

Sunday, March 11, 2018
Girl Scout Sunday
Fourth Sunday in Lent

PRELUDE

“Ubi caritas”

Charles Callahan

CONFESSION AND FORGIVENESS **Kneel or sit as you are able*

P Merciful God,

C you sent Jesus Christ to save the lost.

**We confess that we have strayed from you
and turned aside from your way.**

**We fail in love, neglect justice,
and ignore your truth.**

Have mercy on us and wash away our sin.

**Create in us clean hearts
for the sake of Jesus Christ our Savior. Amen!**

P Behold, now is the acceptable time;
now is the day of salvation.

Almighty God have mercy on us,
forgive us all our sins,
and bring us to everlasting life.

C Amen!

***GATHERING SONG**

“My Faith Looks Up to Thee”

ELW 759

**My faith looks up to thee,
thou Lamb of Calvary,
Savior divine!
Now hear me while I pray,
take all my guilt away,
oh, let me from this day
be wholly thine!**

**May thy rich grace impart
strength to my fainting heart,
my zeal inspire;
as thou hast died for me,
oh, may my love to thee
pure, warm, and changeless be,
a living fire!**

**While life's dark maze I tread
and griefs around me spread,**

be thou my guide;
bid darkness turn to day,
wipe sorrow's tears away,
nor let me ever stray
from thee aside.

When ends life's transient dream,
when death's cold, sullen stream
shall o'er me roll;
blest Savior, then, in love
fear and distrust remove;
oh, bear me safe above,
a ransomed soul!

***GREETING**

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

C **And also with you.**

***CANTICLE OF PRAISE**

"Kyrie"

ELW 157

P In peace, in peace, let us pray to the Lord.

C **Lord, have mercy. Christ, have mercy.**
Lord, have mercy.

P For the reign of God, and for peace throughout the world,
for the unity of all, let us pray to the Lord.

C **Lord, have mercy. Christ, have mercy.**
Lord, have mercy.

P For your people here who have come to give you praise,
for the strength to live your word, let us pray to the Lord.

C **Lord, have mercy. Christ, have mercy.**
Lord, have mercy.

P Help, save, and defend us, O God.

C **Amen.**

***PRAYER OF THE DAY**

P *O God, rich in mercy,*

C **by the humiliation of your Son you lifted up this fallen world and rescued us from the hopelessness of death. Lead us into your light, that all our deeds may reflect your love, through Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. Amen!**

FIRST READING**Numbers 21:4-9**

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.

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.

Reflection

What do you think of when you think of snakes in the Bible? This text is set in the middle of the Israelites wandering in the wilderness. How did they take their wandering? (verse 4) This reminds me of kids whining in the back seat: "Aren't we there yet?" What were their specific complaints? (verse 5) At this point in the story, my sympathies lie with the people. "We're going to die out here because you brought us here, with no food and drink, and the food we have is terrible!" How did the Lord respond to their complaints? (verse 6) So the people repented of their complaints—being bitten by poisonous snakes is worse than eating manna and quail every day. What did they ask Moses to do? (verse 7) How did the Lord answer the prayer of Moses on behalf of the people? (verses 8-9) So the snake becomes both the illness and the healing. The way to healing was to take their eyes off the very real problem that they had swarming around their feet, and look only at the image of that problem. An interesting note about the destruction of the bronze serpent comes in 1 Kings 18:4, which says that King Hezekiah destroyed the bronze serpent because people began to worship it.

***GIRL SCOUT LITANY**

- O come let us sing to the Lord.*
- Let us make a joyful noise to the rock of our salvation.**
- For the Lord is a great God and a great king above all.*
- For he is our God, and we are the people of his pasture and the sheep of his hand.**
- Blessed are the Girl Scouts who are taught to see beauty in all things around them...*
- For their world will be a place of grace and wonder.**
- Blessed are the Girl Scouts who are led with patience and understanding...*
- For they will learn the strength of endurance and the gift of tolerance.**

- 📖 *Blessed are the Girl Scouts who are provided a home where, as sisters, they dwell in harmony and close communion...*
- 🗣️ **For they shall become the peacemakers of the world.**
- 📖 *Blessed are the Girl Scouts who are taught the value and power of truth...*
- 🗣️ **For they shall search for knowledge and use it with wisdom and discernment.**
- 📖 *Blessed are the Girl Scouts who are guided by those with faith in a loving God...*
- 🗣️ **For they will find him early and will walk with him through life.**
- 📖 *Blessed are the Girl Scouts who are loved and know that they are loved...*
- 🗣️ **For they shall sow seeds of love in the world and reap joy for themselves and others.**

SECOND READING

Ephesians 2:1-10

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.

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.

Reflection

The author of Ephesians describes spiritual sickness, reminding the readers of this letter that they were once dead. Why? (verses 1-3) How did God respond to such spiritual illness? (verses 4-5) What is our spiritual health because of what God has done? (verses 6-7) If you have not read this passage aloud, I would encourage you to do so—verses 4-7 are one sentence! Why does God do this for us? (verse 8) What is excluded from the cause of our healing? (verse 9) Why are we people of faith? (verse 10) What do you think is the place of good works in our life of faith? Whose good works are they? Where did the good works themselves come from? I had a realization in talking with an elderly woman about her children and her faith. She said, "I hope that my children know what my faith is." And I realized that I could assure her that they did, because she had shared her faith with me, and it came not out of a decision she made to do so, but just in talking about her life. When we have (or do, but I prefer have) good works, they are prepared for us by God!

***GOSPEL ACCLAMATION**

pg. 189

**Let your steadfast love come to us, O Lord.
Let your steadfast love come to us, O Lord.
Save us as you promised; we will trust your word.
Let your steadfast love come to us, O Lord.**

***GOSPEL**

John 3:14-21

To explain the salvation of God to the religious leader, Nicodemus, Jesus refers to the scripture passage quoted in today's first reading. Just as those who looked upon the bronze serpent were healed, so people will be saved when they behold Christ lifted up on the cross.

[Jesus said:] ¹⁴Just as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, so must the Son of Man be lifted up, ¹⁵that whoever believes in him may have eternal life.

¹⁶For God so loved the world that he gave his only Son, so that everyone who believes in him may not perish but may have eternal life.

¹⁷Indeed, God did not send the Son into the world to condemn the world, but in order that the world might be saved through him. ¹⁸Those who believe in him are not condemned; but those who do not believe are condemned already, because they have not believed in the name of the only Son of God. ¹⁹And this is the judgment, that the light has come into the world, and people loved darkness rather than light because their deeds were evil. ²⁰For all who do evil hate the light and do not come to the light, so that their deeds may not be exposed. ²¹But those who do what is true come to the light, so that it may be clearly seen that their deeds have been done in God."

Reflection

*The story of the bronze serpent, from Numbers 21 (our first reading) is important to this text. What did the people of Israel have to do to be saved from death by poisonous snakes? (see Numbers 21:8-9) What do we have to do to have life? (verses 14-15) Sometimes we think about "eternal life" as being something that happens after we die. John the Evangelist makes it clear that life eternal is life with God in Jesus, both here and now, and after death. When is Jesus "lifted up" like the serpent in the wilderness? What do we have to do in order to be saved from eternal death? (verse 16) Remember the serpent in the wilderness when you think of John 3:16—it is not a matter of "right belief"—if I can say the words right, or if I use the right language to describe what Jesus has done for me. We only have to lift up our eyes to Jesus! Sometimes John 3:16 is used as a club against those who don't believe rightly. Verse 17 disabuses us of that notion. Why did Jesus come into the world? (verse 17) What do you think it means not to believe in Jesus? I remember when I was in college worrying that I did not believe rightly, or enough.... I wrote my Dad a letter asking that question, How do I know if I believe **enough**? He wrote back that just asking the question I could be assured that I believe enough, because God put the question in my heart. Who judges those who do not believe? (verses 19-20) How do we know that our good deeds are indeed the ones that God has prepared beforehand for us? (verse 21)*

CHILDREN'S MESSAGE

Kris Langdon

SERMON

"Faith and Purpose"

Misty Coyle

HYMN OF THE DAY

“On My Honor”

Refrain

On my honor, I will try.
There's a duty to be done and I say aye.
There's a reason to be here for a reason above.
My honor is to try and my duty is to love.

People don't need to know my name.
If I've done any harm, then I'm to blame.
If I've helped anyone, then I've helped me.
If I've opened up my eyes to see.

I've tucked away a song or two.
If you're feeling low, there's one for you.
If you need a friend, then I will come.
And there's many more where I come from. *Refrain*

Come with me where the fire burns bright,
We can even see better by the candle's light.
We can find more meaning in a campfire's glow,
Than we've ever learned in a year or so.

We've a promise to always keep.
And we pray night falls before we sleep.
We'll be Girl Scouts together and when we're gone,
We'll still be trying and a-singing this song. *Refrain*

***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!

***PRAYER SONG**

"Cares Chorus"

I cast all my cares upon You
I lay all of my burdens
Down at Your feet
And anytime that I don't know
What to do
I will cast all my cares upon You

***PRAYERS OF INTERCESSION**

Renewed in the promises of baptism, let us pray for the church, the world, and all who are in need.

A brief silence.

We pray for the church. Direct and guide us in following your will. Grant us clarity in the midst of confusion, and give us courage in the face of challenge. Make us passionate to share the gospel. Lord, in your mercy,
hear our prayer.

We pray for the world you so deeply love. For wilderness places. For deserts and mountains, fruit trees and gardens. For places devastated by flooding or drought, by wind, fire, or earthquake. Restore damaged habitats and protect fragile environments. Lord, in your mercy,
hear our prayer.

We pray for the nations. Grant wisdom to our leaders. Teach us to resolve conflicts without violence. Strengthen those who protect human rights, civil rights, and civil liberties. Bring an end to warfare, famine, and hunger. Lord, in your mercy,
hear our prayer.

We pray for those in need. For those who lack meaningful employment or stable housing. For those who live with mental illness. For those who have chronic pain, and for all who are grieving, sick, or injured *especially* Dorothy, Roxanna, Mary Anna, Kay, and Linda and for those we name before you aloud or silently in our hearts (pause for 10 seconds). Lord, in your mercy,
hear our prayer.

We pray for this assembly. For those preparing for baptism. For parish nurses and all who provide health care in our community. For those who make quilts and gather supplies for global relief ministries. For ministries of prayer and visitation. Lord, in your mercy,
hear our prayer.

With thanksgiving, we remember those who have died in faith, especially those whom we have known and loved. Bring us with them to the fulfillment of your promise of life eternal with you. Lord, in your mercy,
hear our prayer.

Trusting in your covenant of mercy, O God, we lift our prayers to you, through your Son, Jesus Christ, our Savior.

Amen!

***SHARING OF THE PEACE**

P *The peace of Christ be with you always.*

G **And also with you!**

OFFERTORY

“Only By Grace”

**Only by grace can we enter,
only by grace can we stand;
not by our human endeavor,
but by the blood of the Lamb.
Into your presence you call us,
you call us to come.
Into your presence you draw us,
and now by your grace we come,
now by your grace we come.**

**Lord, if you mark our transgressions,
who would stand?
Thanks to your grace we are cleansed
by the blood of the Lamb.
Lord, if you mark our transgressions,
who would stand?
Thanks to your grace we are cleansed
by the blood of the Lamb.**

**Only by grace can we enter,
only by grace can we stand;
not by our human endeavor,
but by the blood of the Lamb.
Into your presence you call us,
you call us to come.
Into your presence you draw us,
and now by your grace we come,
now by your grace we come.**

***OFFERING PRAYER**

P *Merciful God,*

G **receive the sacrifice of our praise and thanksgiving and the offering of our lives, that following in the way of the cross, we may know the joy of the resurrection; through Christ our Lord. Amen!**

*DIALOGUE

- P** *The Lord be with you.*
C **And also with you.**
- P** *Lift up your hearts.*
C **We lift them to the Lord.**
- P** *Let us give thanks to the Lord our God.*
C **It is right to give our thanks and praise.**

*PREFACE

- P** *It is indeed right, our duty and our joy,
that we should at all times and in all places
give thanks and praise to you, almighty and merciful God,
through our Savior Jesus Christ.
You call your people to cleanse their hearts
and prepare with joy for the paschal feast,
that, renewed in the gift of baptism,
we may come to the fullness of your grace.
And so, with all the choirs of angels,
with the church on earth and the hosts of heaven,
we praise your name and join their unending hymn:*

*HOLY, HOLY, HOLY

**Holy, Holy,
Holy Lord God of hosts.
Heaven and earth are full,
are full of your glory.
Hosanna! Hosanna!
Hosanna in the highest.
Blessed is he who comes,
who comes in the name of the Lord.
Hosanna! Hosanna!
Hosanna in the highest.**

*THANKSGIVING AT THE TABLE

- P** *In the night in which he was betrayed,
our Lord Jesus took bread, and gave thanks;
broke it, and gave it to his disciples, saying:
Take and eat; this is my body, given for you.
Do this for the remembrance of me.*

*Again, after supper, he took the cup, gave thanks,
and gave it for all to drink, saying:
This cup is the new covenant in my blood,
shed for you and for all people for the forgiveness of sin.
Do this for the remembrance of me.*

***LORD'S PRAYER**

P *Lord, remember us in your kingdom and teach us to pray.*

C **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!**

***INVITATION TO COMMUNION**

P *Return to God with all your heart. Receive bread for the journey, drink for the desert.*

***BLESSING**

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

C **Amen!**

***PRAYER AFTER COMMUNION**

P *Compassionate God,*

C **you have fed us with the bread of heaven. Sustain us in our Lenten
pilgrimage: may our fasting be hunger for justice, our alms, a making of peace, and our
prayer, the song of grateful hearts; through Christ our Lord. Amen!**

***BENEDICTION**

P *May God who has called us forth from the dust of the earth,
and claimed us as children of the light,
strengthen you on your journey into life renewed.
The Lord bless you and keep you.*

*The Lord's face shine upon you with grace and mercy.
The Lord look upon you with favor
and give you \neq peace.*

☞ Amen!

***SENDING SONG**

"Lord, I Lift Your Name On High"

**Lord I lift Your name on high
Lord I love to sing Your praises
I'm so glad You're in my life
I'm so glad You came to save us**

**You came from heaven to earth
To show the way
From the earth to the cross
My debt to pay
From the cross to the grave
From the grave to the sky
Lord I lift Your name on high**