

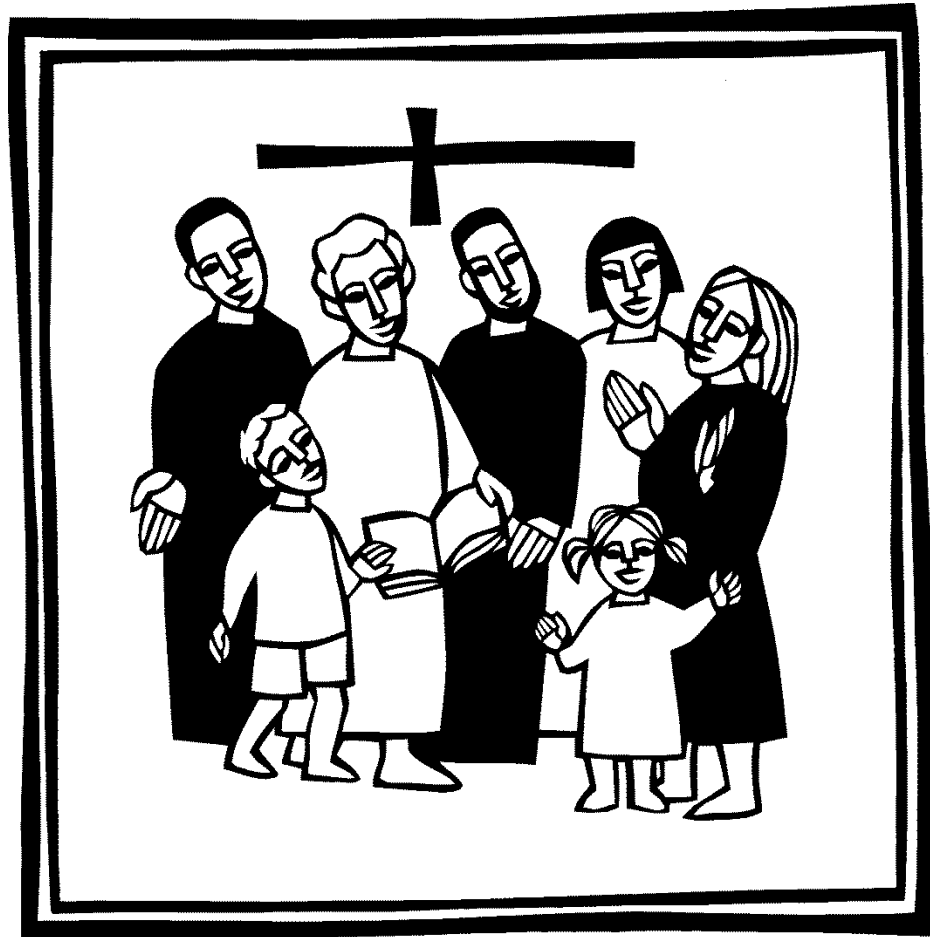


Salem Lutheran Church
401 S. Lake St. Lake Mills IA 50450

Welcome to the House of the Lord

Midweek Lenten Service
March 17, 2021 – 7:00pm

CREATED FOR COMMUNITY



A Midweek Lenten Series

OVERVIEW

The invitation to Lent spoken on Ash Wednesday reminds us that we enter this season together “with the whole church” It goes on to state that “we are created for communion with God, to love one another, and to live in harmony with creation.” Though many common Lenten practices rightly invite us to individual acts of “repentance, prayer and fasting, sacrificial giving and works of love,” Lent is also a time for deepening of community.

In the early church, the weeks before Easter were a time in which the whole community took responsibility for the training of catechumens. Not only were the catechumens enriched by this formation, but those already within the community were strengthened in their faith along with them.

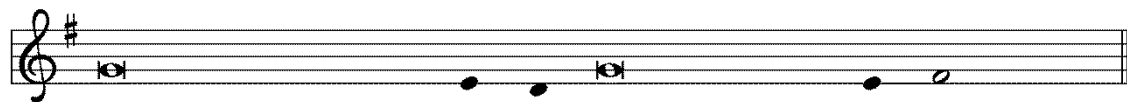
Using readings from Mark’s gospel, this series invites the assembly to reflect on what it means to be in community with one another, with the world, with creation, and with God.

We gather in the sanctuary in silence to center our hearts and minds.

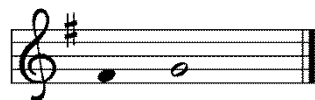
OPENING

ELW p.320

We acknowledge God's presence and pray for God's peace.



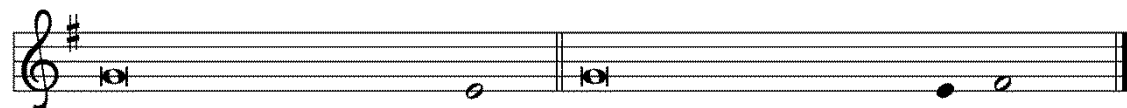
Almighty God grant us a qui - et night and peace at the last.



A - men.



It is good to give thanks to the Lord, **to sing praise to your name, O Most High;**



to herald your love in the morning, **your truth at the close of the day.**

CONFESSION AND FORGIVENESS

We confess our sins and receive forgiveness.

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.

GATHERING SONG

Bless Now, O God, The Journey

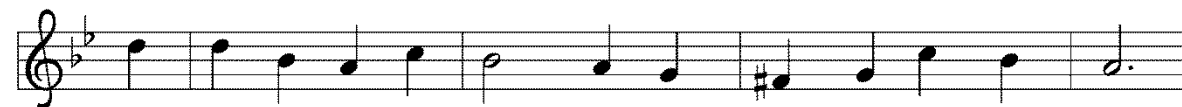
ELW #326



1 Bless now, O God, the jour - ney that all your peo - ple make,
2 Bless so - journ - ers and pil - grims who share this wind - ing way;
3 Di - vine e - ter - nal lov - er, you meet us on the road.



the path through noise and si - lence, the way of give and take.
your hope burns through the ter - rors, your love sus - tains the day.
We wait for lands of prom - ise where milk and hon - ey flow,



The trail is found in des - ert and winds the moun - tain round,
We yearn for ho - ly free - dom while of - ten we are bound;
but wait - ing not for plac - es, you meet us all a - round.



then leads be - side still wa - ters, the road where faith is found.
to - geth - er we are seek - ing the road where faith is found.
Our cov - e - nant is writ - ten on roads, as faith is found.

OPENING PRAYER

Mender of division, you sent Christ to heal the world and to gather those on the margins. Bring your healing power to us. May we extend your power and grace to those separated from their communities and those longing for a tangible sign of your love. In Jesus' name we pray.

Amen.

WEEK FOUR

In community with those on the margins.

The Sunday readings for Lent 4, year B include the visit of Nicodemus to Jesus at night. Though he is a leader in the community, his interest in Jesus pushes him to the outside of his own group and to the edges of Jesus' followers. We continue to read of the Hebrew people wrestling with their wandering in the wilderness, not being part of a settled community. Those on the margins are also a part of our communities. When Jesus crosses over to the land of the Gerasenes in Mark 5:1-20, he encounters and brings healing to a man who has been left on the margins and restores him to community.

SCRIPTURE

Mark 5:1-20

Jesus crosses barriers to attend to those on the margins

¹They came to the other side of the sea, to the country of the Gerasenes. ²And when he had stepped out of the boat, immediately a man out of the tombs with an unclean spirit met him. ³He lived among the tombs; and no one could restrain him any more, even with a chain; ⁴for he had often been restrained with shackles and chains, but the chains he wrenched apart, and the shackles he broke in pieces; and no one had the strength to subdue him. ⁵Night and day among the tombs and on the mountains he was always howling and bruising himself with stones. ⁶When he saw Jesus from a distance, he ran and bowed down before him; ⁷and he shouted at the top of his voice, "What have you to do with me, Jesus, Son of the Most High God? I adjure you by God, do not torment me." ⁸For he had said to him, "Come out of the man, you unclean spirit!" ⁹Then Jesus asked him, "What is your name?" He replied, "My name is Legion; for we are many." ¹⁰He begged him earnestly not to send them out of the country. ¹¹Now there on the hillside a great herd of swine was feeding; ¹²and the unclean spirits begged him, "Send us into the swine; let us enter them." ¹³So he gave them permission. And the unclean spirits came out and entered the swine; and the herd, numbering about two thousand, rushed down the steep bank into the sea, and were drowned in the sea.

¹⁴The swineherds ran off and told it in the city and in the country. Then people came to see what it was that had happened. ¹⁵They came to Jesus and saw the demoniac sitting there, clothed and in his right mind, the very man who had had the legion; and they were afraid. ¹⁶Those who had seen what had happened to the demoniac and to the swine reported it. ¹⁷Then they began to beg Jesus to leave their neighborhood. ¹⁸As he was getting into the boat, the man who had been possessed by demons begged him that he might be with him. ¹⁹But Jesus refused, and said to him, "Go home to your friends, and tell them how much the Lord has done for you, and what mercy he has shown you." ²⁰And he went away and began to proclaim in the Decapolis how much Jesus had done for him; and everyone was amazed.

We engage the scripture together in a prayerful way, reading the texts three times.

Reading the first time: Listen for a word or short phrase that stands out to you.

Reading the second time: Listen for a way in which God is speaking to you personally.

Reading the third time: Listen for a way in which God is speaking to the community/communities of which you are a part.

SUNG RESPONSE *O Christ, the Healer, We Have Come* ELW #610



- 1 O Christ, the heal - er, we have come to pray for health, to plead for friends.
- 2 From ev - 'ry ail - ment flesh en - dures our bod - ies clam - or to be freed;
- 3 In con - flicts that de - stroy our health we rec - og - nize the world's dis - ease;
- 4 Grant that we all, made one in faith, in your com - mu - ni - ty may find



How can we fail to be re - stored when reached by love that nev - er ends?
yet in our hearts we would con - fess that whole - ness is our deep - est need.
our com - mon life de - clares our ills. Is there no cure, O Christ, for these?
the whole - ness that, en - rich - ing us, shall reach the whole of hu - man - kind.

OFFERING

MUSICAL OFFERING

PRAYERS



Almighty God grant us a qui - et night and peace at the last.

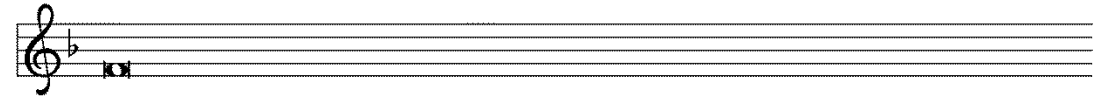


A - men.

We pray in thanksgiving for God's provision, protection and mercy, and for the needs of our community and our world. Prayers may be spoken or offered in silence. We will conclude this time of silent and spoke prayer with the sung response.



Be present, merciful God, and protect us through the hours of this night,



so that we who are wearied by the changes and chances of life may



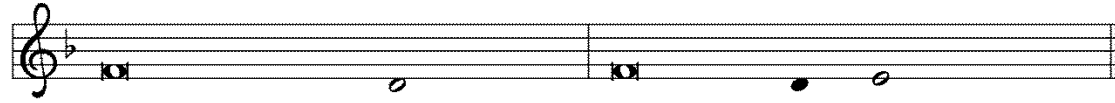
find our rest in you, through Jesus Christ our Lord. A - men.

THE LORD'S PRAYER

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

Our Father in heaven, hallowed be your name, your kingdom come, your will be done, on earth as in heaven. Give us today our daily bread. Forgive us our sins as we forgive those who sin against us. Save us from the time of trial and deliver us from evil. For the kingdom, the power, and the glory are yours, now and forever.

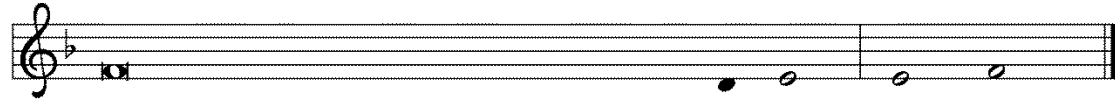
Amen.

BLESSING

Let us bless the Lord. **Thanks be to God.**



Almighty and merciful God, Father, + Son, and Holy Spirit,



bless, preserve, and keep us, this night and forev-er - more. **A - men.**

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