**Worship Plan for Sunday, March 8, 2020**

**SHARING OF CONCERNS AND CELEBRATIONS**

**CONFESSION & FORGIVENESS**

Almighty God, to whom all hearts are open,   
all desires known, and from whom 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 Jesus Christ our Lord.

**Amen.**

If we say we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us.

But if we confess our sins, God who is faithful and just will forgive our sins  
and cleanse us from all unrighteousness.

Most merciful God,

**We confess that we are in bondage to sin and cannot free ourselves.**

**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.**

**For the sake of your Son, Jesus Christ, have mercy on us.**

**Forgive us, renew us, and lead us,  
so that we may delight in your will and walk in your ways,  
to the glory of your holy name. Amen.**

In the mercy of almighty God, Jesus Christ was given to die for us,   
and for his sake God forgives us all our sins.

As a called and ordained minister of the Church of Christ, and by his authority,   
I therefore declare to you the entire forgiveness of all your sins,   
in the name of the Father, and of the + Son, and of the Holy Spirit.

**Amen.**

**GATHERING SONG** *Lift High the Cross (ELW 660)*

**GREETING**

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.**

**PRAYER OF THE DAY**

O God, our leader and guide, in the waters of baptism you bring us to new birth to live as your children. Strengthen our faith in your promises, that by your Spirit we may lift up your life to all the world though your Son, Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. **Amen.**

**CHOIR ANTHEM** *God So Loved the World*

*(The first reading is read by the lay assistant)*

**THE FIRST READING**:  Genesis 12:1-4a

A reading from Genesis.

12Now the Lord said to Abram, “Go from your country and your kindred and your father’s house to the land that I will show you. 2I will make of you a great nation, and I will bless you, and make your name great, so that you will be a blessing. 3I will bless those who bless you, and the one who curses you I will curse; and in you all the families of the earth shall be blessed.”

4So Abram went, as the Lord had told him; and Lot went with him.

*The reading may be concluded:*

Word of God, word of life.

**Thanks be to God.**

**THE Second READING**:  Romans 4:1-5, 13-17

A reading from Romans.

4What then are we to say was gained by Abraham, our ancestor according to the flesh? 2For if Abraham was justified by works, he has something to boast about, but not before God. 3For what does the scripture say? “Abraham believed God, and it was reckoned to him as righteousness.” 4Now to one who works, wages are not reckoned as a gift but as something due. 5But to one who without works trusts him who justifies the ungodly, such faith is reckoned as righteousness.

13For the promise that he would inherit the world did not come to Abraham or to his descendants through the law but through the righteousness of faith. 14If it is the adherents of the law who are to be the heirs, faith is null and the promise is void. 15For the law brings wrath; but where there is no law, neither is there violation. 16For this reason it depends on faith, in order that the promise may rest on grace and be guaranteed to all his descendants, not only to the adherents of the law but also to those who share the faith of Abraham (for he is the father of all of us,

17as it is written, “I have made you the father of many nations”) —in the presence of the God in whom he believed, who gives life to the dead and calls into existence the things that do not exist.

*The reading may be concluded:*

Word of God, word of life.

**Thanks be to God.**

**PSALM 121**

*Directions on how to sing this will be provided on Sunday. Pastor is leading this.*

1 I lift my eyes up to the hills—  
Where does my help come from?

2 My help comes from the Lord, who made  
the heav’ns and earth—it comes!

3 He won’t allow your foot to slip;  
His watch o’er you He keeps.

4 The Lord who watches Israel—  
He slumbers not nor sleeps.

5 The Lord’s your keeper; He keeps watch—  
He’s shade at your right hand.

6 The sun won’t harm you in the day,  
Nor moon at night—you’ll stand!

7 The Lord will keep you from all harm;  
Your life He watches o’er.

8 The Lord guards as you come and go  
both now and evermore.

*(The gospel is read by the pastor)*

**GOSPEL: John 3:1-17**

Today’s gospel is found in the Third Chapter of John.

*The gospel is announced.*

The holy gospel according to John.

**Glory to you, O Lord.**

3Now there was a Pharisee named Nicodemus, a leader of the Jews. 2He came to Jesus by night and said to him, “Rabbi, we know that you are a teacher who has come from God; for no one can do these signs that you do apart from the presence of God.” 3Jesus answered him, “Very truly, I tell you, no one can see the kingdom of God without being born from above.” 4Nicodemus said to him, “How can anyone be born after having grown old? Can one enter a second time into the mother’s womb and be born?” 5Jesus answered, “Very truly, I tell you, no one can enter the kingdom of God without being born of water and Spirit. 6What is born of the flesh is flesh, and what is born of the Spirit is spirit. 7Do not be astonished that I said to you, ‘You must be born from above.’ 8The wind blows where it chooses, and you hear the sound of it, but you do not know where it comes from or where it goes. So it is with everyone who is born of the Spirit.” 9Nicodemus said to him, “How can these things be?” 10Jesus answered him, “Are you a teacher of Israel, and yet you do not understand these things? 11“Very truly, I tell you, we speak of what we know and testify to what we have seen; yet you do not receive our testimony. 12If I have told you about earthly things and you do not believe, how can you believe if I tell you about heavenly things? 13No one has ascended into heaven except the one who descended from heaven, the Son of Man. 14And just as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, so must the Son of Man be lifted up, 15that whoever believes in him may have eternal life. 16“For God so loved the world that he gave his only Son, so that everyone who believes in him may not perish but may have eternal life. 17“Indeed, God did not send the Son into the world to condemn the world, but in order that the world might be saved through him.

*The gospel concludes:*

The gospel of the Lord.

**Praise to you, O Christ.**

**CHILDREN’S MESSAGE**

**SERMON**

**HYMN OF THE DAY** *Restore in Us, O God (ELW 328)*

*(The pastor reads the introduction and the ending,   
the lay assistant reads the indented petitions.)*

**PRAYERS OF INTERCESSION**

Turning our hearts to God who is gracious and merciful, we pray for the church, the world, and all who are in need.

God of rebirth, empower your church throughout the world to be a voice of hope for those who far judgment or condemnation. Assure us of your faithfulness and give us confidence to proclaim your salvation for all. Hear us, O God.

**Your mercy is great.**

God of rebirth, your Spirit hovered over the waters and you called creation into being. Nurture and bless all signs of rebirth around us: budding trees and new shoots, thawing lakes and warm breezes, and animals awaking from hibernation. Hear us, O God.

**Your mercy is great.**

God of rebirth, lead the nations in your way of righteousness. Protect those who advocate for the needs of children, migrants, and victims of violence. G9ive courage to lawmakers, lawyers, judges, and law enforcement officers, guiding them to do justice and to love mercy.

**Your mercy is great.**

God of rebirth, give us a new vision of your healing power among us. Restore hope to those who remain in the depths of depression or despair. Bring mercy and relief to those who are injured, sick, or suffering, *especially for* … and for those we now name aloud or in our hearts…..

Hear us, O God.

**Your mercy is great.**

God of rebirth, we thank you for the children of this community and for the ministries that care for them. Bless new and expectant parents. Console those who have lost children and those whose desire for children remains unfulfilled. Hear us, O God.

**Your mercy is great.**

God of rebirth, by wind and spirit you call us into life renewed. We give you thanks for all your saints who have inherited your promises. Bring us, with them, into your everlasting kingdom. Hear us, O God.

**Your mercy is great.**

According to your steadfast love, O God, hear these and all our prayers as we commend them to you; through Christ our Lord.

**Amen.**

**PEACE**

The peace of Christ be with you always.

**And also with you.**

**THANKSGIVING AT THE TABLE**

In the night in which he was betrayed, our Lord Jesus took bread and gave thanks,   
broke it, and gave it to his disciples, saying;

“Take and eat; this is my body, given for you. Do this for the remembrance of me.”

Again, after supper, he took the cup, gave thanks, and gave it for all to drink, saying;

“This cup is the new covenant in my blood, shed for you and for all people for the forgiveness of sin. Do this for the remembrance of me.”

Remembering, therefore, his life lived for others, and his death and resurrection which renews the face of the earth, we await his coming in glory.

Pour out upon us the Spirit of your love, O Lord, and unite the wills of all who share this heavenly food, the body and blood of Jesus Christ, our Lord; to whom, with you and the Holy Spirit, be all honor and glory, now and forever.

**Amen.**

**LORD’S PRAYER**

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.**

**INVITATION TO COMMUNION**

Return to God with all your heart.   
 Receive bread for the journey, drink for the desert.

**Thanks be to God!**

**COMMUNION**

*(The prayer after communion is read by the lay assistant)*

**PRAYER AFTER COMMUNION**

Compassionate God,

You have fed us with the bread of heaven. Sustain us in our Lenten pilgrimage;   
may our fasting be hunger for justice, our alms, a making of peace,   
and our prayer, the song of grateful hearts; through Christ our Lord.

**Amen.**

**ANNOUNCEMENTS & OFFERING**

**Blessing**May God who has called us forth from the dust of the earth,  
and claimed us as children of the light, strengthen you on your journey into new life.  
Almighty God, Father, Son, + and Holy Spirit bless you, now and forever.  
**Amen.**

**Sending Song** *Bless Now, O God, the Journey (ELW 326)*

*(The dismissal is given by the lay assistant)***DISMISSAL**

Marked with the cross of Christ,

Go forth to love and serve your neighbor.  
**Thanks be to God!**

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