

FOURTH SUNDAY IN LENT

Looking Up and Lifting Up Christ

March 17 & 18, 2012

AS WE GATHER

The cross is not some incidental part of the story of God's love for us. The cross IS the place where that love is revealed most of all. The love of God cannot be told without the cross and where the cross is raised up; God will draw all people unto Himself. As Jesus was lifted up on the tree of the cross, so are we lifted up by that tree, raised up from our death and sin through Christ's forgiveness. This is our glory and comfort and this is the message that God has given to us to proclaim to the world.

WELCOME

+ PREPARATION +

OPENING HYMN #555 "Salvation Unto Us Has Come" Stanzas 1, 2, 9 & 10

(Please rise)

INVOCATION and OPENING SENTENCES

Pastor: In the name of the Father and of the + Son and of the Holy Spirit.

People: Amen.

Pastor: The LORD is my light and my salvation;

People: Whom shall I fear?

Pastor: The LORD is the stronghold of my life;

People: Of whom shall I be afraid? *Psalm 27:1*

CONFESSION and ABSOLUTION

Pastor: Since we are assembled here to hear the Word of God, to call upon Him in prayer, and to receive the body and blood of our Lord Jesus Christ, it is good that we reflect upon our unworthiness, confessing before God our sins of thought, word, and deed, and our helplessness to free ourselves from our sinful nature. It is also good that we remember who we are as the baptized children of God, to whom the Lord has shown His mercy, cleansed from all our sin, and declared righteous in Christ our Lord. We come here today to lay claim again to the grace in which we are forgiven, and, for the sake of Christ, to be restored by His mercy to serve Him and walk in His ways. Let us confess our sins.

People: I confess to God Almighty, before the whole company of heaven and to

you, my brothers and sisters, that I have sinned in thought, word, and deed by my fault, by my own fault, by my own most grievous fault; wherefore I pray God Almighty to have mercy on me, forgive me all my sins, and bring me to everlasting life. Amen.

Pastor: Almighty God in His mercy has given His Son to die for you and for His sake forgives you all your sins. As a called and ordained servant of Christ and by His authority, I therefore forgive you all your sins in the name of the Father and of the + Son and of the Holy Spirit.

People: Amen.

SALUTATION and COLLECT

Pastor: The Lord be with you.

People: And also with you.

Pastor: Let us pray. Almighty God, our heavenly Father, your mercies are new every morning; and though we deserve only punishment, you receive us as your children and provide for all our needs of body and soul. Grant that we may heartily acknowledge your merciful goodness, give thanks for all your benefits, and serve you in willing obedience; through Jesus Christ, your Son, our Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever.

People: Amen.

(Please be seated)

+ THE WORD OF GOD +

OLD TESTAMENT Numbers 21:4-9 (*The unbelief of God's people resulted in His judgment but the same Lord gave them healing and hope.*) They traveled from Mount Hor along the route to the Red Sea, to go around Edom. But the people grew impatient on the way; they spoke against God and against Moses, and said, "Why have you brought us up out of Egypt to die in the wilderness? There is no bread! There is no water! And we detest this miserable food!" Then the LORD sent venomous snakes among them; they bit the people and many Israelites died. The people came to Moses and said, "We sinned when we spoke against the LORD and against you. Pray that the LORD will take the snakes away from us." So Moses prayed for the people. The LORD said to Moses, "Make a snake and put it up on a pole; anyone who is bitten can look at it and live." So Moses made a bronze snake and put it up on a pole. Then when anyone was bitten by a snake and looked at the bronze snake, they lived.

SECOND LESSON Ephesians 2:1-10 (*Once dead in trespasses and sin, the Lord has redeemed us by the gift of His grace in Christ, our Lord.*) As for you, you were dead in your transgressions and

sins, in which you used to live when you followed the ways of this world and of the ruler of the kingdom of the air, the spirit who is now at work in those who are disobedient. All of us also lived among them at one time, gratifying the cravings of our flesh and following its desires and thoughts. Like the rest, we were by nature deserving of wrath. But because of his great love for us, God, who is rich in mercy, made us alive with Christ even when we were dead in transgressions—it is by grace you have been saved. And God raised us up with Christ and seated us with him in the heavenly realms in Christ Jesus, in order that in the coming ages he might show the incomparable riches of his grace, expressed in his kindness to us in Christ Jesus. For it is by grace you have been saved, through faith—and this is not from yourselves, it is the gift of God— not by works, so that no one can boast. For we are God’s handiwork, created in Christ Jesus to do good works, which God prepared in advance for us to do.

(Please rise)

GOSPEL John 3:14-21 (*As Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, so must the Son of Man be lifted up that all who believe in Him may have eternal life.*) Just as Moses lifted up the snake in the wilderness, so the Son of Man must be lifted up, that everyone who believes may have eternal life in him.” For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life. For God did not send his Son into the world to condemn the world, but to save the world through him. Whoever believes in him is not condemned, but whoever does not believe stands condemned already because they have not believed in the name of God’s one and only Son. This is the verdict: Light has come into the world, but people loved darkness instead of light because their deeds were evil. Everyone who does evil hates the light, and will not come into the light for fear that their deeds will be exposed. But whoever lives by the truth comes into the light, so that it may be seen plainly that what they have done has been done in the sight of God.

(Please be seated)

CHILDREN’S MESSAGE

SERMON HYMN #571 “God Loved the World So That He Gave”

SERMON “Prayers, Not Questions” *Numbers 21:5*

(Please rise)

APOSTLES’ CREED (*found on the back cover of hymnal*)

(Please be seated)

OFFERINGS As your offering is collected, please sign our attendance book located at the end of the pew. If you are a visitor, please leave your address and phone. After you are finished, please pass the book along to others in your pew, and return the book to the center aisle.

(Please rise)

PRAYER OF THE CHURCH

Pastor: Dear Lord, today we come to you with thankful hearts as you have answered our call for a senior pastor. Please continue to bless and guide Pastor Bender, his family, the members of St. John’s & St. Paul’s during this transitional time.

People: Amen.

Pastor: Let us pray for the whole people of God in Christ Jesus and for all people according to their needs. That we may believe in Jesus Christ and find healing and redemption in His cross and that we may lift this cross high before the whole world; let us pray to the Lord.

People: Lord, have mercy.

Pastor: That we may glory in the cross of Jesus Christ and that we may show forth our faith in the good works that glorify God and accomplish His purpose. We praise you that our Guatemala Mission Team had a safe journey home after spreading your Good News to those you love; let us pray to the Lord.

People: Lord, have mercy.

Pastor: That the grace of God may come to any and all whose lives are wounded by disease, despair, darkness, or death. We pray your healing power be upon Gretchen, Harold, Elfrieda, Bea, Lois, Ruth, Dolores, Joe, and Samuel. Comfort those who mourn and remember loved ones, including Ron and for those whom we name before the Lord now in our heart . . . that the Lord may grant peace to all people as they have need, in accordance with His good and gracious will; let us pray to the Lord.

People: Lord, have mercy.

Pastor: That the Lord may bless our President, the Congress, our Governor and Mayor, and all elected and appointed civil servants; that peace may be known here and throughout the world, and that every people may know justice and freedom; let us pray to the Lord.

People: Lord, have mercy.

Pastor: That we may worship the Lord with the words of our mouths, with the tithes and offerings we bring, and with the living sacrifices of our very selves, in gratitude for what He has done to save us; let us pray to the Lord.

People: Lord, have mercy.

Pastor: That we may be prepared by the Holy Spirit to receive with faith the very body and blood of our Lord, here in this Holy Sacrament, and that we may be nourished and sustained in faith through our communion today; let us pray to the Lord.

People: Lord, have mercy.

Pastor: Into your hands, O Lord, we commend ourselves and all for whom we pray, trusting in your mercy, through Jesus Christ;

People: Lord, have mercy and grant us your grace always. Amen.

THE LORD'S PRAYER

+ SACRAMENT +

WORDS OF INSTITUTION

THE PEACE OF THE LORD

Pastor: The peace of the Lord + be with you always.

People: Amen.

AGNUS DEI *(Sung to the Tune: # 702 "My Faith Looks Up to Thee")*

O Lamb of God, we pray; Take all our sins away -- Our faith increase.

Have mercy on us all, Strengthen us when we fall,

Answer our fervent call And grant us peace.

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(Please be seated)

DISTRIBUTION Those guests who desire to commune who are members of another LCMS congregation may do so; if you are coming from another church background, please see the pastor or an elder first.

HYMN #560 "Drawn to the Cross Which Thou Hast Blessed"

HYMN #702 "My Faith Looks Up to Thee"

HYMN #559 "Oh, How Great Is Your Compassion"

COMMON DISMISSAL

(Please rise)

POST-COMMUNION PRAYER OF THANKSGIVING

Pastor: Though you had every cause to condemn us to our sins, O Lord, your mercy came to our rescue and delivered up your own Son to be our Savior and Redeemer. He willingly accepted the cross, its suffering, and its death,

that His cross might be raised up as the means to hope and salvation for all who trust in Him. Give us every comfort through your cross and inspire us to faithfully raise it up through the witness of our words and our lives, that all may know with us the love that has set us free; through Jesus Christ, your Son, our Lord who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever.

People: Amen.

BENEDICTION

People: Amen.

CLOSING HYMN #770

"What a Friend We Have in Jesus"

Preacher	Rev. Dr. Ronald E. Meyer, President Emeritus, South Wisconsin District
Lectors	Marc Stefanic, Bob Woller, Jodi Drew
Acolytes	Amber Hren, Kyler Hutchins, Cassy Kallas
Organist	Roger Gottschalk
Music Coordinator	Kim Woller

TODAY'S SPEAKER

The man in our pulpit today Rev. Dr. Ronald E. Meyer served for twelve years as President of The Lutheran Church--Missouri Synod, South Wisconsin District, followed with service on the Development Team for LCMS World Mission, followed with service as *Director of Outreach*, for LCMS World Mission—National Team. President Meyer and his wife Lou Ann reside in New Berlin.

As a part of his ongoing volunteer ministry, Dr. Meyer serves locally on the Board of Directors for the Lutheran Home and for the Lutheran Urban Mission Initiative [LUMIN], both in Milwaukee, nationally on the Board of the Lutheran Deaf Mission Society and internationally as a member of the Caspari Advancement TF and as a Caspari Center Ambassador. The mission for the Caspari Center for Biblical and Jewish Studies is to support the growth of Jewish believers in Jesus, in Israel and worldwide, through strategic education and research.

In addition to functioning as a guest preacher in various places, Pastor Meyer is presently serving as the Assisting Pastor at Brookfield Lutheran. He prays that his ministry with us might be used of God to strengthen our Spirit given faith and move us to greater service of the King of kings and Savior of the world.