

## WELCOME AND ANNOUNCEMENTS

## GREETING

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

C: And also with you.

## OPENING HYMN

*As the Winter Days Grow Longer*

ACS 924

- 1 As the winter days grow longer, drawing short the hours of night;  
as our eager expectation waits for Easter's dawning light—  
yearning people, here we gather, turning watchful eyes to you:  
God who blesses earth with springtime, shine within our world anew!
- 2 As the vines burst into blossom, fragrant in the morning air,  
lifting spirits with their sweetness, luring hearts to thankful prayer—  
Lenten people, here we gather, seeking lives refreshed from sin.  
God who blesses earth with springtime, bloom within our hearts again!
- 3 As we journey through this season, pilgrims through a thirsty land,  
quench us with your living presence; guide us with your loving hand.  
Wand'ring people, here we gather, called to rest along our way.  
God who blesses earth with springtime, grant us sabbath joy this day!

## PRAYER OF THE DAY

P: The Lord be with you. C: And also with you.

P: Together let us pray.

**Almighty and ever-living God, you hate nothing you have made, and you forgive the sins of all who are penitent. Create in us new and honest hearts, so that, truly repenting of our sins, we may receive from you, the God of all mercy, full pardon and forgiveness through your Son, Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. Amen.**

## ANTHEM

Celebrant Choir

## FIRST READING: Joel 2: 1-2, 12-17

Blow the trumpet in Zion; sound the alarm on my holy mountain! Let all the inhabitants of the land tremble, for the day of the Lord is coming, it is near—<sup>2</sup>a day of darkness and gloom, a day of clouds and thick darkness! Like blackness spread upon the mountains a great and powerful army comes; their like has never been from of old, nor will be again after them in ages to come. <sup>12</sup>Yet even now, says the Lord, return to me with all your heart, with fasting, with weeping, and with mourning; <sup>13</sup>rend your hearts and not your clothing. Return to the Lord, your God, for he is gracious and merciful, slow to anger, and abounding in steadfast love, and relents from punishing. <sup>14</sup>Who knows whether he will not turn and relent, and leave a blessing behind him, a grain offering and a drink offering for the Lord, your God? <sup>15</sup>Blow the trumpet in Zion; sanctify a fast; call a solemn assembly; <sup>16</sup>gather the people. Sanctify the congregation; assemble the aged; gather the children, even infants at the breast. Let the bridegroom leave his room, and the bride her canopy. <sup>17</sup>Between the vestibule and the altar let the priests, the ministers of the Lord, weep. Let them say, "Spare your people, O Lord, and do not make your heritage a mockery, a byword among the nations. Why should it be said among the peoples, 'Where is their God?'" The word of the Lord.

## SECOND READING: Psalm 51: 1-17

<sup>1</sup>Have mercy on me, O God, according to your steadfast love; according to your abundant mercy blot out my transgressions. <sup>2</sup>Wash me thoroughly from my iniquity, and cleanse me from my sin. <sup>3</sup>For I know my transgressions, and my sin is ever before me. <sup>4</sup>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 judgment. <sup>5</sup>Indeed, I was born guilty, a sinner when my mother conceived me. <sup>6</sup>You desire truth in the inward being; therefore teach me wisdom in my secret heart. <sup>7</sup>Purge me with hyssop, and I shall be clean; wash me, and I shall be whiter than snow. <sup>8</sup>Let me hear joy and gladness; let the bones that you have crushed rejoice. <sup>9</sup>Hide your face from my sins, and blot out all my iniquities. <sup>10</sup>Create in me a clean heart, O God, and put a new and right spirit within me. <sup>11</sup>Do not cast me away from your presence, and do not take your holy spirit from me. <sup>12</sup>Restore to me the joy of your salvation, and sustain in me a willing spirit. <sup>13</sup>Then I will teach transgressors

your ways, and sinners will return to you. <sup>14</sup>Deliver me from bloodshed, O God, O God of my salvation, and my tongue will sing aloud of your deliverance. <sup>15</sup>O Lord, open my lips, and my mouth will declare your praise. <sup>16</sup>For you have no delight in sacrifice; if I were to give a burnt offering, you would not be pleased. <sup>17</sup>The sacrifice acceptable to God is a broken spirit; a broken and contrite heart, O God, you will not despise. The Word of the Lord.

## **GOSPEL ACCLAMATION**

**ELW p. 252**

**Return to the Lord, your God,  
for he is gracious and merciful, slow to anger,  
and abounding in steadfast love.**

## **GOSPEL: Matthew 6:1-6, 16-21**

The holy gospel according to Matthew. **Glory to you, O Lord.**

[Jesus said to the disciples:] <sup>1</sup>“Beware of practicing your piety before others in order to be seen by them; for then you have no reward from your Father in heaven. <sup>2</sup>“So whenever you give alms, do not sound a trumpet before you, as the hypocrites do in the synagogues and in the streets, so that they may be praised by others. Truly I tell you, they have received their reward. <sup>3</sup>But when you give alms, do not let your left hand know what your right hand is doing, <sup>4</sup>so that your alms may be done in secret; and your Father who sees in secret will reward you. <sup>5</sup>“And whenever you pray, do not be like the hypocrites; for they love to stand and pray in the synagogues and at the street corners, so that they may be seen by others. Truly I tell you, they have received their reward. <sup>6</sup>But whenever you pray, go into your room and shut the door and pray to your Father who is in secret; and your Father who sees in secret will reward you. <sup>16</sup>“And whenever you fast, do not look dismal, like the hypocrites, for they disfigure their faces so as to show others that they are fasting. Truly I tell you, they have received their reward. <sup>17</sup>But when you fast, put oil on your head and wash your face, <sup>18</sup>so that your fasting may be seen not by others but by your Father who is in secret; and your Father who sees in secret will reward you. <sup>19</sup>“Do not store up for yourselves treasures on earth, where moth and rust consume and where thieves break in and steal; <sup>20</sup>but store up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust consumes and where thieves do not break in and steal. <sup>21</sup>For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also.”

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

## **SERMON**

### **HYMN OF THE DAY *Bless Now, O God, the Journey* #326**

1 Bless now, O God, the journey that all your people make,  
the path through noise and silence, the way of give and take.  
The trail is found in desert and winds the mountain round,  
then leads beside still waters, the road where faith is found.

2 Bless sojourners and pilgrims who share this winding way;  
Your hope burns through the terrors, your love sustains the day.  
We yearn for holy freedom while often we are bound.  
Together we are seeking the road where faith is found.

3 Divine eternal lover, you meet us on the road.  
We wait for land of promise where milk and honey flow,  
but waiting not for places, you meet us all around.  
Our covenant is written on roads, as faith is found.

## **APOSTLES' CREED**

### **PRAYERS OF INTERCESSION**

Trusting in God's promise to reconcile all things, let us pray for the church, the well-being of creation, and a world in need.

You call us to return to you, steadfast God. Renew a right spirit within the church and cleanse the hearts of your people. Strengthen those who proclaim your gospel in word and deed. Hear us, O God. **Your mercy is great.**

You sustain your creation, generous God. Supply all that is needful for life to flourish. Protect endangered species and fragile habitats. Teach us to live lightly upon the earth and to honor it as our home. Hear us, O God. **Your mercy is great.**

You seek justice and peace, righteous God. Rebuild cities and homelands devastated by war (*regions in conflict may be named*). Provide welcome, help, and safety to refugees. Prosper negotiations that lead to lasting peace among the nations. Hear us, O God. **Your mercy is great.**

You care for all people, loving God. Heal any who are scarred by violence, addiction, or trauma of any kind. Comfort those who grieve and bring relief to any in pain. Hear us, O God. **Your mercy is great.**

You gather this assembly, abiding God. Unite us in serving our neighbors and working for justice. We pray for caregivers and people who are hospitalized, in treatment, or recovering from illness (*especially*). Hear us, O God. **Your mercy is great.**

You redeem us from death, faithful God. We give thanks for those who served you in the church. Bring us with all the saints into everlasting joy. Hear us, O God. **Your mercy is great.**

Accompany us on our journey, God of grace, and receive the prayers of our hearts, through Jesus Christ, our Savior. **Amen.**

**OFFERING**                      *Create in Me*                      **#186**

Create in me a clean heart, O God and renew a right spirit within me.

Cast me not away from your presence, and take not your Holy Spirit from me.

Restore to me the joy of your salvation, and uphold me with your free Spirit.

**OFFERING PRAYER**

**God our provider, you have not fed us with bread alone, but with words of grace and life. Bless us and these your gifts, which we receive from your bounty, through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.**

**INVITATION TO LENT**                      **ELW p. 252**

Friends in Christ, today with the whole church we enter the time of remembering Jesus' passover from death to life, and our life in Christ is renewed.

We begin this holy season by acknowledging our need for repentance and for God's mercy. We are created to experience joy in communion with God, to love one another, and to live in harmony with creation. But our sinful rebellion separates us from God, our neighbors, and creation, so that we do not enjoy the life our creator intended.

As disciples of Jesus, we are called to a discipline that contends against evil and resists whatever leads us away from love of God and neighbor. I invite you, therefore, to the discipline of Lent—self-examination and repentance, prayer and fasting, sacrificial giving and works of love—strengthened by the gifts of word and sacrament. Let us continue our journey through these forty days to the great Three Days of Jesus' death and resurrection.

**CONFESSION OF SIN**                      **ELW p. 252**

Let us confess our sin in the presence of God and of one another. Most holy and merciful God,  
**we confess to you and to one another, and before the whole company of heaven,  
that we have sinned by our fault, by our own fault, by our own most grievous fault,  
in thought, word, and deed, by what we have done and by what we have left undone.**

We have not loved you with our whole heart, and mind, and strength. We have not loved our neighbors as ourselves. We have not forgiven others as we have been forgiven. **Have mercy on us, O God.**

We have shut our ears to your call to serve as Christ served us. We have not been true to the mind of Christ. We have grieved your Holy Spirit. **Have mercy on us, O God.**

Our past unfaithfulness, the pride, envy, hypocrisy, and apathy that have infected our lives, we confess to you. **Have mercy on us, O God.**

Our self-indulgent appetites and ways, and our exploitation of other people, we confess to you. **Have mercy on us, O God.**

Our negligence in prayer and worship, and our failure to share the faith that is in us, we confess to you. **Have mercy on us, O God.**

Our neglect of human need and suffering, and our indifference to injustice and cruelty, we confess to you.

**Have mercy on us, O God.**

Our false judgments, our uncharitable thoughts toward our neighbors, and our prejudice and contempt toward those who differ from us, we confess to you. **Have mercy on us, O God.**

Our waste and pollution of your creation, and our lack of concern for those who come after us, we confess to you. **Have mercy on us, O God.**

Restore us, O God, and let your anger depart from us. **Hear us, O God, for your mercy is great.**

Almighty God, you have created us out of the dust of the earth. May the ashes of this day be a sign of our mortality and penitence, reminding us that only by the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ are we given eternal life; through the same Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord. **Amen.**

Almighty God have mercy on us, forgive us all our sins through our Lord Jesus Christ, strengthen us in all goodness, and by the power of the Holy Spirit keep us in eternal life. **Amen.**

## **WORDS OF INSTITUTION**

### **LORD'S PRAYER**

### **IMPOSITION OF ASHES and DISTRIBUTION**

### **POST-COMMUNION BLESSING**

### **PRAYER**

Merciful God, accompany our journey through these forty days. Renew us in the gift of baptism, that we may provide for those who are poor, pray for those in need, fast from self-indulgence, and above all that we may find our treasure in the life of your Son, Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. **Amen.**

**BLESSING** Almighty God, Father, ✠ Son, and Holy Spirit, bless you now and forever. **Amen.**

### **DISMISSAL**

Go forth into the world to serve God with gladness; be of good courage;  
hold fast to that which is good; render to no one evil for evil; strengthen the fainthearted; support the weak;  
help the afflicted; honor all people; love and serve God, rejoicing in the power of the Holy Spirit.

**Thanks be to God.**

### **CLOSING HYMN** *O Christ, Our Hope* #604 (1,2)

1 O Christ, our hope, our hearts' desire, creation's mighty Lord,  
Redeemer of the fallen world, by holy love outpoured,  
by holy love outpoured.

2 How vast your mercy to accept the burden of our sin,  
And bow your head in cruel death to make us clean within,  
To make us clean within.