

# **Amazing Grace Lutheran Church**

## **Sunday, March 17, 2024**

### **The Fifth Sunday in Lent**

**Centering Music: Prelude for Lent  
A Reflection on the Cross**

**Stephen DeCesare  
Heather Sorenson**

### **Welcome**

*Lent is a kind of journey. We start with ashes on our foreheads—a reminder that our journey will someday end. We complete the journey with Christ in Jerusalem, on the cross, and in the empty tomb. We are buoyed by God's covenantal promises along the way.*

### **Call to Worship (Psalm 119)**

Blessed are you, O Lord;

**Instruct us in your statutes.**

How shall the young keep their way clean?

**By knowing and keeping your word.**

We take greater delight in the way of your decrees

**Than in all manner of riches.**

We will meditate on your commandments.

**We will delight in your statutes and not forget your word.**

### **Confession and Forgiveness**

Blessed be the holy Trinity, ☩ one God, who writes the law on our hearts, who draws all people together through Jesus.

**Amen.**

Held in God's mercy, let us confess our sin in the presence of God and of one another.

*Silence is kept for reflection.*

Holy God,

**we confess that we are caught in snares of sin  
and cannot break free.**

**We hoard resources while our neighbors  
are hungry and cold.**

**We speak in ways that silence others.**

**We are silent when we should speak up.**

**We keep score in our hearts.**

**We let hurts grow into hatred.**

**For all these things and for sins only you know,  
forgive us, Lord.**

**Amen.**

Here is a flood of grace:

Out of love for the whole world,  
 God draws near to us,  
 breaks every snare of sin,  
 washes away our wrongs,  
 and restores the promise of life through † Jesus Christ.  
**Amen.**

## Gathering Hymn: Eternal Lord of Love, Behold Your Church

**ELW 321**

### Eternal Lord of Love, Behold Your Church



1 E - ter - nal Lord of love, be - hold your church  
 2 So dai - ly dy - ing to the way of self,  
 3 If dead in you, so in you we a - rise,

walk - ing once more the pil - grim way of Lent,  
 so dai - ly liv - ing in your way of love,  
 you the first - born of all the faith - ful dead;

led by your cloud by day, by night your fire,  
 we walk the road, Lord Je - sus, that you trod,  
 and as through ston - y ground the green shoots break,

moved by your love and toward your pres - ence bent:  
 know - ing our - selves bap - tized in - to your death:  
 glo - rious in spring - time dress of leaf and flow'r,

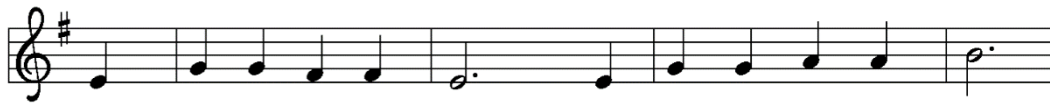
far off yet here— the goal of all de - sire.  
 so we are dead and live with you in God.  
 so in - to life and glo - ry shall we wake.

Text: Thomas H. Cain, 1931–2003  
 Music: OLD 124TH, *Trente quatre psaumes de David*, Geneva, 1551  
 Text © Thomas H. Cain. Used by permission of estate.

## Greeting

The grace of our Lord, Jesus Christ, the love of God, and the communion of the Holy Spirit be with you all.  
**And also with you.**

## Kyrie (ELW Setting 10)



- 1 Have mer - cy on us, Lord, and hear our sol - emn prayer.
- 2 Have mer - cy on us, Christ, and wash a - way our sin.
- 3 Have mer - cy on us, Lord; make sin and shame de - part.



We come to hear your liv - ing word; it saves us from de - spair.  
Pour out your grace and make us whole that new life may be - gin.  
Re - new us with your sav - ing pow'r; cre - ate in us new hearts!

### Canticle of Praise (ELW Setting 10) *Verse 3*



- 1 Glo - ry be to God in heav - en; peace, good - will to all the earth.
- 2 Glo - ry be to Christ for - ev - er, Lamb of God and Lord of love.
- 3 Ho - ly One we now ac - claim you; Lord a - lone, to you we call;



Might - y God of all cre - a - tion, Fa - ther of sur - pass - ing worth:  
Son of God and gra - cious Sav - ior, you have come from heav'n a - bove;  
Ho - ly One in faith we name you, God most high, yet near to all:



we ex - alt you, we a - dore you, we lift high our thanks and praise.  
on the cross you died to save us; now you reign at God's right hand.  
Je - sus Christ, with God the Spir - it, in the Fa - ther's splen - dor bright.



Saints and an - gels bow be - fore you; here on earth our songs we raise.  
Hear our prayer; re - store, for - give us; in your prom - ise firm we stand.  
For the peace that we in - her - it, glo - ry be to God on high!

### Prayer of the Day

O God,

**with steadfast love you draw us to yourself, and in mercy you receive our prayers. Strengthen us to bring forth the fruits of the Spirit, that through life and death we may live in your Son, Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. Amen.**

## **First Reading: Jeremiah 31:31-34**

*The Judeans in Babylon blamed their exile on their ancestors, who had broken the covenant established at Sinai. Here the prophet looks to a day when God will make a new covenant with the people. There will be no need to teach the law, because God will write it on their hearts.*

<sup>31</sup>The days are surely coming, says the Lord, when I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel and the house of Judah. <sup>32</sup>It will not be like the covenant that I made with their ancestors when I took them by the hand to bring them out of the land of Egypt—a covenant that they broke, though I was their husband, says the Lord. <sup>33</sup>But this is the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel after those days, says the Lord: I will put my law within them, and I will write it on their hearts; and I will be their God, and they shall be my people. <sup>34</sup>No longer shall they teach one another, or say to each other, “Know the Lord,” for they shall all know me, from the least of them to the greatest, says the Lord; for I will forgive their iniquity, and remember their sin no more.

The word of the Lord.

**Thanks be to God!**

## **Second Reading: Hebrews 5:5-10**

*Using priestly imagery and references to the Old Testament, the author explains how Christ lived in trusting obedience to God, and so God has made Christ the source of our eternal salvation.*

<sup>5</sup>Christ did not glorify himself in becoming a high priest, but was appointed by the one who said to him,

“You are my Son,  
today I have begotten you”;

<sup>6</sup>as he says also in another place,

“You are a priest forever,  
according to the order of Melchizedek.”

<sup>7</sup>In the days of his flesh, Jesus offered up prayers and supplications, with loud cries and tears, to the one who was able to save him from death, and he was heard because of his reverent submission. <sup>8</sup>Although he was a Son, he learned obedience through what he suffered; <sup>9</sup>and having been made perfect, he became the source of eternal salvation for all who obey him, <sup>10</sup>having been designated by God a high priest according to the order of Melchizedek.

The word of the Lord.

**Thanks be to God.**

## **Gospel Acclamation**

Unless a grain of wheat falls to the earth and dies,

**It remains a single grain;**

But if it dies,

**It bears much fruit.**

## **Gospel Reading: John 12:20-33**

<sup>20</sup>Now among those who went up to worship at the festival were some Greeks. <sup>21</sup>They came to Philip, who was from Bethsaida in Galilee, and said to him, “Sir, we wish to see Jesus.” <sup>22</sup>Philip went and told Andrew; then Andrew and Philip

went and told Jesus. <sup>23</sup>Jesus answered them, "The hour has come for the Son of Man to be glorified. <sup>24</sup>Very truly, I tell you, unless a grain of wheat falls into the earth and dies, it remains just a single grain; but if it dies, it bears much fruit. <sup>25</sup>Those who love their life lose it, and those who hate their life in this world will keep it for eternal life. <sup>26</sup>Whoever serves me must follow me, and where I am, there will my servant be also. Whoever serves me, the Father will honor.

<sup>27</sup>"Now my soul is troubled. And what should I say—'Father, save me from this hour'? No, it is for this reason that I have come to this hour. <sup>28</sup>Father, glorify your name." Then a voice came from heaven, "I have glorified it, and I will glorify it again." <sup>29</sup>The crowd standing there heard it and said that it was thunder. Others said, "An angel has spoken to him." <sup>30</sup>Jesus answered, "This voice has come for your sake, not for mine. <sup>31</sup>Now is the judgment of this world; now the ruler of this world will be driven out. <sup>32</sup>And I, when I am lifted up from the earth, will draw all people to myself." <sup>33</sup>He said this to indicate the kind of death he was to die.

The Gospel of our Lord.

**Praise to you, O Christ!**

## Message

### Hymn of the Day: Now the Green Blade Rises

**ELW 379**

#### Now the Green Blade Rises

1 Now the green blade ris - es from the bur - ied grain,  
 2 In the grave they laid him, love by ha - tred slain,  
 3 Forth he came at Eas - ter like the ris - en grain,  
 4 When our hearts are win - try, griev - ing, or in pain,

wheat that in dark earth man - y days has lain;  
 think - ing that he would nev - er wake a - gain,  
 he that for three days in the grave had lain;  
 your touch can call us back to life a - gain,

love lives a - gain, that with the dead has been;  
 laid in the earth like grain that sleeps un - seen;  
 raised from the dead, my liv - ing Lord is seen;  
 fields of our hearts that dead and bare have been;

love is come a - gain like wheat a - ris - ing green.

Text: John MacLeod Campbell Crum, 1872–1958

Music: NOËL NOUVELET, French carol

Text from *Oxford Book of Carols*. © Oxford University Press 1928. All rights reserved.

## **Confession of Faith**

Living together in trust and hope, let us confess our faith.

**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.**

## **Prayers of Intercession**

Trusting in God's promise to reconcile all things, let us pray for the church, the well-being of creation, and a world in need.

*A brief silence.*

God of the covenant, through the church you draw us into community. We give thanks for the means of grace around which we gather. Inspire writers, musicians, and artists whose creative gifts adorn our worship. Hear us, O God.

**Your mercy is great.**

God of all that exists, you lavish the earth with extravagant beauty. Preserve the rich and complex diversity of living things. Support local, national, and international efforts to protect the environment for future generations. Hear us, O God.

**Your mercy is great.**

God of the nations, you desire peace and plenty for all people. Defend those who challenge oppression and expose corruption. Support advocates for human rights, social justice, and the welfare of children, especially our partners at Isaiah, Neighbors Inc., Cherish All Children, and Lutheran Social Services. Hear us, O God.

**Your mercy is great.**

God of good will, you restore what is broken. We pray for any experiencing estrangement, conflict, or abuse in families and intimate relationships. Protect and comfort all who are vulnerable, especially those living in institutions. Hear us, O God.

**Your mercy is great.**

God of every time and place, you are with us. Support ministries of prayer and presence in this congregation. Move us all to reach out to any who are homebound, lonely, grieving, in treatment, or ill. Hear us, O God.

**Your mercy is great.**

*Here other intercessions may be offered.*

God of promise, we give thanks for the saints whose faith inspires us especially Patrick, missionary to Ireland, whom we commemorate today. Grant us faith to trust in your everlasting love. Hear us, O God.

**Your mercy is great.**

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

**Amen.**

## Peace

The peace of Christ be with you always.

**And also with you.**

## Offering

*AGLC gives in the style of our Tanzanian partners. You may place any gift in the basket as you come forward for communion. If you don't have a physical gift to share, you are encouraged to dip your hand in the basket as a reminder that God uses you to do God's work in the world.*

## Offering Song: Create in Me a Clean Heart

**WOV 732**

### Create in Me a Clean Heart

The musical score is written on four staves in G major (one sharp) and 4/4 time. The melody is simple and hymn-like, with lyrics written below the notes. The first staff contains the first line of the song, the second and third staves contain the second line, and the fourth staff contains the third line. The song concludes with a double bar line.

Cre - ate in me a clean heart, O God, and re - new a right  
spir-it with - in me. Cast me not a - way from your pres-ence, and  
take not your Ho - ly Spir - it from me. Re - store un - to me the  
joy of your sal - va - tion, and up - hold me with your free Spir - it.

Text: Psalm 51:10-12  
Music: FRANCKE, J.A. Freylinghausen, 1670-1739

## Offering Prayer

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.**

## **Holy Communion**

### **Thanksgiving**

O God, Creator of our wilderness world,  
O God, Savior of the lost,  
O God, Comforter of the sick and suffering,  
We give you thanks for your everlasting might;  
We glorify you for your covenant of mercy.

For forty days you cleansed the earth with the waters of the flood.

**We praise you, O God.**

For forty days you illumined Moses with the words of the law.

**We praise you, O God.**

For forty years you fed your people with manna from heaven.

**We praise you, O God.**

You became truly human in Jesus our brother.

For forty days, with fasting and prayer, he renounced the power of the devil.

**Save us, O God.**

Transform us, O God, with your lively Spirit.

Make this food into manna for our journey.

**Save us, O God.**

## **Jesus' Invitation**

Ho - ly, ho - ly, ho - ly Lord, God of pow-er and might,  
heav'n and earth are full of your glo-ry. Ho-san-na in the high-est.  
Bless-ed is he who comes in the name of the Lord. Ho -  
san-na in the high-est, ho-san-na in the high-est.

## Lord's Prayer

Gathered into one by the Holy Spirit, let us pray as Jesus taught us.

**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.**

## Call to the Table

*Amazing Grace Lutheran Church practices open communion. All are welcome. No exceptions. Please feel welcome to stop by our prayer station to light a candle after receiving communion.*

**Bread for the journey. A feast for hungry hearts. Come!**

## Distribution

The body of Christ, given for you. The blood of Christ, shed for you.

*The wine used in worship is alcohol-free. Gluten-free bread is available upon request.*

## Communion Hymn(s):

## Lamb of God Setting 10



1 O Lamb of God, you bear the sin of all the world a - way;

2 O Lamb of God, you bear the sin of all the world a - way;

3 O Lamb of God, you bear the sin of all the world a - way;



you suf-fered death our lives to save: have mer-cy now, we pray.

you set us free from guilt and grave: have mer-cy now, we pray.

e - ter-nal peace with God you made: give us your peace, we pray.

**As the Grains of Wheat**

**Lamb of God (Your Only Son)**

**As the Winter Days Grow Longer**

**ELW 465**

**ELW 336**

**ACS 924**

## As the Winter Days Grow Longer



- 1 As the win - ter days grow long - er, draw - ing short the hours of night;
- 2 As the vines burst in - to blos - som, fra - grant in the morn - ing air,
- 3 As we jour - ney through this sea - son, pil - grims through a thirst - y land,



as our ea - ger ex - pec - ta - tion waits for Eas - ter's dawn - ing light—  
lift - ing spir - its with their sweet - ness, lur - ing hearts to thank - ful prayer—  
quench us with your liv - ing pres - ence; guide us with your lov - ing hand.



yearn - ing peo - ple, here we gath - er, turn - ing watch - ful eyes to you:  
Lent - en peo - ple, here we gath - er, seek - ing lives re - fresh - ed from sin.  
Wan - d'ring peo - ple, here we gath - er, called to rest a - long our way.



God who bless - es earth with spring - time, shine with - in our world a - new!  
God who bless - es earth with spring - time, bloom with - in our hearts a - gain!  
God who bless - es earth with spring - time, grant us sab - bath joy this day!

Text: Mary Louise Bringle, b. 1953

Music: SUO GÂN, Welsh melody

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### Prayer after Communion

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.

Amen.

### Announcements

#### Benediction

Beloved,

we are God's own people,

holy, washed, renewed.

God bless you and keep you,

shower you with mercy,

fill you with courage,

and ☩ give you peace.

Amen.

**Sending Hymn: Lord, Dismiss Us With Your Blessing ELW 545**

## Lord, Dismiss Us with Your Blessing



- 1 Lord, dis - miss us with your bless-ing, fill our hearts with joy and peace;
- 2 Thanks we give and ad - o - ra - tion for your gos - pel's joy - ful sound.
- 3 Sav - ior, when your love shall call us from our strug - gling pil - grim way,



let us each, your love pos - sess-ing, tri - umph in re - deem-ing grace.  
May the fruits of your sal - va - tion in our hearts and lives a - bound.  
let no fear of death ap - pall us, glad your sum - mons to o - bey.



Oh, re - fresh us; oh, re - fresh us, trav-'ling through this wil - der - ness.  
Ev - er faith-ful, ev - er faith-ful to your truth may we be found.  
May we ev - er, may we ev - er reign with you in end-less day.

Text: attr. John Fawcett, 1740–1817, sts. 1–2, alt.; Godfrey Thring, 1823–1903, st. 3, alt.  
Music: SICILIAN MARINERS, Sicilian, 18th cent.

### Dismissal

Go in peace. Share your bread!

Thanks be to God!

### Postlude: A Glorious Song

**Lani Smith**