



Lent 1  
March 8, 2020

## GRACE LUTHERAN CHURCH

*Making Christ Known to all Through Grace*

2225 Washington Street, Lincoln NE 68502 + 402-474-1505 + [www.egrace.org](http://www.egrace.org)

### WELCOME to worship

Grace Lutheran Church, a church of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America, has been at the heart of the faith community in Lincoln since 1889.

- We are deeply committed to our mission: "Making Christ known to all through Grace."
- We celebrate our purpose: "That by God's grace we have been gathered to worship, called to witness, and sent to serve."
- We are excited about our vision: "To become a church with a passion for fostering a welcoming community that strives for peace and a sense of belonging."

Thank you for worshipping with us today and join our community at any time!

### INTRODUCTION to worship

During Lent we journey with all those around the world who will be baptized at the Easter Vigil. In today's gospel Jesus tells Nicodemus that he must be born of water and Spirit. At the font we are given a new birth as children of God. As God made a covenant with Abraham, in baptism God promises to raise us up with Christ to new life. From worship we are sent forth to proclaim God's love for all the world.

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## GATHERING

The Holy Spirit calls us together as the people of God.

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### PRELUDE

### WELCOME AND ANNOUNCEMENTS

*Stand*

#### Confession and Forgiveness

Blessed be the holy Trinity, ☩ one God, who is present, who gives life, who calls into existence the things that do not exist. **Amen.**

If you were to keep watch over sins, O Lord, who could stand? Yet with you is forgiveness, and so we confess.  
*Silence is kept for reflection.*

Gracious God,

**have mercy on us. We confess that we have turned away from you, knowingly and unknowingly. We have wandered from your resurrection life. We have strayed from your love for all people. Turn us back to you, O God. Give us new hearts and right spirits, that we may find what is pleasing to you and dwell in your house forever. Amen.**

Receive good news: God turns to you in love. "I will put my spirit in you, and you shall live," says our God. All your sin is forgiven in the name of ☩ Jesus Christ, who is the free and abounding gift of God's grace for you.  
**Amen.**

## GATHERING HYMN ELW 660

### GREETING

The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, the love of God, and the communion of the Holy Spirit be with you. **And also with you.**

### KYRIE

### 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 your life to all the world through your Son, Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. **Amen.**

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### WORD

God speaks to us in scripture, preaching and song.

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*Sit*

### CHILDREN'S MESSAGE with noisy offering

First Reading: Genesis 12:1-4a

*God's call of Abram and Sarai has a clear purpose—that through them all the families of the earth would gain a blessing. As they set out on their journey, they are accompanied by promises of land, nation, and a great reputation.*

<sup>1</sup>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. <sup>2</sup>I will make of you a great nation, and I will bless you, and make your name great, so that you will be a blessing. <sup>3</sup>I 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."

<sup>4a</sup>So Abram went, as the LORD had told him; and Lot went with him.

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

Psalm: Psalm 121

R: I lift up my eyes to the hills; my help come from the Lord.

<sup>1</sup>I lift up my eyes | to the hills;  
from where is my | help to come?

<sup>2</sup>**My help comes | from the LORD,**  
**the maker of heav- | en and earth.**

<sup>3</sup>The LORD will not let your | foot be moved  
nor will the one who watches over you | fall asleep.

<sup>4</sup>**Behold, the keep- | er of Israel**  
**will neither slum- | ber nor sleep; R**

<sup>5</sup>the LORD watches | over you;  
the LORD is your shade at | your right hand;

<sup>6</sup>**the sun will not strike | you by day,**

**nor the | moon by night.**

<sup>7</sup>The LORD will preserve you | from all evil  
and will | keep your life.

<sup>8</sup>**The LORD will watch over your going out and your | coming in,  
from this time forth for- | evermore. R**

Second Reading: Romans 4:1-5, 13-17

*In the person and example of Abraham we discover that a right relationship with God does not involve earning a reward from God but entails trusting God's promises. Abraham is the forebear and model for both Jews and Gentiles, because we too trust that ours is a God who gives life to the dead.*

<sup>1</sup>What then are we to say was gained by Abraham, our ancestor according to the flesh? <sup>2</sup>For if Abraham was justified by works, he has something to boast about, but not before God. <sup>3</sup>For what does the scripture say? "Abraham believed God, and it was reckoned to him as righteousness." <sup>4</sup>Now to one who works, wages are not reckoned as a gift but as something due. <sup>5</sup>But to one who without works trusts him who justifies the ungodly, such faith is reckoned as righteousness.

<sup>13</sup>For 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. <sup>14</sup>If it is the adherents of the law who are to be the heirs, faith is null and the promise is void. <sup>15</sup>For the law brings wrath; but where there is no law, neither is there violation.

<sup>16</sup>For 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, <sup>17</sup>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.

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

*Stand*

**LENTEN ACCLAMATION**

The Holy Gospel according to John. **Glory to you, O Lord.**

Gospel: John 3:1-17

*A curious Pharisee visits Jesus by night to learn from the teacher his friends reject. Jesus speaks to him about life in the Spirit and the kingdom of God.*

<sup>1</sup>Now there was a Pharisee named Nicodemus, a leader of the Jews. <sup>2</sup>He 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." <sup>3</sup>Jesus answered him, "Very truly, I tell you, no one can see the kingdom of God without being born from above." <sup>4</sup>Nicodemus 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?" <sup>5</sup>Jesus answered, "Very truly, I tell you, no one can enter the kingdom of God without being born of water and Spirit. <sup>6</sup>What is born of the flesh is flesh, and what is born of the Spirit is spirit. <sup>7</sup>Do not be astonished that I said to you, 'You must be born from above.' <sup>8</sup>The wind blows where it chooses, and you hear 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." <sup>9</sup>Nicodemus said to him, "How can these things be?" <sup>10</sup>Jesus answered him, "Are you a teacher of Israel, and yet you do not understand these things?

<sup>11</sup>"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. <sup>12</sup>If I have told you about earthly things and you do not believe; how can you believe if I tell you about heavenly things? <sup>13</sup>No one has ascended into heaven except the one who descended from heaven, the Son of Man. <sup>14</sup>And just as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, so must the Son of Man be lifted up,

<sup>15</sup>that whoever believes in him may have eternal life.

<sup>16</sup>"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.

<sup>17</sup>"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 of the Lord. **Praise to you, O Christ.**

## **SERMON**

*Stand*

**HYMN OF THE DAY** ELW 323

## **APOSTLE'S CREED**

**I believe in God, the Father almighty,  
creator of heaven and earth.**

**I believe in Jesus Christ, God's 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 to the dead.  
On the third day he rose again;  
he ascended into heaven,  
he is seated at the right hand of the Father,  
and he will come to judge the living and the dead.**

**I believe in the Holy Spirit,  
the holy catholic church,  
the communion of saints,  
the forgiveness of sins,  
the resurrection of the body,  
and the life everlasting. Amen.**

## **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. *A brief silence.*

God of rebirth, empower your church throughout the world to be a voice of hope for those who fear 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. Give courage to lawmakers, lawyers, judges, and law enforcement officers, guiding them to do justice and to love mercy. Hear us, O God. **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 those we name before you silently or aloud.... Hear us, O God. **Your mercy is great.**

God of rebirth, we thank you for the children of this community and for the people and 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.**

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### MEAL

*God feeds us with the presence of Jesus Christ*

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*Sit*

**OFFERING with Special Music:**

*Stand*

**OFFERING SONG** ELW 184

### OFFERING PRAYER

Holy and generous host, you set a table where we feast as friends. Prepare us to witness to your goodness with every gift you have given us to share, that all people may know your peace through Jesus Christ, now and forever. **Amen.**

### DIALOG

### PREFACE

It is indeed right, our duty and our joy, that we should always and in all places give thanks and praise to you, almighty and merciful God, through our Savior Jesus Christ. By the leading of a star he was shown forth to all nations; in the waters of the Jordan you proclaimed him your beloved Son; and in the miracle of water turned to wine he revealed your glory. And so, with all the choirs of angels, with the church on earth and the hosts of heaven, we praise your name and join their unending hymn:

### SANCTUS

### THANKSGIVING AT THE TABLE

Holy God, our living Water and our merciful Guide, together with rivers and seas, wells and springs we bless and magnify you. You led your people Israel through the desert, and provided them water from the rock.

We praise you for Christ, our Rock and our Water, who joined us in our desert, pouring out his life for the world.

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, death, and resurrection, we await your salvation for all this thirsty world.

Pour out your Spirit on this holy food and on all the baptized gathered for this feast: wash away our sin, that we may be revived for our journey by the love of Christ.

Through him all glory and honor are yours, Almighty Father, with the Holy Spirit, in your holy Church, both now and forever. **Amen**

#### **LORD'S PRAYER**

**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.**

#### **INVITATION TO COMMUNION**

God's love is poured out in Christ for you. Open yourselves to receive it.

*Sit*

#### **COMMUNION**

*We receive Holy Communion kneeling/standing at the communion rails. You may receive the wine either by common cup, or by individual glass. If you wish to receive wine in an individual glass, please take one from the stacked trays. To receive communion without coming forward, please notify an usher, and be seated near an aisle. There is grape juice in the center circle of each tray of glasses. Gluten free wafers are available from the bread distributor. Please ask.*

#### **COMMUNION HYMNS**

ELW 735 Mothering God You Give Me Birth (sing whole hymn twice through)

*Stand*

#### **PRAYER AFTER COMMUNION**

We thank you, living God, for the body and blood of your Son, which sustains us in the wilderness and the garden alike. As Christ has loved us in this feast, so send us to love Christ in our neighbors. In Jesus' name we pray. **Amen.**

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#### **SENDING**

*God sends us in mission to the world.*

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#### **BLESSING**

Now is the acceptable time. Now is the day of salvation. Holy God, speaking, spoken, and inspiring, ✠ bless you, unbind you, and send you in love and in peace. **Amen.**

**SENDING HYMN** “The Lord Bless You and Keep You” Adult Choir only

**DISMISSAL**

Go in peace. Christ is our light. **Thanks be to God.**

**POSTLUDE**

**WORSHIP SERVANTS:**

**Presiding Minister:** Pr. Eric Lesher

**Assisting Minister:** Charlyne Berens

**Acolyte:** Erin Krueger

**Cantor/Choir:** Adult Choir

**Organist/Pianist:** Anne Melang-Thoren, Jennifer Aliwarga-Carlson

**Reader:** Brady Gavin

**Communion Assistants:** Dave Ripa, Lorraine James, Connie Whyrick, Jan Branting

**Altar Guild:** Doug and Sarah Krueger

**Communion Bread:** Sharon Gottsche

**Communion Wine:** Fran and Kevin Gade, Chris and Wendy Apple, Jo Miller

**Greeters:** Dave Ripa, Lorraine James

**Ushers:** Kurt and Cindy Eberspacher, Lori Drake, Amy Filbert

**Nursery Care:** Judi Schroeder, Elizabeth Krueger

**Transportation:** Alex Chapman, Duane Mischnick

*Staff:*

*Rev. Eric Lesher, Senior Pastor*

*David Sage, Office Administrator*

*Anne Melang-Thoren, Director of Music*

*Jennifer Aliwarga-Carlson, Organist\pianist*

*Robert Stimbert, Custodian*

*Judi Schroeder, Nursery Coordinator*

*Elizabeth Krueger, Nursery Assistant*