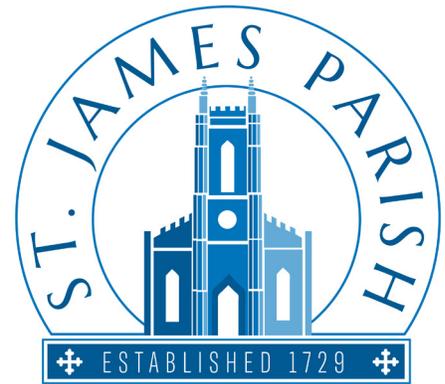


WINTER WORSHIP

SUNDAY 14 MARCH 2021

THE FOURTH SUNDAY IN LENT



Gathering Music (*Sung by the music team; the congregation is invited to listen*)

The Lord is my light, my light and salvation:
in God I trust, in God I trust.

Opening

Forty days alone,
a wilderness of thoughts,
tempting and inviting thoughts,
which could so easily have distracted you
from your task, your mission,
your vision.
Yet you emerged, stronger and more attuned
to all that had to be done,
despite a time constraint
that to our eyes would have seemed hopeless.
We too live in stressful times.
Demands are made of our time,
that leave so little
for the important things of life.
We are easily distracted
in the wilderness of our lives,
by every call to go this way or that,
to turn stone to bread
leap from mountains,
and do all that would keep us from the truth.
We listen to the voices of this world,
and ignore the one who endured all this
and so much more,
and emerged triumphant,
that we might not have to suffer so.
Forgive us, Father,
when we get distracted from our task.
Forgive us those times when we try
to be all things to all people,
and lose sight of what you've truly called us to do.

The Confession

All **Forgive those things we have done
which have caused you sadness,
and those things we should have done
that would have brought you joy.
In both we have failed
ourselves and you.
Bring us back to that place
where our journey began,
when we said that we would follow
the way that you first trod.
Lead us to the Cross
and meet us there.**

Gracious Father, whose blessed Son Jesus Christ came down from heaven to be the true bread which gives life to the world: Evermore give us this bread, that he may live in us, and we in him; who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and for ever. **Amen.**

Song of Prayer: (*Sung by the music team; the congregation is invited to listen*)

Holy God
Holy and mighty
Holy immortal one
Have mercy upon us.

A Prayer for the Evening

You chose a people for your own,
to lavish love upon,
raised up prophets, priests, and kings,
to be the nation through which
the Messiah would be revealed to the world,
and through whom your kingdom would come.
You chose this people gathered here
to be your children,
loved and blessed, forgiven
through the one who knew no sin,
the King of Glory, whose crown was made of thorns,
and whose name we raise in worship. **Amen.**

The Word of God

Numbers 21:4–9

They marched from Mount Hor on the Reed Sea road around the land of Edom. The people became impatient on the road. The people spoke against God and Moses: “Why did you bring us up from Egypt to kill us in the desert, where there is no food or water. And we detest this miserable bread!” So the Lord sent poisonous snakes among the people and they bit the people. Many of the Israelites died. The people went to Moses and said, “We’ve sinned, for we spoke against the Lord and you. Pray to the Lord so that he will send the snakes away from us.” So Moses prayed for the people. The Lord said to Moses, “Make a poisonous snake and place it on a pole. Whoever is bitten can look at it and live.” Moses made a bronze snake and placed it on a pole. If a snake bit someone, that person could look at the bronze snake and live.

Hear what the Spirit is saying to God’s people.

People **Thanks be to God.**

Psalm 107:1–3, 17–22

“Give thanks to the Lord because he is good,
because his faithful love lasts forever!”
That’s what those who are redeemed by the Lord say,
the ones God redeemed from the power of their enemies,
the ones God gathered from various countries,
from east and west, north and south.
Some of the redeemed were fools because of their sinful ways.
They suffered because of their wickedness.
They had absolutely no appetite for food;
they had arrived at death’s gates.
So they cried out to the Lord in their distress,
and God saved them from their desperate circumstances.
God gave the order and healed them;
he rescued them from their pit.
Let them thank the Lord for his faithful love
and his wondrous works for all people.
Let them offer thanksgiving sacrifices
and declare what God has done in songs of joy!

Ephesians 2:1–10

At one time you were like a dead person because of the things you did wrong and your offenses against God. You used to live like people of this world. You followed the rule of a destructive spiritual power. This is the spirit of disobedience to God’s will that is now at work in persons whose lives are characterized by disobedience. At one time you were like those persons. All of you used to do whatever felt good and whatever you thought you wanted so that you were children headed for punishment just like everyone else. However, God is rich in mercy. He brought us to life with Christ while we were dead as a result of those things that we did wrong. He did this because of the great love that he has for us. You are saved by God’s grace! And God raised us up and seated us in the heavens with Christ Jesus. God did this to show future generations the greatness of his grace by the goodness that God has shown us in Christ Jesus. You are saved by God’s grace because of your faith. This salvation is God’s gift. It’s not something you possessed. It’s not something you did that you can be proud of. Instead, we are God’s accomplishment, created in Christ Jesus to do good things. God planned for these good things to be the way that we live our lives.

Hear what the Spirit is saying to God’s people.

People **Thanks be to God.**

Sequence Hymn: *(Sung by the music team; the congregation is invited to listen)*

Amazing grace! how sweet the sound, that saved a wretch like me!
I once was lost but now am 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!

The Lord has promised good to me, his word my hope secures;
he will my shield and portion be as long as life endures.

Through many dangers, toils, and snares, I have already come;
'tis grace that brought me safe thus far, and grace will lead me home.

When we've been there ten thousand years, bright shining as the sun,
we've no less days to sing God's praise than when we'd first begun

The Holy Gospel:

Priest The Holy Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ according to John. (3:14–21)
People **Glory to you, Lord Christ.**

Just as Moses lifted up the snake in the wilderness, so must the Human One be lifted up so that everyone who believes in him will have eternal life. God so loved the world that he gave his only Son, so that everyone who believes in him won't perish but will have eternal life. God didn't send his Son into the world to judge the world, but that the world might be saved through him. Whoever believes in him isn't judged; whoever doesn't believe in him is already judged, because they don't believe in the name of God's only Son. "This is the basis for judgment: The light came into the world, and people loved darkness more than the light, for their actions are evil. All who do wicked things hate the light and don't come to the light for fear that their actions will be exposed to the light. Whoever does the truth comes to the light so that it can be seen that their actions were done in God."

Priest The Gospel of the Lord.
People **Praise to you, Lord Christ.**

Message

The Reverend Cheryl Brainard

Affirmation of Faith

**You, O God, are supreme and holy.
You create our world and give us life.
Your purpose overarches everything we do.
You have always been with us.
You are God.**

**You, O God, are infinitely generous,
good beyond all measure.
You came to us before we came to you.
You have revealed and proved
your love for us in Jesus Christ,
who lived and died and rose again.
You are with us now.
You are God.**

**You, O God, are Holy Spirit.
You empower us to be your gospel in the world.
You reconcile and heal; you overcome death.
You are our God. We worship you.**

Prayers of the People

Leader Lord Jesus Christ,
People **Be with us, within us, behind us and before us.**

Leader We bind ourselves, O God, today, to the strong name of the Trinity,
People **And we name you: Three in One, One in Three; and claim our place in your community of love.**

Leader We are embraced, loving God, in the community that is the heart not just of our church, but also in the community that is the very heart of who you are,
People **Three in One; Father, Son and Holy Spirit.**

Leader Within that great love, we are held and treasured. Lord, hear our prayers this evening;
People **We pray for our hurting world.**

Leader That war-makers will find peace. That the hungry will find food. That refugees will find shelter. That injustice will be answered with all that is right and good.

People **We pray for all who suffer.**

Leader For those we love dearly. For those we barely know. For those whose suffering, we have ignored. Be present in the healing touch of all hands that help the sick and suffering. And send your Spirit to comfort and protect all who need you.

People **We pray for all who struggle.**

Leader For those who cannot see a way through broken relationships, difficult financial realities, emotional darkness, and deep, deep loneliness. May we find you even in the most helpless places. And may we, your people, be present also in those places, bringing Good News and hope to all who are longing for the true life that only you can provide.

People **We pray for all who are joyful.**

Leader We rejoice at the promise of new life, and the goodness of each new day. We celebrate the movement through milestones: births, graduations, new jobs, new relationships; and the hopes that they bring. We remember those moments of blessing in our own lives and we thank you for the opportunity to use our lives to your glory, to live lives that are full and worthy of your calling.

We lift up to you, Lord, the prayers that you've placed on our hearts in our own words at this time...

We will intentionally PAUSE for the community present to share their requests, thanksgivings, desires, hopes & joys either out loud or silently.

We bind ourselves, O God, today, to the strong name of the Trinity.

People **And we name you: Three in One, One in Three: and claim our place in your community of love.**

Leader Lord Jesus Christ

People **Be with us, within us, behind us, before us. Amen.**

The Peace The peace of the Lord be always with you.
And also with you.

THE HOLY EUCHARIST

Music at the Offertory: (*Sung by the music team; the congregation is invited to listen*)

Come, thou fount of every blessing, tune my heart to sing thy grace!
Streams of mercy never ceasing, call for songs of loudest praise.
Teach me some melodious sonnet, sung by flaming tongues above.
Praise the mount! Oh, fix me on it, mount of God's unchanging love.

Here I find my greatest treasure; hither, by thy help, I've come;
and I hope, by thy good pleasure, safely to arrive at home,
Jesus sought me when a stranger wandering from the fold of God;
he, to rescue me from danger, interposed his precious blood.

Oh, to grace how great a debtor daily I'm constrained to be!
Let thy goodness, like a fetter, bind my wandering heart to thee:
prone to wander, Lord, I feel it, prone to leave the God I love;
here's my heart, oh, take and seal it, seal it for thy courts above.

The Lord be with you.

And also with you.

Lift up your hearts.

We lift them to the Lord.

Let us give thanks to the Lord our God.

It is right to give our thanks and praise.

All thanks and praise
are yours at all times and in all places,
our true and loving God;
through Jesus Christ, your eternal Word,
the Wisdom from on high by whom you
created all things.
You laid the foundations of the world
and enclosed the sea when it burst out from the womb;
You brought forth all creatures of the earth
and gave breath to humankind.
Wondrous are you, Holy One of Blessing,
all you create is a sign of hope for our journey;
And so as the morning stars sing your praises
we join the heavenly beings and all creation
as we shout with joy:

**Holy, holy, holy Lord,
God of power and might,
heaven and earth
are full of your glory.
Hosanna in the highest.
Blessed is the one
who comes in the
name of the Lord.
Hosanna in the highest.**

Glory and honor are yours, Creator of all,
your Word has never been silent;
you called a people to yourself,
as a light to the nations,
you delivered them from bondage
and led them to a land of promise.
Of your grace, you gave Jesus
to be human, to share our life,
to proclaim the coming of your holy reign
and give himself for us, a fragrant offering.
Through Jesus Christ our Redeemer,
you have freed us from sin,
brought us into your life,
reconciled us to you,
and restored us to the glory you intend for us.

We thank you that on the night before he
died for us Jesus took bread,
and when he had given thanks to you,
he broke it, gave it to his friends and said:
“Take, eat, this is my Body, broken for you.
Do this for the remembrance of me.”
After supper Jesus took the cup of wine,
said the blessing, gave it to his friends and said:
“Drink this, all of you:
this cup is the new Covenant in my Blood,
poured out for you and for all
for the forgiveness of sin.
Do this for the remembrance of me.”
And so, remembering all that was done for us:
the cross, the tomb, the resurrection and ascension,
longing for Christ’s coming in glory,
and presenting to you these gifts
your earth has formed and human
hands have made,
we acclaim you, O Christ:

**Dying, you destroyed our death.
Rising, you restored our life.
Christ Jesus, come in glory!**

Send your Holy Spirit upon us
and upon these gifts of bread and wine
that they may be to us
the Body and Blood of your Christ.
Grant that we, burning with your Spirit’s power,
may be a people of hope, justice and love.

Giver of Life, draw us together in the Body of Christ,
and in the fullness of time gather us
with all your people
into the joy of our true eternal home.

Through Christ and with Christ and in Christ,
by the inspiration of your Holy Spirit,
we worship you our God and Creator
in voices of unending praise.

Blessed are you now and for ever. **AMEN.**

Lord's Prayer *(Celebrant and People)*

**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 for ever. Amen.**

The Celebrant continues

We break this bread
to share in the Body of Christ.
**We who are many are one body,
for we all share in the one bread.**

Music during Eucharist: *(Sung by the music team; the congregation is invited to listen)*

You are my strength when I am weak,
You are the treasure that I seek;
You are my all in all.
Seeking you as a precious jewel,
Lord to give up, I'd be a fool;
You are my all in all.

*Jesus Lamb of God,
Worthy is your name!
Jesus Lamb of God,
Worthy is your name!*

Taking my sin my cross my shame,
Rising again I bless your name;
You are my all in all.
When I fall down you pick me up;
When I am dry, You fill my cup;
You are my all in all.

Post-Communion Prayer *(Celebrant and People)*

**Loving God,
we give you thanks
for restoring us in your image
and nourishing us with spiritual food
in the Sacrament of Christ's Body and Blood.
Now send us forth
a people forgiven, healed, renewed;
that we may proclaim your love to the world
and continue in the risen life of Christ our Savior. Amen.**

Night Prayer

Lord,
It is night.

The night is for stillness.
Let us be still in the presence of God.

It is night after a long day.
What has been done has been done;
What has not been done has not been done;
Let it be.

The night is dark.
Let our fears of the darkness of the world
And in our lives rest in you.

The night is quiet.
Let the quietness of your peace enfold us,
All dear to us,
And all who have no peace.

The night heralds the dawn.
Let us look expectantly to a new day,
New joys,
New possibilities.

In your name we pray. **AMEN**

Blessing

Life is short, and we do not have too much time to gladden the hearts of those who travel with us. So be swift to love. Make haste to be kind, and the blessing of God be with you always. **AMEN.**

Closing Song

Give thanks with a grateful heart;
Give thanks to the Holy One;
Give thanks because He's given Jesus Christ, His Son.

And now let the weak say, "I am strong,"
Let the poor say, "I am rich,
Because of what the Lord has done for us".

Dismissal



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