

Sunday, March 31, 2019  
Fourth Sunday in Lent

PRELUDE

*"Ubi Caritas"*

Charles Callahan

\*GATHERING SONG

*"Love Divine, All Loves Excelling"* vv. 1 & 4

ELW 631

Love divine, all loves excelling,  
Joy of heav'n, to earth come down!  
Fix in us thy humble dwelling,  
all thy faithful mercies crown.  
Jesus, thou art all compassion,  
pure, unbounded love thou art;  
visit us with thy salvation,  
enter ev'ry trembling heart.

Finish then thy new creation,  
pure and spotless let us be;  
let us see thy great salvation  
perfectly restored in thee!  
Changed from glory into glory,  
till in heav'n we take our place,  
till we cast our crowns before thee  
lost in wonder, love, and praise!

\*GREETING

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

**G** And also with you.

\*CANTICLE OF PRAISE

*"Kyrie"*

ELW 157

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

**G** 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.*

**G** 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.*

**G** Lord, have mercy. Christ, have mercy.  
Lord, have mercy.

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

**☞ Amen.**

**\*PRAYER OF THE DAY**

☞ *God of compassion,*

☞ **you welcome the wayward, and you embrace us all with your mercy. By our baptism clothe us with garments of your grace, and feed us at the table of 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**

**Joshua 5:9-12**

*By celebrating the Passover and eating the produce of the promised land instead of the miraculous manna that had sustained them in the desert, the Israelites symbolically bring their forty years of wilderness wandering to an end at Gilgal.*

<sup>9</sup>The LORD said to Joshua, “Today I have rolled away from you the disgrace of Egypt.” And so that place is called Gilgal to this day.

<sup>10</sup>While the Israelites were camped in Gilgal they kept the passover in the evening on the fourteenth day of the month in the plains of Jericho. <sup>11</sup>On the day after the passover, on that very day, they ate the produce of the land, unleavened cakes and parched grain. <sup>12</sup>The manna ceased on the day they ate the produce of the land, and the Israelites no longer had manna; they ate the crops of the land of Canaan that year.

**Reflection**

*The book of Joshua tells the story of Israel “conquering” the land of Canaan. (A different story is told in the book of Judges, which is also from the first generations of those who entered the Promised Land.) What did the Lord tell Joshua about this time? (verse 9—The footnote in my Bible says the the name Gilgal is related to the Hebrew word “to roll.”) What did the Israelites do there in Gilgal? (verses 10-11) What was the significance of the men of Israel being circumcised (see Joshua 5:2-8) and the keeping of the Passover, when they ate the produce grown in Canaan? I think the story means that finally, after their long journey in the wilderness, the Israelites are home. What would that mean to you? What do you think this story of refugees (they fled slavery in Egypt to come to a new home) might say to us?*

**Psalm 32**

<sup>1</sup>Happy are they whose transgressions | are forgiven,  
and whose sin is | put away!

<sup>2</sup>**Happy are they to whom the LORD im- | putes no guilt,  
and in whose spirit there | is no guile!**

<sup>3</sup>While I held my tongue, my bones with- | ered away,  
because of my groaning | all day long.

<sup>4</sup>**For your hand was heavy upon me | day and night;  
my moisture was dried up as in the | heat of summer.**

<sup>5</sup>Then I acknowledged my sin to you, and did not con- | ceal my guilt.

I said, “I will confess my transgressions to the LORD.” Then you forgave me the guilt | of

my sin.

<sup>6</sup>**Therefore all the faithful will make their prayers to you in | time of trouble;  
when the great waters overflow, they | shall not reach them.**

<sup>7</sup>You are my hiding-place; you preserve | me from trouble;  
you surround me with shouts | of deliverance.

<sup>8</sup>**“I will instruct you and teach you in the way that | you should go;  
I will guide you | with my eye.**

<sup>9</sup>Do not be like horse or mule, which have no | understanding;  
who must be fitted with bit and bridle, or else they will | not stay near you.”

<sup>10</sup>**Great are the tribulations | of the wicked;  
but mercy embraces those who trust | in the LORD.**

<sup>11</sup>Be glad, you righteous, and rejoice | in the LORD;  
shout for joy, all who are | true of heart.

### **Reflection**

*This psalm might be written for people who find that after a long journey away they are finally home in the Lord. What does the psalmist say has been happening? (verses 3-5) The psalm begins with the response of someone whose sin has kept them far from God. (verses 1-2) What metaphors does the psalmist use to describe what happens when you sin? (verses 6-7) What is the promise to those who seek deliverance? (verse 8-10) For those who are right with God, what is their response? (verse 11) How does this psalm speak to you, as you seek to live in Christ?*

### **Second Reading**

### **2 Corinthians 5:16-21**

*One way to describe the gospel is the promise that in Christ everything is transformed into newness. All mistakes, all deliberate sins, all old history is reconciled with Christ's resurrection. This is Paul's strong message to the congregation in the city of Corinth.*

<sup>16</sup>From now on, therefore, we regard no one from a human point of view; even though we once knew Christ from a human point of view, we know him no longer in that way. <sup>17</sup>So if anyone is in Christ, there is a new creation: everything old has passed away; see, everything has become new! <sup>18</sup>All this is from God, who reconciled us to himself through Christ, and has given us the ministry of reconciliation; <sup>19</sup>that is, in Christ God was reconciling the world to himself, not counting their trespasses against them, and entrusting the message of reconciliation to us. <sup>20</sup>So we are ambassadors for Christ, since God is making his appeal through us; we entreat you on behalf of Christ, be reconciled to God. <sup>21</sup>For our sake he made him to be sin who knew no sin, so that in him we might become the righteousness of God.

### **Reflection**

*What does it mean to you to regard someone from a human point of view? (verse 16) If the first thing we see about someone is the color of their skin, or whether they are female or male, or whether they are young or old, what does that say about what prejudices we may have about them? When have you been made a new creation? (verse 17) How did that come about? (verses 18-19) How is this a call to ministry? (verse 20) What does it mean that God made Jesus to be sin? Why would God in Christ do that? What effect does that have on us, as*

*followers of Christ? How might we be the righteousness of God? What does that mean to you? What does that mean to those you are called no longer to regard from a human point of view?*

**\*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**

**Luke 15:1-3, 11b-32**

*Jesus tells a parable about a son who ponders his father's love only after he has spurned it. The grace he receives is beyond his hopes. That same grace is a crisis for an older brother who believed it was his obedience that earned his place in the father's home.*

<sup>1</sup>Now all the tax collectors and sinners were coming near to listen to [Jesus.] <sup>2</sup>And the Pharisees and the scribes were grumbling and saying, "This fellow welcomes sinners and eats with them."

<sup>3</sup>So he told them this parable: <sup>11b</sup>"There was a man who had two sons. <sup>12</sup>The younger of them said to his father, 'Father, give me the share of the property that will belong to me.' So he divided his property between them. <sup>13</sup>A few days later the younger son gathered all he had and traveled to a distant country, and there he squandered his property in dissolute living. <sup>14</sup>When he had spent everything, a severe famine took place throughout that country, and he began to be in need. <sup>15</sup>So he went and hired himself out to one of the citizens of that country, who sent him to his fields to feed the pigs. <sup>16</sup>He would gladly have filled himself with the pods that the pigs were eating; and no one gave him anything. <sup>17</sup>But when he came to himself he said, 'How many of my father's hired hands have bread enough and to spare, but here I am dying of hunger! <sup>18</sup>I will get up and go to my father, and I will say to him, "Father, I have sinned against heaven and before you; <sup>19</sup>I am no longer worthy to be called your son; treat me like one of your hired hands.'" <sup>20</sup>So he set off and went to his father. But while he was still far off, his father saw him and was filled with compassion; he ran and put his arms around him and kissed him. <sup>21</sup>Then the son said to him, 'Father, I have sinned against heaven and before you; I am no longer worthy to be called your son.' <sup>22</sup>But the father said to his slaves, 'Quickly, bring out a robe—the best one—and put it on him; put a ring on his finger and sandals on his feet. <sup>23</sup>And get the fatted calf and kill it, and let us eat and celebrate; <sup>24</sup>for this son of mine was dead and is alive again; he was lost and is found!' And they began to celebrate.

<sup>25</sup>"Now his elder son was in the field; and when he came and approached the house, he heard music and dancing. <sup>26</sup>He called one of the slaves and asked what was going on. <sup>27</sup>He replied, 'Your brother has come, and your father has killed the fatted calf, because he has got him back safe and sound.' <sup>28</sup>Then he became angry and refused to go in. His father came out and began to plead with him. <sup>29</sup>But he answered his father, 'Listen! For all these years I have been working

like a slave for you, and I have never disobeyed your command; yet you have never given me even a young goat so that I might celebrate with my friends. <sup>30</sup>But when this son of yours came back, who has devoured your property with prostitutes, you killed the fatted calf for him!’ <sup>31</sup>Then the father said to him, ‘Son, you are always with me, and all that is mine is yours. <sup>32</sup>But we had to celebrate and rejoice, because this brother of yours was dead and has come to life; he was lost and has been found.’ ”

### **Reflection**

*What are the Pharisees and the scribes grumbling about? (verses 1-2) To whom is the parable Jesus tells addressed? Remember that the Pharisees and scribes were very religious, concerned above all with keeping the law of God and remaining in right relationship with God through all the religious laws of Israel. This story of the Prodigal Son and His Brother, as it is titled in the Lutheran Bible, is familiar to most of us. What do we find out about the two sons? The younger one is the first one we meet in this parable. What is his story? (verses 12-13) We don't know anything else about him (Jesus provides no back story), so we don't know if he's a risk taking capitalist, or a selfish bum (although his behavior in verse 13 seems to lean us toward the selfish bum interpretation). What happened to him after his father gives him his whole inheritance? (verses 14-16) How does he solve his problem? (verses 17-19) What happens when he gets home? (verses 20-24) So far so good. But now we get to meet the elder son. (verses 25-29) What has he been doing while his brother was gone? What is his reaction when his brother comes home? What is his father's response? (verses 31-32) Remember who Jesus is speaking to when he tells this parable. Who are they? Who do you suppose hears this as well as they? (verse 1) Who are we? As good Lutherans, we know that we have not always lived the way God wants us to live. Aren't we the younger son? Doesn't God rejoice when we repent? But isn't it also easy to examine ourselves, to do what God wants us to do, to repent, and then forget that we were ever lost? To be the elder son? Perhaps we are both, and in this season of reflection and repentance, we can see the others no longer from a human point of view (as selfish bums or self-righteous prigs) as others whom God loves as much as God loves us. What do you think?*

**CHILDREN'S MESSAGE**

Eugene Lickenbrock

**SERMON**

**“A New Creation”**

Rev. Roger Lenander

**SONG OF THE DAY**

**“Amazing Grace (My Chains Are Gone)”**

**Amazing grace how sweet the sound  
That saved a wretch like me  
I once was lost but now I'm found  
Was blind but now I see**

**'Twas grace that taught my heart to fear  
And grace my fears relieved  
How precious did that grace appear  
The hour I first believed**

My chains are gone I've been set free  
My God my Savior has ransomed me  
And like a flood His mercy rains  
Unending love amazing grace

The Lord has promised good to me  
His word my hope secures  
He will my shield and portion be  
As long as life endures

My chains are gone I've been set free  
My God my Savior has ransomed me  
And like a flood His mercy rains  
Unending love amazing grace

The earth shall soon dissolve like snow  
The sun forbear to shine  
But God who called me here below  
Will be forever mine  
Will be forever mine  
You are forever mine

**\*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**

*"Let My Prayer Be a Fragrant Offering"*

Let my prayer be a fragrant offering,  
as incense to you arise.

**Let my prayer be a fragrant offering,  
my hands lifted up in praise.**

**\*PRAYERS OF INTERCESSION**

Seeking the grace, mercy, and love of almighty God, we offer our prayers for the church, for people in need, and for all of creation.

*A brief silence.*

God of abundant grace, guide your church to look upon people as you look upon them, with compassion and as deserving of mercy. Shape us to be worthy ambassadors of Christ. Hear us, O God.

**Your mercy is great.**

Bestow dignity on migrant and seasonal farm and factory workers. When the time comes for them to leave jobs, provide new ways for them to make a livelihood. Hear us, O God.

**Your mercy is great.**

Inspire musicians and poets to point to your unfathomable beauty and creativity. Enhance our vision of your holiness through their works. Hear us, O God.

**Your mercy is great.**

Heal and preserve all people who look to you to you for your healing touch especially *the family and friends of Jean Douglass, Bruce, Phil, Roxanna, Dorothy, Trina, Linda, Elaine, Lisa and her baby Lara, and for those we name before you aloud or silently in our hearts (pause for 10 seconds)*. Hear us, O God.

**Your mercy is great.**

Erase the pain of trauma and the shame and stigma of social contempt. Change the hearts of those who bully or mistreat others, and heal broken relationships. Hear us, O God.

**Your mercy is great.**

Invite your whole company of saints into eternal, joyful feasting. When we question your abundant mercy, soften our hearts to receive the gifts of faith and love. Hear us, O God.

**Your mercy is great.**

Reveal your will as you receive our prayers, and conform our ways to your ways; through the saving work of Jesus Christ our Lord.

**Amen!**

**\*SHARING OF THE PEACE**

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

**C** **And also with you!**

**OFFERTORY**

***“God’s Eye Is On the Sparrow”***

Civilla D. Martin

Pamma Williams

**\*OFFERTORY RESPONSE**

*“Fill My Cup, Lord”*

Fill my cup, Lord,  
I lift it up, Lord.  
Come and quench  
this thirsting of my soul.  
Bread of heaven,  
feed me till I want no more;  
fill my cup,  
fill it up and make me whole.

**\*OFFERING PRAYER**

**P** *Generous God,*

**C** you feed us with the harvest of the land, and you provide for our every need. Receive our gifts of money, imagination, and labor, and transform them into a feast that welcomes all, in Jesus Christ, our host and our guest. 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 of your glory.  
Hosanna in the highest.  
Blessed is he  
who comes in the name of the Lord.  
Hosanna in the highest.  
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** *Gathered together in one baptism, let us pray as Jesus taught us.*

**C** **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!**

**\*INVITATION TO COMMUNION**

**P** *Christ has prepared the feast. Come to the table where all are welcomed home.*

**\*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** *Tender and merciful one,*

**C** **at your feast, you fed us who brought nothing, turning our emptiness into joy. Filled with your abundant grace, send us now to be ministers of reconciliation, mending broken hearts, working for justice, and striving for peace among all people, in the name of Jesus Christ. Amen!**

**\*BENEDICTION**

**P** *God, who fills the creation with abundance,  
Christ, who spreads his arms in forgiveness,  
Holy Spirit, who draws ever near to us,  
✝ bless you and bring you to life everlasting.*

**C** **Amen!**

**\*SENDING SONG**

***“My Life Is In You”***

**My life is in you Lord  
My strength is in you Lord  
My hope is in you Lord  
In you it's in you  
My life is in you Lord  
My strength is in you Lord  
My hope is in you Lord  
In you it's in you**

**I will praise you  
With all of my life  
I will praise you  
With all of my strength  
With all of my life  
With all of my strength  
All of my hope is in you**

**Ending  
In you**

**\*DISMISSAL**

**P** *Go in peace. Remember the poor.*

**C** **Thanks be to God!**