

 **St. Paul Lutheran Church**

 **Pontiac, IL**

 **March 14, 2021**

 **Fourth Sunday in Lent**

**The “Red bag” offering will be collected and donated to the “Backpack program”.**

**We gather to worship, reach out, and serve the Lord.**

**Welcome**

Welcome to St. Paul Lutheran Church. Whether you have worshipped with us many times, or this is your first time, there is a place for you here. Your presence among us is a gift.

God’s Peace be with you.

**Introduction to the day**

**Introduction**

The fourth of the Old Testament promises providing a baptismal lens this Lent is the promise God makes to Moses: those who look on the bronze serpent will live. In today’s gospel Jesus says he will be lifted up on the cross like the serpent, so that those who look to him in faith will live. When we receive the sign of the cross in baptism, that cross becomes the sign we can look to in faith for healing, for restored relationship to God, for hope when we are dying.

**Prelude**

**GATHERING**

### Confession and Forgiveness

*All may make the sign of the cross, the sign marked at baptism, as the presiding minister begins.*

L: Blessed be the holy Trinity, ☩ one God,

 The keeper of the covenant,

The source of steadfast love,

 Our rock and our redeemer.

**A: Amen.**

L: God hears us when we cry, and draws us close in Jesus Christ. Let us return to the one who

 is full of compassion.

 *Silence is kept for reflection.*

L: Fountain of living water,

**A: Pour out your mercy over us.**

 **Our sin is heavy, and we long to be free.**

 **Rebuild what we have ruined**

 **And mend what we have torn.**

 **Wash us in your cleansing flood.**

 **Make us alive in the Spirit**

 **To follow in the way of Jesus,**

 **As healers and restorers of the world you so love.**

 **Amen.**

L: Beloved, God’s word never fails.

 The promise rests on grace:

 By the saving love of Jesus Christ,

 The wisdom and power of God,

 Your sins are ☩ forgiven, and God remembers them no more.

 Journey in the way of Jesus.

**A: Amen.**

**Greeting**

L: The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, the love of God, and the communion of the

 Holy Spirit be with you all**.**

**A: And also with you.**

**Prayer of the Day**

L: O God, rich in mercy, by the humiliation of your Son you lifted up this fallen world and rescued us from the hopelessness of death. Lead us into your light, that all our deeds may reflect your love, through Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever.

**A: Amen**.

**Children’s Message**

 **WORD**

**First Reading –** **Numbers 21: 4-9**

L: A reading from Numbers.

L: 4From Mount Hor [the Israelites] set out by the way to the Red Sea, to go around the land of Edom; but the people became impatient on the way. 5The people spoke against God and against Moses, “Why have you brought us up out of Egypt to die in the wilderness? For there is no food and no water, and we detest this miserable food.” 6Then the Lord sent poisonous serpents among the people, and they bit the people, so that many Israelites died. 7The people came to Moses and said, “We have sinned by speaking against the Lord and against you; pray to the Lord to take away the serpents from us.” So Moses prayed for the people. 8And the Lord said to Moses, “Make a poisonous serpent, and set it on a pole; and everyone who is bitten shall look at it and live.” 9So Moses made a serpent of bronze, and put it upon a pole; and whenever a serpent bit someone, that person would look at the serpent of bronze and live.

L:Word of God, word of life.

A**: Thanks be to God.**

**Psalm Reading- Psalm 107: 1-3, 17-22**

L: A reading from Psalm.

 1Give thanks to the Lord, for the Lord is good,
  for God’s mercy endures forever.
 2**Let the redeemed of the Lord proclaim**
  **that God redeemed them from the hand of the foe,**
 3gathering them in from the lands;
  from the east and from the west, from the north and from the south.
 17**Some were fools and took rebellious paths;**
  **through their sins they were afflicted.**
 18They loathed all manner of food
  and drew near to death’s door.
 19**Then in their trouble they cried to the Lord**
  **and you delivered them from their distress.**
 20You sent forth your word and healed them
  and rescued them from the grave.
 21**Let them give thanks to you, Lord, for your steadfast love**
  **and your wonderful works for all people.**
 22Let them offer sacrifices of thanksgiving
  and tell of your deeds with shouts of joy.

L: Holy Wisdom. Holy word.

**A: Thanks be to God.**

**Second Reading – Ephesians 2: 1-10**

L: A reading from Ephesians.

1You were dead through the trespasses and sins 2in which you once lived, following the course of this world, following the ruler of the power of the air, the spirit that is now at work among those who are disobedient. 3All of us once lived among them in the passions of our flesh, following the desires of flesh and senses, and we were by nature children of wrath, like everyone else. 4But God, who is rich in mercy, out of the great love with which he loved us 5even when we were dead through our trespasses, made us alive together with Christ—by grace you have been saved—6and raised us up with him and seated us with him in the heavenly places in Christ Jesus, 7so that in the ages to come he might show the immeasurable riches of his grace in kindness toward us in Christ Jesus. 8For by grace you have been saved through faith, and this is not your own doing; it is the gift of God—9not the result of works, so that no one may boast. 10For we are what he has made us, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand to be our way of life.

L: Word of God, word of life.

**A: Thanks be to God.**

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*Please rise as you are able for the reading of the Holy Gospel.*

**Gospel Acclamation**

(spoken responsively)

L: God so loved the world that he gave his only Son,

**A: So that everyone who believed in him should not perish, but have eternal life.**

**Gospel–John 3: 14-21**

L: The Holy Gospel according to John.

**A: Glory to you, O Lord.**

[Jesus said:] 14“Just as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, so must the Son of Man be lifted up, 15that whoever believes in him may have eternal life.
  16“For God so loved the world that he gave his only Son, so that everyone who believes in him may not perish but may have eternal life.
  17“Indeed, God did not send the Son into the world to condemn the world, but in order that the world might be saved through him. 18Those who believe in him are not condemned; but those who do not believe are condemned already, because they have not believed in the name of the only Son of God. 19And this is the judgment, that the light has come into the world, and people loved darkness rather than light because their deeds were evil. 20For all who do evil hate the light and do not come to the light, so that their deeds may not be exposed. 21But those who do what is true come to the light, so that it may be clearly seen that their deeds have been done in God.”

L: The gospel of the Lord.

**A: Praise to you, O, Christ.**

 **Sermon**

**Hymn of the Day Grace is Not Earned Kate Simmons**

**Apostle’s Creed**

I believe in God, the Father Almighty, creator of heaven and earth. I believe in Jesus Christ, his only Son, our Lord. He was conceived by power of the Holy Spirit and born of the virgin Mary. He suffered under Pontius Pilate, was crucified, died, and was buried. He descended into hell. On the third day, he rose again. He ascended into heaven and is seated at the right hand of the Father. He will come again 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 Intercession**

Throughout our prayers, we will use words from today’s Psalm. Each petition ends “O Lord, hear our prayer”. The congregation is invited to respond, **“Your mercy endures forever.”**

**Sharing the Peace**

L: The peace of Christ be with you always.

**A: And also with you.**

*You are invited to share a sign of God’s peace with your neighbors by saying or typing, “Peace be with you.”*

**MEAL**

**Offering**

*Offerings can also be placed in the offering box at the back of the sanctuary, made by mail or online. You can send a check to St. Paul Lutheran Church 210 Deerfield Rd Pontiac, IL 61764 or give online at* [*stpaulpontiac.org*](http://www.stpaulpontiac.org/)

**Offertory Music Here on Jesus Christ I Will Stand All Creation Sings #1024**

**Offering Prayer**

L: Faithful God,

 You walk beside us in desert places,

 And you meet us in our hunger with bread from heaven.

 Accompany us in this meal,

 That we may pass over from death to life

 With Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord.

**A: Amen.**

**Great Thanksgiving**

L: The Lord be with you.

**A: And also with you.**

L: Lift up your hearts.

**A: We lift them to the Lord.**

L: Let us give thanks to the Lord our God.

**A: It is right to give our thanks and praise.**

**Preface**

L: It is indeed right, our duty and our joy,

that we should at all times and in all places

give thanks and praise to you, almighty and merciful God,

through our Savior Jesus Christ.

You call your people to cleanse their hearts

and prepare with joy for the paschal feast,

that, renewed in the gift of baptism,

we may come to the fullness of your grace.

And so, with all the choirs of angels,

with the church on earth and the hosts of heaven,

we praise your name and join their unending hymn saying

**A: Holy, holy, holy Lord,**

**Lord God of power and might,**

 **heaven and earth are full of your glory**

 **Hosanna in the highest,**

 **Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord.**

 **Hosanna in the highest.**

**Thanksgiving at the Table**

L: Blessed are you O God,

for you made the earth and all that is, and declared it good.

Blessed are you,

for in Christ you entered into creation,

into our humanity, into our vulnerability, into our mortality.

You stayed with us through conflict, through suffering, through death.

Blessed are you for raising Jesus from the dead,

in him promising new life to us all.

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.

Again, 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.

Come, Lord, Jesus, in this meal,

and make us alive again.

By your Spirit,

bind us to that holy communion of saints in every time and place,

and make us your body in the world,

bringing light and healing to all.

**Amen.**

**Lord's Prayer**

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

**A: 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.**

**Invitation to Communion**

L: Jesus draws the whole world to himself. Come to this meal and be fed.

**Communion Hymn Jesus, Remember Me ELW 616**

**Prayer After Communion**

*a blessing is given, a prayer follows*

L: God of steadfast love,

at this table you gather your people

 into one body for the sake of the world.

 Send us in the power of your Spirit,

 That our lives bear witness to the love that has made us new

 In Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord.

 **Amen.**

**Announcements**

**SENDING**

**Blessing**

L: You are what God made you to be:

Created in Christ Jesus for good works,

Chosen as holy and beloved,

Freed to serve your neighbor.

God bless you ☩ that you may be a blessing,

In the name of the holy and life-giving Trinity.

**A: Amen.**

**Dismissal**

L: Go in peace. Share the good news.

**A: Thanks be to God.**

**Postlude**

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Thank you to all those who contributed to today’s service: Worship Slides: Julie Mehlberg, Lector: Judy Sykes, Ushers: Mark Mackinson, Musician:, , Livestream: Louis Kehinde, Sound: John Mehlberg