

Safe Keeping



2nd Sunday in Lent

February 28, 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 We continue our Lenten “season of recovery” as we focus on health as essential to our spiritual lives.

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

P God gathers us as a Beachcomber gathers and marvels at every precious surviving piece of beach glass she finds. We are never alone, we are never lost to the One who seeks humanity’s wholeness. We affirm our commitment to be the Body of Christ that knows we cannot be personally healed until we see the interconnected community as part of the process of healing. Jesus has the power to re-vision the family of God in which false boundaries are overcome. In a year of devastating loss of livelihood, we consider the economic health that reimagines the status

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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 Let us acknowledge our need to restore, repair, renew our Holy Vessels, which include the communities of which we are a part.

Let us pray:

God of All,

You created us for each other. You set in us a yearning for companionship and an empathy that binds us together, protecting each other and delighting in one another.

Yet too often we have broken down our relationships instead of building them up.

We have been set against one another with the lie of scarcity.

We have built systems and economies that widen the gap of resources rather than safeguarding equitable practices.

Too many, and growing numbers, are suffering hardship, food insecurity, joblessness.

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

Help us, Healer.

Show us our empathy.

Forgive our complacency.

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

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

[Silence is kept for reflection](#)

Vessels, holy and whole  
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Healer, come.

## Assurance

*P* Again this week, I invite you to imagine a warmth begin to arise within the core of your body. It may help to keep your eyes closed. This warm orb of light is deep within you, a flame always there and ready when you need it. 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. This warmth that wraps you as a blanket of assurance is one you want to share. You want all to feel this presence, to kindle this hope.

Know this: This love and security is meant for all people.

**No. Matter. What.**

We are capable of sharing our light and not running out of “enough.”  
Christ’s hospitality that broke through false boundaries points the way.  
For you, for me, for all.

Take a deep breath in to let this truth fill you...

## 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...

*P* 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

### Will You Let Me be Your Servant?

- 1 Will you let me be your servant, let me be as Christ to you?  
Pray that I may have the grace to let you be my servant, too.
- 2 We are pilgrims on a journey, we are trav'lers on the road;  
we are here to help each other walk the mile and bear the load.
- 3 I will hold the Christ-light for you in the nighttime of your fear;  
I will hold my hand out to you, speak the peace you long to hear.
- 4 I will weep when you are weeping; when you laugh I'll laugh with you.  
I will share your joy and sorrow till we've seen this journey through.

CCLI Song # 72673

Richard Gillard

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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

“I alone cannot change the world,  
but I can cast a stone across the waters to create many ripples.”

– **Mother Teresa**

## An Ancient Word

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

**All Glory to you, O Lord.**

When he entered Capernaum, a centurion came to him, appealing to him and saying, “Lord, my servant is lying at home paralyzed, in terrible distress.” And he said to him, “I will come and cure him.” The centurion answered, “Lord, I am not worthy to have you come under my roof; but only speak the word, and my servant will be healed. For I also am a man under authority, with soldiers under me; and I say to one, ‘Go,’ and he goes, and to another, ‘Come,’ and he comes, and to my slave, ‘Do this,’ and the slave does it.” When Jesus heard him, he was amazed and said to those who followed him, “Truly I tell you, in no one in Israel have I found such faith. I tell you, many will come from east and west and will eat with Abraham and Isaac and Jacob in the kingdom of heaven, while the heirs of the kingdom will be thrown into the outer darkness, where there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth.” And to the centurion Jesus said, “Go; let it be done for you according to your faith.” And the servant was healed in that hour.

*Matthew 8: 5-13*

*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 broken pieces scattered and separated,  
we trust that you are seeking us, gathering us into wholeness,  
and calling us to join you in the quest.

We pray especially for those who have experienced  
the loss of livelihoods and economic security  
and are feeling helpless to care for their families.

We pray for those whose businesses have gone under  
or are on the precipice between survival or closure.

We pray for those whose disparity of resources  
has been made even more pronounced during this pandemic.

We pray grateful thanks for the efforts of all who have been searching for  
solutions and have given generously for months of their time and  
resources to alleviate the suffering of those they know and do not know.

We ask for encouragement and passion to re-evaluate  
how we as a church can help now and into the future.

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.

CCLI Song # 3315976

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

*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

### I Will Follow

#### Verse 1

All Your ways are good, All Your ways are sure.  
I will trust in You alone.  
Higher than my sight, High above my life,  
I will trust in You alone.

#### Chorus

Where You go I'll go .Where You stay I'll stay.  
When You move I'll move. I will follow.

#### Verse 2

Light into the world. Light into my life  
I will live for You alone.  
You're the One I seek, knowing I will find,  
All I need in You alone. *Chorus*

#### Bridge

In You there's life everlasting. In You there's freedom for my soul.  
In You there's joy unending joy. And I will follow. *Chorus*

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## Blessing

*P* Now go with confidence that the Holy Beachcomber is gathering us all  
for “Safe Keeping,”  
recovering our depth of love for all  
and our joy of living in this world.

May the words of Jesus ring in your ears:  
“I will come.”

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

**All Amen.**

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Holy Vessels

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