

St. Peter's Evangelical Lutheran Church & Elementary School
Our Mission: Learn God's Truth,
Share Spirit's Healing, Follow Jesus' Ways.
Ash Wednesday, February 14, 2024
Virtual Prayer and Preaching Worship



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**CALL to WORSHIP and PRAYER of the DAY**

Lord, ☩ have mercy. **Christ, have mercy. Lord, have mercy on us.**  
Holy God, **hear our prayer.** *A brief silence.* Gracious God, out of your love & mercy you breathed into dust the breath of life, creating us to serve you & our neighbors. Call forth our prayers & acts of kindness, and strengthen us to face our mortality with confidence in the mercy of your Son, Jesus Christ, our Leader & Savior, who lives & reigns with you & the Holy Spirit, one God, now & forever. **Amen**

**GOD'S WORD**

**READING: Genesis 3:1-13, 17-19** *Common English Bible*

The snake was the most intelligent of all the wild animals that the LORD God had made. He said to the woman, "Did God really say that you shouldn't eat from any tree in the garden?"

The woman said to the snake, "We may eat the fruit of the garden's trees but not the fruit of the tree in the middle of the garden. God said, 'Don't eat from it, and don't touch it, or you will die.'"

The snake said to the woman, "You won't die! God knows that on the day you eat from it, you will see clearly and you will be like God, knowing good and evil." The woman saw that the tree was beautiful with delicious food and that the tree would provide wisdom, so she took some of its fruit and ate it, and also gave some to her husband, who was with her, and he ate it. Then they both saw clearly and knew that they were naked. So they sewed fig leaves together and made garments for themselves.

During that day's cool evening breeze, they heard the sound of the LORD God walking in the garden; and the man and his wife hid themselves from the LORD God in the middle of the garden's trees. The LORD God called to the man and said to him, "Where are you?"

The man replied, "I heard your sound in the garden; I was afraid because I was naked, and I hid myself."

God said, "Who told you that you were naked? Did you eat from the tree, which I commanded you not to eat?"

The man said, "The woman you gave me, she gave me some fruit from the tree, and I ate."

The LORD God said to the woman, "What have you done?!"

And the woman said, "The snake tricked me, and I ate."

**HOLY GOSPEL: Mark 12:28-34** *Contemporary English Version*

One of the teachers of the Law of Moses came up while Jesus and the Sadducees were arguing. When he heard Jesus give a good answer, he asked him, "What is the most important commandment?"

Jesus answered, "The most important one says: 'People of Israel, you have only one Lord and God. You must love him with all your heart, soul, mind, and strength.' The second most important commandment says: 'Love others as much as you love yourself.' No other commandment is more important than these."

The man replied, "Teacher, you are certainly right to say there is only one God. It is also true that we must love God with all our heart, mind, and strength, and that we must love others as much as we love ourselves. These commandments are more important than all the sacrifices and offerings that we could possibly make."

When Jesus saw that he had given a sensible answer, he told him, "You are not far from the realm of God." After this, no one dared ask Jesus any more questions.

**HYMN of the DAY: # 793** *"Be Thou My Vision"*

- 1 Be thou my vision, O Lord of my heart;  
naught be all else to me, save that thou art:  
thou my best thought both by day and by night,  
waking or sleeping, thy presence my light.
- 2 Be thou my wisdom, and thou my true word;  
I ever with thee and thou with me, Lord.  
Thou my soul's shelter, and thou my high tow'r,  
raise thou me heav'nward, O Pow'r of my pow'r.
- 3 Riches I heed not, nor vain, empty praise,  
thou mine inheritance, now and always:  
thou and thou only, the first in my heart,  
great God of heaven, my treasure thou art.
- 4 Light of my soul, after victory won,  
may I reach heaven's joys, O heaven's Sun!  
Heart of my own heart, whatever befall,  
still be my vision, O Ruler of all.

Text: Irish, 8th cent.; vers. Eleanor H. Hull, 1860-1935, alt.; tr. Mary E. Byrne, 1880-1931

**MESSAGE:**            **COMMAND**            *silence for reflection follows*

## **CONFESSION and FORGIVENESS**

People of God, today with the whole church we enter the time of recalling 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.

We confess our sin in the presence of God and of one another. *Silence.*  
I confess to God Almighty, before the whole company of heaven,  
and to you, my brothers and sisters, that I have sinned by my own fault  
in thought, word, and deed. I pray God Almighty to have mercy on me,  
forgive me all my sins, and bring me to everlasting life.

**Almighty and merciful God grant you healing, pardon,  
and forgiveness of all your sins. Amen**

**I confess to God Almighty, before the whole company of heaven,  
and to you, my brothers and sisters, that I have sinned by my own  
fault in thought, word, and deed. I pray God Almighty to have mercy  
on me, forgive me all my sins, and bring me to everlasting life.**

Almighty and merciful God grant you healing, pardon,  
and forgiveness of all your sins. Amen

## **The CHURCH PRAYS**

### **PRAYERS of the PEOPLE**

Trusting in God's promise to reconcile all things, we pray for the church, the well-being of creation, and a world in need. *A brief silence.*

You call us to return to you, steadfast God. Renew a right spirit within the church and cleanse the hearts of your people. Strengthen those who proclaim your gospel in word and deed. Hear us, O God.

**Your mercy is great.**

You sustain your creation, generous God. Supply all that is needful for life to flourish. Protect endangered species and fragile habitats. Teach us to live lightly upon the earth and to honor it as our home. Hear us, O God.

**Your mercy is great.**

You seek justice and peace, righteous God. Rebuild cities and homelands devastated by war in Ukraine, Israel, and Palestine. Provide welcome, help, and safety to refugees. Prosper negotiations that lead to lasting peace among the nations. Hear us, O God.

**Your mercy is great.**

You care for all people, loving God. Heal any who are scarred by violence, addiction, or trauma of any kind. Comfort those who grieve and bring relief to any in pain. Hear us, O God.

**Your mercy is great.**

You gather this assembly, abiding God. Unite us in serving our neighbors and working for justice. We pray for caregivers and people who are hospitalized, in treatment, or recovering from illness. Hear us, O God.

**Your mercy is great.**

*Here other intercessions may be offered.*

You redeem us from death, faithful God. We give thanks for those who served you in the church, including Cyril and Methodius, missionaries, whom we commemorate today. Bring us with all the saints into everlasting joy. Hear us, O God.

**Your mercy is great.**

Accompany us on our journey, God of grace, and receive the prayers of our hearts, through Jesus Christ, our Savior. **Amen**

### **LORD'S PRAYER**

So that evil may not tempt us, we 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 and SENDING**

Receive the blessing. *A brief silence.*

Beloved, we are God's own people, holy, washed, renewed.  
God bless you and keep you, shower you with mercy,  
fill you with courage, and give you ☩ peace. **Amen**

Merciful God, accompany our journey thru these forty days. Renew us in the gift of baptism, that we may provide for those who are poor, pray for those

in need, fast from self-indulgence, and above all that we may find our treasure in the life of your Son, Jesus Christ, our Leader & Savior. **Amen**  
*Please share Christ's peace with those in your household or on FB.*

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Mid-week Lent Worship: Join us in Grace Chapel (lower level, elevator access) for worship at 11:30 am. on Wednesdays through March 20th.