

Sunday, March 14, 2021 – Fourth Sunday in Lent

## Trinity's Weekly Connection

*You are welcome to join us for live streaming of our "Virtual Worship" service from Centennial Hall on the Fourth Sunday in Lent, March 14 at 9:15 a.m. If you are unable to join us at that time, be welcome to access the service at your convenience via Trinity's YouTube channel. Instructions for access to the live stream and the recorded video are below.*

### Trinity is live streaming worship – how do I find it?

We are streaming our 9:15 a.m. "Virtual Worship" service on YouTube. To find it, do the following:

- Follow the home page link to "Virtual Worship" on Trinity's website, select "video" and you will be connected to the stream.  
OR
- Go to YouTube, either by opening the app on your phone or by visiting the webpage on your computer.
- Search for 'Trinity Lutheran Church Grand Rapids.' The first option should be one with a picture of our cross tower (that is our channel).
- When you click on it you will be brought to our channel. If the service is live (from about 9:10 to 10:20 a.m. on Sunday morning) there will be a video with 'Live Now' on it.
- Simply click on the video and you will be connected to the stream.
- We also save past services in a play list called 'Rejoice Worship,' so you can view a past worship service at any time. It takes a couple of hours for the video to download on YouTube after worship ends.

*If you have a YouTube account please subscribe to the channel. This will allow our videos to show up in your video feed and when we reach enough subscriptions allow us to change our YouTube url.*

### Prayer of the Day for the Fourth Sunday in Lent

O God, rich in mercy, by the humiliation of your Son you lifted up this fallen world and rescued us from the hopelessness of death. Lead us into your light, that all our deeds may reflect your love, through Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. Amen.

### Prayer for Health Care Providers

Merciful God, your healing power is everywhere about us. Strengthen those who work among the sick; give them courage and confidence in all they do. Encourage them when their efforts seem futile or when death prevails. Increase their trust in your power even to overcome death and pain and crying. May they be thankful for every sign of health you give, and humble before the mystery of your healing grace; through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

### Trinity Members in Our Prayers

We pray for Trinity members Emily Albaitis, Fran Anderson, Deb Bambini and family, George Bauer, Jim and Sue Boyse and family, Bonnie Brandstadt and family, Pat Bruin, Judy Cisler, Barb and Bob Crossman and family, Mike Danielski, Jack Danielson, John Derbin, Renee Fisk and family, Mari Franz and family, Mary Frick, Jack Greiner, Elena Griewahn, Adam Guigue, Craig Gunderson, Mark Hahn, John Hall, Bob and Linda Heine and family, Ruth Helzer, Jerry Hendricks, Bev Heyne and family, Sid and Carrie Hoeksema and family, Callan Hughes, Carol Huttenga, Austin, Meredith and Theodore Johnson, Patricia Johnson, Christopher Keller, Gayl Kessel, Susan Knoll, Jen Knowles, Joni Korb, Roy Lamprich, Marilyn Leese, Jane Legualt, Judy Mallen, Jessica Marks and Patti Patton and their families, Roger Marks, Mark and Rebecca Mattison and family, Brian Mazurek and family, Marcia McClimans and family, Jill McKinney, Marilyn Mellema, Johnny Mielock, John and Karin Moglia and family, Christophe and Benita Muganza, Kenny Muganza, Michael Mulligan, Tim Neilson, Joan Perham and family, Valeriano Ramirez and family, Jacqueline Riegling, Mark and Gayle Rohde and family, Lynn Rose, Petra Rotzell and family, Thiago Saline, Marian Schaible, Chas Schaner, Chris Schomberg, Vince Schumacher, Jim Searfoss, Joan Sellman, Neil and Sue Sandler and family, Matt and Kara Seyffert and family, Kris and Tom Shannon and family, Michael Smith, David and Mary Smoes and family, Courtney Steketee and family, Gary and Pat Stevens and family, Shirley Tedford, Jeremiah (JD) Thamban, Joanna Waite, John Walls, Fred Wilcox, Eric Wollen, Peyton Wollen, Rick and Michelle Wolner, and Kathryn Zielinski.

## Fourth Sunday in Lent

March 14, 2021

*The fourth of the Old Testament promises providing a baptismal lens this Lent is the promise God makes to Moses: those who look on the bronze serpent will live. In today's gospel Jesus says he will be lifted up on the cross like the serpent, so that those who look to him in faith will live. When we receive the sign of the cross in baptism, that cross becomes the sign we can look to in faith for healing, for restored relationship to God, for hope when we are dying.*

### FIRST READING: Numbers 21:4-9

*Though God provides food and water for the Israelites in the wilderness, they whine and grumble. They forget about the salvation they experienced in the exodus. God punishes them for their sin, but when they repent God also provides a means of healing: a bronze serpent lifted up on a pole.*

<sup>4</sup>From Mount Hor [the Israelites] set out by the way to the Red Sea, to go around the land of Edom; but the people became impatient on the way. <sup>5</sup>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 detest this miserable food." <sup>6</sup>Then the Lord sent poisonous serpents among the people, and they bit the people, so that many Israelites died. <sup>7</sup>The people came to Moses and said, "We have sinned by speaking against the Lord and against you; pray to the Lord to take away the serpents from us." So Moses prayed for the people. <sup>8</sup>And the Lord said to Moses, "Make a poisonous serpent, and set it on a pole; and everyone who is bitten shall look at it and live." <sup>9</sup>So Moses made a serpent of bronze, and put it upon a pole; and whenever a serpent bit someone, that person would look at the serpent of bronze and live.

### SECOND READING: Ephesians 2:1-10

*While we were dead in our sinfulness, God acted to make us alive as a gift of grace in Christ Jesus. We are saved not by what we do but by grace through faith. Thus our good works are really a reflection of God's grace at work in our lives.*

<sup>1</sup>You were dead through the trespasses and sins <sup>2</sup>in which you once lived, following the course of this world, following the ruler of the power of the air, the spirit that is now at work among those who are disobedient. <sup>3</sup>All of us once lived among them in the passions of our flesh, following the desires of flesh and senses, and we were by nature children of wrath, like everyone else. <sup>4</sup>But God, who is rich in mercy, out of the great love with which he loved us <sup>5</sup>even when we were dead through our trespasses, made us alive

together with Christ—by grace you have been saved—<sup>6</sup>and raised us up with him and seated us with him in the heavenly places in Christ Jesus, <sup>7</sup>so that in the ages to come he might show the immeasurable riches of his grace in kindness toward us in Christ Jesus. <sup>8</sup>For by grace you have been saved through faith, and this is not your own doing; it is the gift of God—<sup>9</sup>not the result of works, so that no one may boast. <sup>10</sup>For we are what he has made us, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand to be our way of life.

### GOSPEL: John 3:14-21

*To explain the salvation of God to the religious leader, Nicodemus, Jesus refers to the scripture passage quoted in today's first reading. Just as those who looked upon the bronze serpent were healed, so people will be saved when they behold Christ lifted up on the cross.*

[Jesus said:] <sup>14</sup>"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. <sup>18</sup>Those who believe in him are not condemned; but those who do not believe are condemned already, because they have not believed in the name of the only Son of God. <sup>19</sup>And this is the judgment, that the light has come into the world, and people loved darkness rather than light because their deeds were evil. <sup>20</sup>For all who do evil hate the light and do not come to the light, so that their deeds may not be exposed. <sup>21</sup>But those who do what is true come to the light, so that it may be clearly seen that their deeds have been done in God."



## PRAYERS OF INTERCESSION

Relying on the promises of God, we pray boldly for the church, the world, and all in need.

*A brief silence.*

You sent your Son that the world might be saved through him. Inspire the witness of the church throughout the world. Empower missionaries, Bible translators, and ministries of service in your name. Bless our partners in ministry in our synod, our ELCA global partner churches, and Young Adults in Global Mission. Hear us, O God.

**Your mercy is great.**

We pray for Pastor Andreas Teich and the people of Messiah Lutheran Church in Bay City, synod partners with us in mission and ministry. Hear us, O God.

**Your mercy is great.**

We pray for a spirit of unity and harmony so that we may come to cherish our commonalities with people of other faiths, including our three "Standing Together" partner congregations here in Grand Rapids, Masjid At-Tawheed, Westminster Presbyterian Church and Temple Emanuel. Hear us, O God.

**Your mercy is great.**

From east to west your steadfast love is shown. Nourish seas and deserts, wilderness areas and cities. Give water to thirsty lands; nurture spring growth that feeds hungry creatures; bless farmers as they prepare for the growing season. Hear us, O God.

**Your mercy is great.**

You sustained your people in the wilderness. Give courage to all who lead in times of crisis and scarce resources. Prosper the work of those who aid victims of famine and drought. Bring peace in places where scarce resources cause violence. Hear us, O God.

**Your mercy is great.**

Your mercy endures forever. Deliver all who cry to you, especially those who are hungry or without homes. Give life in places where death seems triumphant; give healing to those who are sick and comfort to those who mourn. Hear us, O God.

**Your mercy is great.**

By grace we have been saved. Fill this congregation to overflowing with that grace, that we show mercy to others. Nourish any in our midst who are hungry, especially children, and bless our ministries of feeding and shelter, especially through Family Promise and our local network of food pantries. Give us patience and courage when the way seems long. Hear us, O God.

**Your mercy is great.**

Your Son was lifted up that whoever believes might have eternal life. We praise you for all who have died in Christ. Bring us with all the saints into the fullness of your promises. Hear us, O God.

**Your mercy is great.**

We entrust ourselves and all our prayers to you, O faithful God, through Jesus Christ our Lord.

**Amen.**



## Prayer for this time of pandemic and social upheaval

O God, where hearts are fearful and constricted, grant courage and hope. Where anxiety is infectious and widening, grant peace and reassurance. Where impossibilities close every door and window, grant imagination and resistance. Where distrust twists our thinking, grant healing and illumination. Where spirits are daunted and weakened, grant soaring wings and strengthened dreams. All these things we ask in the name of Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord. Amen.

## A Prayer for the Power of the Spirit among the People of God

God of all power and love, we give thanks for your unfailing presence and the hope you provide in times of uncertainty and loss. Send your Holy Spirit to enkindle in us your holy fire. Revive us to live as Christ's body in the world: a people who pray, worship, learn, break bread, share life, heal neighbors, bear good news, seek justice, rest and grow in the Spirit. Wherever and however we gather, unite us in common prayer and send us in common mission, that we and the whole creation might be restored and renewed, through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

## A Prayer for our Nation in a Time of Transition

Eternal God, amid all the turmoil and changes of the world your love is steadfast and your strength never fails. In this time of transition in our nation, be to us a sure guardian and rock of defense. Guide the leaders of our nation with your wisdom, comfort those in distress, and grant us courage and hope to face the future; through Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord. Amen.

MARCH 14, 2021  
FOURTH SUNDAY  
IN LENT



*God loves the whole world.*

### DAILY BIBLE READINGS

These passages are related to the Lectionary texts for this Sunday.

Sunday	John 3:14-21	God so loved the world
Monday	Numbers 21:4-9	The serpent of bronze
Tuesday	Ephesians 2:1-10	Faith is a gift from God
Wednesday	Deuteronomy 10:12-22	The essence of the law
Thursday	1 John 5:1-5	Faith conquers the world
Friday	Zephaniah 3:14-20	The song of joy
Saturday	Psalms 107:1-3, 17-22	Thanksgiving for deliverance
Sunday	John 12:20-33	The hour has come

### SCRIPTURE VERSE FOR THIS WEEK

*“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.”*

**John 3:16 (NRSV)**

### PRAYERS AND BLESSING

#### **A Prayer for the Week:**

God of steadfast love, help us to remember that you hate nothing that you have created and that you love the world through Christ our Lord. Amen.

#### **Mealtime Prayer:**

Dear God, you who fed the Israelites in the wilderness, we thank you for feeding us today with this food and nourishing us with your love. Amen.

#### **A Blessing to Give:**

May God who loves the world shine brightly on you with the light of Christ.



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MARCH 14, 2021

### HYMN OF THE WEEK

*Christ Be Our Light*



### WEEKLY MILESTONES

Take a moment to tell or think about a recent mountain high and/or valley low in your life.

### CARING CONVERSATIONS

Discuss in your home, small group, or use for personal reflections:

- Talk or think about something you really love to do.
- How do you show love for others?
- God created the whole world and loves it. What does that say about the kind of God we have?

### DEVOTIONS

*Read:* John 3:14-21.

These words from Jesus are part of a conversation he is having with Nicodemus who had come to see Jesus by night. There is a contrast here between those who love the darkness (initially Nicodemus) and those who “come to the light” (v. 21). Nicodemus would eventually be drawn to the light by defending Jesus in front of the Pharisees (John 7:51-52) and preparing Jesus’ body after his crucifixion (John 19:39). In the Gospel of John, following and believing in Jesus can be a journey of coming to the light and gaining eternal life, as Nicodemus does. Darkness cannot choose light; it must be overcome by the light. The judgement of which Jesus speaks is remaining in the dark. Eternal life is having the light of Christ overcome the darkness that prevents us from seeing and loving Jesus. How has the light of Christ helped you in challenging times or times of darkness?

*Pray:* **Merciful God, we thank you for your love for us that calls us out of darkness and to the light of Christ that we may not perish but have eternal life. Amen.**

### SERVICE

Numbers 21:4-9 records that God sent snakes among the people of Israel to punish them. But after Moses prayed for the people, God directed Moses to make a bronze snake and put it up on a pole. When anyone who had been bitten looked at the snake, they were healed. The symbol of a snake on a pole is associated with medicine and health care. This week, plan an act of thanks and appreciation for a doctor, nurse, or medical worker in your community.

### RITUALS AND TRADITIONS

Martin Luther referred to John 3:16, the *Scripture Verse for this Week*, as “the gospel in miniature.” *“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.”* This week, light a candle and read the *Daily Bible Reading* each day, then say the *Prayer for the Week* and a word of thanks for how God shows love to you and the world. End by saying: **Remember that you are God’s, and to God you shall return.**



In addition to *Taking Faith Home*, celebrate milestones in your daily life as an effective faith formation tool. Go to: [www.milestonesministry.org](http://www.milestonesministry.org)