



Grace Lutheran Church

Companion Congregation: Msindo Parish in Tanzania

Welcome to Worship

Fourth Sunday in Lent

March 10, 2024

9:00 a.m.

Liturgical worship with piano

Setting 4

OUR STATEMENT OF MISSION

Grace Lutheran Church is a community of faith, centered in worship, held in grace, strengthened in love, sent forth in mission, in Jesus' name.

Welcome! *If this is your first time worshipping at Grace Lutheran, we're glad you are here!*

The following information pertains to how things normally work. Pandemic changes to worship and communion will be announced in worship, and/or in the margins of the bulletin. However our mission, the love we feel for all people, and the ways we care for each other will remain unchanged.

You can learn more about our congregation

- on our website at www.gracedm.org
- by asking a greeter or other members of the congregation
- picking up one of our brief brochures from the Visitor Center in the Gathering Hall, or newsletters in the Entryway.

Worship Online: During times when we are online-only, or when you cannot be with us in person, you can participate in worship on our website or Facebook page @gracelutherandm .

*We worship together in many ways: Standing, sitting, singing, speaking, listening. You are invited to worship in as many (or few) ways as you are comfortable and able. **When following along in the bulletin, the congregation is invited to read the items in bold (often marked with a C:) aloud.***

Large print bulletins are available from the ushers.

Children belong and are welcome in worship! *Children's bulletins are available from the ushers, and activity bags are available outside the doors to the sanctuary. If needed, the **Kids Corner** in the Gathering Hall has puzzles, books, coloring pages and Mega-blocks! This space is intended to offer a place for children to be and play if they need to step of out of worship and during fellowship times.*

Communion – We welcome all people to the Lord's table *to receive Holy Communion. Children ages 3 and above are welcome at the parents' discretion, after meeting for instruction with the pastor. Children not instructed are invited to come forward for a blessing. If you are not able to come forward to take communion, please notify an usher before the service. Then try to sit by the aisle and the pastor will commune you in your pew.*

If you are interested in finding out more about membership at Grace, please contact Pastor Mike at Mike@gracedm.org, 515-276-6873.

Prelude In recognition of Women Composers Day, "Let Us Break Bread Together" - African American folk tune arranged by M. Sobaje (b. 1948)

Welcome

Poetry Prayer

Open Hands

We are born with the ability
to wrap our fingers around another,
to hold tight to what we know.
Maybe that's where the instinct comes from—
this clinging,
this sinking,
this holding on.
Maybe that's why Peter cries, "Never!"
when Jesus must leave.
From the very beginning
we've known how to hold tight.
So I pray:
open up my hands.
Uncurl my fingers
one by one.
Loosen the grip
that I hold unyielding.
Remind me that birds must fly
and children must grow
and leaves must fall.
And even though
we are born with the ability
to hold tight,
we can learn how to love
with open hands.

Please rise in body or in spirit

Call to Worship

L: On our worst days,

C: God is good.

L: On our best days,

C: God is good.

L: When life is consistent,

C: God is good.

L: And when life turns on its head,

C: God is good.

L: Day and night, Monday through Sunday,

C: God is good. God is here. God is love.

L: Hold tight to that good news. Let us worship God!

Gathering Hymn
We are a “singing church,” so we follow the advice of the apostle Paul to teach and admonish “one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing with grace in your hearts to the Lord” (Colossians 3:16).

Confession and Forgiveness

L: There’s a moment in our scripture today when Jesus turns to Peter, named “the rock” of the church, and says, “Get behind me, Satan!” I don’t know about you all, but that’s a pretty bad day for Peter. It’s a pretty bad day when Jesus calls you Satan! Fortunately, this absurd moment comforts me with the knowledge that even Peter made mistakes. Peter, who was given the keys to Heaven. Peter, Jesus’ right-hand man, made mistakes just like me. And still, Jesus chose him. Knowing that, let us speak honestly with God. For even on our worst days, we belong to God, and that will never change. Join me in prayer—

L: Holy God,

C: We often find ourselves moving through a world that does not make sense. Like Peter, we want to yell out, “This should not happen!” We want to control scenarios beyond our reach. We want to hold your world in our hands. Forgive us for the moments when we lead with declarations instead of curiosity. Forgive us for arguing when we could listen. Forgive us for fixating on one truth, when we could open ourselves up to many. Soften our hard edges and teach us how to listen. With hope in our hearts we pray, amen.

L: Friends, no matter how many times you have dug your heels in, no matter how many fights you have wanted to pick with God, no matter how many times you have disagreed, raged, or clung to what you know instead of embracing holy change—we worship a God of grace. Nothing can separate us from God’s love, not even a stubborn attitude or a tense heart. So hear and believe the good news of the gospel: God’s love for us will always be deeper than we can imagine. We are seen. We are loved. And we are forgiven. Now follow Peter, and go be the Church in the world.

C: Amen.

Gathering Hymn “Jesus, Keep Me Near The Cross” #335

L: The Lord be with you.

C: And also with you.

Prayer of the Day

L: Listening God,

C: If we could attach ourselves to you, we would. We would scribble your scripture onto our tender hearts. We would weave your good news into the fiber of our being. We would bind ourselves to you, but instead, we wander. Instead of attaching ourselves to you, we find ourselves swept up in the business of the day. Like a seesaw of faithfulness, we move

back and forth, up and down, constantly trying to find you in the midst of it all. So speak clearly to us now. Quiet the distractions long enough for us to affix ourselves to your good news. We are listening. We are hungry. We are hopeful. Amen.

Please be seated

First Reading: Numbers 21:4-9

⁴From Mount Hor the Israelites set out by the way to the Red Sea, to go around the land of Edom; but the people became impatient on the way. ⁵The people spoke against God and against Moses, "Why have you brought us up out of Egypt to die in the wilderness? For there is no food and no water, and we detest this miserable food." ⁶Then the Lord sent poisonous serpents among the people, and they bit the people, so that many Israelites died. ⁷The people came to Moses and said, "We have sinned by speaking against the Lord and against you; pray to the Lord to take away the serpents from us." So Moses prayed for the people. ⁸And the Lord said to Moses, "Make a poisonous serpent, and set it on a pole; and everyone who is bitten shall look at it and live." ⁹So Moses made a serpent of bronze, and put it upon a pole; and whenever a serpent bit someone, that person would look at the serpent of bronze and live.

L: The Word of the Lord

C: Thanks be to God

Psalms 107: 1-3, 17-22

¹O give thanks to the LORD, for he is good; for his steadfast love endures forever.

²Let the redeemed of the LORD say so, those he redeemed from trouble

³and gathered in from the lands, from the east and from the west, from the north and from the south.

¹⁷Some were sick through their sinful ways, and because of their iniquities endured affliction;

¹⁸they loathed any kind of food, and they drew near to the gates of death.

¹⁹Then they cried to the LORD in their trouble, and he saved them from their distress;

²⁰he sent out his word and healed them, and delivered them from destruction.

²¹Let them thank the LORD for his steadfast love, for his wonderful works to humankind.

²²And let them offer thanksgiving sacrifices, and tell of his deeds with songs of joy.

Reading Notes

Though God provides food and water for the Israelites in the wilderness, they whine and grumble. They forget about the salvation they experienced in the exodus. God punishes them for their sin, but when they repent God also provides a means of healing: a bronze serpent lifted up on a pole.

Reading Notes: *While we were dead in our sinfulness, God acted to make us alive as a gift of grace in Christ Jesus. We are saved not by what we do but by grace through faith. Thus our good works are really a reflection of God's grace at work in our lives.*

Gospel

The Gospel Lesson is a selection from the accounts of the life of our Lord recorded by the four evangelists, St. Matthew, St. Mark, St. Luke, and St. John. Because Christ is with us in the Gospel reading, we stand to honor his presence. We also sing short verses before and after the reading of the Gospel.

Second Reading: Ephesians 2:1-10

¹You were dead through the trespasses and sins ²in which you once lived, following the course of this world, following the ruler of the power of the air, the spirit that is now at work among those who are disobedient. ³All of us once lived among them in the passions of our flesh, following the desires of flesh and senses, and we were by nature children of wrath, like everyone else. ⁴But God, who is rich in mercy, out of the great love with which he loved us ⁵even when we were dead through our trespasses, made us alive together with Christ—by grace you have been saved—⁶and raised us up with him and seated us with him in the heavenly places in Christ Jesus, ⁷so that in the ages to come he might show the immeasurable riches of his grace in kindness toward us in Christ Jesus. ⁸For by grace you have been saved through faith, and this is not your own doing; it is the gift of God—⁹not the result of works, so that no one may boast. ¹⁰For we are what he has made us, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand to be our way of life.

L: The Word of the Lord

C: Thanks be to God

Please rise in body or in spirit

Gospel Acclamation



Re - turn to the Lord, your God, for he is gra - cious and mer - ci - ful,



slow to an - ger, and a - bound - ing in stead-fast love.

L: The Holy Gospel according to Saint Matthew the Sixteenth Chapter.

C: Glory to you, O Lord.

Gospel: Matthew 16:21-23

²¹From that time on, Jesus began to show his disciples that he must go to Jerusalem and undergo great suffering at the hands of the elders and chief priests and scribes, and be killed, and on the third day be raised. ²²And Peter took him aside and began to rebuke him, saying, "God forbid it, Lord! This must never happen to you." ²³But he turned and said to Peter, "Get behind me, Satan! You are a stumbling block to me; for you are setting your mind not on divine things but on human things."

L: The Gospel of the Lord

C: Praise to you, O Christ

Please be seated

Sermon

Please rise in body or in spirit

Hymn of the Day “Come, Thou Fount of Every Blessing”
To the tune of “Savior, Like a Shepherd Lead Us” #789

Come, thou Fount of ev'ry blessing,
tune my heart to sing thy grace;
streams of mercy, never ceasing,
call for songs of loudest praise.
While the hope of endless glory
fills my heart with joy and love,
teach me ever to adore thee;
may I still thy goodness prove.

Here I raise my Ebenezer:
"Hither by thy help I've come";
and I hope, by thy good pleasure,
safely to arrive at home.
Jesus sought me when a stranger,
wand'ring from the fold of God;
he, to rescue me from danger,
interposed his precious blood.

Oh, to grace how great a debtor
daily I'm constrained to be;
let that grace now like a fetter
bind my wand'ring heart to thee.
Prone to wander, Lord, I feel it;
prone to leave the God I love.
Here's my heart, oh, take and seal it;
seal it for thy courts above.

Affirmation of Faith

L: I believe in a God of second chances,

C: a God who sees through my stubbornness and holds my fear with tenderness.

L: I believe that this God of second chances uses ordinary people like Peter to do good in the world.

C: Therefore, I believe and hope that God can use me too.

L: I believe that from time to time, God invites us to imagine the impossible. I believe that from time to time, God invites us to change our minds.

C: This change is holy and important work, although challenging. When fear and scarcity plague me, or when the impossible feels out of reach, I believe that God meets me with grace and invites me to follow.

Prayers of the People

This prayer in the service follows the directive of the Apostle Paul to young Timothy, a pastor: "I urge, then, first of all, that requests, prayers, intercession and thanksgiving be made for everyone – for Kings and all those in authority, that we may live in peaceful and quiet lives in all godliness and holiness."

Offering

As Lutherans, we believe that Christian giving is about worship AND action. As an option to the offering plate, scan this QR code to access our secure digital offering plate.



The Table

In Holy Communion we share in a meal which breaks down barriers. Baptism is profoundly personal, as we are called by name. Holy Communion

L: Thanks be to God for a love like that.

C: Amen.

Prayers of the People

L: Hear us, O God.

C: Your mercy is great.

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

C: Amen.

All: God of love, have mercy on us. Pour out your Spirit upon us. Center us in worship. Hold us in grace. Strengthen us in love. Send us forth in mission. In Jesus' holy name. Amen.

Passing of the Peace

L: The peace of the Lord be with you all,

C: And also with you!

Please be seated

Announcements

Please rise in body or in spirit

Offering Prayer

L: Let us pray,

C: 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.

Invitation to the Table

L: In the night in which he was betrayed...

L: Lord, remember us in your kingdom and teach us to pray.

Lord's Prayer

**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.**

Invitation to Communion

L: Bread for the journey. A feast for hungry hearts. Come!

Please be seated

Lamb of God



Lamb of God, you take a-way the sin of the world; have mer-cy on



us. Lamb of God, you take a-way the sin of the world; have



mer-cy on us. Lamb of God, you take a - way the



sin of the world; grant us peace, grant us peace.

Distribution Hymns: #751 (3x), #474, #515, #488

Centering Prayer

There will be two minutes of silence for centering prayer. Speak this invitation in the silence of your heart: I consent and surrender to your action and presence in my life.

Please rise in body or in spirit

Prayer after Communion

L: 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.

C: Amen.

Benediction

L: Beloved wanderer, as you leave this place, may you carry your curious heart on your sleeve. May you look for God in every face.

*ion moves from per-
sonal into connecting
us with one another.
In this meal, we are
all made one. There is
no one higher or low-
er, worthy than an-
other. We gather
around The Table in
worship and then as
we gather in other
places, at home,
work, or other, the
tables become exten-
sions of the Table. The
work of unity in this
meal, initiated by
Christ, is extended out
into the world.*

Communion Today
we will receive Holy
Communion through
wafers and pouring
chalice. The line forms
from the front pews
to the back, with the
ambo side of the aisle
going first followed by
the organ side. Please
use the hand sanitizer
provided before you
receive the gluten free
wafer. Then proceed
to the tray of cups.
Both wine and grape
juice will be available.
Please place your cup
in the basket by the
side aisle as you re-
turn to the pew.

May you find the courage to get out of the boat, to run to the tomb, and to speak of your faith. And when the world falls apart, may you hear God's voice deep within, saying, "Take heart, it is I, be not afraid." You are called. You are blessed. In both your ups and your downs, you always belong to God. Go now in peace. Go trusting that good news.

C: Amen

Sending Hymn "When I Survey The Wondrous Cross" #803

Dismissal

L: Go in peace. Share your bread.

C: Thanks be to God.

Postlude Little Prelude and Fugue in D-minor - Bach

*Liturgy adapted from Sarah Speed | A Sanctified Art LLC |
sanctifiedart.org*

How to do Centering Prayer

Find a quiet space where you are unlikely to be disturbed.

Sit in a way that allows you to be relaxed in body and alert in mind. Use a chair, meditation cushion or prayer rug, according to your own physical needs and preferences.

Gently close your eyes.

Allow your heart to open toward that invisible but always present Origin of all that exists.

Use a “sacred word.” This is a word that helps you to let go of thoughts. It is a reminder of your intention to remain open to the silence and return to God. Whenever you become aware of a thought, no matter what its nature, let it go, returning to God through the sacred word.

Continue this practice for 20 minutes. At the end of the time get up and go about your business, leaving the practice behind, in the same way you let go of your thoughts.

People who are just beginning, and are particularly restless in mind and body, may find it easier to start off with shorter prayer periods, perhaps only 5 minutes per sit to start. Then after a few days extend the time to 10 minutes and so on until you are able to sit for 20 minutes. Give the practice at least 2 weeks before you decide if it is right for you.

Two 20-30 minute sits per day are considered ideal. It is strongly recommended that no one meditate for more than 60 minutes a day unless you are attending a structured retreat with experienced leaders

Welcome to Grace!

Ministers —the people of Grace

Pastor –

The Rev. Michael Schmidtmike@gracedm.org

Vicar

Adam Bardenadam@gracedm.org

Organist –

Rich Snyder.....rich@gracedm.org

Piano Accompanist, Music Ensemble Coordinator –

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Jessica Flannery.....jessica@gracedm.org

Custodian – Todd Haugen

Usher – Carter Woodruff

Greeter –

Poem Reader – Carol Woodruff

Lector – Roland Zimany

Communion Assistant –

Altar Guild – Sue Anderson & Jane Ridnour

Tech Crew – Greg Boeschen, Jamie Briggs, Chuck Denton, Paul Nelson, Jon Rissman, & Amy Schmelzer

Counters – Mark Stumme & Jason Galle

Coffee & Donuts – Mike and Marilyn Nizzi



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