



**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

O God, our teacher and guide, you draw us to yourself and welcome us as beloved children. Help us to lay aside all envy and selfish ambition, that we may walk in your ways of wisdom and understanding as servants of your Son, Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord. **Amen.**

Readings

Jeremiah 11

²⁰But you, O Lord of hosts, who judge righteously, who try the heart and the mind, let me see your retribution upon them, for to you I have committed my cause.

What does God's retribution look like? How is this retribution been shaped by the cross?

Psalms 54

²Hear my prayer, O God; give ear to the words of my mouth.

What words has God heard from you these days? Is this good or bad or a little of both?

James 4

^{8a}Draw near to God, and he will draw near to you.

Where and/or how do you draw near to God? How do you know God is near?

Mark 9

³⁵He sat down, called the twelve, and said to them, "Whoever wants to be first must be last of all and servant of all."

What does it take to be last when you know you are first?

Reflection

The Most Challenging Spiritual Practice

The writers of today's readings express to God their fears about death and those who do evil. They rage against all human sin that leads to disorder and war, within and around us. They describe one caught in this reality of evil who is led to slaughter, tested with insult and torture, and faces a shameful death.

Through our lenses we see Jesus. In fact, Jesus keeps describing what is going to happen to him, but his followers can't understand. They don't want to understand. Instead, they argue about who is greatest among them and therefore the one who will take over the ministry of Jesus.

Putting a quick end to that line of argument, Jesus brings a child into their circle. Embracing the child, Jesus invites disciples into humble service—this is how we draw near to God and God to us.

It is easy to be fearful in view of events outside us. It is easy to be thrown off course by feelings inside us or to work hardest for the wrong things. But Jesus invites us to practice what may be the most challenging spiritual practice of all. Jesus invites us to love our neighbor. Jesus asks that we look around for someone concrete to invest our time and energy in, someone who cannot necessarily return the favor.

In real life, there is no way to avoid shame and death. At some point, it comes to each of us. However, for now, wherever we are, we can participate in God's way of life. Empowered by the Holy Spirit, disciples look where Jesus points and see those whom they can serve.

Music Offering: *Children of the Heavenly Father – The National Lutheran Choir*

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.**