



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

Opening Dialog

Behold, now is the acceptable time;

now is the day of salvation.

Turn us again, O God of our salvation,

that the light of your face may shine on us.

May your justice shine like the sun;

and may the poor be lifted up.

Introduction to Sunday

In Isaiah the one God who sits above the earth and numbers the stars will also strengthen the powerless. So, in Jesus' healing work we see the hand of the creator God, lifting the sick woman to health and service. Like Simon's mother-in-law, we are lifted and healed to serve. Following Jesus, we strengthen the powerless; like Jesus, we seek to renew our own strength in quiet times of prayer.

Prayer of the Day

Everlasting God, you give strength to the weak and power to the faint. Make us agents of your healing and wholeness, that your good news may be made known to the ends of your creation, through Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord. **Amen.**

Readings

Isaiah 40

²⁸Have you not known? Have you not heard? The Lord is the everlasting God, the Creator of the ends of the earth.

Silence

Why is it important to remember that God is the creator of the ends of the earth?

Psalms 147

⁵Great is our Lord and mighty in power; there is no limit to God's wisdom.

Silence

How do you seek God's wisdom? How do you know it is from God?

1 Corinthians 9

¹⁸What then is my reward? Just this: that in my proclamation I may make the gospel free of charge, so as not to make full use of my rights in the gospel.

Silence

Why are "my rights" secondary to what God is accomplishing for the world through Jesus?

Mark 1

³¹He (Jesus) came and took her by the hand and lifted her up. Then the fever left her, and she began to serve them.

Silence

The woman is set free to serve others. What does this tell us about the freedom we enjoy in Christ?

Reflection

God and Others

When Jesus heals us and forgives us, we are empowered to serve others. While at first glance it might seem that Jesus' healing of Peter's mother-in-law was self-serving, on further reflection we see the same result in nearly all his signs and miracles. The object of Jesus' compassion now has new responsibilities. When Jesus calms the storm (Mark 4:35-41) the disciples must row the rest of the way! Any meaningful encounter with Jesus will result in our being changed, which in turn alters the way we see our relationship to the needs of others and the world.

Hard economic times, natural disasters, and divisive, party politics can make us feel helpless and hopeless, as if God has abandoned us. Even the church—local congregations as well as denominations—may feel fear and panic in the face of declining numbers and revenues, loss of loyalty from members, indifference or hostility from the surrounding culture, and internal arguments among factions. The exiled people of Israel in Babylon experienced all of this and more, so our condition is neither unique nor beyond the reach of our God. Isaiah 40:21-31 in the NRSV begins "Have you not known? Have you not heard?" Eugene Peterson, in *The Message*, translates this idea as "Have you not been paying attention? Have you not been listening?" There is some irony indeed that God's church, entrusted with God's salvation history and the gospel, still panics, still doubts and worries, still feels like it is up to us to save the church. But it is not. There is only one who does that work among us. Work that will be done despite us or with us as we serve others.

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 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.

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.