**First Lutheran Church**

**Meadowlands, MN**

**March 20, 2024**

***“A Season of Hope”***

**Prelude**

**Welcome**

**Opening Dialogue**

P: Lent calls us to journey, this and every day, following Jesus wherever he leads us.

**C: Lent calls us to journey: to the place where God covenants with us, to receive the new names we are given.**

P: Lent calls us to worship together, to tell future generations the good news.

**C: Lent calls us to practice justice, to bring God's hope to all people.**

P: Lent calls us to faithful living, to trust the One who gives us life.

**C: Lent calls each of us to take up our cross, to trust the One who bears it with us.**

P: Lent calls us to journey with God.

**C: Let us worship God, who walks with us, this and every day.**

**Opening Hymn *“God Loved the World”*** Hymn #323

Vs. 1 God loved the world so that he gave his only

 Son the lost to save, that all who would in

 Him believe should everlasting life receive.

Vs. 2 Christ Jesus is the ground of faith, who was made

 flesh and suffered death; all who confide in

 Christ alone are built on this chief cornerstone.

Vs. 3 If you are ill, if death draws near, this truth your

 troubled heart can cheer: Christ Jesus rescues

 us from death; that is the firmest ground of faith.

Vs. 4 Be of good cheer, for God's own Son forgives all

 sins that you have done, and justified by

 Jesus' blood, your baptism grants the highest good.

Vs. 5 All glory to the Father, Son, and Holy

 Spirit, Three in One! To you, O blessed

 Trinity, be praise now and eternally!

**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.***

**Litany**

P: Lord, you set your face towards Jerusalem and walked alongside those who suffer. Be our vision that we too may walk the way of the cross and extend a hand to those we meet.

**C: Lord, give us the gladness of your help and support us with a willing spirit.**

P: Lord, you stopped to heal the sick, cure the lame and give sight to the blind. Be our vision that we too may give time to others and respond to their needs.

**C: Lord, give us the gladness of your help and support us with a willing spirit.**

P: Lord, you said, "The first shall be last and the last first. Be our vision that we too may work towards your kingdom when the exalted will be brought low and the lowly exalted.

**C: Lord, give us the gladness of your help and support us with a willing spirit.**

P: Lord, you ate with tax collectors and sinners and heard their stories. Be our vision that we too may listen to the despised and rejected and value their lives.

**C: Lord, give us the gladness of your help
And support us with a willing spirit.**

P: Lord, you took time to pray and time to be silent. Be our vision that through our prayers, fasting and almsgiving we too may draw closer to you and find your way.

**C: Lord, give us the gladness of your help and support us with a willing spirit.**

P: Lord, you entered Jerusalem with peace in your heart. Be our vision that we too may desire peace where others desire war, and may work for justice where injustice reigns.

**C: Lord, give us the gladness of your help and support us with a willing spirit for you are our hope and our salvation.**

**Prayer**

P: Lord God, our strength, the struggle between good and evil rages within and around us, and the devil and all the forces that defy you tempt us with empty promises. Keep us steadfast in your word, and when we fall, raise us again and restore us through your Son, Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever.

**C: Amen.**

**Lesson: Psalm 14**

1Fools say in their hearts, “There is no God.” They are corrupt, they do abominable deeds; there is no one who does good.

2The Lord looks down from heaven on humankind to see if there are any who are wise, who seek after God.

3They have all gone astray, they are all alike perverse; there is no one who does good, no, not one.

4Have they no knowledge, all the evildoers who eat up my people as they eat bread, and do not call upon the Lord?

5There they shall be in great terror, for God is with the company of the righteous.

6You would confound the plans of the poor, but the Lord is their refuge.

7O that deliverance for Israel would come from Zion! When the Lord restores the fortunes of his people, Jacob will rejoice; Israel will be glad.

**Lesson: Mark 9:17-29**

17Someone from the crowd answered him, “Teacher, I brought you my son; he has a spirit that makes him unable to speak; 18and whenever it seizes him, it dashes him down; and he foams and grinds his teeth and becomes rigid; and I asked your disciples to cast it out, but they could not do so.” 19He answered them, “You faithless generation, how much longer must I be among you? How much longer must I put up with you? Bring him to me.” 20And they brought the boy to him. When the spirit saw him, immediately it convulsed the boy, and he fell on the ground and rolled about, foaming at the mouth. 21Jesus asked the father, “How long has this been happening to him?” And he said, “From childhood. 22It has often cast him into the fire and into the water, to destroy him; but if you are able to do anything, have pity on us and help us.” 23Jesus said to him, “If you are able! —All things can be done for the one who believes.” 24Immediately the father of the child cried out, “I believe; help my unbelief!” 25When Jesus saw that a crowd came running together, he rebuked the unclean spirit, saying to it, “You spirit that keeps this boy from speaking and hearing, I command you, come out of him, and never enter him again!” 26After crying out and convulsing him terribly, it came out, and the boy was like a corpse, so that most of them said, “He is dead.” 27But Jesus took him by the hand and lifted him up, and he was able to stand. 28When he had entered the house, his disciples asked him privately, “Why could we not cast it out?” 29He said to them, “This kind can come out only through prayer.”

**Message *“Hope Through Doubt”***

**Hymn of the Day *“Jesus, Keep Me Near the Cross”***  Hymn #335

Vs. 1 Jesus, keep me near the cross, there's a precious fountain;
 free to all, a healing stream flows from Calv'ry's mountain.

***Refrain: In the cross, in the cross be my glory ever;
 till my ransomed soul shall find rest beyond the river.***

Vs. 2 Near the cross, a trembling soul, love and mercy found me;
 there the bright and morning star sheds its beams around me. ***[Refrain]***

Vs. 3 Near the cross! O Lamb of God, bring its scenes before me;
 help me walk from day to day with its shadow o'er me. ***[Refrain]***

Vs. 4 Near the cross I'll watch and wait, hoping, trusting ever,
 till I reach the golden strand just beyond the river. ***[Refrain]***

*(The offering is taken at this time.)*

**Offering Prayer**

P:Lord God, we give these offerings in gratitude, rejoicing in the abundance of your gifts to us. We give these offerings in faith, trusting that you will provide for our needs. We give these offerings in hope, knowing you can use them to spread your love in this world. And with these offerings, we give ourselves; may we live with generous hearts, with openhands. Amen

**Prayers**

P: God of the blessed we praise you, for mercy shown, grace given, living water, Spirit’s power. We ask you for daily strength, hope for tomorrow, your word to guide, strong feet to follow.

P: God of the oppressed we bring to you the broken ones, forgotten ones, exploited and abused ones. Bring freedom and release, love and compassion to damaged hearts and souls. God of compassion,
**C: Hear our prayer.**

P: God of the distressed, we bring to you the grieving ones, hurting ones, suffering and wounded ones. Bring wholeness and healing comfort and relief, to broken bodies and minds. God of compassion,
**C: Hear our prayer**

P: God of the dispossessed we bring to you the lonely ones, the homeless ones, thirsty, tired and penniless ones. Bring hope and sustenance physical and spiritual food, to hungry bodies and souls God of compassion,
**C: Hear our prayer**

P: The Lord is good to all; he has compassion on all he has made. May the peace, love and compassion of the Lord be with you now and always.
**C: Amen.**

**Lord's Prayer**

**Blessing**

P: Let us bless the Lord.

***C: Thanks be to God.***

P: Almighty and merciful God, the Father, the + Son, and the Holy Spirit, bless and preserve us.

***C: Amen***

**Sending Hymn Sending Hymn *“Now the Day is Over”*** Hymn #570

Vs. 1 Now the day is over; night is drawing nigh;
 shadows of the evening steal across the sky.

Vs. 2 Jesus, give the weary calm and sweet repose;
 with your tend'rest blessing may our eyelids close.

Vs. 3 Comfort ev'ry suff'rer watching late in pain;
 those who plan some evil, from their sin restrain.

Vs. 4 Through the long night-watches may your angels spread
 their bright wings above me, watching round my bed.

Vs. 5 When the morning wakens, then may I arise
 pure and fresh and sinless in your holy eyes.

Vs. 6 Glory to the Father, glory to the Son,
 and to you, blest Spirit, while the ages run.

**Dismissal**

P: Go now in peace.

***C: Thanks be to God.***

**Postlude**