

Look for the
Shepherd

4th Sunday in Lent
March 19, 2023



Ascension Lutheran Church
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Welcome to Worship...

Welcome to all God's guests, including those who call themselves "members" of this church named Ascension Lutheran Church more than 50 years ago.

A special welcome to guests who are here for the first time or who call yourselves "visitors" among the people of this community. It is at God's invitation, through worship, the Holy Spirit calls each of us to come to a place of **community, communion** and **commitment**. Each of us brings a different lens to worship, and yet, in a worshiping community, these differences become celebrations of diversity.

**Children are always welcome in worship services;
however please know a nursery space is available for
parents who need to tend to their little ones.**

Please silence your cell phones at this time.

Introduction—Lookin' for Love in All the Wrong Places

The Christian scriptures offer many images of where love, grace, forgiveness, righteousness, and healing can REALLY be found. And it is not in the "usual" places. Isn't it as true of us today as it was of the scriptural authors? Don't we often look for wholeness and happiness in places that offer only temporary "good feelings" and satisfaction?

Lent is a wonderfully reflective time to reassess where we are searching for meaning and purpose. We'll move through stories of Jesus to find out who offers the "real deal."

Call to Worship

(All) Hearts o - pen, minds a -
wake, change us now for heav - en's
sake; leave us not a - lone in ha - tred's wake. -
- Show us how - to love, show us how -
- to love, show us how, show us how -
- to love.

P Each week during Lent we are focusing on where love is truly found. We know that all too often we find ourselves looking for love in the security of powerful people, sure that they can “fix” things for us. It wasn’t any different for the people we meet in the First and Second Testaments. They were looking for kings, saviors, liberators who would offer peace and security in uncertain times. In their stories we see they often looked in all the wrong places. In our gospel today, we will hear that the Pharisees just can’t believe that this unconventional trouble-maker named Jesus is the One – the Son of God – the Savior. Time and again Jesus uses the unlikely metaphor of a shepherd to teach us how we ought to love and care for each other. No wonder, the Shepherd does what is needed – when it is needed, regardless of the “rules.”

(All) Eyes o - pen, shocked a -
 wake, much to learn from our mis -
 takes; draw us clo - ser in our heart - ache.
 Show us how - to love, show us
 how - to love, show us how, show us
 how - - to love.

Confession and Assurance

P Let us join together in opening our hearts to the love of God. Before we even utter a word, we can be assured God will offer us grace and a way forward. For this reason, we can be honest with what pains us most about our own thoughts and actions. Let us pray:

Holy and Merciful One,

**we come bringing our deepest longings,
 and our failed attempts at satisfying them.**

We have often looked for love in things that cannot give us love.

**We yearn for lives that matter,
 we desire relationships that thrive,
 we want less regret.**

**We fail to see that you have already given us what really matters:
 your love and acceptance.**

P You provide opportunities all around us
to make a difference in the lives of others.
You give us a fresh start each day, inviting us to trust you.

In this silence, we confess we have looked for love in all the wrong places.
Today may we open ourselves to a change in our paths to seeing with
new eyes, to setting aside empty promises.

Silence for self reflection.

My friends, be assured by the Psalmist who says that
“the Lord is our shepherd... whose goodness and mercy
follows us all the days of our lives.”

Let us respond together:

**All We open our hearts, our minds, our souls, our vision
to the ways of love created by God,
embodied in Jesus,
and already moving in us by the Spirit.
We are forgiven, loved, and freed! Amen!**

We Proclaim

A reading of Psalm 23

The LORD is my shepherd, I shall not want.
He makes me lie down in green pastures;
he leads me beside still waters;
he restores my soul.
He leads me in right paths for his name's sake.

Even though I walk through the darkest valley,
I fear no evil;
for you are with me;
your rod and your staff — they comfort me.

You prepare a table before me in the presence of my enemies;
you anoint my head with oil;
my cup overflows.

Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me all the days of my life,
and I shall dwell in the house of the LORD my whole life long.

L The word of the Lord

All Thanks be to God!

Gospel Acclamation

Please stand as you are able.

O - pen the eyes of my heart, Lord,

o - pen the eyes of my heart; I want to see You,

I want to see You. O - pen the eyes of my heart,

Lord, o - pen the eyes of my heart; I want to

see You, I want to see You.

Gospel Reading

P The Holy Gospel according to St. John, the 9th chapter.

All **Glory to you, O Lord.**

As he walked along, he saw a man blind from birth. His disciples asked him, "Rabbi, who sinned, this man or his parents, that he was born blind?"

Jesus answered, "Neither this man nor his parents sinned; he was born blind so that God's works might be revealed in him. We must work the works of him who sent me while it is day; night is coming when no one can work. As long as I am in the world, I am the light of the world."

When he had said this, he spat on the ground and made mud with the saliva and spread the mud on the man's eyes, saying to him, "Go, wash in the pool of Siloam" (which means Sent). Then he went and washed and came back able to see.

The neighbors and those who had seen him before as a beggar began to ask, "Is this not the man who used to sit and beg?" Some were saying, "It is he." Others were saying, "No, but it is someone like him." He kept saying, "I am the man." But they kept asking him, "Then how were your eyes opened?"

He answered, "The man called Jesus made mud, spread it on my eyes, and said to me, 'Go to Siloam and wash.' Then I went and washed and received my sight."

They said to him, "Where is he?" He said, "I do not know." They brought to the Pharisees the man who had formerly been blind. Now it was a sabbath day when Jesus made the mud and opened his eyes. Then the Pharisees also began to ask him how he had received his sight. He said to them, "He put mud on my eyes. Then I washed, and now I see."

Some of the Pharisees said, "This man is not from God, for he does not observe the sabbath." But others said, "How can a man who is a sinner perform such signs?" And they were divided.

So they said again to the blind man, "What do you say about him? It was your eyes he opened." He said, "He is a prophet."

The Jews did not believe that he had been blind and had received his sight until they called the parents of the man who had received his sight and asked them, "Is this your son, who you say was born blind? How then does he now see?" His parents answered, "We know that this is our son, and that he was born blind; but we do not know how it is that now he sees, nor do we know who opened his eyes. Ask him; he is of age. He will speak for himself." His parents said this because they were afraid of the Jews; for the Jews had already agreed that anyone who confessed Jesus to be the Messiah would be put out of the synagogue. Therefore his parents said, "He is of age; ask him."

So for the second time they called the man who had been blind, and they said to him, "Give glory to God! We know that this man is a sinner."

He answered, "I do not know whether he is a sinner. One thing I do know, that though I was blind, now I see."

They said to him, "What did he do to you? How did he open your eyes?"

He answered them, "I have told you already, and you would not listen. Why do you want to hear it again? Do you also want to become his disciples?"

Then they reviled him, saying, "You are his disciple, but we are disciples of Moses. We know that God has spoken to Moses, but as for this man, we do not know where he comes from."

The man answered, "Here is an astonishing thing! You do not know where he comes from, and yet he opened my eyes. We know that God does not listen to sinners, but he does listen to one who worships him and obeys his will. Never since the world began has it been heard that anyone opened the eyes of a person born blind. If this man were not from God, he could do nothing."

They answered him, "You were born entirely in sins, and are you trying to teach us?" And they drove him out.

Jesus heard that they had driven him out, and when he found him, he said, "Do you believe in the Son of Man?"

He answered, "And who is he, sir? Tell me, so that I may believe in him."

Jesus said to him, "You have seen him, and the one speaking with you is he."

He said, "Lord, I believe." And he worshiped him.

Jesus said, "I came into this world for judgment so that those who do not see may see, and those who do see may become blind."

Some of the Pharisees near him heard this and said to him, "Surely we are not blind, are we?"

Jesus said to them, "If you were blind, you would not have sin. But now that you say, 'We see,' your sin remains."

John 9: 1-41

P The Word of God that is still speaking,

All Praise to you, O Christ.

You may be Seated

Sermon

Pr. Debra Jimenez

Hymn of the Day

Please stand as you are able.

Open Our Eyes

Words and Music by
Bob Cull

O - pen our eyes, Lord, we want to see Je -

-sus, to reach out and touch Him, and

say that we love Him. O - pen our ears, Lord,

and help us to lis - ten, o - pen our

eyes, Lord, we want to see Je - sus.

Apostles' Creed

P Let us join together with the saints across the ages confessing our faith with the words of the 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.**

Prayers of the People

L Let us pray, singing "God have mercy" in Greek, "Kyrie Eleison:"

**♪ ♪ Kyrie Eleison, Kyrie Eleison ♪ ♪
Kyrie Eleison, I pray.**

Prayers for the World

...God have mercy. In this singing we lift up this world to you with our love:

Prayers for Our Community

...God have mercy. In this singing we lift up this community to you with our love:

Prayers for Our Relationships

...God have mercy. In this singing we lift up each other to you with our love:

Prayers for Our Selves

...God have mercy. In this singing we open ourselves to your love:

Sharing the Peace

In our continued physical distancing out of love for the health of one another, we will share the peace of our risen Lord by "speaking" that peace through sign language.

P Christ become Love and Peace with you.

All And also with you.

Offering

While we still will not physically pass the offering plates we will continue to have the plates available at the entrance to receive your offerings and will lift them up in thanksgiving before the throne of grace.



The musical notation is written on two staves in 3/4 time. The first staff contains the melody for the first line of the prayer, with lyrics: "I cast all my cares up - on You. _____ I". The second staff contains the melody for the second line, with lyrics: "lay all of my bur - dens down at Your feet. And". A triplet of eighth notes is marked with a '3' above it in the second staff.

an - y - time that I don't know what to do, I will
cast all my cares up - on You.

Offertory Prayer

P God of good gifts,

All Through your goodness you have blessed us with these gifts:
our selves, our time, and our possessions.

Use us, and what we have gathered, in feeding the world with your love.

Prepare our hearts to receive you in this meal as you pour out your very
presence through Christ Jesus, the wellspring of eternal life. Amen.

Holy Communion

P May Love be with you!

All And also with you!

P Lift up your hearts!

All We lift them up to the Lord!

P Let us give thanks to the Lord our God!

All It is right to give our thanks and praise!

P What love you have given us in your Son Jesus Christ!

Your Spirit poured out through him,

as he brought good news, proclaimed freedom, healed, and fed.

His life of love shows us the way.

His life of love delivers us from false hopes.

His life, death, and resurrection offered ultimate and enduring love.

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.

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.

And so, in remembrance of this love in Jesus Christ, we offer our love completely as we proclaim the mystery of faith.

All Christ has died; Christ is risen; Christ will come again!

The Lord's Prayer

[Please stand as you are able.](#)

P Now gathered into one by the Holy Spirit, let us pray as Jesus taught.

All ***Our Father, who art in heaven,
hallowed be thy name,
thy kingdom come,
thy 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 and ever. Amen.***

The Invitation

P Christ has prepared the feast.

Come to the table where all are welcomed home.

There's A Quiet Understanding

Words and Music by
Tedd Smith



1. There's a qui - et un - der - stand - ing when we're gath - ered
2. And we know when we're to - geth - er, shar - ing love and



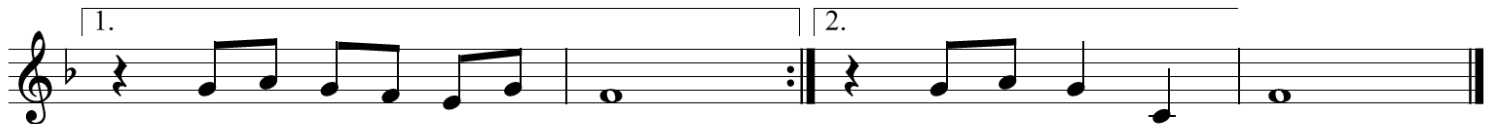
in the Spir - it; It's a prom - ise that He gives _ us, when we gath - er in His
un - der - stand - ing, that our broth - ers and our sis - ters feel the one-ness that He



name. There's a love we feel in Je - sus, there's a man - na
brings. Thank You, thank You, thank You, Je - sus, for the way You



that He feeds _ us; It's a prom - ise that He gives _ us,
love and feed _ us, for the man - y ways You lead _ us,



when we gath - er in His name. thank You, thank You, Lord.

Post Communion Blessing and Prayer

P The body and blood of our Lord Jesus Christ strengthen you and keep you in his grace.

All Amen.

P Embodied God,
at your table, we have tasted the goodness of Jesus.

**All With the eyes of our hearts open to your promise,
empower us to hear the needs of our neighbors
and touch the world with your love. Amen.**

Stewardship of Life and Ministry Announcements

Benediction

Please stand as you are able.

P May the weary weight you have carried here
surrender to the power of connection and communion.
May the fullness of your actual self find warmth and recognition
in the presence of Jesus, the risen One.
May the healing presence of God flow through you,
soothing the cracks of your soul, ✝ anointing your whole life.

All Amen.

- Show us how - to love, show us how -
- to love, show us how, show us how -
- to love.

Dismissal

P Go in peace. Serve in love.

All Thanks be to God.

Readings for next Sunday,
March 26th
Fifth Sunday in Lent

| | |
|------------------------|-----------------|
| First Reading: | Ezekiel 37:1-14 |
| Psalm: | Psalm 130 |
| Second Reading: | Romans 8:6-11 |
| Gospel: | John 11:1-45 |

Music licenses covered by these subscriptions