

Gustaf Adolf Lutheran Church - ELCA

Wednesday, March 3rd, 2021



Again & Again, We are Created for Community: A Midweek Lenten Series

The invitation to Lent spoken on Ash Wednesday reminds us that we enter this season together “with the whole church.” It goes on to state that “we are created for communion with God, to love one another, and to live in harmony with creation.”

Though many common Lenten practices rightly invite us to individual acts of “repentance, prayer and fasting, sacrificial giving and works of love,” Lent is also a time for deepening of community.

During this pandemic, our hearts have yearned for a deeper community that extends beyond the walls of the church and into our homes and hearts. Using readings from Mark’s gospel, this series invites the assembly to reflect on what it means to be in community with one another, with the world, with creation, and with God.

MIDWEEK 2 - In community with all the saints

Call To Worship

L: Today in worship, we will be reminded that again and again, we are called to listen. This is part of our invitation as people of faith—to not only speak, pray, and sing, but to listen. And I will be the first to say, listening is hard. From our toddler years on up, we struggle to listen, particularly when we don’t know what we’re listening for or we don’t agree with what we’re hearing. So for just a moment, as we gather ourselves for worship, I want to invite you to join me in a kinesthetic call to worship by

embodying our prayer as I prompt you. Let us listen, let us pray: Family of faith, I invite you to close your eyes. Rest your feet on the floor beneath you. Release any tension you are holding— In your jaw, your neck, your shoulders, your hands, your legs, your feet. Take a deep breath in and slowly let it out. The Hebrew word for breath (ruach) is the same word for Spirit. So as you breathe, imagine that it is God who is filling up your lungs with energy and love. Trust that God is as close as your very breath. Now I invite you to still your mind. Imagine your mind as a river. Thoughts will drift into view; they always do. However, instead of holding onto those thoughts, allow yourself to let them float by. And listen. Listen deep. Listen far. Listen wide. Listen. The sound of your breath is the sound of the Divine. This is a holy space. Let us worship God.

Gathering Hymn

Behold The Host Arrayed In White

Verse 1

Behold the host arrayed in whitelike thousand snowclad mountains bright, that stands with palms and sings its psalms before the throne of light! These are the saints who kept God's word; they are the honored of the Lord. He is their prince who drowned their sins, so they were cleansed, restored. They now serve God both day and night; they sing their songs in endless light. Their anthems ring when they all sing with angels shining bright.

Prayer of illumination

L: Creator God, **C: We cannot hear the trees growing—seeds pushing up through the dirt into the sun. And we cannot hear a single drop of rain, missing one in the many. We cannot hear the weight of people's grief, a burden that so often is silent. And we cannot hear when hearts are changed, but you can. You hear it all. So once again, we come to you with bowed heads and hopeful hearts, Asking that you would lend us your ears. Help us to hear as you hear so that we can live as you lived. We are listening. Amen.**

Scripture:

Romans 4:13-25

¹³ For the promise that he would inherit the world did not come to Abraham or to his descendants through the law but through the righteousness of faith. ¹⁴ If it is the adherents of the law who are to be the heirs, faith is null and the promise is void. ¹⁵ For the law brings wrath; but where there is no law, neither is there violation. ¹⁶ For this reason it depends on faith, in order that the promise may rest on grace and be guaranteed to all his descendants, not only to the adherents of the law but also to those who share the faith of Abraham (for he is the father of all of us, ¹⁷ as it is written, "I have made you the father of many nations")—in the presence of the God in whom he believed, who gives life to the dead and calls into existence the things that do not exist. ¹⁸ Hoping against hope, he believed that he would become "the father of many nations," according to what was said, "So numerous shall your descendants be." ¹⁹ He did not weaken in faith when he considered his own body, which was already as good as dead (for he was about a hundred years old), or when he considered the barrenness of Sarah's womb. ²⁰ No distrust made him waver concerning the promise of God, but he grew strong in his faith as he gave glory to God, ²¹ being fully convinced that God was able to do what he had promised. ²² Therefore his faith "was reckoned to him as righteousness." ²³ Now the words, "it was reckoned to him," were written not for his sake alone, ²⁴ but for ours also. It will be reckoned to us who believe in him who raised Jesus our Lord from the dead, ²⁵ who was handed over to death for our trespasses and was raised for our justification.

Mark 9:2-8

² Six days later, Jesus took with him Peter and James and John, and led them up a high mountain apart, by themselves. And he was transfigured before them, ³ and his clothes became dazzling white,

such as no one on earth could bleach them. ⁴ And there appeared to them Elijah with Moses, who were talking with Jesus. ⁵ Then Peter said to Jesus, “Rabbi, it is good for us to be here; let us make three dwellings, one for you, one for Moses, and one for Elijah.” ⁶ He did not know what to say, for they were terrified. ⁷ Then a cloud overshadowed them, and from the cloud there came a voice, “This is my Son, the Beloved; listen to him!” ⁸ Suddenly when they looked around, they saw no one with them any more, but only Jesus.

Message

Hymn of The Day

Behold The Host Arrayed In White

Verse 2

On Earth their work was not thought wise, but see them now in heaven’s eyes; before God’s throne of precious stone they shout their victory cries. On earth they wept through bitter years; now God has wiped away their tears, transformed their strife to heavenly life, and freed them from their fears. For now they have the best at last; they keep their sweet eternal feast. At God’s right hand our Lord commands; he is both host and guest.

Affirmation of Faith

C: We believe.

L: Sometimes our belief is confident, Like a child on a dance floor, Unashamed and wildly genuine. We believe.

C: Sometimes our belief is distant, Flickering and calling out to us like a lighthouse on the sea. We believe.

L: Sometimes our belief shows up as passion, Guiding the way we vote, shop, give, live, trust, and hope. We believe.

C: Sometimes our belief is like a shadow—Faith stitched to our heels, unmovable, unlosable, A gift for winding journeys. We believe.

L: Sometimes our belief exists like growing pains. We step forward. We fall back. But again and again, Jesus invites us to listen, To grow, and to take another step.

C: So again and again, We speak these truths out loud: We believe.

L: We believe. **C: Again and again, we believe.** L: Thanks be to God. Amen.

Prayers

Offering

Lord’s Prayer

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

Benediction

As you leave this space, May your mouth speak of God’s goodness. May your arms hold those in need. May your feet walk toward justice. May your heart trust its worth. May your soul dance in God’s grace. And may this be your rhythm— Again and again and again, Until God’s promised day. In the name of the Lover, the Beloved, and Love itself, Go with courage, go with heart, go in peace. **Amen**

Sending Hymn*Behold The Host Arrayed In White***Verse 3**

O blessed saints, now take your rest; a thousand times shall you be blest for keeping faith firm unto death and scorning worldly trust. For now you live at home with God and harvest seeds once cast abroad in tears and sighs. See with new eyes the pattern in the seed. The myriad angels raise their song. O saints, sing with that happy throng; lift up one voice; let heaven rejoice in our redeemer's song!

Dismissal

Go in peace, joined together in Christ. **Thanks be to God.**

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