glory](#)
[God Alone Be Praised](#)

Then pray these intercessions:

On this third Sunday in Lent, let our prayer reflect the guidance of the Ten Commandments. We respond to each petition with the words "grant us your wisdom, O God."

A brief silence.

O God, our lawgiver, our temple, our wisdom, form your church to worship you alone. As you blessed Gregory the Great, so bless our bishops for their ministry in church and world.

A brief silence.

You are our strength and our redeemer:

grant us your wisdom, O God.

Protect all who call upon the power of your name. As you blessed the martyr Perpetua and her companions, so bless all the baptized who suffer for their faith.

A brief silence.

You are our strength and our redeemer:

grant us your wisdom, O God.

Even during this pandemic, connect us in diverse ways to our worshiping communities, and give to all persons regular rest from their work.

A brief silence.

You are our strength and our redeemer:

grant us your wisdom, O God.

Bless with wisdom all parents and any who are granted authority over others, and give to children the will to honor those who care for them.

A brief silence.

You are our strength and our redeemer:

grant us your wisdom, O God.

Keep the nations of the earth from engaging in war, bloodshed, and torture, and help people of all ages to resist the lure of violence.

A brief silence.

You are our strength and our redeemer:

grant us your wisdom, O God.

Uphold marriages and all commitments of care, and defend all persons, especially children, from sexual abuse.

A brief silence.

You are our strength and our redeemer:

grant us your wisdom, O God.

Guard your earth, its animals and its plant life from all who would take for themselves more than they need.

A brief silence.

You are our strength and our redeemer:

grant us your wisdom, O God.

Train the diverse peoples of our nation to respect one another. As you blessed Harriet Tubman and Sojourner Truth, so bless all who work to end discrimination and the oppression of the vulnerable.

A brief silence.

You are our strength and our redeemer:

grant us your wisdom, O God.

Use our bounty to meet the needs of others, those who are homeless or hungry, and hear our prayers for all who are sick or suffering, especially all afflicted with the coronavirus and all we name here before you. . .

A brief silence.

You are our strength and our redeemer:

grant us your wisdom, O God.

Teach us how to pray, also for ourselves:

A longer period of silence.

You are our strength and our redeemer:

grant us your wisdom, O God.

Receive our thanks for all who have died in the faith, and bring us all at the end into the fullness of your life.

A brief silence.

You are our strength and our redeemer:

grant us your wisdom, O God.

We entrust ourselves and all our prayers to you, O faithful and gracious God, through Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord.

Amen.

If you have a hymnal, you may now sing or read "When I Survey the Wondrous Cross" (Evangelical Lutheran Worship 803), "Be Thou My Vision" (Evangelical Lutheran Worship 793). Selected hymns are provided below for those without a hymnal at home.

[When I Survey the Wondrous Cross](#)

[Be Thou My Vision](#)

Then conclude with these prayers:

Let us pray.

A brief silence is kept before the prayer.

Gracious God, who has named and claimed us,
calling us your beloved children,
you know the secrets of our hearts.

When we sin and stray from your paths,
you astound us with your saving grace.

For this Word of life,

we give you thanks.

Loving Jesus, living Word,
in you the Kingdom of God has come near;
through you all that was lost has been found.
Help us to boldly follow wherever you may lead,
trusting your promise that we need not fear,
for you are with us.

For this Word of life,

we give you thanks.

Holy Spirit, the mystery in which we dwell,
into our scarcity, your abundance flows.
Enliven all communities with your good news.
Guide us to love and serve Jesus,

giving ourselves away for the sake of the world.

For this Word of life,

we give you thanks.

All glory to you, holy God, now and forever.

Amen.

Merciful God, accompany our journey through these forty days. Renew us in the gift of baptism, that we may provide for those who are poor, pray for those in need, fast from self-indulgence, and above all that we may find our treasure in the life of your Son, Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever.

Amen.

Offering Prayer

Faithful God, you walk beside us in desert places, and you meet us in our hunger with bread from heaven. Accompany us in this meal, that we may pass over from death to life with Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord. **Amen.**

Gathered into one by the Holy Spirit, let us pray as Jesus taught us:

Our Father in heaven, hallowed be your name, your kingdom come, your will be done, on earth as in heaven. Give us today our daily bread. Forgive us our sins as we forgive those who sin against us. Save us from the time of trial, and deliver us from evil. For the kingdom, the power, and the glory are yours, now and forever. Amen.

Then speak the Blessing:

Almighty God, Father, + Son and Holy Spirit, bless us now and forever.

Amen.

Devotional Music Links: For your individual or group devotion, you may choose to listen to the following choral recordings made available through Augsburg Fortress: "[Christ, the Solid Rock](#);" "[Just As I Am, without One Plea](#);" "[What Wondrous Love Is This](#)."

Readings for the Week:

Monday Psalm 84. **Tuesday** Hebrews 9:23-28. **Wednesday** (commemoration of Harriet Tubman, 1913; Sojourner Truth, 1883; renewers of society) Mark 11:15-19. **Thursday** Psalm 107:17-22. **Friday** (commemoration of Gregory the Great, Bishop of Rome, 604) Ephesians 1:7-14. **Saturday** Numbers 20:22-29. **Fourth Sunday in Lent** Numbers 21:4-9; Psalm 107:1-3, 17-22; Ephesians 2:1-10; John 3:14-21.

Daily Prayer Resources are available, including simple forms of Morning, Evening, and Night Prayer; Responsive Prayer; and prayers for mealtimes and other occasions.

Due to copyright restrictions, we are only able to provide downloadable hymns that are in the public domain and selected hymns for limited use. Other suggestions provided above may be found in *Evangelical Lutheran Worship*. To purchase copies of *Evangelical Lutheran Worship* and *All Creation Sings* for the home, visit the [Augsburg Fortress website](#) or call 1-800-328-4648. Selected hymns from *All Creation Sings* will be provided for limited use.

Reflection text: Gordon Lathrop. Intercessory Prayer: Gail Ramshaw

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Thank you to those who clean the Church following worship.

Annual Meeting March 14th following worship.

Special Meeting, April 11th following worship.

Synod Assembly, 30 April – 2 May.

Daylight Saving Time begins March 14th, set your clocks ahead.

Please keep in your prayers this week: Kevin Johnson, Barbara Metzger, Rob Johnson and Steve Lindberg (Streeter Family Friend's & Kin), Cal Curtis & Patty Thompson (Carole Holten's Son-in-Law & Sister), Emily (Ben & Casey's Daughter), Bob Broberg, Carole Holten, Donna Jackson-Hein, Lois Goossen (Friend of Newgard's).

Pastor's mid-week message for March 3, 2021

A bright yellow highway department truck creeps along a quiet, city street. A worker slowly climbs out of the truck, and digs a large hole between the sidewalk and street. A few minutes later, a second worker gets out, fills in the hole, and tamps down the dirt. A few yards down the street, they repeat the same procedure, then again and again.

An elderly lady has been watching. She walks over and asks, "What in the world are you doing?"

One of the workers says, "We're on an urban beautification project."

"Beautification?" she asks with dismay. "What's so beautiful about all those filled-in holes?"

"Well, you see," says the worker, "the man who plants the trees is out sick today."

In a ridiculous way, that story reminds us that different people play different roles. When one person does not do his or her job, there is a hole.

There was an interesting story in the newspapers in 1994. The story was datelined Arlington, Texas.

Kenny Rogers of the Texas Rangers baseball team had just pitched the 12th perfect game in modern major league history. The opposing team had no hits, no runs, and no one even reached first base. The game featured a diving catch by rookie outfielder Rusty Greer in the ninth inning to preserve this perfect game. Greer, a center fielder, made a sensational catch of Rex Hudler's lead-off line drive in the ninth. "I was going to give it my best effort whether I caught it or not," Greer said. "No matter what, I was going to dive. I got a pretty good jump, dove, and it fell in my glove." Now here's the question I want to ask you. Did the pitcher hurl a perfect game, or was the entire team – particularly Rusty Greer – responsible for that no-hitter? The answer is, of course, that pitcher could not have done it alone.

In 1 Corinthians 12, St. Paul is writing to the church and says that we are a team. He doesn't compare us to a baseball team, but to the human body. Some of us are hands, says St. Paul, some of us are eyes, some of us are toes. **BUT ALL OF US ARE IMPORTANT.** All of us have a place.

We are all important in the work of Christ. There are no first- or second-class citizens in the Christian community. The hand cannot say to the foot, "I have no need of thee." We are all important whatever our role may be. We all matter in the enterprise to which Christ has called us.

Have a blessed week!