

Mt. Lebanon United Methodist Church



Sharing the Love of Christ

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March 23, 2021

7 PM Service of Evening Prayer

Gathering Music: Excerpt from *Variations on "Wondrous love"*

Robert Lau

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 119:48-58

**⁴⁸I revere your commandments, which I love,
and I will meditate on your statutes.**

**⁴⁹Remember your word to your servant,
in which you have made me hope.**

**⁵⁰This is my comfort in my distress,
that your promise gives me life.**

**⁵¹The arrogant utterly deride me,
but I do not turn away from your law.**

**⁵²When I think of your ordinances from of old,
I take comfort, O LORD.**

**⁵³Hot indignation seizes me because of the wicked,
those who forsake your law.**

**⁵⁴Your statutes have been my songs
wherever I make my home.**

**⁵⁵I remember your name in the night, O LORD,
and keep your law.**

**⁵⁶This blessing has fallen to me,
for I have kept your precepts.**

**⁵⁷The LORD is my portion;
I promise to keep your words.
⁵⁸I implore your favor with all my heart;
be gracious to me according to your promise.**

The First Lesson

Isaiah 52:13 – 53:12

¹³See, my servant shall prosper;
he shall be exalted and lifted up,
and shall be very high.
¹⁴Just as there were many who were astonished at him
— so marred was his appearance, beyond human semblance,
and his form beyond that of mortals —
¹⁵so he shall startle many nations;
kings shall shut their mouths because of him;
for that which had not been told them they shall see,
and that which they had not heard they shall contemplate.

^{53:1}Who has believed what we have heard?
And to whom has the arm of the LORD been revealed?
²For he grew up before him like a young plant,
and like a root out of dry ground;
he had no form or majesty that we should look at him,
nothing in his appearance that we should desire him.
³He was despised and rejected by others;
a man of suffering^[a] and acquainted with infirmity;
and as one from whom others hide their faces
he was despised, and we held him of no account.
⁴Surely he has borne our infirmities
and carried our diseases;
yet we accounted him stricken,
struck down by God, and afflicted.
⁵But he was wounded for our transgressions,
crushed for our iniquities;
upon him was the punishment that made us whole,
and by his bruises we are healed.
⁶All we like sheep have gone astray;
we have all turned to our own way,
and the LORD has laid on him
the iniquity of us all.
⁷He was oppressed, and he was afflicted,
yet he did not open his mouth;

like a lamb that is led to the slaughter,
and like a sheep that before its shearers is silent,
so he did not open his mouth.

⁸ By a perversion of justice he was taken away.

Who could have imagined his future?

For he was cut off from the land of the living,
stricken for the transgression of my people.

⁹ They made his grave with the wicked

and his tomb with the rich,

although he had done no violence,

and there was no deceit in his mouth.

¹⁰ Yet it was the will of the LORD to crush him with pain.

When you make his life an offering for sin,

he shall see his offspring, and shall prolong his days;

through him the will of the LORD shall prosper.

¹¹ Out of his anguish he shall see light;

he shall find satisfaction through his knowledge.

The righteous one,^[b] my servant, shall make many righteous,

and he shall bear their iniquities.

¹² Therefore I will allot him a portion with the great,

and he shall divide the spoil with the strong;

because he poured out himself to death,

and was numbered with the transgressors;

yet he bore the sin of many,

and made intercession for the transgressors.

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.

4. 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 18:21-35

²¹ Then Peter came and said to him, "Lord, if another member of the church^[s] sins against me, how often should I forgive? As many as seven times?" ²² Jesus said to him, "Not seven times, but, I tell you, seventy-seven times.

²³ "For this reason the kingdom of heaven may be compared to a king who wished to settle accounts with his slaves. ²⁴ When he began the reckoning, one who owed him ten thousand talents^l was brought to him; ²⁵ and, as he could not pay, his lord ordered him to be sold, together with his wife and children and all his possessions, and payment to be made. ²⁶ So the slave fell on his knees before him, saying, 'Have patience with me, and I will pay you everything.' ²⁷ And out of pity for him, the lord of that slave released him and forgave him the debt. ²⁸ But that same slave, as he went out, came upon one of his fellow slaves who owed him a hundred denarii;^[i] and seizing him by the throat, he said, 'Pay what you owe.' ²⁹ Then his fellow slave fell down and pleaded with him, 'Have patience with me, and I will pay you.' ³⁰ But he refused; then he went and threw him into prison until he would pay the debt. ³¹ When his fellow slaves saw what had happened, they were greatly distressed, and they went and reported to their lord all that had taken place. ³² Then his lord summoned him and said to him, 'You wicked slave! I forgave you all that debt because you pleaded with me. ³³ Should you not have had mercy on your fellow slave, as I had mercy on you?' ³⁴ And in anger his lord handed him over to be tortured until he would pay his entire debt. ³⁵ So my heavenly Father will also do to every one of you, if you do not forgive your brother or sister^[s] from your heart."

Pastor: The word of the Lord.

People: Thanks be to God

Devotional Meditation *"The Kingdom of Heaven is like . . . Forgiveness"*

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 ever-living God, in your tender love for the human race you sent your Son our Savior Jesus Christ to take upon him our nature, and to suffer death upon the cross, giving us the example of his great humility: Mercifully grant that we may walk in the way of his suffering, and also share in his resurrection; through Jesus Christ our Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, for ever and ever. Amen.

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.")**

Hymn: "Weary souls, that wander wide"

REDHEAD

1 Weary souls, that wander wide
From the central point of bliss,
Turn to Jesus crucified,
Fly to those dear wounds of His:
Sink into the purple flood;
Rise into the life of God.

3 O believe the record true,
God to you His Son hath given!
Ye may now be happy too,
Find on earth the life of heaven:
Live the life of heaven above,
All the life of glorious love.

2 Find in Christ the way of peace,
Peace unspeakable, unknown;
By His pain He gives you ease,
Life by His expiring groan:
Rise, exalted by His fall;
Find in Christ your all in all.

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: Improvisation on "Vexilla regis prodeunt"

*The royal banners forward go;
The cross shows forth redemption's glow,
Where He, by whom our flesh was made,
Our ransom with His flesh has paid.*

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 pm 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