



Fifth Sunday in Lent
Gustaf Adolf Lutheran Church
April 3rd, 2022

God is brazen in turning tears into joy. Not so long after their brother Lazarus dies and is raised from the dead, Mary and Martha joyfully welcome Jesus into their home. Mary pours out fragrant perfume (perhaps originally intended to anoint her brother's body after death) and it fills the whole room. This is a brazen act of beauty. Beauty is resistance to death; beauty is an act of love. Her anointing of Jesus' feet is also a public act of worship. Her faith does not hide; it is not frugal. It is embodied, broken open, and poured out. This isn't a frugal faith—it is an abundant, extravagant faith. Mary's act is also risky—she puts her full body into it, sort of like a protest. She exhibits a shameless and brazen faith.

Call to Worship

May we find courage here—**courage to follow our call, courage to live out our faith.**

May we find hope here—**hope for a better world, hope that refuses to let us go.**

May we find truth here—**truth that lives in sacred community, truth that lives in ancient stories.**

May we find all that we seek. **And in our seeking, may we know God. Amen.**

Call to Confession

There are very few things as powerful as a group of people that admits they are not perfect, and asks for grace as they grow. Imagine what our world might be like if every institution had such a weekly rhythm? Friends, we can light the way. Let us be brave in our truth-telling and honest in our confession. For we will always be met by grace. Let us pray.

Prayer of Confession

Jesus of Nazareth, **we admit that often we tuck our faith into our pockets, hiding in a place of comfort rather than proudly declaring: yes we are Christian, yes we believe, yes this faith has changed me. We are so afraid of offending others or embarrassing ourselves that we have established rules: no faith at the dinner table, no faith in politics, no faith with strangers. Forgive us for whispering when we could be singing. Forgive us for staying quiet when we could be part of rewriting the narrative. We want to be brave. We want to pour out perfume over your feet. These things we pray, amen.**

Words of Forgiveness

Family of faith, hear this good news: Even in our silence, **God loves us.**

Even in our fear or shame, **God chooses us.**

Even when we sin, **God wraps us in grace.**

You are free—to be bold, to be brazen, to be exactly who God called you to be. **Thanks be to God, amen.**

Gathering Hymn

In The Cross Of Christ I Glory (Verse 1)

ELW #324

Prayer for Illumination

Holy God, sometimes my waking is a prayer. Sometimes the song I have stuck in my head, rumbling around on repeat, is a prayer. Sometimes the way I talk to the children and the way I hug the dog is a prayer. Sometimes the way I take my phone out to get a picture of the sunset or of the people I love—that is a prayer. **Other times, prayer is moments like this—heads bowed, eyes closed, hearts quiet for just a moment. And in all of it, I trust you to hear me. Help me to hear you in return. Gratefully we pray, amen.**

Word

First Reading: Isaiah 43:16-21

¹⁶Thus says the LORD, who makes a way in the sea, a path in the mighty waters, ¹⁷who brings out chariot and horse, army and warrior; they lie down, they cannot rise, they are extinguished, quenched like a wick: ¹⁸Do not remember the former things, or consider the things of old. ¹⁹I am about to do a new thing; now it springs forth, do you not perceive it? I will make a way in the wilderness and rivers in the desert. ²⁰The wild animals will honor me, the jackals and the

ostriches; for I give water in the wilderness, rivers in the desert, to give drink to my chosen people, ²¹the people whom I formed for myself so that they might declare my praise.

Psalm 126

When the Lord restored the fortunes of Zion, then were we like those who dream.

Then was our mouth filled with laughter, and our tongue with shouts of joy. Then they said among the nations, "The Lord has done great things for them."

The Lord has done great things for us, and we are glad indeed.

Restore our fortunes, O Lord, like the watercourses of the Negeb.

Those who sowed with tears will reap with songs of joy.

Those who go out weeping, carrying the seed, will come again with joy, shouldering their sheaves.

Second Reading: Philippians 3:4b-14

Paul writes: ^{4b}If anyone else has reason to be confident in the flesh, I have more: ⁵circumcised on the eighth day, a member of the people of Israel, of the tribe of Benjamin, a Hebrew born of Hebrews; as to the law, a Pharisee; ⁶as to zeal, a persecutor of the church; as to righteousness under the law, blameless. ⁷Yet whatever gains I had, these I have come to regard as loss because of Christ. ⁸More than that, I regard everything as loss because of the surpassing value of knowing Christ Jesus my Lord. For his sake I have suffered the loss of all things, and I regard them as rubbish, in order that I may gain Christ ⁹and be found in him, not having a righteousness of my own that comes from the law, but one that comes through faith in Christ, the righteousness from God based on faith. ¹⁰I want to know Christ and the power of his resurrection and the sharing of his sufferings by becoming like him in his death, ¹¹if somehow I may attain the resurrection from the dead. ¹²Not that I have already obtained this or have already reached the goal; but I press on to make it my own, because Christ Jesus has made me his own. ¹³Beloved, I do not consider that I have made it my own; but this one thing I do: forgetting what lies behind and straining forward to what lies ahead, ¹⁴I press on toward the goal for the prize of the heavenly call of God in Christ Jesus.

Gospel: John 12:1-8

Six days before the Passover Jesus came to Bethany, the home of Lazarus, whom he had raised from the dead. ²There they gave a dinner for him. Martha served, and Lazarus was one of those at the table with him. ³Mary took a pound of costly perfume made of pure nard, anointed Jesus' feet, and wiped them with her hair. The house was filled with the fragrance of the perfume. ⁴But Judas Iscariot, one of his disciples (the one who was about to betray him), said, ⁵"Why was this perfume not sold for three hundred denarii and the money given to the poor?" ⁶(He said this not because he cared about the poor, but because he was a thief; he kept the common purse and used to steal what was put into it.) ⁷Jesus said, "Leave her alone. She bought it so that she might keep it for the day of my burial. ⁸You always have the poor with you, but you do not always have me."

Message

Hymn of The Day

In The Cross Of Christ I Glory (Verse 2&3)

ELW #234

Affirmation of Faith

I believe in beauty—beauty pulled into being by our Creator, beauty that catches our breath, beauty that turns us toward awe. I believe in courage—courage to believe, courage to stand up for the people we love, courage to love without hesitation. I believe in the Holy Spirit who prays for us when we cannot, who is brave for us when we are not. I believe in Jesus Christ who stood up for Mary, who quieted the voice of critique, who welcomed every bid for relationship. I believe in God. I believe in God who believes in us. Amen.

Prayers of Intercession Sing Response "Hope of All Creation"

Offering

Offering Song

Give Thanks

Gray #170

Offering Prayer

Extravagant God, you have blessed us with the fullness of creation. Now we gather at your feast where you offer us the food that satisfies. Take and use what we offer here, come among us, and feed us with the body and blood of Christ, in whose name we pray. Amen.

Holy Communion

Great Prayer of Thanksgiving

God who knows us, we are amazed by you. Your love never runs out, your hope never runs dry, your joy never gives up. We wish that we could be more like you in that way. In a world that loves scarcity, your abundance is shocking.

In a world that knows fear, your joy is compelling.

In a world that knows anxiety, your peace is captivating. We long for these things.

So today we ask you—be with us on the hamster wheel. Be with us when compassion fatigue rears her head. Be with us when stress makes it hard to breathe. Be with us when self-doubt pushes in close. Be with us when exhaustion becomes constant or when loneliness becomes our primary language. Be with us, and show us the way to the life you long for us. Show us a life of expansive faith. Show us a life of overflowing joy. Show us a life of absorbing beauty. Show us a life of engrossing purpose. Show us a life that is as honest, and rich, and meaningful as the one Jesus led.

And until that expansive and holy day, we will continue to gather at this Table. Until that day we will continue to look for you in our midst. So pour out a double portion of yourself onto this bread and cup so that we might catch a glimpse of your goodness.

God, we are amazed by you. Your love never runs out, so bring that never-ending love here.

Invitation to the Table

Jesus has always been one to invite. He said, "Drop your nets and follow me." He said, "Let the little children come." He said, "Stand up from your mat, you are healed." Jesus has always been one to invite, and that has not changed. So friends, you are invited to this Table. Each and every one of us—with our doubts, our fears, our scars, our joy, our dreams, our hopes, our questions—we are invited to God's table. And here we will be met. Here we will be fed. Here we are given a taste of an expansive life that is full to the brim with love, overflowing with joy. So come. Not because you must, but because you can. Come. You are invited. This Table is for you.

Communion Distribution (All Are Welcome to Receive Communion Here at GA Church)

Post Communion Blessing

Post Communion Prayer

Blessed Jesus, in this rich meal of grace, you have fed us with your body, the bread of life. Now send us forth to bear your life-giving hope to a world in need. **Amen.**

Sending

Benediction

As you leave this place, may you be awestruck by the beauty of this world. May you laugh, and may it be contagious. May you overflow with love for those around you. May you be effusive with hope and quick to point out joy. And in all of your living, and breathing, and being, may you find yourself full to the brim with God's Holy Spirit, and may it change your life. In the name of the Lover, the Beloved, and Love itself—go in peace, full to the brim. Amen.

Sending Hymn

In The Cross Of Christ I Glory (Verse 4)

ELW #324

Dismissal

P: Go in peace. Jesus meets you on the way.

C: Thanks be to God.

Postlude

Bulletin Donated:

Mission Statement of Gustaf Lutheran Church (Adopted in 2022)

To share the Good News of God's Word and to serve the community and the world.

Matthew 22:39 'You shall love your neighbor as yourself.'

Matthew 28:19 Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit,

++++
We celebrate weekly Holy Communion. We welcome all who believe in the Risen Christ and who find in the sacrament our Lord's real presence for the forgiveness of sins and the renewal of life. If you

receive communion in your home congregation, you are invited to receive it here at G.A. Red wine and white grape juice will be offered to you in Christ's name. You may choose your preference. If you are unable to receive wheat bread, or wine, be sure that in a single element you receive the Presence and all the gifts of the sacrament.

From Sundays and Seasons.com. Copyright 2022 Augsburg Fortress. All rights reserved. Reprinted and live streamed by permission under Augsburg Fortress Liturgies Annual License #35904. CCLI# 3138595 and #21256999

"Prayer by Rev. Sarah (Are) Speed | A Sanctified Art LLC | sanctifiedart.org."