



**Midweek Service of Word and Prayer
Grace Lutheran Church
Lincoln, Nebraska**

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.**

Opening Dialog

God is our light and our salvation,

our refuge and our stronghold.

From the rising of the sun to its setting,

we praise your name, O God.

For with you is the fountain of life,

and in your light we see our salvation.

Prayer of the Day

Gracious God, throughout the ages you transform sickness into health and death into life.

Open us to the power of your presence, and make us a people ready to proclaim your promises to the whole world, through Jesus Christ, our healer and Lord. **Amen.**

Readings

Isaiah 35

^{7a}the burning sand shall become a pool, and the thirsty ground springs of water.

What do thirst for these days? How has your faith quenched your thirst?

Psalms 146

³Put not your trust in rulers, in mortals in whom there is no help.

Who do you trust these days? Why?

James 2

⁸You do well if you really fulfill the royal law according to the scripture, "You shall love your neighbor as yourself."

Why is it important to love both your neighbor and yourself?

Mark 7

²⁸But she answered Jesus, "Sir, even the dogs under the table eat the children's crumbs."

Who are the dogs under your table? How do you minister to them?

Reflection

God Is Partial

Again and again throughout biblical history, God is partial to caring for the poor, the weak, and the outcast. Which is why, perhaps, Jesus' response to the Syrophenician woman takes us by surprise: "Let the children be fed first, for it is not fair to take the children's food and throw it to the dogs" (Mark 7:27).

The Syrophenician woman acts in faith. She engages Jesus with what she believes to be true about him: that through him God's mercy will extend even to her. Despite the distinctions that separate them (including race, gender, and religion), she believes Jesus is a Savior who has the power to heal all people and that she, although not a Jew, is a member of the household of God.

The second reading, from James, reminds hearers then and now that the Christian community's actions are to be shaped by God's partiality. God has chosen the poor to be rich in faith. While the world values the rich, the poor are God's own treasure, made honored guests and royal heirs through baptism. The community is called to a partiality based on God's values, not the world's values.

The waters of baptism wash away all distinctions. Like streams breaking forth in the desert, these waters surprise us with mercy in unexpected places. These waters open our eyes, unstop our ears, and loose our tongues to see, hear, and speak God's partiality for the poor, the weak, and the outcast. Baptized into Christ's death and resurrection, the Spirit fills us with faith—a faith active in showing mercy that knows no limits.

Around the table, rich and poor, haughty and humble, all who gather receive a feast fit for the family of God. All are honored and all are fed, because the Lord is the maker of them all.

Music Offering: *Light Dawns on a Weary World*

Lord's Prayer (together)

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.

Apostle's Creed (together)

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 to the living, 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.

Responsive Prayer

Show us your mercy, O God,
and grant us your salvation.

Give us the joy of your saving help again,
and sustain us with your bountiful Spirit.

Give peace in all the world;
for only in you can we live in safety.

Keep the nations under your care,
and guide us in the way of justice and truth.

Let your way be known upon earth;
your saving health among all nations.

Let not the needy be forgotten,
nor the hope of the poor be taken away.

Create in us a clean heart, O God,
and sustain us with your Holy Spirit.

Lord, hear my prayer,
and let my cry come before you.

Closing Prayer

O God, in you we live and move and have our being. Guide and govern us every day by your Holy Spirit, that in all the cares and occupations of our life we may not forget you, but remember that always we are walking in your promises; through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

Dismissal

Go in peace. Serve the Lord. **Thanks be to God.**

Blessing

Almighty God (+) bless us, defend us from all evil, and bring us to everlasting life. **Amen.**