

Lent 4 – Holy Eucharist: Rite 2 – March 30, 2025

Hymn 540 – Awake, thou Spirit of the Watchmen

Awake, thou Spirit of the watchmen who never held their peace by day or night,
contending from the walls of Zion against the foe, confiding in thy might,
Through-out the world their cry is ringing still, and brining people to thy holy will.

O Lord, now let thy fire enkindle our hearts, that everywhere its flame may go,
and spread the glory of redemption till all the world thy saving grace shall know.
O harvest Lord, look down on us and view how white the field; the laborers, how few!

Send forth, O Lord, thy strong Evangel by many messengers, all hearts to win;
make haste to help us in our weakness; break down the realm of Satan, death, and sin:
the circle of the earth shall then proclaim thy kingdom, and the glory of thy Name.

Opening Sentence

Blessed by God: Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.
And blessed be his kingdom, now and for ever.

Almighty God, to you all hearts are open, all desires known, and from you no secrets
are hid: Cleanse the thoughts of our hearts by the inspiration of your Holy Spirit, that
we may perfectly love you, and worthily magnify your holy Name; through Christ our
Lord. Amen.

Song of Praise – page 356

Glory to God in the highest, and peace to his people on earth.

*Lord God, heavenly King, almighty God and Father, we worship you, we give you
thanks, we praise you for your glory.*

*Lord Jesus Christ, only Son of the Father, Lord God, Lamb of God, you take away the sin
of the world: have mercy on us; you are seated at the right hand of the Father: receive
our prayer.*

*For you alone are the Holy One, you alone are the Lord, you alone are the Most High,
Jesus Christ, with the Holy Spirit, in the glory of God the Father. Amen.*

Collect of the Day

The Lord be with you. *And also with you.* Let us pray.

Gracious Father, whose blessed Son Jesus Christ came down from heaven to be the true bread which gives life to the world: Evermore give us this bread, that he may live in us, and we in him; who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and for ever. *Amen.*

First Reading: Joshua 5:9-12

The Lord said to Joshua, "Today I have rolled away from you the disgrace of Egypt." And so that place is called Gilgal to this day. While the Israelites were camped in Gilgal they kept the Passover in the evening on the fourteenth day of the month in the plains of Jericho. On the day after the Passover, on that very day, they ate the produce of the land, unleavened cakes and parched grain. The manner ceased on the day they ate the produce of the land, and the Israelites no longer had manna; they ate the crops of the land of Canaan that year.

The Word of the Lord. *Thanks be to God.*

Psalm 32

Happy are those whose transgressions are forgiven,
and whose sin is put away!

Happy are they to whom the Lord imputes no guilt,
and in whose spirit there is no guile!

While I held my tongue, my bones withered away,
because of my groaning all day long.

For your hand was heavy upon me day and night;
my moisture was dried up as in the heat of summer.

Then I acknowledged my sin to you,
and did not conceal my guilt.

I said, "I will confess my transgressions to the Lord."
Then you forgave me the guilt of my sin.

Therefore all the faithful will make their prayers to you in time of trouble.
when the great waters overflow, they shall not reach them.

You are my hiding place; you preserve me from trouble;
you surround me with shouts of deliverance.

"I will instruct you and teach you in the way that you should go;
I will guide you with my eye.

Do not be like horse or mule, which have no understanding;
 who must be fitted with bit and bridle, or else they will not stay near you.”
Great are the tribulations of the wicked;
 but mercy embraces those who trust in the Lord.
Be glad, you righteous, and rejoice in the Lord;
 shout for joy, all who are true at heart.

Second Reading: 2 Corinthians 5:16-21

A reading from Paul’s Second Letter to the Corinthians.

From now on, we regard no one from a human point of view; even though we once knew Christ from a human point of view, we know him no longer in that way. So if anyone is in Christ, there is a new creation: everything old has passed away; see, everything has become new! All this is from God, who reconciled us to himself through Christ, and has given us the ministry of reconciliation; that is, in Christ God was reconciling the world to himself, not counting their trespasses against them, and entrusting the message of reconciliation to us. We are ambassadors for Christ, since God is making his appeal through us; we entreat you on behalf of Christ, be reconciled to God. For our sake he made him to be sin who knew no sin, so that in him we might become the righteousness of God.

The Word of the Lord. *Thanks be to God.*

Hymn 526 – Let saints on earth in concert sing

Let saints on earth in concert sing with those whose work is done;
for all the servants of our King in heaven and earth are one.

One family we dwell in him, one church, above, beneath,
though now divided by the stream, the narrow stream of death.

One army of the living God, to his command we bow;
part of the host have crossed the flood, and part are crossing now.

E’en now by faith we join our hands with those that went before,
and greet the ever-living bands on the eternal shore.

Jesus, be thou our constant Guide; then, when the word is given,
bid Jordan’s narrow stream divide, and bring us safe to heaven.

Gospel: Luke 15:1-3, 11b-32

Now all the tax collectors and sinners were coming near to listen to him. And the Pharisees and the scribes were grumbling and saying “This fellow welcomes sinners and eats with them.” So he told them this parable: “There was a man who had two sons. The younger of them said to his father, ‘Father, give me the share of the property that will belong to me.’ So he divided his property between them. A few days later the younger son gathered all he had and traveled to a distant country, and there he squandered his property in dissolute living. When he had spent everything, a severe famine took place throughout that country, and he began to be in need. So he went and hired himself out to one of the citizens of that country, who sent him to his fields to feed the pigs. He would gladly have filled himself with the pods that the pigs were eating; and no one gave him anything. But when he came to himself he said, ‘How many of my father’s hired hands have bread enough and to spare, but here I am dying of hunger! I will get up and go to my father, and I will say to him, “Father, I have sinned against heaven and before you; I am no longer worthy to be called your son; treat me like one of your hired hands.”’” So he set off and went to his father. But while he was still far off, his father saw him and was filled with compassion; he ran and put his arms around him and kissed him. Then the son said to him, ‘Father, I have sinned against heaven and before you; I am no longer worthy to be called you son.’ But the father said to his slaves, ‘Quickly, bring out a robe – the best one – and put it on him; put a ring on his finger and sandals on his feet. And get the fatted calf and kill it, and let us eat and celebrate; for this son of mine was dead and is alive again; he was lost and is found!’ And they began to celebrate. Now the elder son was in the field; and when he approached the house, he heard music and dancing. He called one of the slaves and asked what was going on. He replied ‘Your brother has come and our father has killed the fatted calf, because he has got him back safe and sound.’ Then he became angry and refused to go in. His father came out and began to plead with him. But he answered his father, ‘Listen! For all these years I have been working like a slave for you, and I have never disobeyed your command; yet you have never given me even a young goat so that I might celebrate with my friends. But when this son of yours came back, who has devoured your property with prostitutes, you killed the fatted calf for him!’” Then the father said to him, ‘Son, you are always with me, and all that is mine is yours. But we had to celebrate and rejoice, because this brother of yours was dead and has come to life; he was lost and has been found.’”

The Gospel of the Lord. *Praise be to you, O Christ.*

Sermon

The Rev. Charles Rowins

We believe in one God, the Father almighty, maker of heaven and earth, of all that is seen and unseen.

We believe in one Lord, Jesus Christ, the only Son of God, eternally begotten of the Father, God from God, Light from Light, true God from true God, begotten, not made, of one Being with the Father. Through him all things were made. For us and our salvation he came down from heaven: by the power of the Holy Spirit he became incarnate from the Virgin Mary and was made man. For our sake he was crucified under Pontius Pilate; he suffered death and was buried. On the third day he rose again in accordance with the Scriptures; he ascended into heaven and is seated at the right hand of the Father. He will come again in glory to judge the living and the dead, and his kingdom will have no end.

We believe in the Holy Spirit, the Lord, the giver of life, who proceeds from the Father and the Son. With the Father and the Son he is worshiped and glorified. He has spoken through the Prophets. We believe in one holy catholic and apostolic Church. We acknowledge one baptism for the forgiveness of sins. We look for the resurrection of the dead, and the life of the world to come. *Amen.*

Prayers of the People IV – page 388

Let us pray for the Church and for the world.

Grant, Almighty God, that all who confess your Name may be united in your truth, live together in your love, and reveal your glory in all the world.

Lord, in your mercy. *Hear our prayer.*

Guide the people of this land, and of all the nations, in the ways of justice and peace; that we may honor one another and serve the common good.

Lord, in your mercy. *Hear our prayer.*

Give us all a reverence for the earth as your own creation, that we may use its resources rightly in the service of others, and to your honor and glory.

Lord, in your mercy. *Hear our prayer.*

Bless all whose lives are closely linked with ours, and grant that we may serve Christ in them, and love one another as he loves us.

Lord, in your mercy. *Hear our prayer.*

Comfort and heal all those who suffer in body, mind, or spirit; give them courage and hope in their troubles, and bring them the joy of your salvation.

Lord, in your mercy. *Hear our prayer.*

We commend to your mercy all who have died, that your will for them may be fulfilled; and we pray that we may share with all your saints in your eternal kingdom.

Lord, in your mercy. *Hear our prayer.*

Confession and Absolution – page 360

Let us confess our sins against God and our neighbor.

Most merciful God, we confess that we have sinned against you in thought, word, and deed, by what we have done, and by what we have left undone. We have not loved you with our whole heart; we have not loved our neighbors as ourselves. We are truly sorry and we humbly repent. For the sake of your Son Jesus Christ, have mercy on us and forgive us; that we may delight in your will, and walk in your ways, to the glory of your Name. Amen.

Almighty God have mercy on you, forgive all your sins through our Lord Jesus Christ, strengthen you in all goodness, and by the power of the Holy Spirit, keep you in eternal life. *Amen.*

The Peace

The peace of the Lord be always with you. *And also with you.*

Announcements and preparation of the Table

The Eucharistic Prayer – page 361

The Lord be with you. *And also with you.*

Lift up your hearts. *We lift them to the Lord.*

Let us give thanks to the Lord our God. *It is right to give him thanks and praise.*

It is right, and a good and joyful thing, always and everywhere to give thanks to you, Father Almighty, Creator of heaven and earth.

Therefore we praise you, joining our voices with Angels and Archangels and with all the company of heaven, who for ever sing this hymn to proclaim the glory of your Name.

Holy, holy, holy Lord, God of power and might, heaven and earth are full of your glory. Hosanna in the highest. Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord. Hosanna in the highest.

Holy and gracious Father: In your infinite love you made us for yourself; and, when we had fallen into sin and become subject to evil and death, you, in your mercy, sent Jesus Christ, your only and eternal Son, to share our human nature, to live and die as one of us, to reconcile us to you, the God and Father of all.

He stretched out his arms upon the cross, and offered himself, in obedience to your will, a perfect sacrifice for the whole world.

On the night he was handed over to suffering and death, our Lord Jesus Christ took bread, and when he had given thanks to you, he broke it, and gave it to his disciples, and said, "Take, eat: This is my Body, which is given for you. Do this for the remembrance of me."

After supper he took the cup of wine; and when he had given thanks, he gave it to them, and said, "Drink this, all of you: "This is my Blood of the new Covenant, which is shed for you and for many for the forgiveness of sins. Whenever you drink it, do this in remembrance of me."

Therefore we proclaim the mystery of faith:

Christ has died.

Christ is risen.

Christ will come again.

We celebrate the memorial of our redemption, O Father, in this sacrifice of praise and thanksgiving. Recalling his death, resurrection, and ascension, we offer you these gifts.

Sanctify them by your Holy Spirit to be for your people the Body and Blood of your Son, the holy food and drink of new and unending life in him. Sanctify us also that we might faithfully receive this holy Sacrament, and serve you in unity, constancy, and peace; and at the last day bring us with all your saints into the joy of your eternal kingdom.

All this we ask through your Son Jesus Christ. By him, and with him, and in him, in the unity of the Holy Spirit all honor and glory is yours, Almighty Father, now and for ever. Amen.

And now, as our Savior Christ has taught us, we are bold to say,

Our Father, who art in heaven, allowed be thy Name, thy kingdom come, the 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, for ever and ever. Amen.

Breaking of the Bread – page 364

Alleluia. Christ our Passover is sacrificed for us;
Therefore let us keep the feast. Alleluia.

The Gifts of God for the People of God. Take them in remembrance that Christ died for you, and feed on him in your hearts by faith, with thanksgiving.

The Communion – page 365

Body and Blood of our Lord Jesus Christ keep you in everlasting life.

The Lord's Prayer – page 364

The Lord be with you. *And with thy 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, for ever and ever. Amen.

The Breaking of the Bread – page 364

Alleluia. Christ our Passover is sacrificed for us.
Therefore let us keep the feast. Alleluia.

The Gifts of God for the People of God – page 364-365

Take them in remembrance that Christ died for you, and feed on him in your hearts by faith, with thanksgiving.

The Body of Christ, the bread of heaven.
The Blood of Christ, the cup of salvation.

Let us pray together - page 365

Eternal God, heavenly Father, you have graciously accepted us as living members of your Son Jesus Christ, and you have fed us with spiritual food in the Sacrament of his Body and Blood. Send us now into the world in peace, and grant us strength and courage to love and serve you with gladness and singleness of heart; through Christ our Lord. Amen.

Hymn 516 – Come down, O Love Divine

Come down, O Love divine, seek thou this soul of mine,
and visit it with thine own ardor glowing;
O Comforter, draw near, within my heart appear,
and kindle it, thy holy flame bestowing.

O let it freely burn, till earthly passions turn
to dust and ashes in its heart consuming;
and let thy glorious light shine ever on my sight,
and clothe me round, the while my path illuming.

And so the yearning strong, with which the soul will long,
shall far outpass the power of human telling;
For none can guess its grace, till Love create a place
wherein in Holy Spirit makes a dwelling.

Dismissal

Alleluia. Alleluia. Go in peace to love and serve the Lord.
Thanks be to God. Alleluia. Alleluia.

Sermon preached by The Rev. Charles Rowins on the 4th Sunday of Lent, March 30, 2025.

Lent 4. This can be a rough day lesson-wise. Rough for Jesus. Rough for his family. Rough for the authorities. And, perhaps rough for you and me, as we think about ourselves as parents and as children. It's rough saying "no" to our children when they really want something, and it's rough hearing "no" when we really want something.

Now, not every relationship is rough. That's the good news. Indeed, that's the wonderful news. But there are times, aren't there, when we butt heads, either in our parent-role or our child-role.

Imagine what the dinner conversation might have been between Jesus and Joseph and Mary.

"Jesus, we're worried about you. You're a wonderful person with great potential, but there are times when you're stubborn to the point of making people angry. Not good for you. Not good for us as parents."

We understand that you believe that there is a Messiah role for you. This belief is going to get you in trouble. Crucifixion is not a pretty sight. There have been others claiming the Messiah title, and look at what happened to them. They were killed. We don't want that for you. And we don't want that for us.

Well, as much as Jesus loved his parents and valued obedience, he went ahead with what he felt he had to do. Imagine being the parent at that point. Fear, anger, sadness, all of the above?

But maybe some pride as well. Yes, there was the Crucifixion. But there was also the Resurrection. Imagine the joy for the parents when they heard the news that their son had risen from the dead. Incredible. An answer to the prayer of the parents.

But short-lived. He would leave them with a combination of pride and disappointment. Pride in their son for fulfilling his sense of self. But maybe even anger with the whole notion of a savior-hood. Why Jesus? Why our Son?

Well, the short answer from the Son is “Someone had to do it.” Mom and Dad then ask “Do what?” And Son answers “I need to die. Then I need to rise to new life to offer a deeper understanding of life and death. Yes, Mom and Dad, I have the opportunity to demonstrate, not only an appreciation for life as we know it, but also to demonstrate that there is more to life than death. There is new life, with God. It’s something we’ve talked about before. There is life after death. And it’s a very special life.

We won’t know all about it, until we experience it. But we do know this. Our relationship with the Creator is not a dead-end, but another beginning. Sorrow turns to wonder and excitement. An excitement that we won’t experience until we get there.

Meanwhile, we do the best we can with the life that we have been given. For Jesus, that new life began with Mom, carried on with Mom and Dad, ran into a barrier we call death, and then rose from that death to new life. All with the understanding that they and we will share that Good News. Not lost, but found.

Of course, that sharing isn’t always easy, but we have God on our side, for goodness sake. What or who could be more helpful? And we have one another. That’s pretty special too.

“Goodness sake.” A very interesting phrase. What is a “sake” any way? Well, it has to do with welfare. “For heaven’s sake.” “Clean up your room, for goodness sake. Your welfare will be enhanced if you hang up your clothes.”

And then, there is “for Pete’s sake.” Replace “Pete” with your name. Your welfare. What is good for you? What will make your life better? Or, more to the point of what we do right here, the Love of God will make our lives better.

And here we are “for goodness sake.” We’re looking for an enhancement to our welfare and the welfare of others. The expression “for God’s sake” often is a negative. But, in its more helpful sense, its intended sense – what we do right here - doesn’t mean just for God’s sake, but for our sakes as well and for the sake of others.

So parents, the next time you say to your kids “clean up your room, for goodness sake,” remember to add something like “you’ll be happier, and so will we.”

And also remember that when we hear God saying to us “clean up **your** act,” it’s probably for our benefit. To which a big thank you is in order.

And here we are. For whose sake? That would be for God’s sake, and for those we love and care about. We thank you, Lord.

Amen.