

## Sunday, March 1st, 2015

*The liturgist and pastor will meet in the hall outside the choir room a couple of minutes prior to the start of the service at 10:45am.*

*After a short prayer with the choir, the liturgist, choir, and organist will enter and take their seats. Following them, the pastor will step into the pulpit, welcome everyone, and make announcements....*

*The preacher will then ask...*

“Are there any other announcements or concerns of the church that need to be made known at this time?..... Thank you.”

*The preacher will take a seat.*

PRELUDE

Dr. Elizabeth Davis

CHORAL CALL TO WORSHIP

The Choir

*After the Choral Call, the liturgist should step to the lectern and say,*

“Would you join me in reading the responsive call to worship adapted from Psalm 22 and printed in our bulletins?”

CALL TO WORSHIP

(adapted from Psalm 22)

Praise the Lord, you that fear him;

**Stand in awe of him & give him glory, O offspring of Israel;**

For he does not despise the poor nor hide his face from them;

**When they cry to him he hears & answers their cries.**

I will praise him in the great assembly;

**I will perform my vows in the presence of those who worship him.**

The poor shall eat and be satisfied,

**Those who seek the Lord shall praise him:**

All the ends of the earth shall remember and turn to the Lord,

**And all the nations shall bow before him.**

To him alone do those who sleep in the earth bow down in worship;

**All who go down to the dust fall before him.**

My soul shall live for him;

**My descendants shall serve him;**

They shall be known as the Lord's for ever.

**They shall come and make known to a people yet unborn the saving deeds that he has done.**

Let us worship God beginning with prayer...

PRAYER OF INVOCATION

Let us pray... In trust and confidence, we call on your name, almighty God, eager to know you more fully and serve you more faithfully. Open us to hear your amazing promises given to our ancestors in the faith. Lead us to seek your word for us in our day, so that we may grow strong in our faith as our ancestors did in theirs. As they gave you glory and praise and passed on their faith to new generations, may we teach and live in such a way that our children and their children will be drawn to minister in your name. Amen.

Would all of you who are able please stand with me and join in singing our opening hymn, “In the Cross of Christ I Glory”, number 84 in our *Hymnals*.

*The liturgist should step back from the microphone for the hymn.*

\*HYMN OF PRAISE

“In the Cross of Christ I Glory”

*The Hymnal #84*

*After the hymn, the preacher will step into the pulpit and say...*

\*CALL TO CONFESSION

With trembling hearts, painfully aware of our many errors, we turn to the Holy and Righteous God who made us and who can now make us whole. Let us confess our sins as we pray together the prayer of confession printed in our bulletins, pausing at its end for a moment of silent prayer. Let us pray...

**\*PRAYER OF CONFESSION**

*(In Unison)*

Holy God, we come to you confessing that we have set our minds on earthly things. We have sought to gain the world and have believed those who told us we could “have it all”. We confess our reluctance to share in the sufferings of Christ, and to take our part in the pain of this world for the sake of the gospel. Forgive us when our failure to trust the sufficiency of your grace has allowed cowardice to replace courage. Deliver us from our delusions that we can save our feelings, our reputations, or even our own “skins” by avoiding the way of the cross. Strengthen us to pick up our crosses and return to following Christ. Amen.

**\*SILENT CONFESSION**

*(Pause for about 30 seconds of silence.)*

**\*THE ASSURANCE OF PARDON**

God has not left us to suffer in guilt and shame because of our sin, but has come to our rescue in Jesus Christ. By his suffering, ours has been relieved; in his death our sin is buried, and in his rising our hope is renewed....Friends believe the Good News!

**In Jesus Christ, we are forgiven! Thanks be to God!**

**\*GLORIA PATRI**

*The Hymnal #579*

*Glory be to the Father, & to the Son, & to the Holy Ghost;  
As it was in the beginning, is now and ever shall be,  
World without end. Amen, Amen.*

**\*PASSING OF THE PEACE**

All who confess will find forgiveness and their faith will be reckoned to them as righteousness. We have been reconciled to God. Let us also be reconciled to each other and share the peace of Christ. The peace of Christ be with you.

**And also with you.**

*Share the peace of Christ with others as you will.*

*After a few moments, preacher will step into the lectern and say...*

“At this time I want to invite all of our younger friends to come forward for a Word from the Lord brought to them by Ms. Karen.”

*The preacher will take a seat.*

**CHILDREN’S SERMON**

*(All Singing)*

*Jesus friend so kind and gentle, little ones we bring to thee;  
Grant to them thy dearest blessing. Let thine arms around them be;  
Now enfold them in thy goodness, from all danger keep them free.  
As the children leave, the liturgist will return to the lectern and say....*

**THE INVITATION TO THE OFFERING**

Those who want to save their life will lose it, and those who lose themselves for Christ's sake and for the gospel will be saved. We are invited to give all we have and all we are to the realization of God's kingdom among us. Let us give gladly and generously & continue our worship with the presentation of our tithes and offerings...

*The liturgist will sit down until the Doxology begins to play.*

**THE OFFERTORY**

Dr. Elizabeth Davis

**\*DOXOLOGY**

*(In Unison)*

*The Hymnal #592*

*Praise God from whom all blessings flow; Praise Him all creatures here below;  
Praise Him above ye heavenly hosts; Praise Father, Son, and Holy Ghost. Amen.*

*After the Doxology, the liturgist will return to the lectern and say...*

**\*OFFERTORY PRAYER**

Let us pray... Loving God, we share your concern & caring for those who suffer. And we make this offering an expression of that compassion. We ask that you would use it to bless them in whatever ways hearten and strengthen them, according to their situation and your will. Help us to follow the example of Jesus Christ for it is in his name we pray. Amen.

## THE AFFIRMATION OF FAITH

"The Apostle's Creed"

Let us remain standing and reaffirm our Christian faith using the traditional words of the Apostles' Creed printed in our bulletins. Let us say what we believe...

I believe in God the Father Almighty, Maker of heaven and earth; And in Jesus Christ His only Son our Lord; who was conceived by the Holy Ghost, born of the Virgin Mary, suffered under Pontius Pilate, was crucified, dead and buried; He descended into hell; the third day He rose again from the dead; He ascended into heaven, and sitteth on the right hand of God the Father Almighty; from thence He shall come to judge the quick and the dead. I believe in the Holy Ghost; the holy catholic church; the communion of saints; the forgiveness of sins; the resurrection of the body and the life everlasting. Amen.

*Invite the congregation to... "Be seated," and then say....*

Each Sunday of Lent we will be using a short video produced by "The Skit Guys" to help introduce the morning message. This morning we will hear from Simon Peter as he recalls the day the Lord called him Satan.

LENTEN VIDEO

"Simon Peter: Dad Strength"

ANTHEM

The Choir

*After the choir finishes, the Liturgist will return to the lectern & say....*

## SCRIPTURE READINGS

Our first lesson this morning is taken from the fourth chapter of Paul's Letter to the church at Rome, beginning at the thirteenth verse. You are encouraged to follow along and you can find the passage on page 980 in your pew bibles. Listen now for the word of God...

The promise to Abraham and his descendants, that they should inherit the world, did not come through the law but through the righteousness of faith. If it is the adherents of the law who are to be the heirs, faith is null and the promise is void. For the law brings wrath, but where there is no law there is no transgression. That is why 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 us all, as 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.

In hope he believed against hope, that he should become the father of many nations; as he had been told, "So shall your descendants be."

He did not weaken in faith when he considered his own body, which was as good as dead because he was about a hundred years old, or when he considered the barrenness of Sarah's womb. No distrust made him waver concerning the promise of God, but he grew strong in his faith as he gave glory to God, fully convinced that God was able to do what he had promised. That is why his faith was "reckoned to him as righteousness."

But the words, "it was reckoned to him," were written not for his sake alone, but for ours also. It will be reckoned to us who believe in him that raised from the dead Jesus our Lord, who was put to death for our trespasses and raised for our justification.

*The liturgist will return to his/her seat with his family or friends in the congregation.*

*When the liturgist finishes, the preacher will step into the pulpit & say...*

Our Gospel lesson this morning is taken from Mark, the eighth chapter, beginning at the thirty-first verse. You are encouraged to follow along and you can find the passage on page #876 in your pew bibles.

Listen once more for the word of God...

And he began to teach them that the Son of man must suffer many things, and be rejected by the elders and the chief priests and the scribes, and be killed, and after three days rise again. And he said this plainly. And Peter took him, and began to rebuke him.

But turning and seeing his disciples, he rebuked Peter, and said, "Get behind me, Satan! For you are not on the side of God, but of men."

And he called to him the multitude with his disciples, and said to them, "If any man would come after me, let him deny himself and take up his cross and follow me. For whoever would save his life will lose it; and whoever loses his life for my sake and the gospel's will save it. For what does it profit a man, to gain the whole world and forfeit his life? For what can a man give in return for his life? For whoever is ashamed of me and of my words in this adulterous and sinful generation, of him will the Son of man also be ashamed, when he comes in the glory of his Father with the holy angels."

Leader: This is the Word of the Lord.

**People: Thanks be to God.**

THE SERMON

“When You Tell God, ‘No!’”

Poor Peter. He was so close. Just a breath or two before he advises the Lord of all Creation and the Savior of the world that his death wasn't really necessary, he was the one who first declares openly what his other disciples had hoped or maybe even thought but had never put into words, that this man their rabbi was also the Messiah and Son of the Living God.

But in a matter of heartbeats he has gone from being the hero to the goat. One minute he is given the keys to the kingdom, and the next Jesus is calling him Satan.

That moment of falling from the heights of grace into the abyss of sin had happened so many times before. One minute we offer a triumphant, “Yes!” to God's offer of grace, and the next minute we extend a polite, “No” to the same God who made us and would soon give his life to redeem us.

It happens in an instant. One minute you are walking and whistling, the next you are wide-eyed and falling. Satan yanks back the manhole cover and an innocent afternoon stroll becomes a horror story. You inhale the evil stench. Helplessly you tumble, aware of the fall but unable to gain control. You crash at the bottom and stare blankly into the darkness.

Such is the pattern of sudden sin. Can you relate to it? Very few sins are premeditated and planned. But don't think for one minute that just because you don't want to fall, that you won't.

This yellow-bellied father of lies doesn't dare meet you face-to-face. No sir. This demon of demons doesn't wait to shake hands and face you before he comes out swinging. He fights dirty.

He is the master of weak moments. He waits until your back is turned. He waits until your defense is down. He waits until the bell has rung and you are walking back to your corner. Then he throws a haymaker at your most vulnerable point and...

You tell your Master, “No.”

It's David disrobing Bathsheba. It's Adam accepting the fruit from Eve. It's Peter telling Jesus that his suffering and death were totally unnecessary. It's Peter denying that he ever knew Jesus. It's Noah, drunk and naked in his tent. It's Lot's wife on her way to safety, taking one last forbidden look back. It's Lot, in bed with his own daughter. It's your worst nightmare. It's sudden. It's sin.

We know what we are doing and yet can't believe that we are doing it. We want to stop but haven't the will or the good sense to do so. We want to turn around, but like a deer in the headlights, we can't move. We want to run and, pitifully, we want to stay.

It's the teenager in the backseat on that special date. It's the alcoholic buying “just one”. It's the boss touching his secretary's hand. The husband walking into the porn shop. The mother losing her temper. The father beating his child. The gambler losing his money. The Christian losing control. It's Satan gaining a foothold.

Bull's eye! Out of the blue we're hit with confusion, guilt, excuses, and despair. It all hits. It hits hard. We numbly pick ourselves up and stagger back into our world. “Oh God, what have I done?” “Should I tell someone?” “I'll never do it again.” “My God, can you forgive me?”

Some of you know exactly what I mean. Some of you, like me, have tumbled so often that the stench of Satan's breath is far from a novelty. You've asked for God's forgiveness so often that you worry that the well of mercy might run dry. You've offered false assurance and comfort to yourself or, worse to others, by proffering, “Oh, I don't believe God would do that,” when God himself has told you in his word that he most certainly will. How often do we tell ourselves that it's OK to sleep late and miss

church, because we were out late the night before. Or that we can miss church because Sunday is the only chance we get to rest and spend time with our families, as if God had made your schedule or kept your calendar and it's His fault for overbooking and over busying you week after week. God **does want** you to rest on the Sabbath-- in Him. He does want you to spend time with the family, but with the whole family of God first at church and then at home.

Want to sharpen your defenses a bit?

First, *recognize Satan*. Our war is not with the flesh and blood but with Satan himself. Do like Jesus did when Satan met him in the wilderness. Call him by name. Rip off his mask. He appears in the most innocent of clothing: a night out with the boys, a good book, a popular movie, a pretty neighbor. Sometimes, and this one is perhaps the most frightening possibility-- he looks just like you, or someone you love as much as God loves you. That is what is going on when Peter presumes to advise God, that he doesn't really know what he is talking about in this morning's reading. Jesus sees the disciple to whom God has first revealed his true and as yet unrevealed identity as the Messiah, speaking nonsense and trying to steer him away from his ordained course.

But don't let him fool you! When the urge to sin rears its ugly head, look him squarely in the eye and call his bluff. "Get behind me, Satan!" "Go back to the pit where you belong!" And whatever you do, don't listen to him however flattering it may sound. And don't flirt with this liar. He'll thrash you like wheat.

Second, *remember who loves you and who you can trust*. Don't make the mistake Adam and Eve did in the Garden and believe the snake who will lie to you and tell you whatever you want to hear to get you to sin. let no distrust make you waver concerning the promise of God, but grow strong in your faith as **you** give glory to God, fully convinced that God is able to do what he has promised." And your faith will be reckoned to you as righteousness.

Finally, *accept God's forgiveness*. Romans, chapter 7 and 8 is the Emancipation Proclamation for those of us who have a tendency to tumble. Thank God and drink deeply as you read verse 25 and verse 1 of chapter 8: "Thanks be to God—through Jesus Christ our Lord!...Therefore there is now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus."

Amen. For those *in* Christ there is *no* condemnation. None. Claim the promise. Memorize the words. Accept the cleansing. Throw out the guilt. Praise the Lord. And...watch out for open manholes.

### THE PASTORAL PRAYER & THE LORD'S PRAYER

Heavenly Father, you know our fears. Before they gripped our hearts with trembling, you overcame them. Help us trust in your victory.

You know our hurts. Before they crushed us with pain, you decreed that they would not be more than we could bear. Help us draw upon your strength.

You know our every regret. Before remorse awakened guilt in us, you pronounced pardon. Help us accept your forgiveness.

You know how fleeting is our faith. Before we knew to reach out to you, you claimed us as your own. Help us trust your faithfulness.

We acknowledge that we are no longer our own, but yours.

Put us to what you will; rank us with whom you will.

Put us to doing; put us to suffering:

Let us be employed for you, or laid aside for you;

Let us be exalted for you, or brought low for you;

Let us be full, or let us be empty;

Let us have all things, or let us have nothing;

We freely and gladly give all that are we and all that we have to you.

Pour out your Spirit upon us and upon these gifts of bread and wine, that they may be for us the communion of the body and blood of Christ. Render holy to us in full truth this sacrament of holy Communion that we may be strengthened to trust and obey without evasion or reservation. Make us not

only willing, but eager, to take up our crosses & follow after Jesus knowing that he will lead us to eternal life, joy, & peace. Amen.

THE LORD'S PRAYER

*(The congregation will sing in unison)*

*Malotte*

*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 debts, as we forgive our debtors;  
And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil.  
For thine is the kingdom, & the power & the glory, forever. Amen.*

THE SACRAMENT OF THE LORD'S SUPPER

**The Invitation**

On his last night on this earth, at his last meal with his disciples, our Lord Jesus ordered us to break bread together as a way to remember his love for us, and our duty to love one another. When we fall into sin, we must remember that he has provided us a way out through the sacrifice of himself on the cross. Those who come to this table find forgiveness for their sins and the power to resist them in the future. This meal was not intended to be a reward for the worthy, but as a help to the undeserving. This is not our table, but that of our Lord, and He invites all who have need of his strength or his forgiveness to come and receive the meal of grace he has prepared for you.

**The Words of Institution**

On the night in which he was betrayed, our Lord took bread, and after he had give thanks, he broke it and gave it to his disciples saying: "Take, eat. This is my body which is broken for you. Do this in remembrance of me."

In like fashion after they had eaten, he took the cup. After he had given thanks he gave it to his disciples saying, "This cup is the new covenant in my blood, drink ye all of it."

For as often as you eat this bread and drink this cup you proclaim the Lord's death until he comes again in final victory.

**The Distribution of the Elements**

**The Prayer After Receiving**

O loving God, may this sacrament remind us that to turn away from you is to fall, to turn toward you is to rise, and to stand before you is to abide forever. Grant us, dear God, in all our duties your help; in all our uncertainties your guidance; in all our dangers your protection; and in all our sorrows your peace; through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

Let all of us who are able, stand and join in one voice to sing our hymn of dedication, "When I Survey the Wondrous Cross", #101 in our hymnals.

\*HYMN OF DEDICATION "When I Survey the Wondrous Cross" *The Hymnal #101*

THE BLESSING

May the Lord bless you and keep you. May the Lord make His face to shine upon you and give you His peace-- in your coming in and your going out; in your lying down and in your rising up; in your labor and in your leisure; in your laughter and in your tears; until you come to stand before Jesus in that day in which there is no sunset & no dawning. Amen.

\*CONGREGATIONAL RESPONSE

"Go, My Children, Fed and Nourished"  
Go, my children, fed and nourished, closer to me;  
Grow in love and love by serving, joyful and free.  
Here my Spirit's power filled you, Here His tender comfort stilled you;  
Go, my children, fed and nourished, joyful and free.

\*POSTLUDE

Dr. Elizabeth Davis