

Treasure



1st Sunday in Lent

February 21, 2021



Ascension Lutheran Church

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All are welcome!

HOLY VESSELS



A LENTEN SEASON OF RECOVERY

Introduction

In this Lenten “season of recovery” for our physical, communal, mental, intellectual, and environmental health, we will explore the healing narratives of Jesus that tell of divine solidarity with human suffering and remind us that we can begin a journey toward making something beautiful from that which is seemingly broken. Beach glass offers us a multifaceted symbol of this transformative process.

GATHER

*People gather around Jesus as his reputation becomes known from town to town.
As we gather virtually or physically, we too are yearning for presence,
for peace, for help.*

Welcome to Worship

P Each of us is created a precious and holy vessel of embodied love. We have been through a harrowing time since last Lent that has shattered our sense of wholeness—body, mind, and spirit—like a glass vessel fractured into pieces. Let us enter a Lenten “season of recovery” as we focus on Jesus, the Healer of our every ill.

**Vessels, holy and whole
Broken, needing the One
Open, body and soul
Healer, come.**

P Beach glass begins as something whole and yet discarded. As it is tumbled by the sea, it is broken and polished until it becomes a treasured “mineral gem.” We do not embrace that suffering is necessary or God-given, but that suffering is a part of life. When pain comes and brokenness enters our lives, Jesus reaches out to touch and remind us of the Treasure that we *all* are—worthy of new life in the midst of hopelessness. In a year when pandemic has wreaked havoc on our world, we begin by affirming our journey to physical health.

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APPROACH

People opened their lives to Jesus. We are drawn to the Healer—opening our hearts with honesty about our lives and finding assurance that offers peace.

Prayer of Confession

P Lent developed into a season of intense inward reflection and confession centuries after the life of Jesus. Yet, as we will see, Jesus encouraged people to open up about their lives—to speak truth—no matter how broken. This is the beginning of compassion for ourselves and others. It is the beginning of healing. The Latin origins of the word “confess” is to “study and acknowledge.” This will be a season of studying how we can be a healing presence in our community. To do this, we acknowledge our need to restore our own Holy Vessels.

Let us pray:

Creator God,

We are bodies fashioned by your hand in your own image,
shapes and colors of diverse and immense beauty.

And yet too often we have ignored the sacred nature of our physical lives.

The Holy Vessels you have fashioned are tired and suffering,
ravaged by months of disrupted rhythms and ailment.

Our fragility has come into full view and we are frightened.

We cannot fathom the proportions of loss and so we look away,
sometimes even from our own needs.

P

Help us, Healer.

Show us our strength.

Forgive our inertia.

Move us to move one step at a time toward greater care.

In this silence, we sense and acknowledge our yearning for wholeness.

Silence is kept for reflection

**Vessels, holy and whole
Broken, needing the One
Open, body and soul
Healer, come.**

Assurance

P I invite you to feel a warmth begin to arise within the core of your body. It may help to keep your eyes closed. Imagine a warm orb of light deep within you. This warm glow begins to emerge from the recesses of your inner being to fill and flood your whole body until your skin is glowing with it, radiating outward. You are surrounded by light. Feel this warmth wrap you as a blanket of assurance.

Know this: God's love and grace surround you...

No. Matter. What.

You are a precious and holy vessel *right now*.

Christ's light is a treasure given freely.

For you, for me, for all.

Take a deep breath in to let this truth fill you...
and breathe out with the relief of assurance.

Peace

P I invite you to imagine the warmth that surrounds you extending to those who may be next to you in close proximity.

Imagine it extending beyond your walls to the neighborhood...

the wider community...

the church...

and seeing it spread like the rising sun, let it expand to all the world.

Let this be our peace. Amen.

I invite you to open your eyes.

The peace of Christ is with you.

All And also with you.

Opening Song

Healer of Our Every Ill

Refrain

Healer of our ev'ry ill, light of each tomorrow,
give us peace beyond our fear, and hope beyond our sorrow.

1 You who know our fears and sadness,
grace us with your peace and gladness;
Spirit of all comfort, fill our hearts. *Refrain*

3 Give us strength to love each other,
ev'ry sister, ev'ry brother;
Spirit of all kindness, be our guide. *Refrain*

Text: Marty Haugen, b. 1950

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BELIEVE

People were fortified by Jesus' words and deeds that revealed care for all—especially those marginalized. We strengthen our belief in the possibility for renewed health and vigor for all.

A Contemporary Word

Where there is ruin, there is hope for a treasure.

— Rumi

An Ancient Word

P The Holy Gospel according to St. Mathew, the 8th chapter.

All Glory to you, O Lord.

When Jesus had come down from the mountain, great crowds followed him; and there was a leper who came to him and knelt before him, saying, “Lord, if you choose, you can make me clean.” He stretched out his hand and touched him, saying, “I do choose. Be made clean!” Immediately his leprosy was cleansed. Then Jesus said to him, “See that you say nothing to anyone; but go, show yourself to the priest, and offer the gift that Moses commanded, as a testimony to them.”

That evening they brought to him many who were possessed with demons; and he cast out the spirits with a word, and cured all who were sick. This was to fulfill what had been spoken through the prophet Isaiah, “He took our infirmities and bore our diseases.”

Matthew 8: 1-4; 16-17

P The Gospel of our Lord.

All Praise to you, O Christ.

Apostles' Creed

P Let us join together with one voice confessing our faith with the words of the 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,
he is seated at the right hand of the Father,
and he will come 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.**

ASK

People who were healed by Jesus were not afraid to ask. And so we come before the Holy One, making our petitions and desires known, trusting the work of the Spirit.

Prayers of Intercession

L Healer of our every ill,
especially our malady of separation and fear,
we come before you to make our petitions known.
Hear our cries for healing of body, mind, and spirit.
We know that already you are at work among us,
showing us the way to recovery from the toxicities and grief of our time.

As demolished pieces that are treasured when found,
we trust that beauty from brokenness is possible
when we seek to bind together that which is wounded.

We pray especially for those who have experienced
the physical loss of family and friends in the pandemic
and those who are still suffering the consequences of the illness.
We pray for each person who suffers in body in other ways—
weariness from inactivity or weariness from overactivity in this time.

We pray for those whose treatment of maladies have been put on hold
and those who suffered isolation in their illness, whatever the cause.
We pray grateful thanks for the medical staff everywhere around the
world who have shown unbelievable strength and stamina
and we mourn the demise of too many caregivers
who risked their lives for our sake.

L And so we lift our prayers spoken and unspoken to you, O Lord, as you hear the cries of our hearts.

Lord, in your mercy.

All You hear our prayer.

Song of Preparation

Make Us Holy, Make Us Whole

In your love, make us whole.
May we rest in your compassion.
Calm the lost, weary soul
in the warmth of your love.
May your peace fill our hearts.
May we know the love of Jesus.
By your grace, you console.
Make us holy, make us whole.

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Mark Friedman

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KNOW

The parting words Jesus gave to those he healed were often as much balm as the healing act itself. We hear the words of encouragement from the One who makes beauty from brokenness.

Holy Communion

P Our God is with you!

All And also with you!

P Lift up your hearts

All We lift them up to our God.

P Let us give thanks to our Sovereign God

All It is right to give our thanks and praise.

P It is right, and a good and joyful thing,
always and everywhere to give thanks to you,
In the beginning you breathed life into raw materials,
creating and animating containers of beauty and goodness.
We, your Holy Vessels, were fired in the kiln of love
until we shined with your light.
Susceptible to shattering, we find ourselves broken,
unable at times to remember your promise of repair.
You remind us time and again that, though broken,
we are held in your presence
and made whole by your grace.

P When Jesus ascended,
he promised to be with us always.
In the power of your Word and Holy Spirit,
we are not alone.

On the night in which he gave himself up for us,
he took bread, gave thanks to you, broke the bread,
gave it to his disciples, and said:
“Take, eat; this is my body which is given for you.
Do this in remembrance of me.”

When the supper was over, he took the cup,
gave thanks to you, gave it to his disciples, and said:
“Drink from this, all of you;
this is my blood of the new covenant,
poured out for you and for many
for the forgiveness of sins.
Do this, as often as you drink it,

All Amen.

The Lord's Prayer

P Joining with all who are being transformed, let us pray the prayer Jesus taught us.

**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.**

All 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,

The Invitation and The Meal

P Beloved: here is bread; here is wine. Here is Jesus.
Come and be fed.

Sharing the Meal

Post Communion Blessing

P The body and blood of our Lord Jesus Christ strengthen you and keep you in his grace.

All Amen

RESPOND

*Scriptural accounts of healing often end with responses from the “crowd” of witnesses.
How will we proceed into the brokenness of this world and respond as
the Body of Christ?*

Stewardship of Life & Ministry Announcements

Sending Song

Spirit Song

Verse 1

Oh let the Son of God enfold you with His Spirit and His love
Let Him fill your heart and satisfy your soul.
Oh let Him have those things that hold you and His Spirit like a dove
Will descend upon your life and make you whole.

Chorus

Jesus oh Jesus Come and fill Your lambs
Jesus oh Jesus Come and fill Your lambs

Verse 2

Oh come and sing this song with gladness
As your hearts are filled with joy
Lift your hands in sweet surrender to His name
Oh give Him all your tears and sadness
Give Him all your years of pain
And you'll enter into life in Jesus' name

CCLI Song # 27824

John Wimber

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Blessing

P Now go with confidence as “Treasures of God,”
recovering your depth of love for all
and our joy of living in this world.

May the words of Jesus ring in your ears:
“I do choose you.”

And may the Spirit hover, move, and deliver
salve to your soul✝ and a spring in your step.

All Amen.

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