

ELW Service of the Word Sunday, February 23, 2025

## **GATHERING**

### **PRELUDE**

### **ANNOUNCEMENTS**

## **CONFESSION AND FORGIVENESS**

Blessed be the holy Trinity, ✝ one God, our creator, our protector,  
our wellspring of life. Amen.

Trusting that God receives our words and the meditations of our hearts,  
let us confess our sin.

Merciful God,

**you speak blessing and compassion into the world.**

**Forgive us for the ways we act  
with judgment, cruelty, or indifference.**

**We ignore the needs of our neighbors;  
we resist your call to oppose injustice;  
we give in to scarcity and fear;  
we assume the worst about one another.**

**Cleanse us from our faults and release us from their grasp.**

**Show us your lovingkindness.**

**Restore our hearts and repair your world,  
that we may live in Christ's ways. Amen.**

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God proclaims these words of assurance:

“Do not fear, for I have redeemed you.

I have called you by name. You are mine.”

In ✝ Christ, you are forgiven.

In the Spirit, you are made free.

Refreshed by the waters of mercy,  
live anew as beloved children of God.

**Amen.**

**GATHERING SONG *Morning Has Broken* (ELW 556)**

1 Morning has broken like the first morning;  
blackbird has spoken like the first bird.  
Praise for the singing! Praise for the morning!  
Praise for them, springing fresh from the Word!

2 Sweet the rain's new fall, sunlit from heaven,  
like the first dewfall on the first grass.  
Praise for the sweetness of the wet garden,  
sprung in completeness where God's feet pass.

3 Mine is the sunlight! Mine is the morning,  
born of the one light Eden saw play!  
Praise with elation, praise ev'ry morning,  
God's recreation of the new day!

**GREETING (ELW p. 213)**

The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, the love of God,  
and the communion of the Holy Spirit be with you all.  
**And also with you.**

**KYRIE (ELW p. 213)**

Have mercy on us, Lord, and hear our solemn prayer.  
We come to hear your living word; it saves us from despair.

Have mercy on us, Christ, and wash away our sin.  
Pour out your grace and make us whole that new life may begin.

Have mercy on us, Lord, make sin and shame depart.  
Renew us with your saving pow'r; create in us new hearts!

**PRAYER OF THE DAY (ELW p. 215)**

*Let us pray.*

O Lord Jesus, make us instruments of your peace, that where there is hatred, we may sow love, where there is injury, pardon, and where there is despair, hope. Grant, O divine master, that we may seek to console, to understand, and to love in your name, for you live and reign with the Father and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. Amen.

**FIRST READING: Genesis 45:3-11, 15**

*A reading from Genesis.*

Joseph said to his brothers, “I am Joseph. Is my father still alive?” But his brothers could not answer him, so dismayed were they at his presence.

Then Joseph said to his brothers, “Come closer to me.” And they came closer. He said, “I am your brother, Joseph, whom you sold into Egypt. And now do not be distressed, or angry with yourselves, because you sold me here; for God sent me before you to preserve life. For the famine has been in the land these two years; and there are five more years in which there will be neither plowing nor harvest. God sent me before you to preserve for you a remnant on earth, and to keep alive for you many survivors. So it was not you who sent me here, but God; he has made me a father to Pharaoh, and lord of all his house and ruler over all the land of Egypt. Hurry and go up to my father and say to him, ‘Thus says your son Joseph, God has made me lord of all Egypt; come down to me, do not delay. You shall settle in the land of Goshen, and you shall be near me, you and your children and your children’s children, as well as your flocks, your herds, and all that you have. I will provide for you there—since there are five more years of famine to come—so that you and your household, and all that you have, will not come to poverty.’ And he kissed all his brothers and wept upon them; and after that his brothers talked with him.

The word of the Lord.

**Thanks be to God.**

**PSALM: Psalm 37:1-11, 39-40**

1 Do not be provoked by evildoers;

do not be jealous of those who do wrong.

**2 For they shall soon wither like the grass,  
and like the green grass fade away.**

3 Put your trust in the Lord and do good;  
dwell in the land and find safe pasture.

**4 Take delight in the Lord,  
who shall give you your heart's desire.**

5 Commit your way to the Lord; put your trust in the Lord,  
and see what God will do.

**6 The Lord will make your vindication as clear as the light  
and the justice of your case like the noonday sun.**

7 Be still before the Lord and wait patiently.

Do not be provoked by the one who prospers, the one who succeeds  
in evil schemes.

**8 Refrain from anger, leave rage alone;  
do not be provoked; it leads only to evil.**

9 For evildoers shall be cut off,  
but those who hope in the Lord shall possess the land.

**10 In a little while the wicked shall be no more;  
even if you search out their place, they will not be there.**

11 But the lowly shall possess the land;  
they will delight in abundance of peace.

**39 But the deliverance of the righteous comes from you, O Lord;  
you are their stronghold in time of trouble.**

40 You, O Lord, will help them and rescue them;

you will rescue them from the wicked and deliver them, because in  
you they seek refuge.

**SECOND READING: 1 Corinthians 15:35-38, 42-50**

*A reading from 1 Corinthians.*

But someone will ask, “How are the dead raised? With what kind of body do they come?” Fool! What you sow does not come to life unless it dies. And as for what you sow, you do not sow the body that is to be, but a bare seed, perhaps of wheat or of some other grain. But God gives it a body as he has chosen, and to each kind of seed its own body.

So it is with the resurrection of the dead. What is sown is perishable, what is raised is imperishable. It is sown in dishonor, it is raised in glory. It is sown in weakness, it is raised in power. It is sown a physical body, it is raised a spiritual body. If there is a physical body, there is also a spiritual body. Thus it is written, “The first man, Adam, became a living being”; the last Adam became a life-giving spirit. But it is not the spiritual that is first, but the physical, and then the spiritual. The first man was from the earth, a man of dust; the second man is from heaven. As was the man of dust, so are those who are of the dust; and as is the man of heaven, so are those who are of heaven. Just as we have borne the image of the man of dust, we will also bear the image of the man of heaven.

What I am saying, brothers and sisters, is this: flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God, nor does the perishable inherit the imperishable.

The word of the Lord.

**Thanks be to God.**

**GOSPEL ACCLAMATION (ELW p. 216)**

**Alleluia, Lord, to whom shall we go?**

**Alleluia. You have the words of eternal life.**

**Alleluia, alleluia.**

**GOSPEL (VISUALWORD): Luke 6:27-38**

The holy gospel according to Luke.

**Glory to you, O Lord.**

*[Jesus said:] 27 “But I say to you that listen, Love your enemies, do good to those who hate you, 28 bless those who curse you, pray for those who abuse you. 29 If anyone strikes you on the cheek, offer the other also; and from anyone who takes away your coat do not withhold even your shirt. 30 Give to everyone who begs from you; and if anyone takes away your goods, do not ask for them again. 31 Do to others as you would have them do to you.*

*32 “If you love those who love you, what credit is that to you? For even sinners love those who love them. 33 If you do good to those who do good to you, what credit is that to you? For even sinners do the same. 34 If you lend to those from whom you hope to receive, what credit is that to you? Even sinners lend to sinners, to receive as much again. 35 But love your enemies, do good, and lend, expecting nothing in return. Your reward will be great, and you will be children of the Most High; for he is kind to the ungrateful and the wicked. 36 Be merciful, just as your Father is merciful.*

*37 “Do not judge, and you will not be judged; do not condemn, and you will not be condemned. Forgive, and you will be forgiven; 38 give, and it will be given to you. A good measure, pressed down, shaken together, running over, will be put into your lap; for the measure you give will be the measure you get back.”*

The gospel of the Lord.

**Praise to you, O Christ.**

**SERMON****HYMN OF THE DAY *Beautiful Savior* (ELW 838)**

1 Beautiful Savior,  
King of creation,  
Son of God and Son of Man!  
Truly I'd love thee,

truly I'd serve thee,  
light of my soul, my joy, my crown.

2 Fair are the meadows,  
fair are the woodlands,  
robed in flow'rs of blooming spring;  
Jesus is fairer,  
Jesus is purer,  
he makes our sorrowing spirit sing.

3 Fair is the sunshine,  
fair is the moonlight,  
bright the sparkling stars on high;  
Jesus shines brighter,  
Jesus shines purer  
than all the angels in the sky.

4 Beautiful Savior,  
Lord of the nations,  
Son of God and Son of Man!  
Glory and honor,  
praise, adoration,  
now and forevermore be thine!

### **A STATEMENT OF FAITH**

We are not alone, we live in God's world. We believe in God: who has created and is creating, who has come in Jesus, the Word made flesh, to reconcile and make new, who works in us and others by the Spirit. We trust in God. We are called to be the Church: to celebrate God's presence, to live with respect in Creation, to love and serve others, to seek justice and resist evil, to proclaim Jesus, crucified and risen, our judge and our hope. In life, in death, in life beyond death, God is with us. We are not alone. Thanks be to God.

## PRAYERS OF INTERCESSION

With the Spirit of Christ shining upon us, let us boldly pray for the church, the world, and all of creation.

READER 1 Surprising God, you call us to love our enemies and to show kindness in the face of cruelty. Let our actions be a shining witness of your overwhelming grace for all. God of grace,  
**hear our prayer.**

READER 2 As animals hibernate and fields lay dormant, let them be a reminder that life and faith are not static but always changing and growing. May we, with all creation, trust that the ending of one thing promises life in a new way. God of grace,  
**hear our prayer.**

READER 3 We pray for leaders and policymakers who work to reduce violence in our nations, cities, and towns. Give your wisdom and discernment amid heated arguments and differing viewpoints. God of grace,  
**hear our prayer.**

PASTOR We pray for the victims of abuse and violence. Provide safe shelter and new beginnings to those experiencing domestic violence and dangerous situations. Enfold with love all who seek your healing care (*especially*). God of grace,  
**hear our prayer.**

READER 4 Empower our faith communities to be signs of your gracious love. Bless the local ministries of parish nursing and caregiving, that they will be a voice for those in need in our communities. God of grace,  
**hear our prayer.**



READER 5 We give thanks for the enduring witness of those who have died before us. May their lives in you provide a witness of your everlasting grace. God of grace,  
**hear our prayer.**

We entrust our prayers to you, O God, in the sure and certain hope that your promise is revealed among the people.  
**Amen.**

### **PEACE (ELW p. 217)**

The peace of Christ be with you always.  
**And also with you.**

### **VISUAL WORD**

### **THANKSGIVING FOR THE WORD (ELW p. 220)**

Let us pray.

O God of justice and love, we give thanks to you that you illumine our way through life with the words of your Son. Give us the light we need, awaken us to the needs of others, and at the end bring all the world to your feast; through Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord, to whom, with you and the Holy Spirit, be honor and glory forever.  
**Amen.**

### **LORD'S PRAYER (ELW p. 221)**

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

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.

## **BLESSING**

The Spirit of the triune God  
✠ bless you with joy,  
anoint you with compassion,  
and send you in love.  
**Amen.**

## **SENDING SONG *O God, Our Help in Ages Past* (ELW 632)**

1 O God, our help in ages past,  
our hope for years to come,  
our shelter from the stormy blast,  
and our eternal home:

2 Under the shadow of your throne  
your saints have dwelt secure;  
sufficient is your arm alone,

and our defense is sure.

3 Before the hills in order stood  
or earth received its frame,  
from everlasting you are God,  
to endless years the same.

4 A thousand ages in your sight  
are like an evening gone,  
short as the watch that ends the night  
before the rising sun.

5 Time, like an ever-rolling stream,  
bears all our years away;  
they fly forgotten, as a dream  
dies at the op'ning day.

6 O God, our help in ages past,  
our hope for years to come,  
still be our guard while troubles last  
and our eternal home.

## **DISMISSAL**

Go in peace. Serve the Lord.  
**Thanks be to God.**

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