

ELW Service of the Word Sunday, March 30, 2025

WELCOME VIDEO

CHOIR ANTHEM

PRELUDE

ANNOUNCEMENTS

CONFESSION AND FORGIVENESS

Blessed be the holy Trinity, ✝ one God, who forgives all our sin,
whose mercy endures forever. Amen.

Let us return to God, confessing our sin in the assurance of God's abiding
love.

Compassionate One,
**you are slow to anger and abounding in steadfast love,
but our lives do not always reflect you and your love for the world.
We do not show others the tender compassion
you have shown to us. We do not welcome others with the radical
hospitality you grant to all people.
We oppress others, even though you have set us free again and again.
We squander the abundant gifts of the earth.
Transform our lives and guide us again in the way of the cross.
Amen.**

Beloved in Christ,
God's arms are always stretched open wide
to welcome the wandering ones home.
In ✝ Christ your sins are forgiven.
You have a place in God's house forever.
Amen.

GATHERING SONG Jesus, Keep Me Near the Cross (ELW 335)

1 Jesus, keep me near the cross,
there's a precious fountain;
free to all, a healing stream
flows from Calv'ry's mountain.

Refrain

In the cross, in the cross
be my glory ever;
till my ransomed soul shall find
rest beyond the river.

2 Near the cross, a trembling soul,
love and mercy found me;
there the bright and morning star
sheds its beams around me. Refrain

3 Near the cross! O Lamb of God,
bring its scenes before me;
help me walk from day to day
with its shadow o'er me. Refrain

4 Near the cross I'll watch and wait,
hoping, trusting ever,
till I reach the golden strand
just beyond the river. Refrain

GREETING (ELW p. 213)

The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, the love of God,
and the communion of the Holy Spirit be with you all.
And also with you.

KYRIE (ELW p. 203)

**Have mercy on us, Lord, and hear our solemn prayer.
We come to hear your living word; it saves us from despair.**

**Have mercy on us, Christ, and wash away our sin.
Pour out your grace and make us whole that new life may begin.**

**Have mercy on us, Lord, make sin and shame depart.
Renew us with your saving pow'r; create in us new hearts!**

PRAYER OF THE DAY

Let us pray.

God of compassion, you welcome the wayward, and you embrace us all with your mercy. By our baptism clothe us with garments of your grace, and feed us at the table of your love, through Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. Amen.

FIRST READING: Joshua 5:9-12

A reading from Joshua.

The Lord said to Joshua, "Today I have rolled away from you the disgrace of Egypt." And so that place is called Gilgal to this day.

While the Israelites were camped in Gilgal they kept the passover in the evening on the fourteenth day of the month in the plains of Jericho. On the day after the passover, on that very day, they ate the produce of the land, unleavened cakes and parched grain. The manna ceased on the day they ate the produce of the land, and the Israelites no longer had manna; they ate the crops of the land of Canaan that year.

The word of the Lord.
Thanks be to God.

PSALM: Psalm 32

1 Happy are they whose transgressions are forgiven,
 and whose sin is put away!

**2 Happy are they to whom the Lord imputes no guilt,
 and in whose spirit there is no guile!**

3 While I held my tongue, my bones withered away,
 because of my groaning all day long.

**4 For your hand was heavy upon me day and night;
 my moisture was dried up as in the heat of summer.**

5 Then I acknowledged my sin to you, and did not conceal my guilt.
 I said, "I will confess my transgressions to the Lord." Then you
 forgave me the guilt of my sin.

**6 Therefore all the faithful will make their prayers to you in time of
 trouble; when the great waters overflow, they shall not reach them.**

7 You are my hiding-place; you preserve me from trouble;
 you surround me with shouts of deliverance.

**8 "I will instruct you and teach you in the way that you should go;
 I will guide you with my eye.**

9 Do not be like horse or mule, which have no understanding;
 who must be fitted with bit and bridle, or else they will not stay
 near you."

**10 Great are the tribulations of the wicked;
 but mercy embraces those who trust in the Lord.**

11 Be glad, you righteous, and rejoice in the Lord;
 shout for joy, all who are true of heart.

SECOND READING: 2 Corinthians 5:16-21

A reading from 2 Corinthians.

From now on, therefore, we regard no one from a human point of view; even though we once knew Christ from a human point of view, we know him no longer in that way. So if anyone is in Christ, there is a new creation: everything old has passed away; see, everything has become new! ¹⁸ All this is from God, who reconciled us to himself through Christ, and has given us the ministry of reconciliation; that is, in Christ God was reconciling the world to himself, not counting their trespasses against them, and entrusting the message of reconciliation to us. So we are ambassadors for Christ, since God is making his appeal through us; we entreat you on behalf of Christ, be reconciled to God. For our sake he made him to be sin who knew no sin, so that in him we might become the righteousness of God.

The word of the Lord.
Thanks be to God.

GOSPEL ACCLAMATION

**We are turning, Lord, to hear you; you are merciful and kind—
 slow to anger, rich in blessing, and with love to us inclined.**

GOSPEL (VISUAL WORD): Luke 15:1-3, 11b-32

The holy gospel according to Luke.
Glory to you, O Lord.

1 Now all the tax collectors and sinners were coming near to listen to [Jesus.] 2 And the Pharisees and the scribes were grumbling and saying, “This fellow welcomes sinners and eats with them.”

3 So he told them this parable: 11b “There was a man who had two sons. 12 The younger of them said to his father, ‘Father, give me the share of the property that will belong to me.’ So he divided his property between them. 13 A few days later the younger son gathered all he had and traveled to a distant country, and there he squandered his

property in dissolute living. 14 When he had spent everything, a severe famine took place throughout that country, and he began to be in need. 15 So he went and hired himself out to one of the citizens of that country, who sent him to his fields to feed the pigs. 16 He would gladly have filled himself with the pods that the pigs were eating; and no one gave him anything. 17 But when he came to himself he said, ‘How many of my father’s hired hands have bread enough and to spare, but here I am dying of hunger! 18 I will get up and go to my father, and I will say to him, “Father, I have sinned against heaven and before you; 19 I am no longer worthy to be called your son; treat me like one of your hired hands.” ’ 20 So he set off and went to his father. But while he was still far off, his father saw him and was filled with compassion; he ran and put his arms around him and kissed him. 21 Then the son said to him, ‘Father, I have sinned against heaven and before you; I am no longer worthy to be called your son.’ 22 But the father said to his slaves, ‘Quickly, bring out a robe—the best one—and put it on him; put a ring on his finger and sandals on his feet. 23 And get the fatted calf and kill it, and let us eat and celebrate; 24 for this son of mine was dead and is alive again; he was lost and is found!’ And they began to celebrate.

25 “Now his elder son was in the field; and when he came and approached the house, he heard music and dancing. 26 He called one of the slaves and asked what was going on. 27 He replied, ‘Your brother has come, and your father has killed the fatted calf, because he has got him back safe and sound.’ 28 Then he became angry and refused to go in. His father came out and began to plead with him. 29 But he answered his father, ‘Listen! For all these years I have been working like a slave for you, and I have never disobeyed your command; yet you have never given me even a young goat so that I might celebrate with my friends. 30 But when this son of yours came back, who has devoured your property with prostitutes, you killed the fatted calf for him!’ 31 Then the father said to him, ‘Son, you are always with me, and all that is mine is yours. 32 But we had to celebrate and rejoice, because this brother of yours was dead and has come to life; he was lost and has been found.’ ”

The gospel of the Lord.
Praise to you, O Christ.

SERMON

HYMN OF THE DAY *Softly and Tenderly Jesus Is Calling* (ELW 608)

1 Softly and tenderly Jesus is calling,
calling for you and for me.
See, on the portals he's waiting and watching,
watching for you and for me.

Refrain

"Come home, (Come home,
come home! (come home!)
You who are weary, come home."
Earnestly, tenderly, Jesus is calling,
calling, "O sinner, come home!"

2 Why should we tarry when Jesus is pleading,
pleading for you and for me?
Why should we linger and heed not his mercies,
mercies for you and for me? Refrain

3 Oh, for the wonderful love he has promised,
promised for you and for me!
Though we have sinned, he has mercy and pardon,
pardon for you and for me. Refrain

A STATEMENT OF FAITH

We are not alone, we live in God's world. We believe in God: who has created and is creating, who has come in Jesus, the Word made flesh, to reconcile and make new, who works in us and others by the Spirit. We trust in God.

We are called to be the Church: to celebrate God's presence, to live with respect in Creation, to love and serve others, to seek justice and resist evil, to proclaim Jesus, crucified and risen, our judge and our hope. In life, in death, in life beyond death, God is with us. We are not alone. Thanks be to God.

PRAYERS OF INTERCESSION

Led by the Spirit, let us turn to God in prayer for the church, the world, and all those in need.

READER 1 God of faithful promise, make your church a new creation in Christ. As you reconcile us to yourself, guide us also in your way of reconciliation, that through confession and forgiveness, repentance and reparations, your church may bear witness to your love. God, in your mercy,
receive our prayer.

READER 2 God of new beginnings, restore balance to the earth. Send rain to places of drought and sunshine to places of flooding, that the produce of the land may again support life. God, in your mercy,
receive our prayer.

READER 3 God of prodigal grace, unite the nations as fellow members of the human family. Give leaders the courage to put aside pride and ego, to cease squandering lives and time, and to work for the well-being of all. God, in your mercy,
receive our prayer.

PASTOR God of boundless love, receive with open arms any in need of compassion (*especially*). Embrace all who are far from home or estranged from loved ones, and all who live with regret. Embolden your people to offer and to seek forgiveness. God, in your mercy,
receive our prayer.

READER 4 God of radical inclusion, widen human circles to welcome all who are excluded. Bless the work of disability ministries, ministries by and with neurodivergent people, and multicultural and

ethnic-specific ministries; that the welcome of Jesus be extended to all.
God, in your mercy,
receive our prayer.

READER 5 God of resurrection life, welcome home all who have died (*especially*). We thank you for their lives and entrust them into your keeping, where true reconciliation and eternal peace are found. God, in your mercy,
receive our prayer.

Receive the prayers of your people and draw all things together in your love, in the name of Jesus, who leads us from death to life.
Amen.

PEACE

The peace of Christ be with you always.
And also with you.

VISUALWORD

THANKSGIVING FOR THE WORD

Let us pray.

O God of justice and love, we give thanks to you that you illumine our way through life with the words of your Son. Give us the light we need, awaken us to the needs of others, and at the end bring all the world to your feast; through Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord, to whom, with you and the Holy Spirit, be honor and glory forever.
Amen.

LORD'S PRAYER (ELW p. 221)

Gathered into one by the Holy Spirit, let us pray as Jesus taught us.

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.

BLESSING

God our tender parent,
God the crucified one,
God the reconciling Spirit,
✠ bless you now and forever.
Amen.

SENDING SONG *Amazing Grace, How Sweet the Sound* (ELW 779)

DISMISSAL (ELW p. 222)

Go in peace. Serve the Lord.
Thanks be to God.

CONGREGATION JOINS IN SINGING:

God be with you 'til we meet again, By his counsel's guide, uphold you,
With his sheep securely fold you, God be with you 'til we meet again.
Amen.

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