

Gustaf Adolf Lutheran Church-E.L.C.A.



The Fifth Sunday In Lent

Sunday, March 17th, 2024

Wandering Heart: "Teach me"

Peter is often all or nothing, either resisting Jesus or drawing closer to him in earnest. In this scripture, we see a version of Peter who is hungry to learn. His posture is humble and open—he wants to absorb Jesus' teachings like a wet sponge. He asks a question and might expect a straightforward answer: "How many times should I forgive?" Instead, Jesus' math is not predictable—it's infinite. Forgiveness is abundant; grace is not earned. In your own faith, do you find comfort in theological formulas? Do you wish for straightforward answers? Can you let go of black-and-white thinking and instead embrace the infinite colors of grace?

Gustaf Adolf Lutheran Church—E.L.C.A.

Ministers:

You, All Members of G.A.

Pastor:

Jaime Decker

Prelude Music

Welcome/Announcements

Gathering

Call to Worship

L: Why are you here?

C: I am seeking God with my whole heart, with my entire mind, with a fire burning in my bones.

L: I see it! You're in the right place! This is God's house. The door is open to you.

C: Why are you here?

L: I am seeking God with my whole heart, with my entire mind, with a fire burning in my bones.

C: We see that in you! You're in the right place. This is God's house. The door is open to you.

L: Let us worship God.

C: Let us learn from the Spirit. Amen!

Call to Confession

L: Friends, when you study Peter's story in scripture it's almost impossible to ignore how much he loved to ask questions. He asks Jesus: "What does the parable mean?" "Where are you going?" "How many times should we forgive?" Like a tenacious toddler, Peter was full of questions, because Peter was eager to learn. I wish I was more like that. I still have so much to learn. So friends, let's be like Peter. Let's return to Christ with the humility of a student as we pray together the prayer of confession. Let this be a moment of learning.

Let us pray:

Prayer of Confession

L: Holy God, **C: We long to be lifelong learners. We long to approach you with curiosity and an open mind. Instead, we often live as if we know best. We forget that the disciples called you "Rabbi, Teacher." Forgive us for the times when we fail to be curious. Forgive us for the times when we assume we know best. Forgive us for the moments when we imagine that our learning is done and that we have all the answers. Like Peter—who was brave enough to ask, "How many times should we forgive?"—make us brave. Spark a desire in us to learn, and may our curiosity carry our faith into deeper waters. With hope and humility we pray, amen.**

Words of Forgiveness

L: Family of faith, When Peter asked Jesus, "How many times should I forgive?" Jesus responded with abundance. That abundance exists for you as well. No matter what you have done or left undone, no matter what lessons you have learned or are still learning, God's abundant grace exists for you. God's love will never run out. So hear and rest in this good news: You are forgiven. You are loved. You are invited to serve. Thanks be to God! **C: Amen.**

*Gathering Hymn

Jesus, Keep Me Near The Cross

ELW #335 (Verse 1)

*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.

*Prayer For Illumination

L: Teaching God, **C: We want to learn your ways. We want to learn the ways of forgiveness. We want to learn the ways of grace. We want to learn your ways of love. That is part of why we return to your text week after week, because we are hungry to be more like you. So as we prepare to listen to your good Word, calm the noise in our minds. Center our spirits to focus on you so that we might learn and hear what we have missed in this story before. God, we want to learn your ways. Meet us here. Speak your truth. Help us listen. Amen.**

Word

Reading

Psalm 119:9-16

⁹How shall the young keep their way clean? By keeping to your word.

¹⁰**With my whole heart I seek you; let me not stray from your commandments.**

¹¹I treasure your promise in my heart, that I may not sin against you.

¹²**Blessed are you, O LORD; instruct me in your statutes.**

¹³With my lips I recite all the judgments of your mouth.

¹⁴**I take greater delight in the way of your decrees than in all manner of riches.**

¹⁵I will meditate on your commandments and give attention to your ways.

¹⁶**My delight is in your statutes; I will not forget your word.**

R: The Word of the Lord **C: Thanks be to God**

Gospel Reading

Matthew 18:15-22

P: The Holy Gospel according to _____ **C: Glory to you, O Lord.**

¹⁵ "If your brother or sister sins against you, go and point out the fault when the two of you are alone. If you are listened to, you have regained that one. ¹⁶ But if you are not listened to, take one or two others along with you, so that every word may be confirmed by the evidence of two or three witnesses. ¹⁷ If that person refuses to listen to them, tell it to the church, and if the offender refuses to listen even to the church, let such a one be to you as a gentile and a tax collector. ¹⁸ Truly I tell you, whatever you bind on earth will be bound in heaven, and whatever you loose on earth will be loosed in heaven. ¹⁹ Again, truly I tell you, if two of you agree on earth about anything you ask, it will be done for you by my Father in heaven. ²⁰ For where two or three are gathered in my name, I am there among them." ²¹ Then Peter came and said to him, "Lord, if my brother or sister sins against me, how often should I forgive? As many as seven times?" ²² Jesus said to him, "Not seven times, but, I tell you, seventy-seven times.

P: The Gospel of our Lord. **C: Praise to you, O Christ.**

Message

Hymn of the Day

Jesus, Keep Me Near The Cross

ELW #335 (Verse 2&3)

Affirmation of Faith

L: We believe that questions are a building block of faith.

C: "How many times should I forgive?" "Jesus, where are you going?" "What must I do to inherit eternal life?"

L: We believe that humble curiosity can open our eyes.

C: "Where does it hurt?" "What do you need?" "How can I help?"

L: We believe that God is a teacher.

C: "Speak, Lord, your servant is listening." "Here I am." "Send me."

L: We believe that faith invites our whole being to engage,
C: with all our heart, with all our mind, with all our strength.
L: We believe. Help our unbelief.
C: In Christ's name we pray, Amen.

Prayer of the People

L: Hear us, O God. **C: Your mercy is great.**

Offering

Offering Hymn

Give Thanks

Gray #170

Offering Prayer

L: Jesus, you are the bread of life and the host of this meal. Bless these gifts that we have gathered that all people may know your goodness. Feed us not only with this holy food but with hunger for justice and peace. We pray this in your name. **C: Amen.**

Meal

Holy Communion

*Great Thanksgiving	Pg. 206
*Holy, Holy, Holy	Pg. 207
*Words of Institution	Pg. 207
*Lord's Prayer	Pg. 208

***Invitation to Communion**

P: Bread for the journey. A feast for hungry hearts. Come!

***Lamb of God**

Pg. 208

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

***Post Communion Blessing**

*** Post Communion Prayer**

P: Generous God, at this table we have tasted your immeasurable grace. As grains of wheat are gathered into one bread, now make us one loaf to feed the world; in the name of Jesus, the Bread of life. **C: Amen.**

Sending

***Benediction**

Beloved wanderer, as you leave this place, may you carry your curious heart on your sleeve. May you look for God in every face. May you find the courage to get out of the boat, to run to the tomb, and to speak of your faith. And when the world falls apart, may you hear God's voice deep within, saying, "Take heart, it is I, be not afraid." You are called. You are blessed. In both your ups and your downs, you always belong to God. Go now in peace. Go trusting that good news. Amen.

***Sending Hymn**

Jesus, Keep Me Near The Cross

ELW #335 (Verse 4)

***Dismissal**

P: Go in peace. Share your bread.

C: Share the Good News of God’s Word and 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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