

First Sunday in Lent
February 21, 2021
Cross of Glory Lutheran Church
Brooklyn Center, MN

This Lenten season, we're using Holden Evening Prayer, a worship music setting that blends traditional and contemporary styles together in a contemplative liturgy. If you don't yet know these songs, we invite you to join in as soon as you're comfortable. If you already know them, please jump in, trusting that God raises our voices together in song, even while we're apart!

PRELUDE

GREETING

CONFESSION AND FORGIVENESS

Blessed be the holy Trinity, † one God, the giver of life, the source of steadfast love, our rock and our redeemer. **Amen.**

Let us take a moment of silence to confess our sin and return to the one who is full of compassion.
Silence for reflection.

Merciful God, **we have rejected your gift of life in order to be our own gods, clinging to death-dealing idols of our own making. We have distanced ourselves from those who are different. We have turned away from the groans of creation and the cries of our neighbors in need. Mend what we have broken. Join together what we have torn apart. And make us alive to your love, that we may experience and share the life you offer us now.**

Beloved, nothing in all of creation can separate us from the love of God. So hear this good news: in the name of Jesus Christ, your sins are † forgiven. Live now in the freedom of forgiveness and in the joy of life together. Amen.

OPENING SONG

Joyous light of heavenly glory, loving glow of God's own face,
you who sing creation's story, shine on every land and race.
Now as morning breaks around us, we shall raise our songs to you,
God of daybreak, God of shadows, come and light our hearts anew.

In the stars that grace the darkness, in the blazing sun of dawn,
of the light of peace and wisdom, we can hear your quiet song.
Love that fills the night with wonder, love that warms the weary soul,
Love that bursts all chains asunder, set us free and make us whole.

You who made the heaven's splendor, every dancing star of night,
make us shine with gentle justice, let us each reflect our light.
Mighty God of all creation, gentle Christ who lights our way,
loving spirit of salvation, lead us on to endless day.

THANKSGIVING

Leader: May God be with you all,

A: And also with you.

L: Let us sing our thanks to God,

A: It is right to give God thanks and praise.

L: Blessed are you, Creator of the universe, from old you have led your people by night and day. May the light of your Christ make our darkness bright, for your Word and your presence are the light of our pathways, and you are the light and life of all creation.

A: Amen

PSALMODY

This song, drawing on the words of Psalm 144, begins in unison then breaks into two parts and is sung as a round. In our recorded worship service, there will be a leader for both parts. If you're last name begins with A-M, follow part I. If your last name begins with N-Z, follow part II.

Refrain (*begins in unison*):

Let my prayer rise up as incense before you,
the lifting up of my hands as an offering to you.

Part I & II sung in round:

O God, I call to you, come to me now;
hear my voice when I cry to you. *Refrain.*

Keep watch within me, God;
deep in my heart may the light of your love be burning bright. *Refrain*

All praise to the God of all, Creator of life;
all praise to the Christ and the Spirit of love. *Refrain*

Silence for meditation.

PRAYER

Let us pray together . . . **May our prayers come before you, O God, as incense, and may your presence surround and fill us, so that together with all creation, we might sing your praise and your love in our lives. Amen.**

READING: Psalm 51:1-17

- ¹ Have mercy on me, O God,
according to your steadfast love;
according to your abundant mercy
blot out my transgressions.
- ² Wash me thoroughly from my iniquity,
and cleanse me from my sin.
- ³ For I know my transgressions,
and my sin is ever before me.
- ⁴ Against you, you alone, have I sinned,

and done what is evil in your sight,
so that you are justified in your sentence
and blameless when you pass judgement.
⁵ Indeed, I was born guilty,
a sinner when my mother conceived me.
⁶ You desire truth in the inward being;
therefore teach me wisdom in my secret heart.
⁷ Purge me with hyssop, and I shall be clean;
wash me, and I shall be whiter than snow.
⁸ Let me hear joy and gladness;
let the bones that you have crushed rejoice.
⁹ Hide your face from my sins,
and blot out all my iniquities.
¹⁰ Create in me a clean heart, O God,
and put a new and right spirit within me.
¹¹ Do not cast me away from your presence,
and do not take your holy spirit from me.
¹² Restore to me the joy of your salvation,
and sustain in me a willing spirit.
¹³ Then I will teach transgressors your ways,
and sinners will return to you.
¹⁴ Deliver me from bloodshed, O God,
O God of my salvation,
and my tongue will sing aloud of your deliverance.
¹⁵ O Lord, open my lips,
and my mouth will declare your praise.
¹⁶ For you have no delight in sacrifice;
if I were to give a burnt-offering, you would not be pleased.
¹⁷ The sacrifice acceptable to God is a broken spirit;
a broken and contrite heart, O God, you will not despise.

READING: 2 Corinthians 5:20b-6:10

²⁰So we are ambassadors for Christ, since God is making his appeal through us; we entreat you on behalf of Christ, be reconciled to God. ²¹For our sake he made him to be sin who knew no sin, so that in him we might become the righteousness of God.

6 ¹As we work together with him, we urge you also not to accept the grace of God in vain. ²For he says, 'At an acceptable time I have listened to you, and on a day of salvation I have helped you.' See, now is the acceptable time; see, now is the day of salvation! ³We are putting no obstacle in anyone's way, so that no fault may be found with our ministry, ⁴but as servants of God we have commended ourselves in every way: through great endurance, in afflictions, hardships, calamities, ⁵beatings, imprisonments, riots, labors, sleepless nights, hunger; ⁶by purity, knowledge, patience, kindness, holiness of spirit, genuine love, ⁷truthful speech, and the power of God; with the weapons of righteousness for the right hand and for the left; ⁸in honor and dishonor, in ill repute and good repute. We are treated as impostors, and yet are true; ⁹as unknown, and yet are well known; as dying, and see—we are alive; as punished, and yet not killed; ¹⁰as sorrowful, yet always rejoicing; as poor, yet making many rich; as having nothing, and yet possessing everything.

The Word of the Lord.

Thanks be to God.

REFLECTION I Rev. Ali Tranvik The Ashes Form a Cross

One of my favorite moments in the whole church year is the moment just after everyone has been marked with a cross on Ash Wednesday, and you can look out across a sanctuary full of ash crosses marked on the faces of 90-day-olds and 90-year-olds, faces of loved ones and ones that are harder to love, faces familiar and new. Like everything in the pandemic, we found new ways of doing this ritual, but it is yet *another* moment in our life together that I lament not being able to experience with you in-person this year.

The cross is the shape that marks the beginning of the season of Lent, and it's the shape that marks the end of it on Calvary. From the cross of Ash Wednesday to the cross of Good Friday, this season of Lent is a time when we reflect on the shape of the cross. Because the shape of the cross is the shape of sin, the shape of our best attempts to get rid of a God who didn't quite fit the mold of "Messiah." He wasn't a mighty king, a sovereign ruler who retreated into a castle or temple for a life of solitude and security and self-sufficiency and who offered us the same. No, this Jesus of Nazareth was a poor, brown Palestinian, Jewish man, whose very life was seen as a threat to the status quo because of the way he lived life together— with lowly fishermen and status-less children and disliked tax collectors and bleeding women. With those who dwelled not in the places of power or city center but on the edges, in the streets and shadows of the Roman empire, in the low places and wilderness places. This Jesus lived life together, and made possible new kinds of togetherness, and invites us into it. But he was killed, because we preferred a different kind of God, or perhaps preferred to be gods ourselves. The shape that represents our best attempts to separate ourselves from God, and God from the world. The cross is the shape of sin. The symbol of the worst that humanity can *do*.

But the cross is also a symbol of the worst that humanity can *experience*. The cross, in other words, is also the shape of suffering. Martin Luther once said that if we are to know anything about who God is and where he can be found, look to the cross. Because we have a God who doesn't stand over the cross in condemnation but who hangs from it. Which is to say, we have a God who knows suffering, who knows despair, who knows hopelessness and forsakenness, who knows loneliness, who knows pandemics, who knows death.

The cross is the shape of sin and it's the shape of suffering but it's also--paradoxically--the shape of *love*. It's the shape that bore the body of a God who would not stop loving us in spite of our best attempts to separate ourselves from it, and who could not stop loving us in the midst of our suffering.

Yes, the cross is a paradox. Because Jesus couldn't stay dead. Indeed, the love that Jesus embodied could not be killed. Life—life together, the kind that mighty kings, sovereign rulers, or just ordinary people seeking solitude, security, and self-sufficiency disdained—could not be stopped.

MUSIC	At the Cross	Worship Team	
Verse 1	Oh Lord You've searched me You know my way Even when I fail You I know You love me	Verse 3	You go before me You shield my way Your hand upholds me I know You love me
Verse 2	Your holy presence Surrounding me In every season	Verse 4	And when the earth fades Falls from my eyes And You stand before me

I know You love me
I know You love me

I know You love me
I know You love me

Chorus: At the cross I bend my knee
Where Your blood was shed for me
There's no greater love than this
You have overcome the grave
Your glory fills the highest place
What can separate me now

Bridge: You tore the veil You made a way
When You said that it is done
You tore the veil You made a way
When You said that it is done

CROSS MEDITATION: PowerPoint Cross Images from the Cross of Glory Family

Throughout the season of Lent, you are invited to take part in a communal spiritual practice of paying attention to the crosses or cross shapes that appear in the sanctuaries of your home or work. Take a picture of the crosses you notice and email them to Pastor Ali. A few of these crosses will be shown during this time of prayerful reflection in our recorded worship service each week.

REFLECTION II Rev. Ali Tranvik The Cross is Made of Ashes

I was part of a conversation a couple weeks ago with a group of pastors who were talking about various ways we could do Ash Wednesday this year, how we do the marking of the ashes, this very physical ritual this year in the midst of all the physical distancing. I heard all sorts of ideas—drive-by ashes, take-home ashes, temporary tattoos (or at least hopefully temporary tattoos), homemade ashes using fireplaces or candles or the dirt from a house plant. One pastor said her plan was simply to run her finger over any piece of furniture in her home and mark her own forehead with dust.

However it was that we were marked with the cross this year, the words we are told in this ritual are: “Remember that you are dust, and to dust you shall return.” These words are often seen as a kind of morbid reminder of our mortality, of the fact that we will die, that as much as we may try to deny or overcome it or separate ourselves from it, we are headed back to the ground. “To dust you shall return.”

But listen to these words again, because the dust is not only where we’re headed, but it’s also where we came from. These words come from Genesis 3:19, when God tells Adam (Adamah, אָדָמָה, whose name in Hebrew literally means “dust” or “dirt”) that “you will return to the ground, for out of it you were taken; you are dust, and to dust you shall return.” Yes, the dirt is where we’re headed, but it’s also where we came from. It’s also what we *are*.

Which is to say, in our attempts to distance ourselves from our own death, we are distancing ourselves from our birth. In our attempts to separate ourselves from dustiness, the stuff of our death, we are also separating the stuff of life. From creation, from a creative and creating God.

Because just as the shape of the cross is a paradox, so too is its substance. We may think of dust as something to be swept up or dirt as something to wash away. To be told that we are dust, that we are dirt sounds offensive, right?! But to be told we are dirt is not just to be reminded of our bodily death but to be reminded of our life. Yes, dirt is the site where our dead bodies will reside but dirt is alive, buzzing with millions of organisms. Creation continues, life keeps creeping up through the cracks—in fact, it cannot be stopped.

God does not dwell on the shiny mountaintops of the Transfiguration, like Pastor John told us last week, but in the down-mountain muck—the dirt—of the world. The places the world sees as desolate or dirty or dangerous or death-dealing are where life is found. The places we see as lifeless, hopeless, God-less are the very places where God dwells: Cross of glory! Dirt of life!

Paul talks about this paradox of Christian living (cruciform living) in today's text from 2 Corinthians: "We are treated. . . as dying, and see—we are alive; as punished, and yet not killed; as sorrowful, yet always rejoicing; as poor, yet making many rich; as having nothing, and yet possessing everything" (6:8-10).

If you are headed into this Lenten season a little daunted by the fact that we have 40 days in front of us of dwelling on death (in a year when we've already done plenty of that), or pondering separation (in a year when we've already done plenty of that), let us remember that the good news is never far away. Even in this season of repentance, lament, sorrow, we find a message in 2 Corinthians that points not just to the other end of the Lenten season, but which declares an immediate, present, in-this-very-moment word of gospel. We need not wait, for now is the day of salvation" (Jacobson). Now is the time when life exceeds death on a cross, when life is bursting forth in the dirt. Even in the dirt of this frozen winter ground. Even in Lent. Even in this pandemic. Even in this time of physical separation. Even as we try to further separate ourselves, to "cast ourselves away from God's presence," as our psalmist writes, the ever-creating Creator can't stop and won't stop offering us "the joy of salvation," the joy of life—and life together—even now. Thanks be to God!

MUSIC Create in Me Worship Team

Verse 1 A sacrifice pleasing to God *Verse 2*
is a broken spirit
You'll not despise a humble heart
You will hold and heal it.
Renew, restore
remember me, my Lord.

Come purify and I will be clean
Wash away all my shame
O let me hear gladness and joy
O let me hear gladness and joy
Let my mouth sing Your praise.
Renew, restore
remember me, my Lord. **Chorus**

Chorus Create in me a new heart
After Yours after Yours
Create in me a new heart
After Yours after Yours
My Lord.

CONFESSION OF FAITH 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.

THE ANNUNCIATION + MAGNIFICAT

Leader: And angel went from God to a town called Nazareth to a woman whose name was Mary.
The angel said to her, "Rejoice, O highly favored, for God is with you. You shall bear a child, and his name shall be Jesus, the Chosen One of God most high." And Mary said, "I am a servant of my God, I live to do your will."

All: My soul proclaims your greatness, O God,
and my spirit rejoices in you,
You have looked with love on your servant here,
and blessed me all my life through.
Great and mighty are you, O Holy One,
strong is your kindness evermore.
How you favor the weak and lowly one,
humbling the proud of heart.

You have cast the mighty down from their thrones,
and uplifted the humble of heart,
you have filled the hungry with wondrous things,
and left the wealthy no part.
Great and mighty are you, O Faithful One,
strong is your justice, strong your love,
As you promised to Sarah and Abraham, kindness forevermore.

My soul proclaims your greatness, O God,
and my spirit rejoices in you,
You have looked with love on your servant here,
and blessed me all my life through.

PRAYERS of the PEOPLE

Refrain (*sung by all after each verse*): **God of mercy, hold us in love.**

Leader:

1. In peace, in peace we pray to you.
2. For peace and salvation, we pray to you.
3. For peace between nations, peace between peoples.
4. For we who are gathered to worship and praise you.
5. For all of your servants who live out your gospel.
6. For all those who govern that justice might guide them.
7. For all those who labor in service to others.
8. Grant weather that nourishes all of creation.
9. Keep watch on our loved ones and keep us from danger.
- 10: For all the beloved who rest in your mercy.

Leader: Help us, comfort us, all of our days:

All: Keep us, hold us, gracious God.

L: Great and merciful God, Source and Ground of all goodness and life, give to your people the peace that passes all understanding, and the will to live you Gospel of mercy and justice, through Jesus Christ our Lord.

A: Amen

LORD'S PRAYER

Lord, remember us in your love, and teach us to pray:

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.

FINAL BLESSING

Leader: Let us bless our God.

All: Praise and thanks to you.

L: May God, Creator, bless us and keep us, may Christ be ever light for our lives, may the Spirit of love be our guide and path, for all of our days.

A: Amen.

POSTLUDE

WORSHIP LEADERSHIP

Lead Pastor: Rev. Ali Tranvik

Pianist, vocalist, worship team director: Mark Trease

Vocalist, choir director: Keith Williams

Worship team vocalist: Johnetta Freeman

Cantor, lector: Kris Simon

Technical directors: Ryan Bailey and Mike Edstrom

Ministers: The people of Cross of Glory

MUSIC CREDITS:

- Holden Evening Prayer: Text and Music: Marty Haugen, b. 1950; © 1990, GIA Publications, Inc.
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- Create in Me: CCLI Song # 4333830. David M. Edwards | Margaret Becker
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Given that our Prayers of the People are sung this season as part of the Holden liturgy, we will be printing the names of those requesting prayer each week. Please keep these sisters and brothers in prayer:

WEEKLY PRAYER LIST: Mavis Wold, Gil Hartlage, Terry Stejskal, Vicky Jacobson, Jeannie Kuzmich, Eva and Josh, daughter and son-in-law of Kim and Gary Jacobson, Jennifer, granddaughter of Penny Lindblom, Suzanne, daughter of Penny Lindblom, Cindy, daughter of Dave and Nancy Hengel, and the loved ones of Ole Stavedahl as they grieve his death.

Congregational Support as of 1/31/2021

Annual Budget: \$230,000.00

Year to Date Budgeted: \$19,533.37

Year to Date Received: \$26,450.72

Difference: \$6,917.35

Community Announcements:

- Grab another cup of coffee and join us following Zoom worship for Virtual Coffee Hour, a weekly time of small-group fellowship. Following Virtual Coffee Hour, Council will gather on Zoom for its monthly meeting.
- Next Sunday 2/28 after Zoom worship, you're invited to Table Talks, our monthly Adult Sunday School series. This month, as we enter into the season of Lent, we're exploring the topic of Faith + Fasting. To "set the table" for our discussion, please read Isaiah 58:1-12 ahead of time. Email Pastor Ali with any questions.
- Following Table Talks next week, all are welcome to take part in a meeting with the Justice for All committee. Email Mike McClanahan (mikemc5751@outlook.com) for more information or to be added to the Justice for All email list.
- This Lenten season, join the Cross of Glory community every Wednesday at noon on Zoom for 15 minutes of prayer and Holy Communion, and every Tuesday morning at 9:30 for Zoom Bible Study. You're also invited to take part in a communal spiritual practice throughout this season of taking photos of crosses or cross shapes you notice in the "sanctuaries" of your home. Email Pastor Ali (atranvik@crossofglory.us) pictures, a few of which will be shared in worship each week!
- Please be alert: there's a form of online theft that continues to target faith communities across the country. The scam sends emails to members that appear to be from Pastor Ali but are actually from a fake email account, asking that you purchase gift cards. If you receive an email claiming to be from Pastor Ali with a request of this nature, please delete or block it. Pastor Ali will never ask you to buy gift cards, and will never request money from you over email. All communications from the pastor will come in the form of announcements during worship services or direct phone calls. Any emails from Pastor Ali will come exclusively from this address: atranvik@crossofglory.us. If you do receive a suspicious-looking email, please report it to the church office (763-533-8602) so that we can be aware and help look out for one another!
- Positive Covid-19 case rates in Hennepin County continue to decrease; however, they are still high enough that Cross of Glory remains at Level 2 of our Preparedness & Response Plan. This means indoor groups of 10 or fewer people are welcome to gather on-site assuming all Building Entry Policy guidelines are maintained. Please schedule gatherings ahead of time by calling the church office. Worship services will continue to be virtual under this level. For more information, please consult Cross of Glory's Covid-19 Plan on our website or reach out to the Task Force.

- Liturgy means "the work of the people." We're grateful for all the ways our shared work helps shape our weekly worship! If you are interested in being added to our list of readers, please email Linda Knudsen at lindadknudsen@comcast.net.
- If you have any articles you'd like to submit for the March newsletter please send them to Sue (svukelich@crossofglory.us) by March 22, 2021.
- Please reach out to Pastor Ali with any other announcements or pastoral care concerns by email (atranvik@crossofglory.us) or phone (763-533-8602).