

FOURTH SUNDAY IN LENT

Genuine Love

March 9 & 10, 2024

5:00pm & 8:00am

AS WE GATHER

We hear today of eternal life that is given to us because of God's great love for us, shown to us in perhaps the most famous Bible verse, John 3:16. This verse speaks of God's genuine love for us and the world shown in Jesus' death on the cross for us. The love of God never ends. God's love is present here and now and extends into eternal life as eternal love. May we be so encouraged by God's love to share it with others. Thanks be to God for such love!

Reception of Holy Communion: If you are planning to receive Christ's supper today, please read through the words of exhortation in the fellowship folder. For members, it is a good review of important spiritual matters for gathering at the table. For guests, it explains our stance on confession of faith, doctrinal unity, and proper spiritual preparation to receive the Supper for your benefit.

WELCOME

Let us fix our eyes on Jesus, the author and perfecter of our faith,
who for the joy set before him endured the cross, scorning its shame,
and sat down at the right hand of the throne of God.

Consider him who endured such opposition from sinful men,
so that you will not grow weary and lose heart. Hebrews 12:2-3 NIV

HANDSHAKES & HUGS

✠ PREPARATION ✠

OPENING HYMN #420 "Christ, the Life of All the Living"

Christ, the life of all the living, Christ, the death of death, our foe,
Who, Thyself for me once giving To the darkest depths of woe:
Through Thy suff'rings, death, and merit I eternal life inherit,
Thousand, thousand thanks shall be, Dearest Jesus, unto Thee.

Thou, ah! Thou, hast taken on Thee Bonds and stripes, a cruel rod;
Pain and scorn were heaped upon Thee, O Thou sinless Son of God!
Thus didst Thou my soul deliver From the bonds of sin forever.
Thousand, thousand thanks shall be, Dearest Jesus, unto Thee.

Thou hast borne the smiting only That my wounds might all be whole;
Thou hast suffered, sad and lonely, Rest to give my weary soul;
Yes, the curse of God enduring, Blessing unto me securing.
Thousand, thousand thanks shall be, Dearest Jesus, unto Thee.

Heartless scoffers did surround Thee, Treating Thee with shameful scorn
And with piercing thorns they crowned Thee.

All disgrace Thou, Lord, hast borne,
That as Thine Thou mightest own me
And with heav'nly glory crown me.

Thousand, thousand thanks shall be, Dearest Jesus, unto Thee.

Thou hast suffered men to bruise Thee, That from pain I might be free;
Falsely did Thy foes accuse Thee: Thence I gain security;
Comfortless Thy soul did languish Me to comfort in my anguish.
Thousand, thousand thanks shall be, Dearest Jesus, unto Thee.

Thou has suffered great affliction And hast borne it patiently,
Even death by crucifixion, Fully to atone for me;
Thou didst choose to be tormented That my doom should be prevented.
Thousand, thousand thanks shall be, Dearest Jesus, unto Thee.

Then, for all that wrought my pardon, For Thy sorrows deep and sore.
For Thine anguish in the Garden, I will thank Thee evermore,
Thank Thee for Thy groaning, sighing,
For Thy bleeding and Thy dying,
For that last triumphant cry, And shall praise Thee, Lord, on high.

(Rise)

INVOCATION & OPENING SENTENCES

Pastor: In the name of the Father and of the ✠ Son and of the Holy Spirit.

People: Amen.

Pastor: God so loved the world,

People: that He gave His only Son,

Pastor: that whoever believes in Him should not perish

People: but have eternal life.

Pastor: Our Lenten journey leads us to the cross where Jesus gave His life,

People: and then to the resurrection and eternal life.

CONFESSION & ABSOLUTION

Pastor: Though Christ has loved us with this genuine love that gives us eternal life, we sometimes ignore His love and refuse to share Christ's love with others. Still, our heavenly Father is merciful, and He invites us to draw near to Him in hope and confidence to ask for His grace.

Silence for reflection.

Pastor: Heavenly Father,

People: we have sinned against you and against our neighbors. We have not loved you with our whole heart. We have not loved our neighbors as ourselves. We have not loved our enemies. Forgive us, renew our love, on account of Jesus. Amen.

Pastor: Jesus Christ was lifted up on the tree of the cross so that we might be forgiven. His genuine love is for the world and is for you. As a called and ordained servant of Christ and by His authority, I therefore forgive you all your sins in the name of the Father and of the ☩ Son and of the Holy Spirit.

People: Amen. We are forgiven by the genuine love of Jesus.

SALUTATION & PRAYER OF THE DAY

Pastor: The Lord be with you.

People: And also with you.

Pastor: Let us pray. Almighty God, our heavenly Father, your mercies are new every morning; and though we deserve only punishment, you receive us as your children and provide for all our needs of body and soul. Grant that we may heartily acknowledge your merciful goodness, give thanks for all your benefits, and serve you in willing obedience; through Jesus Christ, your Son, our Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever.

People: Amen.

(Be seated)

☩ WORD ☩

OLD TESTAMENT READING *Numbers 21:4–9* (Moses lifts up the bronze serpent to save the people of Israel.) ⁴From Mount Hor they set out by the way to the Red Sea, to go around the land of Edom. And the people became impatient on the way. ⁵And the people spoke against God and against Moses, "Why have you brought us up out of Egypt to die in the wilderness? For there is no food and no water, and we loathe this worthless food." ⁶Then the LORD sent fiery serpents among the people, and they bit the people, so that many people of Israel died.

⁷And the people came to Moses and said, "We have sinned, for we have spoken against the LORD and against you. Pray to the LORD, that he take away the serpents from us." So Moses prayed for the people. ⁸And the LORD said to Moses, "Make a fiery serpent and set it on a pole, and everyone who is bitten, when he sees it, shall live." ⁹So Moses made a bronze serpent and set it on a pole. And if a serpent bit anyone, he would look at the bronze serpent and live.

Lector: This is the Word of the Lord.

People: Thanks be to God.

EPISTLE *Ephesians 2:1–10* (We are saved by grace through faith.)

And you were dead in the trespasses and sins² in which you once walked, following the course of this world, following the prince of the power of the air, the spirit that is now at work in the sons of disobedience—³ among whom we all once lived in the passions of our flesh, carrying out the desires of the body and the mind, and were by nature children of wrath, like the rest of mankind. ⁴But God, being rich in mercy, because of the great love with which he loved us, ⁵even when we were dead in our trespasses, made us alive together with Christ by grace you have been saved—⁶ and raised us up with him and seated us with him in the heavenly places in Christ Jesus, ⁷so that in the coming ages he might show the immeasurable riches of his grace in kindness toward us in Christ Jesus.

⁸For by grace you have been saved through faith. And this is not your own doing; it is the gift of God, ⁹not a result of works, so that no one may boast. ¹⁰For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand, that we should walk in them.

Lector: This is the Word of the Lord.

People: Thanks be to God.

⁴

(Rise)

HOLY GOSPEL *John 3:14–21* (God so loved the world.)

Pastor: The Holy Gospel according to St. John, the third chapter.

People: Glory to you, O Lord.

¹⁴And 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, that whoever believes in him should not perish but have eternal life. ¹⁷For God did not send his Son into the world to condemn the world, but in order that the world might be saved through him.

¹⁸Whoever believes in him is not condemned, but whoever does not believe is condemned already, because he has not believed in the name of the only Son of God. ¹⁹And this is the judgment: the light has come into the world, and people loved the darkness rather than the light because their works were evil. ²⁰For everyone who does wicked things hates the light and does not come to the light, lest his works should be exposed. ²¹But whoever does what is true comes to the light, so that it may be clearly seen that his works have been carried out in God.”

Pastor: This is the Gospel of the Lord.

People: Praise to you, O Christ.

(Be seated)

CHILDREN’S SONG & CHILDREN’S MESSAGE

“Do You Know Who Died For Me”

Do you know who died for me? Jesus did, Jesus did,
Lovingly He died for me, Yes, He really did.

Do you know who rose for me? Jesus did, Jesus did,
Lovingly He rose for me, Yes, He really did!

Do you know who lives for me? Jesus does, Jesus does,
Lovingly He lives for me, Yes, He really does!

Do you know who cares for me? Jesus does, Jesus does,
Lovingly He cares for me, Yes, He really does.

A Lamb goes uncomplaining forth, The guilt of sinners bearing
And, laden with the sins of earth, None else the burden sharing;
Goes patient on, grows weak and faint,
To slaughter led without complaint, That spotless life to offer,
He bears the stripes, the wounds, the lies,
The mockery, and yet replies, “All this I gladly suffer.”

This Lamb is Christ, the soul’s great friend, The Lamb of God, our Savior,
Whom God the Father chose to send To gain for us His favor.

“Go forth, My Son,” The Father said,
“And free My children from their dread Of guilt and condemnation.
The wrath and stripes are hard to bear,
But by Your passion they will share The fruit of Your salvation.”

“Yes, Father, yes, most willingly I’ll bear what You command Me.
My will conforms to Your decree, I’ll do what You have asked Me.”
O wondrous Love, what have You done!

The Father offers up His Son, Desiring our salvation.

O Love, how strong You are to save!

You lay the One into the grace Who built the earth’s foundation.

Lord, when Your glory I shall see And taste Your kingdom’s pleasure,
Your blood my royal robe shall be, My joy beyond all measure!
When I appear before Your Throne,
Your righteousness shall be my crown; With these I need not hide me.
And there, in garments richly wrought,
As Your own bride shall we be brought To stand in joy beside You.

SERMON

(Rise)

OFFERTORY

Create in me a clean heart, O God, and renew a right spirit within me.
Cast me not away from Thy presence, and take not Thy Holy Spirit from me.
Restore unto me the joy of Thy salvation, and uphold me with Thy free spirit.
Amen.

APOSTLES' CREED

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 Spirit, born of the virgin Mary, suffered under Pontius Pilate, was crucified, died and was buried. He descended into hell. The third day he rose again from the dead. He ascended into heaven and sits at the right hand of God the Father Almighty. From thence he will come to judge the living and the dead.

I believe in the Holy Spirit, the holy Christian Church, the communion of saints, the forgiveness of sins, the resurrection of the body, and the life everlasting.

Amen.

(Be seated)

OFFERINGS As your offering is collected, **please sign our fellowship folder** located at the end of the pew. If you are a visitor, please leave your address and phone. After you are finished, please pass the folder along to others in your pew, and return it to the center aisle. You may check the folder to see names of those to greet after the service.

(Rise)

PRAYER OF THE CHURCH

Pastor: Lord Jesus Christ, as we come before you with our prayers and petitions, we thank you for your genuine love, and we pray, Jesus, may our hearts be burning

People: with more fervent love for you.

Pastor: Lord Jesus Christ, show your love to all those who have experienced broken families, homes, and churches. Surround them with your love and with people who will love them as you love them. Jesus, may our hearts be burning

People: with more fervent love for you.

Pastor: Lord Jesus Christ, extend your love to all those who have abandoned the faith. Strengthen us to lovingly invite them toward your genuine love for the world. Jesus, may our hearts be burning

People: with more fervent love for you.

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Pastor: Lord Jesus Christ, in your earthly life you experienced the death of those

you loved. Bring your comfort to all those who are suffering in such grief. Be with the Hinz family as they remember with love, Pastor Tom, on his 100th birthday. Point them to the hope of eternal life with you. Jesus, may our hearts be burning

People: with more fervent love for you.

Pastor: Lord Jesus Christ, be present with all those who are single. Encourage them with the love of friends and family. Provide caring people to remind them that they are not alone. Jesus, may our hearts be burning

People: with more fervent love for you.

Pastor: Lord Jesus Christ, You have prepared many good works for us to do in our earthly lives. Give us courage to do those good works with joy, expecting nothing in return, knowing we are saved by grace alone. Jesus, may our hearts be burning

People: with more fervent love for you.

Pastor: Lord Jesus Christ, you have blessed all of us with the gift of life and so we rejoice in the blessings you bestow upon us over all the years of our lives. We especially rejoice with Dorothy Gundersen, who celebrates her 100th birthday this coming week. Help us all to treasure the people you place in our lives. Jesus, may our hearts be burning

People: with more fervent love for you.

Pastor: Lord, look with favor upon all who are sick, injured, and recovering, especially Wendy, Michael, Margie, Anna, Jim, Eugene, Charlene, Danielle, Marlene, RoseMarie, Dorothy, Janice, Marga, Ardis, Noah, Guy, Mike, Jill, Janet, Vern, Cathy, Helga, June, Shirley and Sarah. Have mercy upon them and restore them to health according to your wisdom. Jesus, may our hearts be burning

People: with more fervent love for you.

Pastor: Lord Jesus, we commend all of these people and situations into your hands, for you have promised in love to hear our prayers; for you live and reign with the Father and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever.

People: Amen.

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THE LORD'S PRAYER

People: 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.

✠ SACRAMENT ✠

THE WORDS OF OUR LORD

PAX DOMINI

Pastor: The peace of the Lord be with you always.

People: Amen.

AGNUS DEI

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Lamb of God, You take away the sin of the world; have mercy on us.

Lamb of God, You take away the sin of the world; have mercy on us.

Lamb of God, You take away the sin of the world; grant us peace.

(Be seated)

DISTRIBUTION HYMNS

HYMN # 588

“Jesus Loves Me”

Jesus loves me! This I know, For the Bible tells me so.

Little ones to Him belong; They are weak, but He is strong.

Yes, Jesus loves me! Yes, Jesus loves me!

Yes, Jesus loves me! The Bible tells me so.

Jesus loves me! He who died Heaven’s gates to open wide.

He has washed away my sin, Lets His little child come in.

Yes Jesus loves me! Yes, Jesus loves me!

Yes, Jesus loves me! The Bible tells me so.

HYMN #392

“God Loves Me Dearly”

God loves me dearly, Grants me salvation,

God loves me dearly, Loves even me.

Refrain

***Therefore I’ll say again: God loves me dearly,
God loves me dearly, Loves even me.***

9 continued

I was in slav’ry, Sin, death, and darkness;

God’s love was working To make me free. **Refrain**

He sent forth Jesus, My dear Redeemer,
He sent forth Jesus And set me free. **Refrain**

Jesus, my Savior, Himself did offer;
Jesus, my Savior, Paid all I owed. **Refrain**

Now I will praise You, O Love Eternal;
Now I will praise You All my life long. **Refrain**

HYMN #636 “Soul, Adorn Yourself with Gladness”

Soul, adorn yourself with gladness, Leave the gloomy haunts of sadness,
Come into the daylight’s splendor, There with joy your praises render.

Bless the One whose grace unbounded This amazing banquet founded;
He, though heav’nly, high, and holy, Deigns to dwell with you most lowly.

Hasten as a bride to meet Him, And with loving rev’rence greet Him.

For with words of life immortal He is knocking at your portal.

Open wide the gates before Him, Saying, as you there adore Him:

Grant, Lord, that I now receive You, That I nevermore will leave You.

He who craves a precious treasure Neither cost nor pain will measure;

But the priceless gifts of heaven God to us has freely given.

Though the wealth of earth were proffered,

None could buy the gifts here offered:

Christ’s true body, for you riven, And His blood, for you once given.

Now in faith I humbly ponder Over this surpassing wonder

That the bread of life is boundless Though the souls it feeds are countless:

With the choicest wine of heaven Christ’s own blood to us is given.

Oh, most glorious consolation, pledge and seal of my salvation!

Jesus, source of lasting pleasure, Truest friend, and dearest treasure,

Peace beyond all understanding, Joy into all life expanding:

Humbly now, I bow before You; Love incarnate, I adore You

Worthily let me receive You And, so favored, never leave You.

10 continued

Jesus, sun of life, my splendor, Jesus, friend of friends, most tender,
Jesus, joy of my desiring, Fount of life, my soul inspiring:
At Your feet I cry, my maker, Let me be a fit partaker
Of this blessed food from heaven, For our good, Your glory, given.
Lord, by love and mercy driven, You once left Your throne in heaven
On the cross for me to languish And to die in bitter anguish,
To forego all joy and gladness And to shed Your blood in sadness.
By this blood redeemed and living, Lord, I praise You with thanksgiving.
Jesus, bread of life, I pray You, Let me gladly here obey You.
By Your love I am invited, Be Your love with love requited;
By this Supper let me measure, Lord, how vast and deep love's treasure.
Through the gift of grace You give me As Your guest in heav'n receive me.

COMMON DISMISSAL

(Rise)

POST-COMMUNION THANKSGIVING

Pastor: Let us pray. We give thanks to you, almighty God, that you have refreshed us through this salutary gift, and we implore you that of your mercy you would strengthen us through the same in faith toward you and in fervent love toward one another; through Jesus Christ, your Son, our Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever.

People: Amen.

BENEDICTION

Pastor: The Lord bless you and keep you. The Lord make His face shine on you and be gracious to you. The Lord look upon you with favor and ✠ give you peace.

People: Amen.

CLOSING HYMN #543 "What Wondrous Love Is This"

What wondrous love is this, O my soul, O my soul!
What wondrous love is this, O my soul!
What wondrous love is this That caused the Lord of bliss
To bear the dreadful curse for my soul, for my soul,
To bear the dreadful curse for my soul!
When I was sinking down, sinking down, sinking down,
When I was sinking down, sinking down,
When I was sinking down Beneath God's righteous frown,
Christ laid aside His crown for my soul, for my soul,
Christ laid aside His crown for my soul!

To God and to the Lamb I will sing, I will sing;
To God and to the Lamb I will sing;
To God and to the Lamb, Who is the great I Am,
While millions join the theme, I will sing, I will sing,
While millions join the theme, I will sing.

And when from death I'm free, I'll sing on, I'll sing on;
And when from death I'm free, I'll sing on.
And when from death I'm free, I'll sing His love for me,
And through eternity I'll sing on, I'll sing on,
And through eternity I'll sing on.

Preacher
Liturgist
Lectors
Organist

Pastor Josh Grotelueschen
Pastor Harold Bender
Russell Hurst, Lillia Carson
JoLynn Bender