

Mt. Lebanon United Methodist Church



Sharing the Love of Christ

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Reverend Thomas Q. Strandburg, Pastor tstrandburg@mlumc.org

March 9, 2021

7 PM Service of Evening Prayer

Gathering Music: Canon [*Passacaglia*] in D Major

Johann Pachelbel (1653-1706)

The Opening Sentences

I know my transgressions, and my sin is ever before me. *Psalm 51:3*

Hide your face from my sins, and blot out all my iniquities. *Psalm 51:9*

The sacrifice acceptable to God is a broken spirit; a broken and contrite heart, O God, you will not despise. *Psalm 51:17*

Introduction to the Service

The General Confession

Pastor: Therefore, I implore of all of you who are gathered here to join me, with a pure heart and humble voice, to approach the throne of grace as we say together:

People: Almighty and most merciful Father: we have done wrongly, and like lost sheep, we have gone astray from your Way. We have relied upon our own intuition, and have indulged in the desires of our own hearts. We have broken the laws you have revealed to us. We have done things we should not have done, and we have failed to do things we should have done; and we are powerless to save ourselves. Even so, O Lord, have mercy upon us sinners. Spare those who confess their faults, and restore those who are penitent, as you have promised to do through the Word of your only son, our Lord Jesus Christ. For the sake of the same Christ Jesus, grant that we may, from now on, lead Godly and righteous lives, that your name might be glorified. Amen.

The Absolution

Pastor: Almighty God, the father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who does not desire that sinners should die, but instead that they should turn from their wickedness and live; and who has given power to his ministers to declare to penitent hearts the forgiveness of their sins: God pardons and absolves the sins of all who turn to him with true repentance and who truly believe the good news of the Gospel of Christ. Therefore, let us pray to God to grant us true repentance of our sins, and the abiding presence of the Holy Spirit, so that our current

prayers and supplications may be pleasing to him, and that the remainder of our lives may be pure and holy, so that we may finally enter into the eternal joy of God's Kingdom; through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

The Lord's Prayer

Our Father, who are in heaven, hallowed be your name. Your kingdom come, your 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. Amen.

Pastor: Open our lips, O Lord.;

People: And our mouths shall declare your praise.

Pastor: Speedily save us, O God.

People: Hasten to our aid, O Lord.

Pastor: Glory be to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Spirit;

People: As it was in the beginning, is now, and shall be forever, world without end.

Amen. Pastor: Praise the Lord.

People: May the Lord's Name be praised.

The Psalm

Psalm 119:25-35

- ²⁵I am laid low in the dust;
preserve my life according to your word.
- ²⁶I gave an account of my ways and you answered me;
teach me your decrees.
- ²⁷Cause me to understand the way of your precepts,
that I may meditate on your wonderful deeds.
- ²⁸My soul is weary with sorrow;
strengthen me according to your word.
- ²⁹Keep me from deceitful ways;
be gracious to me and teach me your law.
- ³⁰I have chosen the way of faithfulness;
I have set my heart on your laws.
- ³¹I hold fast to your statutes, LORD;
do not let me be put to shame.
- ³²I run in the path of your commands,
for you have broadened my understanding.
- ³³Teach me, LORD, the way of your decrees,
that I may follow it to the end.
- ³⁴Give me understanding, so that I may keep your law
and obey it with all my heart.

³⁵ **Direct me in the path of your commands,
for there I find delight.**

The First Lesson

Isaiah 42:1-4

“Here is my servant, whom I uphold,
my chosen one in whom I delight;
I will put my Spirit on him,
and he will bring justice to the nations.

² He will not shout or cry out,
or raise his voice in the streets.

³ A bruised reed he will not break,
and a smoldering wick he will not snuff out.

In faithfulness he will bring forth justice;

⁴ he will not falter or be discouraged
till he establishes justice on earth.

In his teaching the islands will put their hope.”

Pastor: The word of the Lord.

People: Thanks be to God

The Song of Simeon (Nunc Dimittis)

LAND OF REST

1. Lord, let thy servant now depart
into thy promis'd rest,
Since my expecting eyes have been
with thy salvation blest;

2. Which till this time thy favour'd saints
and prophets only knew;
Long since prepar'd, but now set forth
in all the peoples' view.

3. A light to shew the heathen world
the way to saving grace;
But, O! the light and glory both
of Israel's chosen race.

To Father, Son, and Holy Ghost,
the God whom we adore,
Be glory; as it was, is now,
and shall be evermore.

The Second Lesson

Matthew 22:1-14

Jesus spoke to them again in parables, saying: ² “The kingdom of heaven is like a king who prepared a wedding banquet for his son. ³ He sent his servants to those who had been invited to the banquet to tell them to come, but they refused to come.

⁴“Then he sent some more servants and said, ‘Tell those who have been invited that I have prepared my dinner: My oxen and fattened cattle have been butchered, and everything is ready. Come to the wedding banquet.’

⁵“But they paid no attention and went off—one to his field, another to his business. ⁶The rest seized his servants, mistreated them and killed them. ⁷The king was enraged. He sent his army and destroyed those murderers and burned their city.

⁸“Then he said to his servants, ‘The wedding banquet is ready, but those I invited did not deserve to come. ⁹So go to the street corners and invite to the banquet anyone you find.’ ¹⁰So the servants went out into the streets and gathered all the people they could find, the bad as well as the good, and the wedding hall was filled with guests.

¹¹“But when the king came in to see the guests, he noticed a man there who was not wearing wedding clothes. ¹²He asked, ‘How did you get in here without wedding clothes, friend?’ The man was speechless.

¹³“Then the king told the attendants, ‘Tie him hand and foot, and throw him outside, into the darkness, where there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth.’

¹⁴“For many are invited, but few are chosen.”

Pastor: The word of the Lord.

People: **Thanks be to God**

Devotional Meditation *“The Kingdom of Heaven is like . . . a Wedding Banquet”*

The Apostles’ Creed

**I believe in God, the Father Almighty,
creator of heaven and earth.**

**I believe in Jesus Christ, his 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,**

is seated at the right hand of the Father,
and will come again 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.

The Apostles' Creed (ecumenical version)

The Collect for Lent

Almighty and everlasting God,
you hate nothing that you have made
and forgive the sins of all those who are penitent:
create and make in us new and contrite hearts
that we, worthily lamenting our sins
and acknowledging our wretchedness,
may receive from you, the God of all mercy,
perfect remission and forgiveness;
through Jesus Christ your Son our Lord,
who is alive and reigns with you,
in the unity of the Holy Spirit,
one God, now and for ever.

Prayers of the People

Together, let us pray
for the people of this congregation... (**People's Response: "Lord, receive our prayer."**)
for those who suffer and those in trouble... (**"Lord, receive our prayer."**)
for the concerns of this local community... (**"Lord, receive our prayer."**)
for the world, its peoples, and its leaders... (**"Lord, receive our prayer."**)
for the earth you have given to our care... (**"Lord, receive our prayer."**)
for the Church universal—its leaders, its members, and its mission... (**"Lord, receive our prayer."**)
in communion with the saints... (**"Lord, receive our prayer."**)

1. Jesus, joy of our desiring,
holy wisdom, love most bright;
drawn by thee, our souls aspiring
soar to uncreated light.
Word of God, our flesh that fashioned,
with the fire of life impassioned,
striving still to truth unknown,
soaring, dying round thy throne.

2. Through the way where hope is guiding,
hark, what peaceful music rings;
where the flock, in thee confiding,
drink of joy from deathless springs.
Theirs is beauty's fairest pleasure;
theirs is wisdom's holiest treasure.
Thou dost ever lead thine own
in the love of joys unknown.

The General Thanksgiving

Almighty God, Father of all mercies: we, your unworthy servants give you our most humble and heartfelt thanks for the goodness and steadfast love that you have shown to us and to all humankind. We bless you for having created us, for having preserved us, and for having richly blessed us in this life; but above all else, we bless you for these things: the unfathomable love you show to us in the redemption of the world by our Lord Jesus Christ; the means of your saving grace; and the hope of glory everlasting. And, we beg of you, give us a true understanding of all your mercies, that our hearts may be unfeignedly thankful, and that we might show forth your praise not only with our lips, but by giving up our whole selves to your service, and by walking before you in holiness and righteousness all the days of our lives. This we ask through Jesus Christ, to whom, along with you and the Holy Spirit, belongs all honor and glory, world without end. Amen.

A Prayer of St. Chrysostom

Almighty God, who has at this time given us the grace to make our common supplications to you with a single accord; and who has promised us that whenever two or three of us gather in your name, you will be among us: fulfill, O Lord, the desires and petitions made by your servants as may best suit them and best fit your will, that in this world we may receive the knowledge of your Truth, and in the world to come, eternal life. Amen.

Pastor: Let us bless the Lord.

People: Thanks be to God.

The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, the love of God, and the communion of the Holy Spirit be with all of you. 2 Cor. 13:14

May the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace in believing, so that you may abound in hope by the power of the Holy Spirit. Rom. 15:13

Glory to God whose power, working in us, can do infinitely more than we can ask or imagine: Glory to him from generation to generation in the Church, and in Christ Jesus for ever and ever. Amen.
Eph. 3:20-21

Parting Music: *Conditor alme siderum* (Creator of the stars of night), UMH692

Liturgy of Evening Prayer Services

During this Season of Lent, MLUMC will continue to offer weekly opportunities for God's people to gather for prayer and praise. All are welcome to attend the Liturgy of Evening Prayer at 7:00 p.m. either in-person or remotely. It will continue to be offered on the following Tuesday nights at 7:00 p.m. in the sanctuary -- March 9th, 16th, & 23rd. Again, you are welcome to attend either in-person or remotely.

Lent and Easter Services

Maundy Thursday, April 1

7:30 pm Tenebrae Service in Sanctuary

Good Friday, April 2

Individual and Family Communion Appointments 30-minute private appointments are available to receive the Sacrament of Holy Communion in a safe, hygienic, and physically-distanced manner. Appointments will begin on the hour, and on the half-hour. Please contact the church office to schedule a time that is convenient for the members in your household. Each appointment will include a brief organ prelude, a prayer of thanksgiving, the receiving of bread and cup, and an organ postlude. If it has been a while since you have felt comfortable to come to the Lord's Table, now could be the perfect opportunity!

Holy Saturday, April 3

6:30 p.m., Outdoor Easter Vigil in upper parking lot.

The traditional Easter Vigil is by far the oldest of all services of worship in the Christian tradition, having been held since the earliest days of our faith. Since the beginning, the service has always begun outdoors, with the lighting of a fire from whose flames the Paschal or Christ Candle is lit.

Traditionally, the vigil would last through the night. We won't go that far! Our abbreviated vigil will be 45 minutes or less in length, rain or shine. In case of rain, the service will be moved indoors, so make your plans accordingly.

Easter Sunday, April 4

7 a.m. Outdoor Sunrise Service in the upper parking lot. As Easter morning moves from darkness into light, we will hope to sense the emotions of the women who first heard news of the resurrection. Our theme will be "Christ is risen! He is risen indeed!" This service will be 30 minutes or less in length, rain or shine. In case of rain, the service will be moved indoors, so make your plans accordingly. Please park in our lower lot, or in Laughlin's lot, and plan to join us.

8:30 a.m. Traditional Worship in the Sanctuary

9:30 a.m. The Gathering in Asbury Center

10:45 a.m. Traditional Worship in the Sanctuary