

First St. John Lutheran Church

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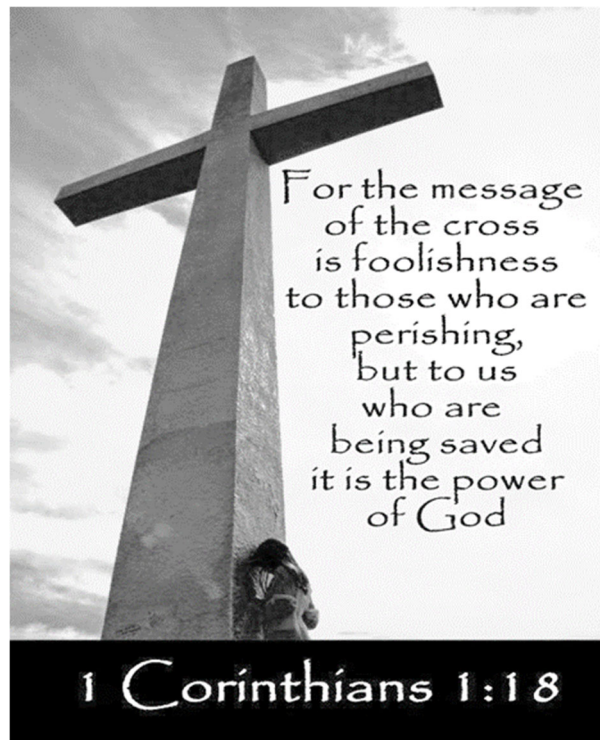
www.firststjohn.com

Rev. Jerald K. Rayl

Annette Slater - Music Director

Dr. Anthony Pattin - Organist

Toni Wilbarger - Secretary



Called through faith; Gathered in worship; Serving the community

March 7, 2021

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Third Sunday in Lent

Welcome to First St. John Lutheran Church! Please review some of our guidelines below.

Masks must be worn. We have some available to take if you don't have one. Some are cloth masks and can be taken home to wash and reuse. There are also disposable masks.

Please do not congregate in the Narthex (entrance area) either as you arrive or leave.

To minimize direct contact, we will use the outside aisles only for entry and exit. The center aisle will be used for communion, special needs, or emergency exit.

Ushers will fill the pews from the front to the back of the church and dismiss from the back to the front. Please follow their directions. We are sorry everyone cannot have their usual seat.

NOTE: We can speak the congregational responses behind our masks. Dr. Tony and Annette Slater will provide music. The service will be recorded and published to the website. We are now live streaming the service on our church website, www.firststjohn.com

Elders will wear gloves. You can get a bulletin at the check-in table when you walk in. Please do not leave your bulletin in the pew when you exit; take it home or put it in the recycling bin at the front door.

There is a small wooden church just to the right of the main door when you come in. It has a slot for your offering.

Restrooms are in the church basement. Go to the Narthex (lobby) and take the left set of steps down. The ladies room is at one end of the hallway, and the men's room is at the other. Return to the Narthex using the opposite set of stairs. Please, one person only in the restroom area.

Diaper Changing: A diaper changing table is available in the ladies restroom in the basement of the church.

Flowers: If you would like to sign up for flowers for a Sunday, please call the church office during the week to check on availability.

ORDER OF WORSHIP

Prelude
Ringing of the Bell

Dr. Pattin

Opening Hymn "Bless Now, O God, the Journey" No. 326
(sung by Annette)

Confession and Forgiveness

P: Blessed be the holy Trinity, (+) one God, the keeper of the covenant, the source of steadfast love, our rock and our redeemer.

C: Amen.

P: God hears us when we cry out and draws us close in Jesus Christ. Let us return to the one who is full of compassion.

(Silence is kept for reflection.)

P: Fountain of living water,

C: pour out your mercy over us. Our sin is heavy, and we long to be free. Rebuild what we have ruined and mend what we have torn. Wash us in your cleansing flood. Make us alive in the Spirit to follow in the way of Jesus, as healers and restorers of the world you so love. Amen.

P: Beloved, God's word never fails. The promise rests on grace: by the saving love of Jesus Christ, through the wisdom and power of God, your sins are (+) forgiven, and God remembers them no more. Journey in the way of Jesus.

C: Amen.

Prayer of the Day

P: The peace of the Lord be with you all.

P: Let us pray. Holy God, heavenly Father, in the waters of the flood you saved the chosen, and in the wilderness of temptation you protected your Son from sin. Renew us in the gift of baptism. May your holy angels be with us, that the wicked foe may have no power over us, through Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever.

C: Amen.

Announcements

FIRST READING: Exodus 20:1-17

This covenant is the third one the church hears in this cycle of readings. After escaping from slavery, the Israelites come to Mount Sinai where God instructs them how to live together in community. The Ten Commandments recognize that God is the creator of all things. Flowing from God, the life of the community flourishes when marked by the basic building blocks recounted here: honesty, trust, fidelity, and respect for life, family, and property.

God 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 an 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 his 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.

Reader: Word of God. Word of Life.

C: Thanks be to God.

PSALM: PSALM 19

The commandment of the LORD gives light to the eyes. (Ps. 19:8)

The heavens declare the glory of God,
and the firmament shows his handiwork.

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

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

(Please stand)

⁴their sound has gone out into all lands,
and their message to the ends of the world.

⁵In the deep has he set a pavilion for the sun;
it comes forth like a bridegroom out of his chamber;
it rejoices like a champion to run its course.

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

⁷The law of the LORD is perfect and revives the soul;
the testimony of the LORD is sure and gives wisdom to the innocent.

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

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

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

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

¹²Who can tell how often he offends?
Cleanse me from my secret faults.

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

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

SECOND READING: 1 Corinthians 1:18-25

Paul's preaching about the salvation God offers through the cross was met with suspicion. How can victory come out of death? Some thought this message was nonsense. But Paul announces that God's wisdom overturns common expectations about who God is and where God intends to be.

The 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.

Reader: Word of God. Word of Life.

C: Thanks be to God.

Lenten Verse "Return to the Lord Your God" (sung by Annette)

*Return to the Lord, your God, for he is gracious and merciful,
Slow to anger, and abounding in steadfast love,
And abounding in steadfast love. (Repeat)*

Gospel Acclamation

P: The Gospel according to St. John Chapter 2.

C: Glory to you, O Lord.

GOSPEL: John 2:13-22

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.

The Passover of the Jews 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 Jews 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 Jews then said, "This temple has been under construction for forty-six years, and will you raise it up in three days?" ²¹But he 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.

Gospel Response

P: This is the Gospel of the Lord.

C: Praise to you, O Christ.

(Please be seated)

SERMON

Sermon Hymn

"Lord Jesus, Think on Me"

Pastor Rayl

No. 599

(sung by Annette)

(Please stand)

Apostles' Creed

I believe in God, the Father almighty,
creator of heaven and earth.

I believe in Jesus Christ, God's only Son, our Lord,

who was conceived by the Holy Spirit,
born of the virgin Mary,
suffered under Pontius Pilate,
was crucified, died, and was buried;
He descended to the dead.
On the third day he rose again;
He ascended into heaven,
and is seated at the right hand of the Father.
He will come again to judge the living and the dead.

I believe in the Holy Spirit,
the holy catholic church,
the communion of saints,
the forgiveness of sins,
the resurrection of the body,
and the life everlasting. Amen.

The Offering (*As you exit, please place your offering in the wooden church in the Narthex if you have not already done so.*)

Musical Offertory

Dr. Pattin

Offering Prayer

P: 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.

C: Amen.

Pastoral Prayer (*Each petition concludes with this response*)

P: Hear us, Lord.

C: Your mercy is great.

The Lord's Prayer (*prayed by all*)

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.

Blessing

P: In faith you are what God made you to be: created in Christ Jesus for good works, chosen as holy and beloved, freed to serve your neighbor. God bless you (+) that you may be a blessing, in the name of the holy and life-giving Trinity.

C: Amen.

Dismissal

P: Go in peace. Share the hope that is in you.

C: Thanks be to God.

Closing Hymn "O Master, Let Me Walk with You" No. 818
(v. 1, 3, & 4 sung by Annette)

Postlude

Dr. Pattin

PARTICIPANTS IN TODAY'S SERVICE

ELDERS

Jeff Smith, Ted Hagedorn

SOLOIST

Annette Slater

SOUND BOARD

Dave Wilbarger

Sacred Space

The path of least resistance can easily pull us from activity to passivity in the spending of our days. If only we could turn off our televisions or withstand the seduction of on-line surfing. If only we could refuse the world's imposition of its priorities on this one life we have to live, banish the *good enough* that greedily crowds out the *best*. If only we could have the empowering energy of Jesus to be kingdom people at all times, not just when it is convenient, comfortable. But our old ways recur, like mold in the basement.

Jesus as a young man claimed the sanctuary as his father's house, a sacred space set apart in the midst of the people. In today's gospel reading we hear him challenging his culture's understanding of this sacred space. Jesus is saddened to see the kingdom of God distracted by the kingdom of earth. He is angered to see the people's vision of the kingdom of God overgrown with weeds; all that is sacred, overrun; sacred space, central to the soul of a people, co-opted for lesser things.

The world in which we have been born is rich beyond measure. How can we create sacred space for God in the here and now? The call to live a larger life may well include a return of sacred space to our homes, our days, our life. For some that means returning Sundays to hours fertile with reflection and rest. For others it may be praying compline at day's end. For still others it may mean working to create housing (sacred space) for the homeless, to lift up the soul of the people in the name of God. Even in the midst of our passivity, God raises us up to be the people of God, the image of God in this world.