



First Sunday in Lent/Ash Wednesday

Gustaf Adolf Lutheran Church

February 26th, 2023

Seeking: Who Will You Listen To?

Seeking the fruit of the garden, Adam and Eve allow the snake's manipulative voice to become louder than God's voice. In the wilderness, Jesus defies the deception of the tempter by listening intuitively—to God, to his inner moral compass, to the teachings of his faith. And so, who will you listen to? What sources do you seek for news, information, and media? Whose voices—and what messages—take up too much space in your head? From the onslaught of messaging we receive, we are invited to choose carefully.

Call to Worship

We gather together at the edge of a new season.

We stand together on the cusp of something new.

Will we wade into self-reflection?

Will we invite honesty to dance?

Will we listen for God's invitation?

Will we seek deeper faith?

What kind of fast do we choose? What kind of faith will we build?

We gather together at the edge of a new season.

Listen, God is speaking.

Psalm 51:1-17

Have mercy on me, O God, according to your steadfast love; according to your abundant mercy, blot out my transgressions. ²Wash me thoroughly from my iniquity, and cleanse me from my sin. ³For I know my transgressions, and my sin is ever before me. ⁴Against 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. ⁵Indeed, I was born guilty, a sinner when my mother conceived me. ⁶You desire truth in the inward being; therefore teach me wisdom in my secret heart. ⁷Purge me with hyssop, and I shall be clean; wash me, and I shall be whiter than snow. ⁸Let me hear joy and gladness; let the bones that you have crushed rejoice. ⁹Hide your face from my sins, and blot out all my iniquities. ¹⁰Create in me a clean heart, O God, and put a new and right spirit within me. ¹¹Do not cast me away from your presence, and do not take your holy spirit from me. ¹²Restore to me the joy of your salvation, and sustain in me a willing spirit. ¹³Then I will teach transgressors your ways, and sinners will return to you. ¹⁴Deliver me from bloodshed, O God, O God of my salvation, and my tongue will sing aloud of your deliverance. ¹⁵O Lord, open my lips, and my mouth will declare your praise. ¹⁶For you have no delight in sacrifice; if I were to give a burnt offering, you would not be pleased. ¹⁷The sacrifice acceptable to God is a broken spirit; a broken and contrite heart, O God, you will not despise.

Invitation To Lent

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

L: Let us confess our sin in the presence of God and of one another.

(Silence is kept for reflection and self-examination.)

L: Most holy and merciful God,

C: 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.

L: Merciful God, How many times in a day could we choose love?

C: How many times could we choose justice?

L: How many times could we speak kindly to ourselves?

C: How many times could we offer grace?

L: How many times, God? And how often do we miss it?

C: Forgive us for choosing the path you did not travel.

L: Forgive us for hitching our horse to the world's measure of goodness, instead of yours.

C: Return our hearts to you, and guide us continually, even in the parched places.

L: With gratitude we pray, **C: Amen.**

Thanksgiving Over the Ashes

Imposition of Ashes

Remember that you are dust, and to dust you shall return.

Hymn (*Sing During Imposition of Ashes*)

I Want Jesus To Walk With Me (Verse 1)

ELW #325

L: Accomplish in us, O God, the work of your salvation,

ALL: that we may show forth your glory in the world.

L: By the cross and passion of your Son, our Savior,

ALL: bring us with all your saints to the joy of his resurrection.

L: 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.

ALL: Amen.

Prayer for Illumination

"In the prayer for Illumination, we always ask for God to speak to us through scripture. However, when we do that, we end up doing all the talking. So today, in fitting with the theme of listening, we are simply going to carve out a few moments for silence. I invite you to take a deep breath, to close your eyes, and to listen for what God might be saying to you now. The moment of silence will conclude with a bell."

Word

Isaiah 58:1-12

Shout out, do not hold back! Lift up your voice like a trumpet! Announce to my people their rebellion, to the house of Jacob their sins. ²Yet day after day they seek me and delight to know my ways, as if they were a nation that practiced righteousness and did not forsake the ordinance of their God; they ask of me righteous judgments, they delight to draw near to God. ³"Why do we fast, but you do not see? Why humble ourselves, but you do not notice?" Look, you serve your own interest on your fast day, and oppress all your workers. ⁴Look, you fast only to quarrel and to fight and to strike with a wicked fist. Such fasting as you do today will not make your voice heard on high. ⁵Is such the fast that I choose, a day to humble oneself? Is it to bow down the head like a bulrush, and to lie in sackcloth and ashes? Will you call this a fast, a day acceptable to the LORD? ⁶Is

not this the fast that I choose: to loose the bonds of injustice, to undo the thongs of the yoke, to let the oppressed go free, and to break every yoke? ⁷Is it not to share your bread with the hungry, and bring the homeless poor into your house; when you see the naked, to cover them, and not to hide yourself from your own kin? ⁸Then your light shall break forth like the dawn, and your healing shall spring up quickly; your vindicator shall go before you, the glory of the LORD shall be your rear guard. ⁹Then you shall call, and the LORD will answer; you shall cry for help, and he will say, Here I am. If you remove the yoke from among you, the pointing of the finger, the speaking of evil, ¹⁰if you offer your food to the hungry and satisfy the needs of the afflicted, then your light shall rise in the darkness and your gloom be like the noonday. ¹¹The LORD will guide you continually, and satisfy your needs in parched places, and make your bones strong; and you shall be like a watered garden, like a spring of water, whose waters never fail. ¹²Your ancient ruins shall be rebuilt; you shall raise up the foundations of many generations; you shall be called the repairer of the breach, the restorer of streets to live in.

Genesis 2:15-17; 3:1-7

¹⁵The LORD God took the man and put him in the garden of Eden to till it and keep it. ¹⁶And the LORD God commanded the man, "You may freely eat of every tree of the garden; ¹⁷but of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil you shall not eat, for in the day that you eat of it you shall die." ^{3:1}Now the serpent was more crafty than any other wild animal that the LORD God had made. He said to the woman, "Did God say, 'You shall not eat from any tree in the garden?'" ²The woman said to the serpent, "We may eat of the fruit of the trees in the garden; ³but God said, 'You shall not eat of the fruit of the tree that is in the middle of the garden, nor shall you touch it, or you shall die.'" ⁴But the serpent said to the woman, "You will not die; ⁵for God knows that when you eat of it your eyes will be opened, and you will be like God, knowing good and evil." ⁶So when the woman saw that the tree was good for food, and that it was a delight to the eyes, and that the tree was to be desired to make one wise, she took of its fruit and ate; and she also gave some to her husband, who was with her, and he ate. ⁷Then the eyes of both were opened, and they knew that they were naked; and they sewed fig leaves together and made loincloths for themselves.

Gospel: Matthew 4:1-11

Then Jesus was led up by the Spirit into the wilderness to be tested by the devil. ² He fasted forty days and forty nights, and afterward he was famished. ³ The tempter came and said to him, "If you are the Son of God, command these stones to become loaves of bread." ⁴ But he answered, "It is written, 'One does not live by bread alone, but by every word that comes from the mouth of God.'" ⁵ Then the devil took him to the holy city and placed him on the pinnacle of the temple, ⁶ saying to him, "If you are the Son of God, throw yourself down, for it is written, 'He will command his angels concerning you,' and 'On their hands they will bear you up, so that you will not dash your foot against a stone.'" ⁷ Jesus said to him, "Again it is written, 'Do not put the Lord your God to the test.'" ⁸ Again, the devil took him to a very high mountain and showed him all the kingdoms of the world and their glory, ⁹ and he said to him, "All these I will give you, if you will fall down and worship me." ¹⁰ Then Jesus said to him, "Away with you, Satan! for it is written, 'Worship the Lord your God, and serve only him.'" ¹¹ Then the devil left him, and suddenly angels came and waited on him.

Message

Affirmation of Faith

In a world full of noise, **we believe that God is speaking.**

In a world full of chaos, **we believe that God is singing.**

In a world full of temptation, **we believe that God is healing.**

Church, who will you listen to? **We will listen to God—our Creator, Friend, and Guide.**

Church, what will you listen for? **We will listen for water in the desert, for the wind of the Spirit, for the laughter of children, for the sound of open doors, and for God’s voice, who calls us beloved. Amen.**

Prayers of Intercession Response: **Receive our prayer.**

Offering

Offering Song

Give Thanks

Gray #170

Offering Prayer

God of good gifts, receive these and all our offerings as we present them in faithful service for the sake of your gospel. Prepare our hearts to receive you in this meal as you pour out your very presence through Christ Jesus, the wellspring of eternal life. Amen.

Holy Communion

Invitation to the Table

Great Prayer of Thanksgiving

Lift Up Your Hearts

We lift them to the Lord.

Let us give thanks to the Lord, our God.

It is right to give God thanks and Praise.

God of the lost and found.....

***Words of Institution**

Pg. 207

***Lord’s Prayer**

Pg. 208

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

Post Communion Blessing

Post Communion Prayer

God of manna and mustard seeds, we came to this Table hungry and we leave feeling full—full of hope, full of promise, full of what could be. For we not only found glimpses of you at this Table, but we caught a glimpse of the way things could be: in a meal where all are welcomed and all are fed. Is there anything holier than that? So thank you for nourishing our curiosity alongside our spirit and our conviction. May we always seek you the way you seek after us. With grateful hearts we pray, **Amen.**

Sending

Benediction

As you leave this place, may God bless you with seeking. Seek out the hungry. Seek the weary. Seek the good in every person you pass. Seek out the hopeful. Seek the faithful. Seek God in each of us. As you seek and as you wonder, may you find what you are looking for. In the name of our loving God, who is always seeking us, go now in peace. Amen.

Sending Hymn

I Want Jesus To Walk With Me (Verse 3)

ELW #325

Dismissal

P: Go in peace. Serve in Love.

C: To share the Good News of God’s Word and to serve the community and the world.

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,

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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.

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