

Different Pictures



4th Sunday in Lent

March 14, 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 Prolonged times of difficulty can impede our ability to stay creative. The picture of our lives is dulled and hope for a brighter future can fade. We need a touch of inspiration to awaken us from our sleep, as we hear in one of this week’s healing stories. We also awaken to our agency to seek out the Divine Healer, reaching out to touch the power we know can restore our intellect and imagination. We emerge ready to re-engage with the world, seeking and seeing solutions, creating different pictures of life renewed just as a mosaic artist creates beauty from broken pieces of glass.

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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 so that we might be able to create and imagine new possibilities, new solutions.

Let us pray:

God of All Possibilities,

Made in your image, you have tasked us as co-creators of a better world.

You bestowed imagination and the ability to learn and progress.

But we are tired. Our energy wanes and enthusiasm wanes.

The call for ideas, solutions, work-arounds and adaptations has been non-stop for us all—whether we are needing to find ways to keep children engaged and well, or figuring out how to maintain a passion for our work win the midst of trying times, or needing desperately to undo systems of oppression too long affecting our lives and the lives of our neighbors.

Not only our livelihoods, but our liveliness is at stake.

Too often we want to give up, declare it all too hard and simply isolate, waiting out the time for better days.

It all feels overwhelming and so we look away, sometimes even from the need in our own community.

Help us, Healer.

Show us our energy reserves.

Forgive our cynicism.

P 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
Broken, needing the One
Open, body and soul
Healer, come.**

Assurance

P 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 ignite and spark inspiration. It floods your whole body until your skin is glowing with it, radiating outward. This light from you offers a beacon for those around you, whose own light reflects and multiplies your own. There is now exponentially more radiance.

Know this: We are gifted with agency to affect healing in the world.

No. Matter. What.

We are not alone and we can join with others to magnify hope.

Christ will answer when we call, when we reach out for what we know can help.

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

Mighty To Save

Verse 1

Ev'ryone needs compassion, Love that's never failing

Let mercy fall on me.

Ev'ryone needs forgiveness, The kindness of a Saviour

The hope of nations.

Chorus

Saviour, He can move the mountains

My God is mighty to save. He is mighty to save

Forever Author of salvation, He rose and conquered the grave

Jesus conquered the grave.

Verse 2

So take me as You find me, all my fears and failures;

Fill my life again.

I give my life to follow ev'rything I believe in.

Now I surrender. *Chorus*

Bridge

Shine your light and let the whole world see
We're singing for the glory of the risen King, Jesus
Shine your light and let the whole world see
We're singing for the glory of the risen King.

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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

“The authentic self is the soul made visible.”

—Anonymous—

An Ancient Word

P The Holy Gospel according to St. Mathew, the 9th chapter.

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

While he was saying these things to them, suddenly a leader of the synagogue came in and knelt before him, saying, “My daughter has just died; but come and lay your hand on her, and she will live.” And Jesus got up and followed him, with his disciples. Then suddenly a woman who had been suffering from hemorrhages for twelve years came up behind him and touched the fringe of his cloak, for she said to herself, “If I only touch his cloak, I will be made well.” Jesus turned, and seeing her he said, “Take heart, daughter; your faith has made you well.” And instantly the woman was made well. When Jesus came

to the leader's house and saw the flute players and the crowd making a commotion, he said, "Go away; for the girl is not dead but sleeping." And they laughed at him. But when the crowd had been put outside, he went in and took her by the hand, and the girl got up. And the report of this spread throughout that district.

Matthew 9: 18-26

P The Gospel of our Lord.

All Praise to you, O Christ.

Sermon

Pr. Debra Jimenez

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 exhausted spirits,
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.

You remind us that we do not have to shoulder everything alone.
We give you thanks that all we must do is orient ourselves toward your
divine spirit to accompany us, touch us, inspire us, heal us.

We pray especially for all who feel opportunity and possibility is
cut off to them, whose spirit is continually dampened and damaged by
those who fail to see value in their contributions, who steal away
rights to the fullness of expression.

We give thanks for communities, churches, non-profits, and businesses
that are supporting the flourishing of all voices, especially voices
that have been silenced.

L We give thanks for the courage of innovators who use their resources and creativity to make more good in the world, making this a priority over profit.

We ask for courage and encouragement to re-evaluate how we as a church can join this effort now and into the future.

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

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.

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.

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

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

Be Thou My Vision

- 1 Be thou my vision, O Lord of my heart;
naught be all else to me, save that thou art:
thou my best thought both by day and by night,
waking or sleeping, thy presence my light.
- 2 Be thou my wisdom, and thou my true word;
I ever with thee and thou with me, Lord.
Thou my soul's shelter, and thou my high tow'r,
raise thou me heav'nward, O Pow'r of my pow'r.
- 3 Riches I heed not, nor vain, empty praise,
thou mine inheritance, now and always:
thou and thou only, the first in my heart,
great God of heaven, my treasure thou art.
- 4 Light of my soul, after victory won,
may I reach heaven's joys, O heaven's Sun!
Heart of my own heart, whatever befall,
still be my vision, O Ruler of all.

Blessing

P Now go with confidence that we will awaken, we will seek out and reach for the healing solutions that our neighbors,
our communities,
our world needs,
recovering our depth of love for all
and our joy of living in this world.

May the words of Jesus ring in your ears:
“You are not dead, you are sleeping.”

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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